



SB WORKS SMALL BUSINESS CHALLENGE 2017

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

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Washington, DC has much to offer: beautiful architecture, fascinating residents from near and far, a stable and growing economy, and a whole lot of free and cheap things to do. But what makes neighborhoods special? It's the small businesses that connect neighbors to each other and open up opportunities for residents of all kinds.

Small business makes the District a great place to live. And who knows small business better than anyone? The people running, serving, and supporting them.

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1. MEET SB WORKS

SB Works is a community development nonprofit focusing on impact-driven services for DC's small business community. We leverage public and private funding to provide locally-owned and operated businesses the affordable business support services they need to remain competitive.

SB Works' 2017 Small Business Challenge is committing more than \$100,000 total funding to local businesses for support services. We are calling for proposals that use innovative solutions to solve their business' needs. Business support series can include: marketing, website design and support, accounting and bookkeeping, storefront façade improvement, sales strategy, and other business support. We would also like to see proposals that try to improve the local small business environment overall. We encourage proposals to be creative. Eligible business owners located within qualified DC business districts as well as results-oriented consultants are encouraged to apply.

This is a unique opportunity to design a project to support your business or community and assemble the support you need to make it happen.

2. OVERVIEW

SB Works' mission is to protect and promote the small business environment for enterprises that contribute to their community's character. We lower economic barriers for local businesses by troubleshooting with, advocating for and developing relationships in the District's under-represented neighborhoods. **SB Works is unique because it is dedicated to helping small business owners balance business performance with a sustainable lifestyle.**

The 2017 Small Business Challenge is supported by local nonprofit partners and partially funded by the D.C. Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). As such, it is designed to support areas of the District that serve Low- to Moderate-Income residents and support the overall community.

The purpose of the Challenge is to leverage businesses' understanding of their own needs while using local creativity to solve those issues. The program aims to support existing businesses, foster new businesses, and create job opportunities for District residents.

Proposals should be one of two project types:

Small business support services, including...

- Customer Service Training
- Marketing Planning
- Logo & Branding Guide Creation
- Basic Website Design/ & Content
- Facade Improvement, Signage
- Bookkeeping/Accounting Set-up & Training



- Business Operation/Profitability Audit
- IT Support – Hardware
- Permitting & Licensing Support
- Team Management Training (on-boarding, customer service)
- Sales Strategy/Training

or

Initiatives to improve the local small business environment, for example...

- Apps to engage new and existing customers
- Events attracting new customers to less trafficked neighborhoods
- Educational activities on small business issues
- Lighting and signage through engaging local artist
- Community-engagement event at a neighborhood restaurant
- Creative one-off events to highlight local small business talent

3. HOW IT WORKS

Applicants are encouraged to envision a project that will make their business or community more economically competitive, and then create an application to demonstrate how they will accomplish that project. Funds will be awarded to proposals in the form of reimbursements for project consulting expenditures.

3.1 APPLICATION PROCESS

This program is designed to be intentionally broad. We are looking for innovative, creative projects that bring together your unique, on-the-ground knowledge of DC's small business environment with solutions that advance individual businesses and the greater business community.

Each application should include the following components:

- 1. The Applicant** – Tell us who you are and what it's like to run a business in your community. Tell us what's working well and what's missing.
- 2. The Project** – Provide an explanation of the project's impact, deliverables, and expenses to help overcome challenges identified above.
- 3. Documentation** – Provide proof of eligibility and feasibility, most importantly the ability to execute and maximize impact of the project.

Refer to the Application for exact questions and instructions on how to apply.

Applicants are encouraged to submit their application via email. Application materials should be sent as a single PDF file to info@sbworksdc.org with the subject "Small Business Challenge Application".

Applications may also be submitted in paper version. Completed applications may be sent to:



SB Works
Attn: Program Manager
2613 Rhode Island Ave NE
Washington, DC 20018

The deadline to submit the application is October 30, 2017 at 11:59pm EST.

