

DEPARTMENT OF SMALL AND LOCAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY

MADE IN DC CURATOR & RETAIL INNOVATION GRANT PROGRAM

Fiscal Year 2026

This Notice of Funding Availability (“NOFA”), in combination with the Request for Applications (“RFA”), which will be released when the grant opens, constitutes the full set of instructions to assist applicants with completing competitive applications for the Fiscal Year (“FY”) 2026 Made in DC Curator and Retail Innovation Grant Program. **Applicants are required to read both documents in their entirety before applying.**

The District of Columbia (“DC,” “D.C.,” or “District”) Department of Small and Local Business Development (“DSLBD” or “Department”) is pleased to announce that it will begin soliciting applications for the FY26 Made in DC Curator and Retail Innovation Grant Program on or about **April 13, 2026 at 2:00 pm Eastern Time (“ET”).**

Made in DC (“MiDC”) is a local certification program that supports and promotes businesses that design, make, produce, and/or assemble products in the District. The MiDC Curator and Retail Innovation Grant Program is designed to support the growth and visibility of MiDC-certified businesses by creating structured retail opportunities that strengthen brand presence and drive revenue within the District.

The program advances retail placemaking for MiDC-certified businesses by establishing a shared curated retail platform that expands storefront access for brands without permanent brick-and-mortar locations. This initiative provides District-based makers across various industries with access to a structured, short-term retail environment to sell locally made products, and engage directly with consumers without the long-term commitments associated with securing an independent lease. To achieve this purpose, DSLBD will award funding to one or more qualified curators to design, manage, and operate temporary retail pop-up spaces located within the District of Columbia that feature multiple MiDC-certified businesses across various industries.

The Department intends to award one (1) or more grants to a retail space curator with a total of \$25,000.00 in available funding for FY26.

The competitive application will open on April 13, 2026, at 2:00 pm ET, and close on May 13, 2026, at 2:00 pm ET. Applications will only be accepted through the online application system listed in the corresponding RFA that will be posted on DSLBD’s website.

Who can Apply?

To be eligible for this grant opportunity, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Must be a District-based business;
- Applicant has identified a retail space and is able to provide documentation (e.g., lease, letter of intent (“LOI”), or other legally verifiable agreement for a temporary retail space)

confirming the space can be activated and operational by July 1, 2026.

Applicants are also required to provide, among other items, a current Certificate of Clean Hands (“CCH”) from the District’s Office of Tax and Revenue (“OTR”), proof of an active Business License from the District’s Department of Licensing and Consumer Protection (“DLCP”), and a signed affidavit attesting to compliance with applicable program conditions.

How do I Apply?

Instructions are included in the RFA, which will be available for download on DSLBD’s website on or before April 13, 2026. Applicants are required to read the full RFA at: <https://dslbd.dc.gov/service/current-grant-opportunities>.

How can the Funds be Used?

Grant funds must be used to cover business expenses incurred from the effective date of the relevant grant agreement until September 30, 2026 for expenses directly related to curating a temporary retail space for MiDC-certified businesses.

How Will Awardees be Selected?

Grant awardees will be selected through a competitive application process. DSLBD staff will review complete and timely submitted applications for eligibility. A panel will review applications deemed eligible and score them using the criteria discussed in detail within the RFA.

The Director of DSLBD will approve all grant awards at the final stage. Announcements of selected awards will be made on or around June 29, 2026.

Questions?

DSLBD will hold virtual information sessions concerning the grant program. Details on information sessions will be provided in the RFA alongside a registration link, and they will also be listed on DSLBD’s Eventbrite page, on or around April 13, 2026. Applicants are highly encouraged to attend an information session.

Questions asked outside of the virtual information sessions must be submitted in writing to DSLBD at madeindc@dc.gov. DSLBD will begin answering questions after the grant opens on April 13, 2026 at 2:00 pm ET. DSLBD will not respond to questions over the phone. All questions must be submitted no later than May 8, 2026 at 2:00 pm ET.

Reservation of Rights

DSLBD reserves the right to issue addenda, modifications, and/or amendments after the issuance of this NOFA or the corresponding RFA, or to rescind the NOFA or RFA at any time.