

Robust Retail: Citywide Grant Official Request for Applications (RFA)

Application Period: January 15, 2020 through March 15, 2020.

Issued by the Department of Small & Local Business Development

Updated: January 23, 2020



Look for paperwork bootcamps & grant information sessions at <http://bit.ly/DSLBDeventbrite>. Send all questions in writing to Inno.ED@dc.gov.

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. It outlines the following important sections:

1. Objectives

What DSLBD seeks to accomplish through the grant.

2. Application & Deadline

Where eligible businesses can submit an application online.

3. Eligibility

What businesses are eligible to apply & the needed paperwork.

4. Restrictions

How the funds can & cannot be spent.

5. Narrative Template

The competitive application.

6. Selection

How DSLBD decides awardees.

7. Award Information

What happens if you are awarded grant.

8. Important Legal Disclaimers

DSLBD legal reservations in addition to those listed above.

Questions?

DSLBD will hold multiple information sessions throughout the grant period as advertised via the DSLBD Eventbrite at: <http://bit.ly/DSLBDEventbrite>.

All other questions will be answered via email only by DSLBD staff Shannon Taylor, Kate Mereand or Virginia-Marie Roure via the Inno.ED@dc.gov email address. Please submit all questions not asked in an information session to Inno.ED@dc.gov.

1. Objective

A robust retail sector is critical to maintaining the vibrancy of DC neighborhoods, but market realities are changing for retail businesses. Thus the Robust Retail grant(s) support existing DC-based retail businesses adapting their business model to meet changing customer demand. DSLBD encourages but does not require applicants to include Made in DC products (www.thisisMadeinDC.com) as part of their concept for business model redesign.

The Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD) is excited to announce that we will be accepting applications for the **2020 Robust Retail: Citywide grants starting January 15, 2020 and closing March 15, 2020.**

DSLBD intends to award up to \$10,000 per business for a total of 40 businesses from the \$400,000 in available funding for 2020. Funds must be fully expended with appropriate receipts and accounting by August 31, 2020.

2. Online Application & Deadline

Apply at <https://www.zoomgrants.com/zgf/robustretailcitywide2020> Only applications submitted through the online system will be accepted and scored. No application materials will be accepted outside of the application system

The last date to ask questions about the grant application is March 11, 2020, 2 pm.

The final deadline is March 15, 2020, at 2 pm. No Exceptions.

3. Eligibility Checklist

Only for-profit consumer-facing, small retail businesses with a licensed location in DC are eligible for Robust Retail Citywide Grants. ***Home-based and non-profit businesses are not eligible for this grant opportunity.***

To be eligible, businesses must submit all required documentation in advance of an application being scored for a single eligible business with a valid business license.

Applicants who complete eligibility documentation by February 15, 2020 or March 1, 2020 will receive a courtesy review of their eligibility.

This checklist covers the required documentation used to determine applicants' eligibility. Applications that do not provide these documents will not be scored. Applicants that do not have appropriate documentation will not be scored.

Eligibility Checklist	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Federal Employment Identification Number (FEIN)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Current with DC Taxes, able to obtain "Clean Hands" Certificate (https://otr.cfo.dc.gov/page/online-clean-hands-application)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Proof of Current General Liability Insurance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Master Supplier Form (including ARIBA Supplier Number) from Office of Contracts and Procurement (https://ocp.dc.gov/publication/pass-master-supplier-form)
Needed to complete the Master Supplier Form are:	<input type="checkbox"/> Valid Business License Number (https://eservices.dcrd.dc.gov/BBLV/Default.aspx)
	<input type="checkbox"/> DUN & Bradstreet Number (https://www.dnb.com/duns-number/get-a-duns.html)
	<input type="checkbox"/> ARIBA Supplier Number (https://service.ariba.com/Supplier.aw)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Attesting your business is small per the Certified Business Enterprise guidelines. https://dslbd.dc.gov/page/certification-faqs
<input type="checkbox"/>	Current IRS W-9 https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf
<input type="checkbox"/>	Business financials to include, Income Statement (or Profit and Loss Statement) which is no more than one (1) year old and/or Business Balance Sheet which is no more than one (1) year old

Need help with your eligibility paperwork? You can attend a Grant Paperwork Bootcamp as advertised via the DSLBD Eventbrite: <http://bit.ly/DSLBDeventbrite>.

4. Restrictions on Allowable Uses of Funds

Grant funds have several allowed uses and several restricted uses. The “Period of Performance” is April 1, 2020 through August 31, 2020. All expenses funded by this grant must occur during this time.

The proposed use of funds must be accepted by DSLBD and may not be used for any of the disallowed uses below. DSLBD will consider uses that support your retail business. The grant funds cannot be used for any of the following:

1. Expenses incurred before April 1, 2020 or after August 31, 2020.
2. Expenses which 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 the District of Columbia.
5. Any undocumented expense.

5. Narrative Questions of the Application

The full narrative is submitted within the application system. We have listed the narrative questions here. We recommend writing your answers in your preferred word processing program, spell checking your answers, and then pasting them into the application system.

