



CBE Green Equitable Back Office and Marketing Services Grants Request for Applications (RFA)

Open October 19, 2022, through December 1, 2022, at 2:00 pm

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 & Documentation** -- What businesses are eligible to apply and what paperwork is required
- 4. Restrictions on Allowable Uses of Funds**—How the funds cannot be spent
- 5. Narrative & Budget Questions**—The competitive application
- 6. Scoring & Scoring Criteria**—How the review committee will score the grant narrative
- 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

Look for CBE Green 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.*



1. Objective

The Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD) is excited to announce that it will begin soliciting applications for the Fiscal Year 2023 **CBE Green Equitable Back Office and Marketing Services (CBE Green) Grants** starting October 19, 2022.

The CBE Green grants are for DSLBD Certified Business Enterprises (CBEs) to provide direct support to small, resident-owned, and disadvantaged CBEs pursuing contracting opportunities with and similar to DC Sustainable Energy Utility (DCSEU) opportunities. DSLBD seeks proposals from CBEs to provide market research, marketing, and back-office (business operations) support to help CBEs achieve success with green energy contracts.

CBE Green is an initiative within DSLBD to support CBEs into the expanding green and sustainable energy and buildings market. In partnership with DC's Department of Energy and the Environment (DOEE), DSLBD is supporting CBEs through additional training opportunities to prepare them for DOEE, DCSEU, and more green market opportunities.

Direct back-office support and training are key building blocks to prepare CBE businesses for participation in market opportunities. Market research is necessary to help CBEs strategically plan for and pursue a large and growing marketplace. Marketing will assist CBEs in connecting to direct opportunities.

DSLBD will refer CBEs to service providers who are awarded a CBE Green grant during the grant period of performance starting on or around January 15, 2022, and ending September 30, 2023.

DSLBD intends to award around four (4) to eight (8) grants for a mix of support from the \$250,000 in total available funding for Fiscal Year 2023. Applicants may apply for funding in the following service areas:

- **Market Study:** Up to \$25,000 for a market study of CBE opportunities in the green energy economy including but not limited to opportunities related to Building Energy Benchmarking (BEPs), solar, and building maintenance and upgrades.
- **Marketing:** Up to \$25,000 to market: (1) small, resident-owned, or disadvantaged CBEs to prime contractors in the green energy infrastructure space, (2) opportunities with primes to CBEs, and (3) DCSEU's Train Green program.
- **Back-Office:** Up to \$50,000 to provide back-office services for between 25 and 100 CBE businesses pursuing or preparing to pursue green procurement opportunities.

2. Online Application & Deadline

Apply at <https://www.zoomgrants.com/zgf/CBEGreen2023>. *If typing in the address, it must include this exact capitalization. To start your application, you must create a Zoom Grants account by logging in at ZoomGrants.com.*

Only complete applications submitted through Zoom Grants an online grant application system used by DSLBD, will be accepted and scored. No application materials will be accepted outside of the application system or after the CBE Green 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 any time during the application period if you have technical difficulties by emailing Questions@ZoomGrants.com.

The last date to ask questions is November 30, 2022, 2:00 pm.

The final deadline is December 2, 2022, at 2:00 pm.

No exceptions.

DSLBD intends for grants to be reviewed in December 2022. Notifications to selected applicants are anticipated to be sent by email on or around January 2023.

3. Eligibility & Checklist

Only CBEs compliant with applicable District laws are eligible to apply for the CBE Green grants. Applicants must be the business owner(s), authorized members or authorized employees of the CBE. *Third party support may be added to the application but cannot apply on behalf of a CBE.* Required documentation must demonstrate:

- Active CBE status
- Active Business Licensure
- Compliance with DC Tax and Licensing Laws
- Commercial General Liability Insurance Coverage
- Active Ariba Supplier Network registration
- Registered or prepared to register as DC Vendor to receive payment

Failure to demonstrate eligibility

Applications from applicants who do not meet eligibility requirements will not be scored or considered for a CBE Green grant. All documents and attestations showing eligibility must be submitted through the online Zoom Grants application system. False attestations can result in grant forfeiture and other penalties as appropriate.

Applicants interested in applying for a CBE Green grant MUST submit the required Eligibility Documents and Attestations outlined below and meet the status criteria.

