



## **Restaurant Bridge Fund**

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **What is the Restaurant Bridge Fund?**

To meet the existing and future COVID-19 related needs for DC's businesses, Mayor Muriel Bowser and the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED), in partnership with the Council of the District of Columbia, are strategically investing \$100 million in The Bridge Fund to sustain the hospitality, entertainment, and retail industries and mitigate the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on workers and businesses. The Bridge Fund is devised to assist small business employers to maintain operations and employees. With \$35 million allocated to the restaurant industry, the Restaurant Bridge Fund aims to provide competitive grants to eligible restaurant and food services establishments that have experienced significant economic distress since the beginning of the COVID-19 public health emergency and made plans to respond and adapt to these challenging circumstances.

Full-service restaurants with restaurant licenses, including limited-service restaurants, fast food restaurants, and food service providers such as: bars and taverns with a tavern license, wineries, breweries or distilleries with a tavern license, bakeries, cafes, delicatessens, coffee shops, vending trucks or carts, food trucks, food courts, caterers, and cafeterias would be eligible to apply for the Restaurant Bridge Fund. The funds will support general operational expenses (rent/mortgage/docking expense, payroll, insurance, fuel for mobile vendors, and/or utilities), and expenses incurred related to winterization or COVID-19 preparation.

The Restaurant Fund will award at least 700 grants for eligible businesses with consideration to economic distress, business viability, length of revenue generating operations, and District resident employment. Additionally, 15% of the funds (\$5.25M) will be set aside for businesses that meet the following conditions:

- Are eligible to be a Resident-Owned Business (ROB)
- Are eligible to be a Small Business Enterprise (SBE); and
- Are at least one of the following: at least 51% owned by economically disadvantaged individuals OR at least 51% owned by a woman or majority of women OR a certified Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE).
- Applicants for the set-aside must also meet the eligibility requirements for the Bridge Fund Restaurant program (below).

The Restaurant Bridge Fund will be open to businesses that meet the following criteria:

- Must be located in the District of Columbia
- Must employ at least one District resident, may include owner.
- Must be currently open & operating.
- Business must have been revenue generating prior to October 1, 2020.
- If the business opened after March 17, 2020 and before September 30, 2020, the business must have generated a minimum of \$25,000 in revenue.
- Must have a DC Business License and all other applicable ABRA licenses.

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- Maximum of \$10 million in annual revenue for 2019 and/or \$7.5 million in revenue as of September 30, 2020.
- Franchises must be independently owned & operated.
- Must demonstrate financial distress of 25% in decrease in revenue during COVID-19.
- Must be Local Business Enterprise (LBE) eligible.
- Must have a current Certificate of Clean Hands (dated within 90 days prior to application submission date)

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **When will I receive my award notification letter?**

We anticipate conditional award notifications will begin in January and continue through February 2021.

### **If I am selected for the award, what are my next steps?**

If selected for the award, you'll receive a notification letter outlining your next steps.

### **What are the minimum and maximum amount of funds that I can receive?**

This is a competitive grant program; the minimum award is \$10,000 and the maximum award is \$50,000.

### **Can I apply more than once for the same business? Will I receive grant funds on an annual basis?**

This is a one-time grant and offers one application per business location with different EIN numbers. If you own more than one business, you can apply for up to five businesses under this fund.

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

To be eligible for funding, businesses must provide all required documentation at the time of their application. The application deadline is December 28, 2020 at 5:00 PM/EST.

### **Can I submit the application via email?**

No. All electronic applications must be submitted at the latest by Monday, December 28, 2020 at 5:00 PM/EST.

### **My business opened after September 30, 2020. Am I eligible to apply?**

No. We are only accepting applications from businesses who have opened before September 30, 2020.

### **My business is permanently closed or temporarily closed with plans to reopen soon. Am I eligible to apply?**

No. This fund is for restaurants and food service providers that are open and have a plan to remain open. In addition, the physical location of the business must be free of plywood boards on windows and doors.

### **What types of businesses are ineligible to apply for the Restaurant Bridge Fund?**

Ineligible types of businesses include banks, construction/general contracting/architecture/design-build businesses, e-commerce businesses, financial services, home-based businesses, real estate development/property management/realtor businesses, and seasonal/only open for part of the year businesses.

