

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

NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY (NOFA)

FY26 Emerging Retail Initiative Grant Program

Request for applications (RFA) Release Date: December 12, 2025

RFA ID No: FY26-BD-LO-ERI

Introduction: The Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (“DMPED”) invites the submission of applications from qualified organizations for a grant pursuant to the Great Streets Initiative under the Emerging Retail Initiative grant program (“**Program**”). The purpose of the Program is to create a low-risk environment for businesses to test their concepts, build brand awareness, and scale toward permanent brick-and-mortar operations, ultimately fostering economic vibrancy, sustainability, and community engagement in underserved commercial corridors.

The funding opportunity is to fund businesses that are proposing the following:

1. Activate vacant spaces: Occupy or support businesses in temporarily occupied and underutilized commercial spaces to bring vibrancy, foot traffic, and economic opportunity to local corridors.
2. Test their concepts in low-risk retail environments (e.g., pop-ups, stalls, short-term spaces, community-markets) or support businesses to develop sustainable models for long-term growth.
3. Foster job creation and retention: Increase full-time employment opportunities within their emerging business.
4. Provide essential amenities by offering goods and services that meet community needs.
5. Promote commercial sustainability: Encourage capital improvements, customer attraction, and retention through expanded offerings and improved retail spaces
6. Gradually scale from shared or incubator spaces to permanent locations.
7. Build brand recognition and grow their customer base.
8. Leverage community-focused spaces that support innovation, cultural diversity, and sustainability.

Authority: The Program will be funded pursuant to the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development Limited Grant-Making Authority Act of 2012, effective September 20, 2012; D.C. Official Code §–1-328.04(a)(5) and the Great Streets Neighborhood Retail Priority Area Amendment Act of 2013 effective October 1, 2013 (D.C. Official Code §2-1217.73(b)).

Anticipated Number of Awards: DMPED expects to award multiple grants under the Program, with a total funding amount of up to \$200,000, contingent upon the availability of appropriated funds. Individual awards are anticipated to be up to \$20,000.

Eligibility: Applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria to be considered for an award under the Program:

- **Business Type:**
 - Retail, service-oriented businesses (excluding professional services) or select non-profits operating within incubators, pop-up stalls, short-term retail spaces, food halls or community driven markets
 - Pop-up stalls
 - Short-term retail spaces
 - Incubator spaces
 - Food halls or community-driven markets
- **Business Status:**
 - Applicants may be new or existing small business, non-profit in the art and humanities sector, or a community development organization supporting small businesses in their space
- **Previous Grantee:**
 - Businesses that have received Great Streets or Emerging Retail in the last 5 years (2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025) are not eligible to apply.
 - Preference will be given to new grantees.
- **Site Control:**
 - Must demonstrate site control through a lease, letter of intent (LOI), or other legally verifiable agreement for a temporary space.
 - Revenue: Average annual revenue for the last three years must be below \$500,000
 - Be located in or abutting an existing Great Streets corridor, as defined in D.C. Code § 2-1217.73. See map: <https://opendata.dc.gov/apps/great-streets-lookup/explore>

Additional details about eligibility and criteria for selecting applicants will be included in the RFA.

Grant Information Session: DMPED will host a virtual and in-person information sessions for interested applicants. Please check DMPED’s website for more details:

<https://dmped.dc.gov/service/grant-opportunities>.

Contact Information: Great Streets Program Team **Phone:** (202) 727-6365 **Email:** Greatstreets@dc.gov

Availability of RFA: The RFA will be released on December 12, 2025, and posted at

<https://dmped.dc.gov/service/grant-opportunities>.

Grant Application Submission Deadline: Applications will be accepted through January 16, 2026, at 12:00PM ET. All applications must be submitted electronically, according to the instructions contained in the RFA. Late applications will not be accepted.

Application Process: The grant application process will include an initial screening of applications to evaluate the completeness of the application, followed by scoring by a review panel, and a final approval of funding by the Deputy Mayor. Within 45 days of the application

close date, DMPED will notify all applicants as to whether the application is moving from the initial screening phase to the scoring phase.

Final Determination of Award: DMPED anticipates making a final determination of award within four months of the application close date. Award and funding determinations are final and cannot be appealed. The Deputy Mayor will make the final funding decision, based on a review panel's recommendations, the Mayor's budget priorities, the available resources, the goal of achieving a balance as to communities served, and the goals of the Program.

Reservations: DMPED reserves the right to issue addenda and/or amendments following the release of the NOFA or RFA or it may rescind the NOFA or RFA at any time in its sole discretion.