

## SB WORKS SMALL BUSINESS CHALLENGE 2017 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Application itself is the most comprehensive place for information on the awarding process. Please refer to that first and contact us with any unanswered questions. *This page will be updated continually as further questions arise.*

### WHAT ARE A FEW EXAMPLES OF COMPETITIVE APPLICATIONS?

#### **Small business support services, including...**

- Marketing Research and Planning
- Logo & Branding Creation
- Website Design/ & Content Update
- Facade Improvement, Signage
- Bookkeeping/Accounting Set-up & Training
- IT Support – Hardware
- Business Operation/Profitability Audit
- Sales Strategy/Training
- Team Management/Staff Training
- Customer Service Training
- Permitting & Licensing Support

**or**

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

- Apps to engage new and existing customers
- Events to attract new customers to less-trafficked neighborhoods
- Educational activities on small business issues
- Lighting and signage improvements along a business corridor
- Creative one-off events to highlight local small business talent

### WHAT SERVICES ARE INELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING?

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

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

### WHO IS NOT ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

Due to the goals of this program, some business types are **ineligible** for funds, 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 you're not sure.

**I HAVE A GREAT IDEA, BUT DO NOT HAVE ALL OF THE PARTS OF THE APPLICATION. WHAT CAN I DO?**

Contact us. We may be able to help you. Our goal is to find great projects and businesses who need assistance—not collect a mountain of paperwork from you! We can provide assistance to most businesses to address the impediments or issues you face.

**DOES THIS PROGRAM DISBURSE FUNDS DIRECTLY TO BUSINESSES?**

No. This program is designed to pay for business services as they are rendered. SB Works will enter into an agreement with awardees that will include a schedule for payment directly to consultants and vendors that execute the project.

**IS THIS OPEN TO ALL BUSINESSES IN DC? DOES IT MATTER WHERE I AM LOCATED?**

Yes and no. The goal is to support businesses that are in transitional areas, where the small business environment isn't strong and/or residents have incomes that are near or below the District's average household income. We use a map that is based on the 2010 U.S. Census findings, so the best thing to do is ask us. Many businesses serve the neighborhood they are located in, but we know every business is different. We focus on serving communities in Wards 1, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8

**What is the typical size and scope of a project?**

While the typical size and scope of a project varies greatly, typical projects consist of a business identifying a particular need that a business support consultant could fill that would enable their business to thrive. SB Works then reviews the situation and may allocate funds to subsidize the project (typically \$2,000-\$5,000 per business, but can go much higher for projects with greater impacts). For example, a bakery owner could think their business could greatly benefit from a new website to improve marketing. They would then propose a web designer make their business a new website and the Challenge would fund this small business support. This is a very basic example of a proposed project. SB Works encourages business owners and community members to be creative with their proposal. We want to work with you to get the support you need.

### **WHAT IF I LIVE OUTSIDE OF DC? MAY I STILL APPLY?**

Applications must be benefiting by a D.C. business or resident primarily, and using consultants within DC is encouraged but not mandatory. Applicants do not need to live in or represent the business district where the project is proposed but the project does have to serve the eligible community. For example, an events planner can develop an event in collaboration with a community group if it brings foot traffic to a business district.

### **MY NONPROFIT/NON-BRICK & MORTAR BUSINESS IS INTERESTED IN APPLYING. AM I ELIGIBLE?**

The key to eligibility is a project that supports an eligible business. Any nonprofit, individual, or business owner who can demonstrate that their project benefits such a business or business community is eligible. Storefronts are not mandatory.

### **I HAVE A HOME-BASED BUSINESS. AM I ELIGIBLE?**

Generally, no; because this program is designed to attract customers to emerging neighborhood. However, if you can make the case that you perform services that improve individual businesses or the overall small business environment of a transitional area, we will review your application. Your business will need to demonstrate that it is registered and appropriately licensed.

### **I DO CONSULTING OR CONTRACT WORK. CAN I APPLY ON BEHALF OF MY OWN BUSINESS?**

No, you cannot apply to be paid for work you do on behalf of your own business (i.e. an accounting being paid to balance his own books). However, you are allowed to perform a service that benefits the whole community, such as hosting a small business event, developing a community-wide software app. Your compensation must be in line with other service providers.

### **I NEED HELP WITH MY APPLICATION. WHERE CAN I GET IT?**

We can provide a list of recommended consultants and support for your application if necessary.

### **IS THERE SUPPORT FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS WHO WANT TO APPLY?**

If you know someone who may need language assistance, is physically disabled or visually impaired, we can provide translation services for a few common languages in the District (possibilities include Spanish, Korean, Mandarin, Amharic) for versions of the application material.