



**District of Columbia  
Department of Small and Local Business Development  
FY 2023 Robust Retail Citywide Grant  
Request for Applications (RFA)**

**Open February 1, 2023, through April 10, 2023, at 2:00 pm Eastern Time  
Updated 2/2/2023**

**How to use this document to guide your application process:**

This Request for Applications (RFA) is the full set of instructions for applicants to understand how to complete the application. **All applicants are encouraged to read this entire document before submitting an application.** It outlines the following important sections:

1. **Objective**—What DSLBD seeks to accomplish through the grant
2. **Online Application Deadline**—Where online and when eligible businesses must apply
3. **Eligibility & Checklist** —What businesses are eligible to apply and what
4. **Date Restrictions on Expenditures for Reimbursement**—How the funds cannot be spent
5. **Allowed and Disallowed Expenditures for Reimbursement**
6. **Selection Process**
7. **Award Information**—What happens if you are awarded a grant
8. **Important Legal Disclaimers**—Additional DSLBD legal reservations
9. **Appendix A**—Eligible business types

Look for Robust Retail Citywide information sessions at <https://dslbd.eventbrite.com>. Outside of an information session, **send all questions in writing to [DCMainStreets@dc.gov](mailto:DCMainStreets@dc.gov)**. *No phone calls will be accepted.*



## 1. Objective

A robust retail sector is critical to maintaining the vibrancy of DC neighborhoods, but due to market realities of the past years, the District's small retail businesses are still under threat of business decline and closure. Therefore, the FY 2023 Robust Retail Citywide grants program is designed to help support existing DC-based retail businesses maintain operations and viability during the continuing small business crisis.

The District of Columbia (**DC or District**) Department of Small and Local Business Development (**DSLBD**) is excited to announce in this Request for Applications (**RFA**) that DSLBD will be accepting applications for the Fiscal Year (**FY**) **2023 Robust Retail Citywide Grant program, starting February 1, 2023**. The Robust Retail Citywide grants are only for licensed retail businesses physically located within the District in a brick and mortar commercial space.

Retail businesses that apply and meet all eligibility requirements by the final deadline, April 10, 2023 by 2:00 Eastern Time, will be placed in a lottery for a Robust Retail grant. Businesses that received a Robust Retail Citywide award in FY 2022 are not eligible to apply.

The grant will operate as a reimbursement grant for eligible expenses incurred to maintain business operations and viability within the period of performance of October 1, 2022, through April 10, 2023.

DSLBD intends to award up to \$5,000 each to approximately 100 businesses from the total \$500,000 in available funding for FY 2023.

## 2. Online Application & Deadline

### Online Application

**All applicants must apply online** at <https://www.zoomgrants.com/zgf/RRC2023>. *If an applicant is typing in this address, it must exactly match this address, including the exact lower case and capitalized letters. To start your application, you must create a ZoomGrants account by logging in at ZoomGrants.com or the link above.*

Only complete applications submitted through the ZoomGrants portal, an online grant application system used by DSLBD, will be accepted and entered into the lottery. No application materials will be accepted outside of the application system or after the grant deadline.

It is recommended that applicants submit their applications through ZoomGrants at least 24-48 hours before the final deadline to ensure that you can resolve any technical difficulties if they arise.

*ZoomGrants, Inc. is a third-party provider that offers customer assistance for login issues, issues with saving your application, and other IT related issues for your application. ZoomGrants provides technical support Monday – Friday from 10am-7pm eastern time. Reach out to ZoomGrants at any time during the application period if you have technical difficulties by emailing [Questions@ZoomGrants.com](mailto:Questions@ZoomGrants.com).*

#### **Important Deadlines:**

- **Early Eligibility Review 1 is February 17, 2023, 2:00pm.**
- **Early Eligibility Review 2 is March 17, 2023, 2:00pm.**
- **The last date to ask DSLBD questions about the grant is April 5, 2023, 2:00 pm.**
- **The application submission final deadline is April 10, 2023, at 2:00 pm. No exceptions.**

**DSLBD will not accept late applications for any reason.**

If a business submits multiple applications for one location, only the last submitted application for that location will be considered.

Notifications to selected applicants are anticipated to be sent by email on or around April 17, 2023.