All completed applications will be reviewed by an application review panel and by the Program Manager prior to the actual award of any funds. Upon approval, each awardee will be required to execute an agreement with SB Works and begin the project within thirty (30) days of award agreement execution. Projects that do not commence within the allotted thirty days will be re-evaluated, and awarded funds may be reallocated. Awardees are required to complete the scope of the project within 120 days of executing the agreement.

3.2 AWARD DETAILS

SB Works is commit at least \$100,000 across multiple small business projects that come up with innovative ways to protect and promote the small business environment of the eligible areas with a special focus on Ward 5. The exact number of awards and their size depends on the quality of the applications and the size of the requests.

In order to stretch the funds as far as possible, some investments may be awarded with the restriction that they must be partially funded through private means. Applications that commit matching funds from private sources are highly encouraged, although not required.

Be ambitious! But more importantly, have a compelling vision and be prepared to execute it.

3.3 APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Eligible applicants are owners of small retail and service-oriented businesses and community members. Applicants must be able to demonstrate their connection to an eligible business or business district. (See Evaluation Metrics for details.)

Applications must benefit businesses that meet the following minimum requirements:

- Be a neighborhood-serving business
- Be located within or primarily serve a Washington, DC LMI Census Tract. (Identify census tract [here](#).)
- Be a registered business in Good Standing* with the DC Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA), the DC Office of Tax and Revenue (OTR), the federal Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and if applicable the DC Department of Employment Services (DOES).
- Provide proof of actual or projected income under \$500,000.
- Provide proof of property and liability insurance* compliant with the requirements set forth in the application.



* Regarding Good Standing & Insurance: SB Works' mission includes helping legitimate businesses, even when they find themselves noncompliant. If you don't qualify because of any of the above Good Standing requirements or need support with insurance procurement, contact SB Works. We may be able to assist you through a separate program

Due to the goals of this Challenge, some business types are **ineligible**, including:

- Businesses who have already received Great Streets and Community Development Block Grant funding
- Businesses with more than 25 employees
- Businesses with more than 3 locations
- Franchises or national chains
- Businesses without a DC address
- Businesses in the following industries: banking, hotels, mobile retail, political organizations, or religious organizations. Please inquire if unsure of eligibility.

3.4 FUNDING USE ELIGIBILITY

All requests to utilize program funds are subject to approval by SB Works. Funds will be used to reimburse consultants and project team awardees for expenses that they have incurred for:

- 1. Strategic business support services for existing businesses**
- 2. Troubleshooting thorny issues for existing businesses**
- 3. Storefront improvements**
- 4. Support for new businesses**
- 5. Special events, initiatives, or campaigns to support targeted business districts**

Investment funds may **not** be used to reimburse any of the following expenses:

- Financing of existing debt
- Invoices incurred prior to execution of the awardee's agreement
- Merchandise
- Product inventory
- Rent
- Food, drink, or disposable materials for one-time event use (e.g., cups, plates, balloons, etc).
- Payroll
- Day-to-day operational costs (e.g. utilities, taxes, maintenance, refuse, etc.)



4. EVALUATION PROCESS

4.1 PHASE 1: ELIGIBILITY

Each application will first be screened for basic eligibility and completeness. To obtain basic eligibility, the applicant must meet all of the criteria listed under "Applicant Eligibility."

4.2 PHASE 2: EVALUATION

All applications deemed eligible and complete will be forwarded to an expert Review Panel to be evaluated, scored, and ranked. Reviewers will represent a range of expertise in community-based economic development and small business assistance. The Review Panel will evaluate and score applications based on the Evaluation Metrics details below and rank them accordingly.

Finally, the Review Panel will make recommendations regarding the selection of awardees to the SB Works program team. The Program Manager will communicate all final determination of commitments to applicants by November 1, 2017.

Evaluation Metrics

Applications will be evaluated according to the 165-point scoring criteria outlined below.

