



Ward 7 & 8 2021 Microbusiness Dream Grants Official Request for Applications (RFA)

Open August 15, 2020 through September 30, 2020 at 2 pm
Issued by the Department of Small & Local Business Development

Look for paperwork boot camps & grant information sessions at <http://bit.ly/DSLBDeventbrite>.
Outside of an information session, **send all questions in writing to Inno.ED@dc.gov**. *No phone calls will be accepted.*

Updated August 13, 2020

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. Objective**—What DSLBD seeks to accomplish through the grant
- 2. Application & Deadline**—Where eligible businesses can submit an application online
- 3. Restrictions on Allowable Uses of Funds**—How the funds cannot be spent
- 4. Eligibility**—What businesses are eligible to apply & the needed paperwork
- 5. Scoring & Scoring Criteria**—How the review committee will score the grant narrative
- 6. Narrative & Budget Questions**—The competitive application
- 7. Selection Process**—How DSLBD decides awardees
- 8. Award Information**—What happens if you are awarded a grant
- 9. Important Legal Disclaimers**—Additional DSLBD legal reservations

1. Objective

The Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD) is excited to announce that we will be soliciting applications for the **Ward 7 and 8 2021 Microbusiness Dream Grants starting August 15, 2020.**

The grants are to provide business development support to the growth of microbusinesses in Wards 7 and 8. These microbusinesses must **be appropriately licensed, have fewer than five (5) employees, the business must be located in Ward 7 or 8, and Ward 7 or 8 residents must have ownership of 51% or more** of the of the business.

DSLBD intends to award between 20 and 25 grants, of up to \$10,000 each, from the \$200,000 in total available funding for 2021.

This grant is for for-profit businesses only.

2. Online Application & Deadline

Apply at <https://www.zoomgrants.com/zgf/dreamgrants2021>. If typing in the address it must include this exact capitalization.

Only applications submitted through the online system, Zoom Grants, will be accepted and scored. No application materials will be accepted outside of the application system or after the grant deadline.

Zoom Grants 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. Zoom Grants provides technical support Monday – Friday from 10am-7pm eastern time. Reach out to Zoom Grants at anytime during the application period if you have technical difficulties by emailing Questions@ZoomGrants.com.

The last date to ask questions is September 25, 2020, 2 pm.

The final deadline is September 30, 2020, at 2 pm.

No exceptions.

Grants will be reviewed between October 1, 2020 and October 30, 2020. Notifications to applicants are anticipated on or before October 31, 2020.

3. Restrictions on Allowable Uses of Funds

Grant funds have several allowed uses and several restricted uses. The “Period of Performance” is after October 1, 2020 and before August 30, 2021, or a shorter period based on grantee insurance coverage. All expenses funded by this grant must occur during this time and the grantee must carry general liability coverage.

The proposed use of funds must be accepted by DSLBD, and will be outlined in individual grant agreements per grantee.

Disallowed Uses

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

1. Financing existing debt, including payment of taxes owed
2. Expenses incurred outside of the period of performance
3. **Expenses which are reimbursed by a different grant from DC Government**
4. Personal use or other uses not related to the business identified in the grant

4. Eligibility & Checklist

Only appropriately licensed microbusinesses with fewer than five (5) employees, located in Ward 7 or 8, and with Ward 7 or 8 residents maintaining ownership of 51% or more of the of the business are eligible for funding. Applicants must be the business owner. *Third party support may be added to the application but cannot apply on behalf of an organization.* Required documentation will demonstrate:

- Proof of Residency in Ward 7 or 8
- Proof of Majority Ownership
- Attestation of Microbusiness
- Compliant with DC Tax and Licensing Laws
- General Liability Insurance
- Attestation of business bank account
- DUNS number

Failure to demonstrate eligibility

Applicants who do not meet eligibility requirements will not be scored or awarded a grant. All documents and attestations showing eligibility must be submitted through the online Zoom Grants application system. False attestations may result in grant forfeiture.

Applicants may submit their eligibility documentation in Zoom Grants for an optional courtesy review of their eligibility. There are three opportunities for a courtesy review. The courtesy review will only provide feedback on whether the application is ready to move forward for scoring. The three preview deadlines are:

- August 24, 2 pm
- September 7, 2 pm
- September 21, 2pm

Required Documents and Attestations for Eligibility

Required Items	Description
1. Valid Photo ID for the Ward 7 & 8 residents who are majority owners of the business.	DC Driver's License, DC Non-Driver Identification Card, passport (will not accept other State IDs)
2. Proof of Ward 7 or 8 residency dated July 15, 2020 or later	Utility bill, bank statement, Government check, formal Government letter verifying residency, or paycheck (neither a deed nor a water bill will be accepted)
3. Proof of majority ownership	Corporate registration documents demonstrating ownership, majority ownership, or attestation of sole proprietorship
4. Attest to the business having 5 (five) or fewer full-time employees (FTEs).	Attestation within Zoom Grants about FTE staffing (Any applicant shown to have falsely attested may forfeit the grant.)
5. Office of Tax & Revenue "Clean Hands" Document	Anyone can check their Clean Hands status for free at https://otr.cfo.dc.gov/page/certificate-clean-hands
6. Proof of General Liability Insurance, such as a Certificate of Insurance, or attest to intent to purchase	DSLBD cannot provide carrier recommendations – grantees must have coverage during grant activities (expenditures)
7. Valid DC business license number.	Must be searchable in the DCRA Business License Look Up or provide proof of alternative licensure
8. Employment Identification Number (EIN)	Available for free at IRS.gov
9. DUN & Bradstreet Number (DUNS number)	You can get your DUNS number for free at http://www.dnb.com/ under D-U-N-S Number
10. Attestation of a business bank account or separate account for business expenses	Businesses should have bank accounts separate from personal accounts

This checklist covers ALL the required documentation used to determine applicants' eligibility. Applications that fail to provide complete and verifiable documents, information, and attestations will not be scored. Need help with your eligibility paperwork? Attend a Grant Paperwork Bootcamp as advertised via the DSLBD Eventbrite: <http://bit.ly/DSLBDeventbrite>.

