



2021 Robust Retail: Citywide Grant Official Request for Applications (RFA)

Application Period: December 7, 2020 through January 28, 2021.

Issued by the Department of Small & Local Business Development (DSLBD).

Updated: December 4, 2021

**The final deadline to apply is January 28, 2021, at 2 pm eastern.
No Exceptions.**

*Look for paperwork boot camps & 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 Link

Where eligible businesses can submit an application online.

3. Deadlines

The final deadline, pre-eligibility check deadlines, and the question deadline.

4. Eligibility Documentation & Attestations

What businesses are eligible to apply & the needed paperwork.

5. Allowed Costs and Restrictions

How the funds can & cannot be spent.

6. Budget Reporting Requirements

Required Expense Information

7. Selection

How DSLBD decides awardees.

8. Award Information

What happens if you are awarded grant.

9. Important Legal Disclaimers

DSLBD legal reservations in addition to those listed above.

Questions?

DSLBD will hold an information session and a paperwork boot camp during the grant application period as advertised via the DSLBD Eventbrite at: <http://bit.ly/DSLBDeventbrite>. These sessions will be recorded and made available to all applicants.

All other questions will be answered via email only by DSLBD staff Shannon Taylor and Kate Mereand 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

The Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD) is excited to announce that we will be accepting applications for the **2021 Robust Retail: Citywide grants starting December 7, 2020 and closing January 28, 2021.**

A robust retail sector is critical to maintaining the vibrancy of DC neighborhoods, but due to market realities of the past year, retail businesses are under threat of business decline and closure. Thus the Robust Retail Citywide grant(s) support existing DC-based retail businesses maintaining operations and viability during the current small business crisis.

DSLBD intends to award up to \$7,500 per business to 106 businesses from the total \$800,000 in available funding for Fiscal Year 2021. This grant will be operated as a reimbursement grant, awarded via lottery, open to DC retail businesses that have met all eligibility requirements by the final deadline.

2. Online Application

Apply at <https://bit.ly/ROBUSTRETAIL21APPLY>.¹ Only applications submitted through the online system will be accepted. No application materials will be accepted outside of the application system or past the deadline.

Once submitted, applicants will not be able to amend an application. To make an amendment or update, please submit a new application. If a business submits multiple applications, only the most recent application submitted will be considered.

We recommend submitting your applicant at least 24-48 hours before the final deadline to ensure that you are able to resolve any technical difficulties if they arise. DSLBD will not accept late applications for any reason.

3. Deadlines

There are three deadlines that applicants should monitor.

- **Eligibility Pre-review:** Applicants who complete eligibility documentation by before or January 8, 2021 will receive a courtesy review and determination of their eligibility on a rolling basis.
- **Question Deadline:** The last date to ask questions about the grant application is January 25, 2021, 2 pm eastern. Questions asked after this time cannot be guaranteed a response prior to application deadline.
- **Final deadline: The final deadline is January 28, 2021, at 2 pm eastern. No Exceptions.**

¹ See also <https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/6067814/Robust-Retail-Grant>

4. Eligibility Requirements

Only for-profit, consumer-facing, small retail businesses that are independently-owned, open and operating, with 25 or fewer employees and 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 entered into the lottery for a single eligible business with a valid business license. All documentation is subject to verification.

- Unverifiable information will result in the application being disqualified.
- Applications from businesses that have demonstrably failed to meet reporting requirements on previous DC Government and DSLBD grants will be deemed ineligible.
- Failure to meet any requirement of the application and eligibility criteria by the application deadline will result in the application being disqualified as ineligible.
- 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 appropriate.

| Eligibility Documentation Uploads Checklist | |
|---|---|
| Business Formalized | Federal Employment Identification Number (FEIN) or (EIN) |
| Clean Hands Compliant | Office of Tax and Revenue (OTR) issued clean hands certificate in the name of the business, under the business EIN, verifiable against the OTR public database in MyTax.DC.Gov. (https://otr.cfo.dc.gov/page/certificate-clean-hands). The document must be dated July 1, 2020 or later. |
| Business Licensing Compliant | Valid Business License Number for the DC Retail Location verifiable against DCRA’s business license database (https://dcra.dc.gov/service/verify-basic-business-license) or upload of alternative licensure if a DCRA Basic Business License is not required (i.e. childcare, barbershops, salons). |
| Office of Risk Management Compliant | Certificate(s) of General Liability Insurance covering period of reimbursement requests, July 1, 2020 through January 28, 2021. Other forms of insurance are not accepted. |
| Prepared for Tax Reporting | Current IRS W-9 https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf |

In addition to providing eligibility documentation, applicants must make several attestations regarding the applicant business. It is important that applicants answer these attestations accurately and honestly, as the owner applicant is making a legal claim to the truth of these statements.

| Attestation Check List | |
|------------------------|---|
| Business Size | Attest the business is small and independently owned, with 25 or fewer full time employees or full time equivalents (FTE)s. |

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|---|---|
| | |
| Business Operation | Attest that the business is open and operating. Businesses that are not open AND operating are not eligible. |
| Retail Business | Attest that the business is a retail location in DC. |
| Applicant is Owner | Attest that the applicant is the business owner. |
| Qualified, Reimbursable Expenses | Attest the business will be able to provide full receipts and documentation of \$7500 of qualified business expenditures clearly made between July 1, 2020 and January 28, 2021 for expenses made when the business is/was covered under the general liability insurance provided. |
| 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. |
| Accountability | Attest that the business has completed all reporting requirements for DSBLD 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, will result in disqualification from this grant round.</i> |
| Can Receive Electronic Funds | Attest that the business has a business bank account that can receive electronic funds transfer if awarded the grant. |
| Full Accuracy | Attest that all information provided in the application is true and accurate. |

5. Restrictions on Allowable Uses of Funds

Grant funds have several allowed uses and several restricted uses. The “Period of Performance” is July 1, 2020 through January 28, 2021. All expenses funded by this grant must occur during this time. Businesses are required to demonstrate proof of general liability insurance for any period for which they are requesting to use funds.

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.

DSLBD will explicitly allow grant reimbursement for expenses for the applicant business that cover

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

The grant funds cannot be used for any of the following:

1. Expenses incurred before July 1, 2020 or after January 28, 2021.
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 the District of Columbia.
5. Any undocumented expense.

6. Budget Reporting Requirements

Applicants are required to submit proof of all expenses to be reimbursed within 5 days of Notice of Grant Award. DSLBD will reconcile the receipt and expenditure documentation. If \$7500 of allowable, reimbursable expenses cannot be reconciled from the provided documentation, the grant award may be forfeit.

Budget Requirements:

1. Proof of expenditures may be submitted in the form of dated receipts, dated payroll documentation, or bank/credit card statements. *Non-responsive information (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.*
2. All uploaded receipts and documentation must be clearly legible.
3. Receipts under \$500 must be batched into files of \$500 or more, with an included list of each receipt.
4. All uploads must be accurately reflected in the budget chart.
5. All expenses must be expenses for the business location applying for the grant.

7. Selection Process

A. Application Acceptance or Rejection

Following the closing of the application deadline(s), DSLBD will disqualify 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

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

DSLBD intends to select grant recipients through a lottery process. The first 54 grants will be evenly split across all 8 DC Wards. The remaining 52 grants will be awarded from a 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. Director of DSLBD will make the final determination and approval of grant awards.

8. Award Information

Grant notification announcements of selected awards will be made on or around February 5-15, 2021.

Selected grantees will need to complete reimbursement expenditure reporting for \$7500 of qualified business expenses from July 1, 2020 to January 28, 2021, and sign a grant agreement with DSLBD. The agency anticipates signing grant agreements between DSLBD and the grantees between February 5 and 15. If agreements are unable to be executed within 5 business days of grant award notification, for any reason, then the grant may be forfeit. 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 by March 31, 2021, providing a description of the impacts of the grant.

Terms of disbursement shall be determined after applicants are selected for grant award. Grants will be disbursed in one sum. 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, and invoice has been submitted, and the invoice is approved.**

DSLBD will notify successful applicants of its selection decision by email and send a Notice of Grant Award to the selected grant recipients. This will include additional post-award instructions.

Additional information may be required as part of a final grant agreement. An awardee that cannot provide these and other requested materials within 5 business days of notification of grant award may be disqualified and DSLBD may award the grant to another applicant.

9. 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 http://bit.ly/dslbd_grants.

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.