APPLICANT: 45 POINTS

Team (Up to 10 points)

- Who is on your Team? List all participant and their roles

Experience (Up to 10 points)

- Does your team have relevant business experience?
- The applicant must provide a description of his/her previous experience with owning and operating a business and include resumes for owners and proposed project team.
- The applicant should demonstrate, through a description of the expertise of key staff, that s/he is qualified to undertake the project for which s/he seeks investment. Preference will be given to applicants who have demonstrated success in similar ventures.

Role in the Community (Up to 15 points)

- What is the team's role within community? Tell us your story, including impact, longevity, residency, etc. How does your role contribute to the character to the community?

Financials (Up to 10 points)

- What is your business' financial condition?
- Submit any relevant materials to convey your financial viability. This may include tax returns (no more than 2 prior tax years), profit & loss statements, income or cash flow statements, balance sheets, annual or projected budgets, audits, etc.

PROJECT: 120 POINTS

Proposal (Up to 25 points)

- Tell us about your community. What does it need?
- What is your idea? Describe in detail the business support services and/or activities you



intend to undertake. How is it a valid, high-quality, realistic solution to the need you've identified?

Readiness/Timeline (Up to 10 points)

- Provide a detailed implementation schedule for your project.

Budget (Up to 15 points)

- Will your team contribute matching funds toward the expenses of the project? If so, how much? (Include written agreements for any contributors other than the direct applicant, including partner businesses)
- Does the budget cover all reasonable expenses for the project and demonstrate a reasonable investment in its objectives?

Target Area (Up to 5 points)

- What is the neighborhood or location your project will serve?

Beneficiaries (Up to 15 points)

- Describe who this program will benefit. May include customers, community members, new jobs created, etc.

Impact (Up to 15 points)

- What will be the impact of your project? How will you measure success?

Creativity/Innovation (Up to 25 points)

- How does your project creatively address challenges this business or community faces?

Feasibility (Up to 10 points)

- Do you have everything you need to make this project succeed? Explain how you will bring together the various components of your application to achieve its goals.

Proposal Verifications & Modifications

SB Works may conduct pre-award site visits to verify information submitted in an application and to determine if it is appropriate to fund the applicant's proposed project under the program.

SB Works may enter into negotiations with an awardee and adopt a revised funding amount or other revision of the awardee's proposal that may result from the negotiations.



5. AWARD PROCESS

Awardees will sign an agreement with SB Works, and then immediately commence execution of their project. Projects that do not commence within the allotted thirty days will be re-evaluated, and designated funds may be reallocated. Awardees are required to complete the scope of the project within 120 days of executing the agreement.

SB Works will pay consultants and/or vendors directly for services, taking into account any matching funds from the applicant. All expenditures must be approved by the SB Works Program Manager. All expenditures must be allowable under the program. All costs must be necessary and reasonable. Awardees are required to maintain all receipts and invoices relating to their project. SB Works reserves the right to disallow costs that are deemed ineligible under the program and may withdraw any remaining funds at any time.

Approved payment requests will typically be processed within 30 business days. Failure to follow the above rules and regulations will result in a delay in the reimbursement process.

Disclaimers

We do not foresee these circumstances, but in the event that they transpire, the following may apply:

- Funding for any application is contingent on continued program funding. The publication of this award application does not guarantee SB Works will make any commitments.
- SB Works reserves the right to accept or deny any or all applications if SB Works determines that it is in the best interest of the program goals to do so.
- SB Works reserves the right to issue Addenda and/or Amendments to this application subsequent to the issuance of this application, or to rescind this application.
- In the event of a conflict between the terms and conditions of the award 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.

6. TIMELINE

- Request for Applications Released – October 4, 2017
- Applications Due – October 30, 2017
- Award Recipients Announced – November 2, 2017
- Recipient Recognition Event – November 8, 2017



7. INFORMATION SESSIONS

SB Works will host informational sessions to provide an overview of the process and answer questions from applicants. Once confirmed, details about the informational sessions will be posted on the SB Works website at www.sbworkdsc.org. We hope to see you there!

Submission Deadline: Monday October 30, 2017 at 11:59PM

Questions? Contact us at
Phone: (202) 803-5400
Email: info@sbworksdsc.org