1. What is your business, what is it called, and where is it?
2. Who owns the business, how long have you owned it, and who operates the business day to day?
3. How does this business interact with the community? Tell us who the community is and why this business is important to the communities described.
4. What challenges do retail businesses like yours face today? What are you doing and what more would you like to do to face that challenge?
5. What impact would a \$10,000 cash infusion have for your retail business? (This is where you put your \$10,000 grant budget)
6. How would this grant help you address the challenges you described in Section 4?
7. Do you carry Made in DC products? If so, tell us about it!
8. Do you have employees who are DC residents? If so, tell us about it!
9. Was the business awarded a Robust Retail Citywide Grant in 2019? If yes, how were the funds utilized?
10. We are asking everyone to upload one photo. Describe the photo you chose and explain why that is the most important photo to share with us.
11. Anything else you think a review committee scoring your business against other wonderful businesses should know about why funding your business would be a positive use of public funds?

A single photo is required. A budget for the use of the grant funds is required but can be fully described in the narrative section of the application.

6. Selection Process

A. Application Acceptance or Rejection

Following the closing of the application deadline(s), DSLBD will not review applications that do not comply with the 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 Agency to do so. The Agency shall notify the applicant if it rejects that applicant's proposal. The Agency may suspend or terminate an outstanding RFA pursuant to its own grant making rule(s) or any applicable federal regulation or requirement.

B. Selection Criteria and Review Process

DSLBD will select grant recipients through a competitive application process. A review panel may be composed of agency partners, members of the public, and DC Government employees to review eligible applications received by the submission deadline and score them against the below criteria with respective weight. Applicants who best demonstrate that they are qualified to achieve the program objectives will be awarded the grant(s). The DSLBD program team will review the panel reviewers' recommendations and the Director of DSLBD will make the final determination of grant awards.

C. The following criteria will be used to evaluate all applications.

1. Does the use of funds help the business stay open? (10 points)
2. Does the use of funds help the business grow? (10 points)
3. Does the use of funds demonstrate an adaptation to meet market challenges? (10 points)
4. Will the grant have an impact broader than the direct support of the business? (employees, local neighborhood, customers...)? (10 points)
5. Are the goals realistic and achievable during the period of performance? (10 points)
6. Is this a positive use of public funds to support the overall public interest? (10 points)
7. BONUS! (5 points each)
 - Does the company employ a majority of local DC residents? (5 points)
 - Does the plan incorporate other small business in the ecosystem, like Made in DC? (5 points)

7. Award Information

Grant notification announcements of selected awards will be made on or around April 15, 2020.

Selected grantees will need to sign a grant agreement with DSLBD. The agency anticipates signing grant agreements between DSLBD and the grantees by April 15, 2020. If agreements are unable to be executed by June 1, 2020, for any reason, then the grants may be forfeit. The grant agreement will require additional documentation and reporting. This will include an approved budget and only costs outlined under the grant with appropriate documentation (receipts) will be accepted as proof of appropriate expenditures.

Grantees are required to prepare a final report by August 31, 2020, providing a description of the expenses and impacts of the grant.

Terms of disbursement shall be determined after applicants are selected. We anticipate most grants will be disbursed in one sum prior to performance of grant activities. DC Government pays all invoices within thirty (30) days of receipt of invoice. **This timeline does not start until after an executed grant agreement is in place, a recipient is fully registered to receive payment in DC Government payment systems, a purchase order number has been successfully created, and the grantee successfully submits their invoice on the DC Vendor Portal.**

DSLBD will notify successful applicants of its selection decision by email and send a Notice of Grant Award to the selected grant recipient upon receipt of the following pre-award documents.

Additional information may be required as part of a final grant agreement. An awardee that cannot provide these and other requested materials by June 1, 2020 may be disqualified and DSLBD may award the grant to another applicant.

8. Reservations

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

A. Application Acceptance

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

B. Notice of Funding Availability

DSLBD published the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) in the DC Register and the OPGS Funding Alert. The NOFA is available at <https://dslbd.dc.gov/node/610162>

C. Reservations

Funding for any grant award is contingent on continued grantor funding.

Publication of Request for Applications does not commit DSLBD to make any awards.

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

DSLBD may suspend or terminate an outstanding RFA pursuant to its own grant making rule(s) or any DSLBD federal regulation or requirement.

DSLBD reserves the right to accept or deny any or all applications if DSLBD determines that it is in the best interest of the District to do so.

DSLBD shall not be liable for any costs incurred by an applicant in the preparation of one or more grant applications for this Program. The applicant understands and agrees that all costs incurred in developing and preparing any grant application shall be the applicant's sole responsibility.

DSLBD may conduct pre-award on-site visits to verify information submitted in a grant application.

DSLBD serves as their own reference in evaluating applications. Grant decisions will reflect applicants' performance in managing previous grants.

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.

In the event of a conflict between the terms and conditions of the grant application and any applicable federal or local 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.