Required Documents and Attestations for Eligibility

Required Items	Description
1. Active CBE Certification Number	The number must be for the applicant business and should be the same number listed on the DSLBD website at https://dslbd.secure.force.com/public/ .
2. Active DC Business License Number	Must be searchable in the DCRA Business License Look Up (https://scout.dcra.dc.gov) or uploaded to provide proof of alternative licensure if DCRA licensing is not required for business type.
3. Office of Tax & Revenue Compliant “Clean Hands” Document issued October 1, 2022, or later	Applicants can check their Clean Hands status and generate a notice of compliance (if compliant) for free at https://otr.cfo.dc.gov/page/certificate-clean-hands .
4. Proof of Commercial General Liability Insurance (Certificate of Insurance). As applicable, proof of workmen’s compensation and automobile liability insurance.	DSLBD cannot provide carrier recommendations – grantees must have coverage during grant activities (expenditures). Once selected, grantees must name the District as an additional assured on its required policies.
5. Employment Identification Number (EIN)	Available for free at IRS.gov
6. IRS W-9 2018 form or later	Available at https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf
7. Ariba Network ID Number	Details available at https://ocp.dc.gov/page/vendor-registration-electronic-solicitations-ocp .
8. Attestation of Registration as a Vendor with the Office of Contracts and Procurement	Details available at https://ocp.dc.gov/page/vendor-registration-electronic-solicitations-ocp . DSLBD will verify internally.

The above checklist covers ALL the required documentation used to determine an applicant's eligibility. Applications that fail to provide complete and verifiable documents, information, and attestations **will not be scored.**

Courtesy Eligible Review Deadlines

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

- November 4, 2:00 pm
- November 18, 2:00 pm

4. Restrictions on Allowable Uses of Funds

CBE Green Grant funds have allowed uses and disallowed uses. All expenses funded by the CBE Green Grant must occur during the "Period of Performance", which is the **date of grant agreement final** execution through September 30, 2023.

The proposed use of funds must be acceptable to DSLBD and will be outlined in individual grant agreements.

Allowed Uses

The funds can be used for any of the following:

1. Market research and report development
2. Direct support and training related costs, including but not limited to staff time, materials, research, space for in-person meetings or technology for virtual meetings.
3. Software for clients directly related to support activities (i.e., accounting or project management software).
4. Marketing collateral and programming of CBEs and opportunities
5. Cost related to analyzing effectiveness of support and trainings.
6. Costs during the Period of Performance.
7. Other costs proposed by applicant and accepted by DSLBD in its sole discretion.

Disallowed Uses

The funds cannot be used for any of the following:

1. Financing existing debt, including payment of taxes owed.
2. Expenses incurred outside of the Period of Performance.
3. Expenses that are reimbursed by a different grant from the District Government.
4. Personal use or other uses not related to the purposes identified in the grant.
5. Food (with the exception of food while attending professional development conferences outside of the Washington, DC metropolitan area).
6. Alcohol or alcohol-related paraphernalia (i.e., wine glasses, mixers, beer taps, etc.).
7. Payments to a professional fundraiser to raise funds for the Grantee.
8. Donations or charitable giving to non-profits organizations.
9. Vehicle purchase.
10. Real estate purchase.
11. Lobbying the District of Columbia government.
12. Lawsuits against the District of Columbia government.
13. Any activity, goods or products deemed illegal by the District of Columbia government.
14. Any activity, goods or products deemed ineligible by DSLBD in its sole discretion.

5. Narrative & Budget Questions of the Application

The competitive application is divided into six sections, which correspond directly to the scoring criteria listed in Section 6 of this document. There are also some options for uploads of additional documentation.

A. Explain how the proposed project provides critical support to CBEs in building up and pursuing green energy related contracts. (20 points)

1. Select if your proposal covers (A) market study, (B), marketing and promotion of and to CBEs, or (C) back-office services.

2. Provide a brief description of the overall proposed project (or projects) to help grant reviewers understand the remainder of your answers.
3. Explain what area of support the project will provide for CBEs.
4. Explain why these supports are critical to CBEs pursuing green contracting opportunities.
5. Explain the barriers that CBEs may face in obtaining these supports on their own in the open market, and how this provision of support will overcome these barriers.

