Great Streets Small Business Retail Frequently Asked Questions

What is the application timeframe?

December 12- January 16, 2026

What types of businesses are eligible for Great Streets?

• A brick-and-mortar small business (including, but not limited to partnerships, limited liability companies, and corporations) in the retail or restaurant industry that is an eligible business type (see below, not an exhaustive list).

• Provide proof that the average annual revenue of the business (based on the last three (3) completed calendar years), or the projected average annual revenue for the first three (3) years "in business," does not exceed $3 million.

• Sole proprietors with a physical storefront are eligible if they are District residents.

• An art and humanities-based 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations or community revitalization non-profit duly organized in the District of Columbia.

• Retail and service-oriented business owners whose location situates in or within a Great Street corridor boundary.

• Business owners sharing space (Award amount for multiple businesses collocated within same physical address location shall not exceed the $90,000 threshold.)

• Businesses that hold a Tavern license and permits issued by (ABCA) that are able to demonstrate they have a working kitchen and food items on the menu

• Owners of retail or service franchises which are based in the District, but which have fewer than three existing locations.

What are some examples of eligible businesses?

Here are some examples of businesses that may be eligible. This is not an exhaustive list.

- Restaurant
- Bakery
- Food Court
- Coffee Shop
- Delicatessens
- Art Gallery
- Art Supply Store
- Bookstore
- Cards, Gifts, Party Store
- Clothing/Specialty Apparel Store
- Consignment Shop
- Convenience Store
- Corner Stores

- Dry Cleaner
- Electronics Store
- Flooring Center
- Florist with On-Site Retail
- Furniture Store
- Grocery Store
- Gyms / Yoga, Dance, or Fitness Studios
- Hair Salon / Barbershop
- Hardware Store
- Home Goods
- Jeweler
- Laundromat
- Massage Therapy
- Nail Salon
- Pet Supply Store
- Pharmacy
- Printing & Signage Shop
- Specialty Foods Store
- Specialty Products (e.g., beads, incense, candles)
- Specialty Retail Store
- Tuxedo/Dress Rental Shop
- Experiential Retail
- Waxing Center
- Liquor Store (no funding can be used to buy product)
- Cannabis Dispensaries (no funding can be used to buy product)

How much are the grant awards?

Grant awards vary from $5,000 - $70,000 for the General Great Streets Grant. Applicants can receive an additional up to $20,000 if they propose an additional innovative component to their project.

What is an example of an innovative component a business can propose?

For instance, Studio X, a hair salon that proposes a project with capital improvements such as adding new furniture and signage may fulfill the general Great Streets criteria and can request up to $70,000 for this part of their project.

Studio X decides to go after the innovation top up to request an additional $20,000 to expand their venture into virtual reality. Studio X qualifies for the innovation top up with a proposal to create a separate green room that provides a designated space for virtual reality simulations that train stylists on new techniques and styles across the world. This new project will create an additional revenue stream and potential job opportunities (e.g. tech specialist, hair instructor etc.)

Are there businesses that are not eligible?

The following businesses are not eligible for Great Streets (not an exhaustive list):

• Business operating as a secondary form of income or side business for the business owner.

• Businesses that are permanently closed and have taken steps to cease business operations under DLCP Corporations Divisions and OTR Guidelines

• Business that are franchises that are not independently owned and operated

• Businesses that received a grant from Great Steets or Emerging Retail Initiative in the last 5 years

• Construction and Real Estate businesses (general contracting, architecture, development, property management, realtors, etc.)

• Financial Institutions (banks, credit unions, check cashing establishments, payday lenders)

• Health care and social assistance businesses (physicians, dentists, acupuncture, and chiropractor offices, etc.)

• Hotels, Bed and Breakfasts, and Inn and Motels

• Online only / e-commerce businesses • Professional services companies (Accountant, Insurance, Law Office, etc.)

• Seasonal businesses (only open for part of the year)

• Transportation companies and service providers (includes taxi drivers, rideshare drivers, shuttle providers)

• Universities or education institutions

Who is the ideal candidate?

We are looking for candidates that do the following:

• Activate or stabilize the commercial corridor through its physical presence.

• Maintain and/or create new jobs, especially for District residents.

• Visually impact the corridor via façade improvements; and

• Improve the customer experience via interior remodeling.

If business circumstances change for an applicant between proposal submission and award, could the grantee request a modification or amendment to their Great Streets grant?

Requests for budget modifications or amendments may be reviewed; however, approval is not guaranteed.

Under the requirements of the RFA, would a part-time, regularly scheduled, hourly worker be considered a permanent job?

Yes, as long as the position itself is permanent.

I'm a sole proprietor. Can I apply for this grant?

Yes, sole proprietors are eligible for Great Streets as long as the sole proprietor meets all the eligibility requirements and is a District of Columbia resident. The business must be the sole proprietor's primary form of income.

The RFA notes that "Up to 35% of the grant can be applied towards the following soft costs [...] Marketing materials and services, this can include a temporary marketing consultant." Can the

35% for soft costs include other types of consultants? For example, part-time events support, cultural consultants, or web developers that might be needed for the business? This may be allowed, with preference given to Washington, DC-based consultants and Certified Business Enterprise (CBE) firms**.** However, this will not fulfill the permanent jobs requirement, since these are temporary positions to support the project.

