

**OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY MAYOR
FOR PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

FY2016 GREAT STREETS RETAIL SMALL BUSINESS REIMBURSEMENT GRANTS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

ASSISTANCE

1. **Who can assist me with the grant application?** Please contact one of our community partners for assistance with completing the grant application:
<http://greatstreets.dc.gov/node/745772>
2. **How do I search for Certified Business Enterprises (CBEs) to ask for quotes for my proposed project?** There are two ways to identify CBEs that can complete work for your proposed improvement project:
 - a. Search for CBEs in the [online database](#)
 - b. Request one-on-one assistance with identifying appropriate CBEs [using this form](#)
3. **What other funding opportunities are available to small business owners?** To stay updated on all funding opportunities from the Government of the District of Columbia, please register for the DC Funding Alert at <http://opgs.dc.gov/service/funding-alert-information>.

ELIGIBILITY

1. **Can a grantee from a previous round re-apply for another grant?** No. Per Section IV. Eligible Applicants (page 4 of the Request for Applications), “Eligible applicants for the grants are owners of small retail and service-oriented businesses who ***have not previously received Great Streets funding for the specified business property***” (emphasis added). A grantee from a previous round can only apply for funding for a *different* commercial property (within the Great Streets boundaries) than the one for which s/he was awarded a prior grant.
2. **Do I need a storefront to apply for the grant?** Yes.
3. **Can commercial property owners apply for the grant?** No, only the owner of the business that occupies the commercial space is eligible to apply for the grant.
4. **I am a non-retail, service-oriented business; can I apply for the grant?** Yes, service-oriented businesses are eligible to apply for the grant as long as (1) the business drives day-time foot traffic to the Great Streets corridor beyond its own employees, (2) clients are served on-site at the business location, and (3) the business is not listed as “ineligible” in Section IV. Eligible Applicants (page 4 of the Request for Applications).
5. **Are Great Streets funds available to entrepreneurs who want to start a business?** The grant is open to both new and existing businesses, but new business owners must submit a business plan and have site control of the business property that s/he is looking

to improve (for more information, please review Section IV. Eligible Applicants on pages 4-5 of the Request for Applications). Please also note that “prior relevant business experience” is an evaluation criterion for this funding opportunity.

6. **Can I apply as a home-based business?** No. Since the purpose of the grant is to assist with improvements to a commercial space, all applicants must have a storefront within one of the Great Street corridors.
7. **Are restaurants with bars (i.e. those with a C/R license) eligible to apply for the grant?** Yes. Restaurants are eligible to apply for the grant as long as the small business owner does not use Great Streets funds to renovate the alcohol-serving area(s) of the restaurant. Ineligible costs include design and build-out of the bar and liquor shelving. Please note that restaurants located within the H Street/Bladensburg Road NE corridor are eligible for the grant as long as their annual alcohol sales do not exceed 20% of total annual sales.
8. **Can a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization apply for the grant as a service-oriented business?** No, only for-profit businesses can apply for the grant.
9. **Can franchises apply for the grant?** Yes, unless the franchise is located in the H Street/Bladensburg Road NE corridor (businesses with 20 or more locations in the United States are ineligible to apply for grant funding in the H Street/Bladensburg Road NE corridor).
10. **Can health service businesses apply for the grant?** Yes, as long as clients are served on site at the business location.
11. **How does DMPED define professional services?** “Professional services” are traditional office-based businesses that do not serve clients on site or drive day-time foot traffic to the Great Streets corridor beyond their own employees.
12. **If two separate businesses occupy the same commercial space, can those two separate businesses apply for the grant as two separate entities?** The grant is address-based, so only one grant can be awarded per unique business address.
13. **Are law firms eligible to apply for the grant?** Law firms are eligible to apply for the grant only if they serve clients on site and drive day-time foot traffic to the Great Streets corridor beyond their own employees.
14. **Would a farmer’s market/seasonal craft fair be eligible to apply for the grant?** A farmer’s market/seasonal craft fair is ineligible to apply for the grant since it is not tied to a commercial property.

FUNDING USES

1. **Can the grant be used to cover monthly rent payments?** No

TIMING

- 1. Is the grant still available?** Yes, the grant application is due on Friday, October 2nd, 2015 at 4pm.
- 2. If approved for a grant, can a small business owner be reimbursed for construction that s/he starts before the execution of a grant agreement, or work that s/he has completed in the past?** No, DMPED cannot reimburse grantees for work completed prior to the execution of a grant agreement between the grantee and the District. However, if a grantee does not need the first up-front disbursement to begin their improvement project, they can cover previously-incurred costs with that disbursement, understanding that they will need additional funds to continue the work under the grant.
- 3. What is the turnaround time for a funding decision on the grant applications?** DMPED will notify applicants of their funding status within 60 days of the grant application deadline.
- 4. How often is Great Streets funding made available?** Historically, Great Streets funding has been authorized, and subsequently made available, on an annual basis.

APPLICATION SPECIFICS

- 1. What are the formatting requirements for the application in terms of number of pages, font size, and margins?** The application does not have a proposal component, so there are no formatting requirements. [Please click here](#) to create an account in the application management system (ZoomGrants) and review the entire application.
- 2. Does the application require a cover letter?** No.
- 3. Is a grantee obligated to move forward with one of the contractors whose quotes s/he submitted with the grant application?** We strongly encourage grantees to move forward with one of the submitted quotes since the application is evaluated based on those quotes.
- 4. Is there a pre-screening/pre-qualification process?** Due to the large volume of applications, DMPED does not currently have capacity to perform pre-screening of applications. Potential applicants are encouraged to review the minimum application requirements in Section IV. Eligible Applicants on pages 4 and 5 of the Request for Applications.
- 5. What proof of ownership is required for a newly purchased business property?** DMPED requires one of the following proofs of site control for owner-occupied small businesses: deed, executed contract of sale, or executed option to purchase.
- 6. Is a Letter of Intent (LOI) an acceptable proof of site control?** No. DMPED requires one of the following proofs of site control for this grant program: deed, executed contract of sale, executed option to purchase, or executed lease with a minimum unexpired term of at least two (2) years.

7. **How do I complete the Budget Proposal?** Please list all line items and associated costs for your proposed project. Please ensure that the description of each line item and associated cost matches how that item is listed in the submitted quote or estimate that you plan to pursue for the project. All quotes and estimates should be uploaded in the “Application Attachments” section of the ZoomGrants application portal.
8. **What does DMPED want to see in the letters of support submitted with an application?** Through a letter of support, it would be helpful to learn about the applicant business’ history in the neighborhood, their positive contributions (both past, present and proposed), and how the small business drives day-time foot traffic to the Great Streets corridor beyond its own employees.
9. **Will the funding boundaries stay the same for next year’s grant?** The Great Streets boundaries are dynamic, so they may change in the coming years.
10. **Can an employee of the Government of the District of Columbia apply for the grant?** Depending on the agency in which the applicant is employed, there may be a conflict of interest in applying for the grant. According to the District’s grants manual, the grant making officer is instructed to seek counsel from the District’s Ethics Officer in evaluating potential conflicts.

Please direct all inquiries to:

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