### **3. Eligibility & Checklist**

For Robust Retail Citywide grant eligibility, a District-based retail business must meet **all** of the following requirements:

- A. Be a licensed for-profit public-facing seller of legal goods and services;
- B. Be physically located in a brick and mortar commercial retail space in the District;
- C. Be an **eligible** business type as listed in **Appendix A of this RFA**;

D. Not be an **ineligible** business type as listed in **Appendix A of this RFA**; and

D. Provide all required documents and attestations in the following checklists:

**Required Documents and Attestations for Eligibility**

Eligibility Documentation Checklist	
Required Items	Description
1. Active DC Business License Number	<p>Must be searchable in the Department of Licensing and Consumer Protection’s (DLCP) Business License Look Up (<a href="https://scout.dkra.dc.gov">https://scout.dkra.dc.gov</a>) or uploaded to provide proof of alternative licensure if DLCP licensing is not required for business type.</p> <p>Note: The <b>business license number</b> is required, not the Certificate of Occupancy or “C of O” number.</p>
2. Office of Tax & Revenue (OTR) Compliant Certificate of “Clean Hands” issued January 1, 2023, or later	<p>Applicants can check their Clean Hands status and generate a notice of compliance (if compliant) for free at <a href="https://otr.cfo.dc.gov/page/certificate-clean-hands">https://otr.cfo.dc.gov/page/certificate-clean-hands</a>.</p> <p>Note: The Clean Hands Certificate must be issued for the name of the business, if there is ambiguity we will conduct a further review of public records.</p> <p>The Clean Hands document comes from OTR and is <b>NOT</b> the Certificate of Good Standing issued by DLCP.</p>
3. Employer Identification Number (EIN)	Available for free at <a href="https://irs.gov">IRS.gov</a>
4. IRS W-9 Form - 2018 or later	Available at <a href="https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf">https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf</a>
5. Recent photograph of the store front with business signage	An uploaded photograph

Attestation Checklist	
Attestation	Description

1. Not a 2022 Awardee	Attest that the business <u>did not</u> receive a 2022 Robust Retail Citywide Award.
2. Business Operation	Attest that the business is open and operating. ( <i>Businesses that are not open AND operating are not eligible.</i> )
3. Retail Business	Attest that the business is in a commercial retail space
4. Applicant is owner or authorized representative	Attest that the applicant is the business owner or an authorized representative applying with full knowledge of the business owner. (The business owner, if awarded, must provide proof of ownership and knowledge of grant application prior to signing the grant agreement.)
5. Independently Owned and Operated	Attest that the business is independently owned, operated, and controlled and has fewer than 25 employees. Meaning that the business manages and controls its day-to-day operations without being subject to control, restriction, modification, or limitation by another business enterprise(s) or by a not-for-profit business(es) that has or may have an ownership and/or financial interest in the business.
6. Qualified, Reimbursable Expenses	Attest that the business will be able to provide full receipts and documentation of \$5,000 of qualified business expenditures, within one week of award acceptance, with bona fide receipts that the expenditures were made between October 1, 2022 and April 10, 2023.
7. No Double Dipping	Attest that the business has not been reimbursed for these receipts by another DC Government or other business grant, and if awarded will not request reimbursement for these same expenses from another grant source.
8. Accountability	Attest that the business has completed all reporting requirements for DSLBD and DC Government grants previously received and closed in the last 2 years. ( <i>Failure to complete reporting for previous DSLBD direct to small business grant rounds, including previous Robust Retail grants,</i>

	<i>will result in disqualification from this grant round.)</i>
9. Can Receive Electronic Funds	Attest that the business has a business bank account that can receive electronic funds transfer if awarded the grant.
10. Full Accuracy	Attest that all information provided in the application is true and accurate. Failure to honestly and accurately represent the factual truth in the attestations may result in being disqualified, forfeiture of an awarded grant, or greater penalties as applicable.

The above checklists cover ALL the required documentation and attestations used to determine an applicant’s eligibility. All required documents and attestations must be submitted through the online ZoomGrants application system by the deadline. All documentation is subject to verification.

**Failure to demonstrate eligibility**

Applicants who fail to provide complete and verifiable documents, information, and attestations, or who otherwise do not meet eligibility requirements, **will not be included in the lottery** for a Robust Retail Citywide grant. False attestations can result in grant forfeiture and other penalties as applicable.

**Businesses with multiple locations**

Businesses that meet eligibility and have multiple locations under their ownership are allowed to submit one application per location. However, if more than one application is selected within the lottery, only one will be awarded.

**Verifying Eligibility Documentation**

DSLBD will review the submitted documentation, verify it within the appropriate database and ensure it meets the listed requirements. If there is any ambiguity to the information submitted, DSLBD will further review public records to verify the information submitted. DSLBD will not correct any errors and all information must be accurate and correct by the deadline. When an applicant submits its required eligibility documentation, the applicant should ensure that information is aligned across documents. That is, the business name should be the same on the Basic Business License, Corporate Registration, and the Certificate of Clean Hands.