5. Scoring Criteria

The following criteria will be used to evaluate all eligible applications. Applicants are recommended to review their submissions against these scoring criteria before submitting a final application.

A. Will the proposed budget help achieve business sustainability and growth? (25 points)

Sustainability is whether the business is potentially profitable, and growth is whether the business can be more profitable over time. This question is whether the budget supports increased profitability.

B. Does the business model demonstrate potential for growth? (25 points)

The business model is the overall structure of what and how a business is selling goods or services, and the potential for growth indicates that the business is or will be positioned to engage a customer base that is likely to purchase those goods and services.

C. Are the business' goals reasonable and achievable in the next year? (25 points)

Reasonable and achievable means the business can demonstrate a realistic plan for leveraging the grant funds into tangible actions in the short term with some immediate results.

D. Does the business support itself and the community through its operation? (25 points)

Businesses may engage many different communities. Overall community engagement helps build sustainable businesses and sustainable communities through wealth-building, network creation, and increasing the overall quality of life for residents.

6. Narrative & Budget Questions of the Application

The application is broken into four sections, which correspond directly to the scoring criteria listed in section 6 of this document.

A. Tell us how your proposed budget will help your business achieve sustainability and growth.

1. What is the name your business?
2. If awarded the grant, describe how you would invest the grant award in your business. Detail your proposed specific dollar amounts and expenditures in the chart; you may use any amount up to \$10,000.
3. Explain how these specific investments will lead to greater stability and sustainability, and explain how much increased revenue or growth you would expect after making these investments.
4. Please share any examples of how your businesses has leveraged funding, including grant funding in the past 3 years, to stabilize or grow your business. (Receipt of previous funding will not impact whether or not the business will receive new funding.)

B. Tell us about your business and business model.

5. What does your business do, how long have you owned it, and who runs it day to day?
6. Tell us about your customers and sales. Describe the market for your goods and services, and share how sales have changed for your business in the last year.
7. What have you done to try and grow your sales in the last year? How has that worked?
8. What is your dream for your business? What is the vision for your business in the next year and in the long term?

C. Tell us what you anticipate changing with the business in the next year if you are awarded these funds.

9. Will you pivot your business, find new customers, or do something else as a result of an investment?
10. What are the biggest challenges your business faces right now, what have you done already to try to overcome these challenges?
11. How will these funds help you overcome these challenges or barriers you are facing with your business?

D. Tell us how the business interacts with and supports the surrounding community.

12. Do you employ local residents, provide critical services, engage in community building or do other things to enhance the local community? Tell us about it.
13. How does your business define community? This could be neighbors, other businesses, customers, suppliers, employees, whoever supports you and you support – tell us about them.
14. How would these grant funds affect your business' ability to engage with your community?
15. Please upload one visual document about your business and explain it here.

Note: We did not ask a specific question about how your business has been harmed by recent events, as is this not specifically a relief grant. However, we recognize that most if not all businesses are facing additional challenges, burdens, and barriers now. You may choose to tell the grant reviewers about what the pandemic has meant for your business, what steps you are taking to face those challenges, and what help you continue to need.

DSLBD's objective in awarding the Dream Grants, as listed on page 3 above, is to support the sustainability and growth of Ward 7 & 8 microbusiness businesses. The narrative and budget questions are attuned specifically to help you tell the story of how your business will work to achieve sustainability and growth in the next year.

7. Selection 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 above criteria with respective weight.

The DSLBD program team will review the panel reviewers' recommendations and the Director of DSLBD will make the final determination of grant awards. Applicants who best demonstrate that they are qualified to achieve the program objectives of growing microbusinesses in Ward 7 or 8 will be awarded the grant(s).

8. Award Information

Grant Award Notification

Grant notifications are expected to be made on or around October 15-31, 2020. All other applicants will be notified of the decision no later one week after the initial notification is made to selected applicants.

Formal Grant Agreement

Selected applicants will need to sign an individual grant agreement with DSLBD. The agency anticipates signing grant agreements between DSLBD and the grantees by October 15-31, 2020. If you are a previous DSLBD grantee, your award may be contingent upon completion of previous grant reporting. If agreements are unable to be executed by November 15, 2020 because the awarded grantee cannot meet the post-award requirements for any reason, then the grant funds may be forfeit.

Additional Survey Assessment

DSLBD anticipates further survey assessment of awarded businesses following the finalization of grant agreements.

Grant Reporting

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 30, 2021, providing a proof of appropriate expenses made and impacts of the grant.

Disbursement (Payment)

Terms of disbursement shall be determined after applicants are selected, but may include the collection of additional documentation such as a W9, proof of insurance, and ACH payment documentation. 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 or selected 3rd party payment systems, a purchase order number has been successfully created, and the grantee successfully submits an invoice in the required system.**

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 November 15, 2020 may be disqualified and DSLBD may award the grant to another applicant.

8. Important Legal Disclaimers

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

A. Contingent

Funding for this award is contingent on continued funding from the grantor. 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 Agency to do so. The Agency may suspend or terminate an outstanding RFA pursuant to its own grant making rule(s) or any applicable federal regulation or requirement.

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.

C. 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://dslbd.dc.gov/>.

D. 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 local, state, or 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.