In the evaluation criteria, 30 points are assigned to "Job Creation and Economic Impact." However, the prompts refer only to job creation. How does the review committee intend to evaluate proposed economic impact beyond job creation? The review committee will assess economic impact based on the creation of sustainable high-quality jobs and the resulting broader economic benefits. Evaluation will consider job permanence, local workforce impact and whether the position represents new employment.

I operate more than one business. Can I apply for multiple businesses?

Yes, you may apply for up to three locations, so long as each location has a unique EIN and each location meets all eligibility requirements. If a parent company or ownership group operates more than three locations, only three total locations will be eligible. Each location will need to be within the annual revenue requirement.

My business is a nonprofit. Am I eligible?

Yes, arts and humanities nonprofit organizations and community revitalization organizations are eligible for Great Streets.

If I received a grant from the District government, does that count as revenue toward the $3 million annual revenue requirement?

No, a grant received from the district government will not be counted toward your gross receipts.

I operate a business but do not have a brick-and-mortar location. Am I eligible to apply?

If you are a sole proprietor operating primarily from your home, you are ineligible. Retailers that operate exclusively online are not eligible.

The annual revenue of my business was $3 million in 2024. Can I apply?

Yes, the three-year annual average of your business must be 3 million or below.

I own a brick-and-mortar retail business, but it is not on the ground floor. Am I eligible to apply?

Yes, we allow first and second floor businesses to apply if they are street-facing.

What does it mean to have site control?

Site control means that you have the right to operate within a specific space on a continuous basis. You can demonstrate site control through a deed, lease, sublease. In addition, you will need to submit a signed and notarized Landlord affidavit from your landlord stating your business is allowed to operate from the space. Letter of Intents are not allowable for Great Streets Retail.

I have submitted my application. Will I receive a grant?

A submitted application does not automatically mean a grant will be awarded. This is a very competitive grant program with hundreds of applicants. The application needs to be prescreened, reviewed and then selected for an award.

When will I hear if I have received an award?

All applications will be reviewed prior to conditional award notices being sent. Conditional award notifications are expected to be sent in Late Spring to Early Summer 2026.

If I am selected for an award, when will I receive my funds?

A disbursement of funds will occur upon completion of the award recommendation, receipt of required documents, and a signed grant agreement. We anticipate grant funds will be released in Summer of 2026.

What documents do I need to apply for the Great Street Grant?

You will need to provide the following documents with your application:

• Three years of business tax returns

• Active DC Business License for the location where the business operates

• Evidence of site control (commercial lease, deed or LOI if moving into a space vacant for over 1 year)

• Certificate of Clean Hands dated within 90 days prior to application date

• State-issued identification of the business owner (passports not accepted)

• Statement of Insurance

• Arrest and Convictions Document

• Debarment Document

• Certificate of Good Standing

• Itemized and justifiable budget

• Ethics and Accountability document

• Tax Certification Affidavit

• W9

•Landlord Affidavit

Which documents, should I upload for the Profit and Loss (P&L) request?

- If operating three (3) years or longer (provide Profit and Loss statements for the past three years)
- Less than one year- submit a year-to-date P&L

Do I need a business license to apply?

Yes, you must have an active DC Business License to be eligible for this program. The business license address must match the primary business address.

I am a new business in an industry that requires an inspection before receiving a business license. Can I still apply?

Yes. New businesses who cannot obtain a business license must show proof of application submission with a copy of the permit number.

My business was initially incorporated in a jurisdiction outside of DC. Can I apply?

Yes, if you are currently registered in DC with a DC address.

What if I do not have 3 years of Business Tax Returns?

You will need to submit a total of 3 years of tax returns. For the years you do not have business tax returns, please submit your personal tax returns for all business owners, until you reach a combined total of 3 years.

Can I submit the same Certificate of Clean Hands that I used for a previous grant application?

A current Certificate of Clean Hands (dated within 90 days prior to application date) must be submitted at the time of the application. Grants will not be disbursed to businesses that do not provide a Certificate of Clean Hands. The Certificate of Clean Hands must match the EIN or SSN indicated on the application.

How do I request an updated Certificate of Clean Hands?

Businesses can request a Certificate of Clean Hands through the MyTax.DC.gov portal. Learn how to navigate this process by visiting OTR's website: www.otr.cfo.dc.gov/page/certificateclean-hands.

Do I need to provide proof of insurance to receive this grant?

Yes, you will need to submit a valid Certificate of Occupancy verifying that your business carries the required amount of insurance. Insurance coverage that is lower than the requirements will not be accepted.

What if I can't provide my documents in time?

Businesses must provide all required documentation at the time of their application. Incomplete or missing documents may result in your application being deemed ineligible.

Can I submit the application via email?

No. All applications must be submitted on the designated online portal no later than Friday, January 16th at 12:00 PM EST. DMPED and its program partners are not responsible for unreadable, incomplete, late, and/or out-of-order submissions. We recommend that you submit your application as early as possible.

Can I ask a question about my compliance documents before submitting my application?

Yes. Please email dmped.grants@dc.gov with your question in as much detail as possible. We also recommend submitting your application as early as possible.

If you have programmatic questions, you may email greatstreets@dc.gov

Where can I get help with my application?

There are a number of organizations that can provide technical or language assistance with your application. 8 For technical assistance, you may contact your DC Main Street organization (if applicable) or contact a Small Business Technical Assistance Community-Based Organization.

For language assistance, you can contact the Mayor's Office of Community Affairs at one of the following numbers:

• Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs: (202) 671-2825

• Mayor's Office on African Affairs: (202) 727-5634

• Mayor's Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs: (202) 727-3120