**Courtesy Eligible Review Deadlines**

Applicants may submit their eligibility documentation in ZoomGrants for an optional courtesy review of their eligibility prior to the grant submission deadline. DSLBD will provide two opportunities for a courtesy eligibility review. The two courtesy eligibility review deadlines are:

- February 17, 2:00 pm
- March 17, 2:00 pm

#### **4. Date Restrictions on Expenditures for Reimbursement**

All business expenses reimbursed by the Robust Retail Cityside grant must have occurred between October 1, 2022 through April 10, 2023. All receipts must be dated between this period to be considered for reimbursement with the grant funds.

#### **5. Allowed and Disallowed Expenditures for Reimbursement**

Robust Retail Citywide grant program has allowed uses and disallowed uses of grant funds.

##### **Allowed Uses**

DSLBD will allow grant funds for the reimbursement the business' expenses that cover the following:

1. Employee Wages and Salaries
2. Insurance
3. Rent
4. Utilities
5. Inventory
6. Cleaning Supplies
7. New Delivery or Online Costs
8. Taxes, Debt Service

DSLBD will consider allowing other cost categories proposed by a business and will make a determination in its sole discretion.

##### **Disallowed Uses**

DSLBD will not allow the use of the grant funds for reimbursing disallowed costs which include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Expenses incurred before October 1, 2022 or after April 10, 2023.

2. Expenses that are reimbursed by a different grant from DC Government.
3. Any interior or exterior construction not permitted by DC Code.
4. Assistance to bring legal charges against or to lobby or influence the District of Columbia government.
5. Any undocumented expense.
6. Donations or charitable giving to non-profits organizations.
7. Vehicle purchase.
8. Real estate purchase.
9. Lobbying the District of Columbia government.
10. Lawsuits against the District of Columbia government.
11. Any activity, goods or products deemed illegal by the District of Columbia government.
12. Any activity, goods or products deemed ineligible by DSLBD in its sole discretion.

## **6. Selection Process**

### **Application Acceptance or Rejection**

Following the closing of the application deadline(s), DSLBD will not accept any applications. DSLBD will disqualify submitted applications that do not comply with the instructions in the RFA. The Agency reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications if the Agency determines it is in the best interest of the District to do so. The Agency shall notify the applicant if it rejects an applicant's proposal. The Agency may also suspend or terminate an outstanding RFA pursuant to its own grant making rule(s) or any other applicable District or federal laws or regulations.

### **Selection Criteria and Review Process**

DSLBD intends to select grant recipients through a lottery process. The grants will be evenly split across all 8 DC Wards for 8 grants in each Ward. The remaining eligible grants will be entered into a citywide pool of all applicants. If there are insufficient eligible applicants from any Ward, any remaining grants will be awarded from the citywide pool of all applications. Eligible applications will be assigned a random number. DSLBD will use a random number generator to develop an ordered list of selected recipients. The Director of DSLBD will make the final determination and approval of grant awards.

## **7. Award Information**

### **Grant Award Notification**

Grant notification announcements of selected awards will be made on or around April 17,



2023. DSLBD will notify successful applicants of its selection decision **by email** and send a Notice of Grant Award (NOGA) to the selected grant recipients along with additional post-award instructions.

Selected grantees will need to complete reimbursement expenditure reporting for \$5,000 of qualified business expenses from October 1, 2022 – April 10, 2023 and sign a grant agreement with DSLBD. The agency anticipates signing grant agreements between DSLBD and the grantees between April 17, 2023 and May 5, 2023.

### **Grant Award Acceptance**

*Applicants must accept the award within three (3) business days from the date of NOGA and provide receipts within five (5) business days of acceptance.*

If agreements are unable to be executed within 10 business days from the date of NOGA, for any reason, then the grant may be forfeited. The grant agreement will require additional documentation and reporting. This will include electronic fund transfer information (an ACH form) for the business bank account and final report about how the grant benefited the business.

Grantees are required to prepare a final report providing a description of the impacts of the grant.

### **Expense Reporting Requirements**

Applicants are required to submit proof of all expenses to be reimbursed within five (5) days of Notice of Grant Award. DSLBD will reconcile the receipt and expenditure documentation. If \$5,000 of allowable, reimbursable expenses cannot be reconciled from the provided documentation, the grant award may be forfeited.

### **Reimbursement Requirements**

- Proof of expenditures may be submitted in the form of dated receipts, dated payroll documentation, or bank/credit card statements. (Non-responsive information, such as expenses for which the business is not requesting reimbursement, balances, overdue notices, on bank/credit card statements may be redacted to protect the privacy of the business and is encouraged.)
- All uploaded receipts and documentation must be clearly legible.
- Receipts under \$500 must be batched into files of \$500 or more, with an included list of each receipt.
- All uploads must be accurately reflected in the budget chart.
- All expenses must be expenses for the business location applying for the grant.