B. Explain how the proposal is realistic in the projected timelines, expenditures, and project goals. (20 points) *If awarded the CBE Green grant, describe how you would use the grant dollars. Detail your proposed specific dollar amounts and expenditures in the chart; you may apply for any amount up to \$100,000 across all three funding tiers but may be awarded a lesser amount or for fewer tiers of project if awarded.*

6. Provide a detailed workplan outlining each major activity of your proposal.
7. Detail how many CBEs you propose to support and explain the average cost per CBE business for the support intended to be provided.
8. Detail your onboarding plan for CBEs for marketing or back-office support given that DSLBD will refer CBEs to you, and you may additionally recruit eligible CBEs for services. If applying for the market study, explain your market research process.
9. Explain the capacity of your business or organization to complete all the proposed tasks and expend the budget by September 30, 2023.
10. If awarded a lesser amount than requested, please share what portion(s) of your proposal you would prefer to be funded and why.

C. Explain past performance in the area of support proposed. (20 points)

11. Tell us who will be directly operating the proposed project and their relevant experience and credentials. Resumes may be uploaded in additional documents.
12. Detail past performance of your organization for market research, marketing services, and/or operating equitable, back-office support services for small businesses. Capability statements may be uploaded in additional documents.
13. Explain your expertise related to sustainable energy and green procurement, and if this is a new content area how your project team will approach adapting your other experience to this project.

D. Are the proposed services targeted to support CBEs in achieving success in contract development and contract delivery. (20 points)

14. Explain how the proposed project will directly impact a CBE's ability to compete for green market contracts.

15. Explain how this service will directly impact a CBE's ability to expand its business in the green energy economy.

E. Tell us why this proposal will support equitable access to green and sustainable market opportunities. (20 points)

16. Explain how this project supports small, resident-owned, and disadvantaged CBEs with a focus on broadening equitable access to market opportunity and explain the reporting and metrics you will track for outcomes and lessons learned.

F. Optional Additional Uploads

- a. Applicants may submit a slide deck of no more than 15 slides to help demonstrate their full proposal.
- b. Applicants may submit resumes for each of the key training or other personnel identified in the proposal.
- c. Applicants may submit a capabilities statement.
- d. Applicants may choose to submit up to 3 letters of support of any kind; letters of support may be coalition letters with multiple signatories.

6. Scoring Criteria

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

A. Will the proposed project provide critical support to CBEs in building up and pursuing green energy related contracts? (20 points). *This CBE Green initiative is focused on market research, marketing, and back-office services for CBEs pursuing green and sustainable market contracting opportunities. DSLBD will consider novel proposals for back-office support that benefit CBEs.*

B. Is the proposal realistic in the projected timelines, expenditures, and project goals? (20 points). *Projects will start in January/February and will need to be completed by September 30, 2023. Can the project be implemented and funds be expended in the project timeline? Only costs expended after once a grant is signed (January/February 2023) and by September 30, 2023, are eligible to be expensed against the grant.*

- C. **Do the providers have past performance in the area of the support proposed? (20 points).** *Providers should have demonstrated experience in the area of the support they are proposing.*
- D. **Are the proposed supports targeted to help CBEs achieve access and success in the green energy economy? (20 points).** *Proposed supports should be targeted towards CBEs achieving contract awards and performing well on subsequent contracts and subcontracts.*
- E. **Will the project increase access to opportunity for small, resident-owned, and disadvantaged CBEs? (20 points).** *DSLBD supports equitable grantmaking and access to contract opportunities.*

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. DSLBD will select a mix of different direct services to support CBEs.

The DSLBD program team will review the panel reviewers' recommendations and report them to the Director of DSLBD who will make the final determination of grant awards.

8. Award Information

A. Grant Award Notification

Grant notifications are expected to be made in January 2023. All other applicants will be notified of the decision no later than one week after the initial notification is made to selected applicants.

B. 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 between February 5, 2023. 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 February 15, 2023, because the awarded grantee cannot meet the post-award requirements for any reason, then the grant funds may be forfeited.

C. Additional Survey Assessment

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

D. 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. Failure to submit documentation of proper expenditures may result in a requirement to return funds not properly accounted as expended on allowable costs.

Grantees are required to prepare a final report by October 30, 2022, providing proof of appropriate expenses made and impacts of the grant.

E. Disbursement (Payment)

Terms of disbursement shall be determined after applicants are selected but may include the collection of additional documentation such as an IRS W-9, additional proof of insurance, and ACH payment documentation. We anticipate most grants will be disbursed in one lump sum. 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 3rd party payment systems, a purchase order number has been successfully created, and the grantee successfully submits an invoice in the required system.**

F. 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 February 15, 2023, may be disqualified and DSLBD may award the grant to another applicant.

9. 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 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 on October 14, 2022 and the OPGS 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 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.

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 for a CBE Green grant. 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 any other applicable local, state, or federal regulation or requirement.

- 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.