## **Disbursement (Payment)**

Terms of disbursement shall be determined after applicants are selected, but may include the collection of additional documentation, such as an ACH payment documentation. We anticipate grants will be disbursed in one lump sum to selected grantee. The District of Columbia Government pays all invoices within thirty (30) days of receipt of invoice. **This 30-day timeline starts after an executed grant agreement is in place, a recipient is fully registered to receive payment via the District's payment systems or selected 3<sup>rd</sup> party payment systems and the grantee successfully submits an invoice with all receipts and eligible proof of payment for the submitted expenditures.**

## **Modifications**

Additional or modified information may be required as part of a final grant agreement. An awardee that cannot provide these and other requested materials by April 27, 2023, may be disqualified and DSLBD may award the grant to another applicant that was not a lottery winner.

## **8. Important Legal Disclaimers**

This section includes the following reservations that DSLBD makes in releasing this RFA.

### **A. Contingent**

Funding for this award is contingent on continued funding from the District. The RFA does not commit the Agency to make an award.

### **B. Application Acceptance**

Following the closing of the application deadline(s), DSLBD will not review applications that do not comply with all instructions in the RFA. The agency reserves the right to accept or deny any or all applications if the agency determines it is in the best interest of the District to do so. The agency may suspend or terminate an outstanding RFA pursuant to its own grant making rule(s) or any applicable District or federal laws or regulations.

Applications must be made through the online ZoomGrants portal. DSLBD will not accept applications submitted via hand delivery, email, mail, or courier service. DSLBD will not review late submissions or incomplete applications.

### **C. Notice of Funding Availability**

DSLBD published the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) in the DC Register on January 27, 2023 and the Office of Partnerships and Grants Funding Alert. The NOFA is available at <http://dslbd.dc.gov/>.

#### **D. Conflicts**

In the event of a conflict between the terms and conditions of the grant application and any applicable District or federal law or regulation, or any ambiguity related thereto, then the provisions of the applicable law or regulation shall control, and it shall be the responsibility of the applicant to ensure compliance.

#### **E. Costs of Applications**

Neither DSLBD nor the District of Columbia Government shall be liable for any costs incurred by an applicant in the preparation of any grant applications. All costs incurred in developing and preparing any grant application shall be the applicant's sole responsibility.

#### **F. Reservation of Rights**

1. DSLBD reserves the right to issue addenda and/or amendments subsequent to the issuance of the NOFA or RFA, or to rescind the NOFA or RFA. DSLBD will post addenda or amendments in the online application (see below). Applicants are responsible to review and adhere to any RFA addenda or amendments.
2. DSLBD may suspend or terminate an outstanding RFA pursuant to District or federal laws or regulations.
3. DSLBD may conduct pre-award on-site visits to verify information submitted in a grant application.
4. DSLBD serves as its own reference in evaluating applications. Grant decisions may reflect applicants' performance in managing previous grants.
5. DSLBD may enter into negotiations with an awardee and adopt a firm funding amount or other revision of the awardee's proposal that may result from the negotiations.

## **Appendix A – Eligible and Ineligible Business Types**

(These are not exhaustive lists of eligible or ineligible business types. If applicant's business type is not listed on either, please email DSLBD at [DCMainStreets@dc.gov](mailto:DCMainStreets@dc.gov) for a business type eligibility determination.

### **Eligible Business Types**

- Art Gallery
- Art Supply Store
- Bar or Tavern
- Bookstore
- Cards, Gifts, Party Store
- Clothing/Specialty Apparel Store
- Consignment Shop
- Convenience Store/Corner Stores
- Dry Cleaner
- Florist with On-Site Retail
- Furniture Store
- Grocery Store
- Gyms / Yoga, Dance, or Fitness Studios
- Hair Salon / Barbershop
- Restaurants
- Winery, Brewery, Distillery (with tavern or manufacturer license)
- Hardware Store
- Home Goods
- Jeweler
- Laundromat
- Nail Salon
- Pet Supply Store
- Pharmacy
- Printing & Signage Shop
- Specialty Shops
- Tuxedo/Dress Rental Shop
- Waxing Center
- Wine Shop

### **Ineligible Business Types**

- Business that are franchises that are not independently owned and operated
- Childcare providers
- Health care and social assistance businesses (physicians, dentists, acupuncture, and chiropractor offices, etc.)
- Nonprofit organizations
- Online only / e-commerce businesses
- Professional services companies (Accountant, Insurance, Law Office, etc.)
- Home-based Businesses