### **Is a Clean Hands Certificate required to be eligible to apply for the grant?**

Yes. A current Clean Hands Certificate is required to apply for the grant. The Clean Hands Certificate must be obtained within 90 days of application submission date.

**Can I submit the same Certificate of Clean Hands that I used for the Microgrant Program?**

No. A new Certificate of Clean Hands, dated within 90 day prior to the application, must be submitted at the time of the application.

**Can I ask a question about my materials before submitting my application?**

Yes. Please email [RestaurantBridgeFund@dc.gov](mailto:RestaurantBridgeFund@dc.gov) with your question in as much detail as possible.

**Are sole proprietors eligible to receive a grant from the Restaurant Bridge Fund?**

It depends. They are eligible to receive a grant only if they have a physical presence and are a DC resident.

**I am a sole proprietor with a physical business presence (for example, a food truck) in DC but my home residency is in Maryland, Virginia or another state. Am I eligible?**

No. Sole proprietors must be DC residents.

**I own a retail and a restaurant business in one shared space. Can I submit an application for both the Retail Bridge Fund and the Restaurant Bridge Fund?**

No. You can only submit one application for the Bridge Fund.

**I own a pop up/seasonal restaurant that leases kitchen space and equipment. Am I eligible to apply?**

No. The business must have a lease of no less than 12 months. Seasonal businesses are not eligible for this funding opportunity.

**I own a bar or nightclub. Should I apply for the Restaurant Bridge Fund?**

Bars and taverns holding tavern licenses must derive at least 25% of sales from food. (If they do not, they can apply to the Entertainment Bridge Fund, which opens December 21, 2020.)

**My business is incorporated in a different state, but the main business office location is in DC. Am I eligible to apply?**

Yes. The business is eligible to apply.

**I am a non-profit organization with a for-profit restaurant entity. Am I eligible to apply?**

Yes. If the nonprofit has a separate for-profit restaurant, its eligible to apply for the for-profit restaurant entity only.

**I do not have a Basic Business License, or my Basic Business License is expired or has been revoked. Am I eligible to apply for the Restaurant Bridge Fund?**

No. An active DC Business License is required to be eligible to apply to the Restaurant Bridge Fund.

**I recently renewed my Basic Business License, but I have not received the new official license yet.**

If you have obtained a Basic Business License, but do not have the official copy yet, you are allowed to submit a receipt for the license with the license number included. If you do this, you must submit a copy of your Business License as soon as you receive a copy.

**I applied for the Restaurant Bridge Fund. Am I guaranteed to receive a grant?**

No. This is a competitive grant. We cannot guarantee that you will receive a grant if you apply for the fund.

**I am a distillery, winery, brewery, or cidery. Am I eligible for the Restaurant Bridge Fund?**

Distilleries, wineries, breweries, or cideries holding tavern licenses through ABRA must derive at least 25% of sales from food. (If they do not, they can apply to the Entertainment Bridge Fund, which opens December 21, 2020.) If you have a manufacturer or other license through ABRA, you are not eligible

for the Restaurant Bridge Fund, but may be eligible for the Retail Bridge Fund instead. View all current ABRA license holders [here](#).

**I have received a grant award from the Hotel Bridge Fund for my hotel business. My hotel also has a restaurant. Am I eligible to apply for the Restaurant Bridge Fund?**

If the restaurant business has a separate EIN number from the hotel, then it is eligible for the Restaurant Bridge Fund. If the restaurant business and hotel does not have separate EIN numbers, then the restaurant will not be eligible for the Restaurant Bridge Fund.

**I have furloughed but not laid off my employees. Can I apply?**

Yes. However, please note that the Restaurant Bridge Fund requires the business' number of employees and payroll as of September 30, 2020. Furloughed employees should not be included in the calculation and/or reporting of active employees.

**What does it mean to be "Local Business Enterprise (LBE) eligible"?**

Your business must meet the following criteria to be Local Business Enterprise (LBE) eligible. The definition for a Local Business Enterprise (LBE) is below:

- Principal office physically located in the District;
- Chief executive officer and highest-level managerial employees maintain their offices and perform their managerial functions in the District;
- Meets one of the four following standards:
  - More than 50% of the assets, excluding bank accounts, are in the District;
  - More than 50% of the employees are residents of the District;
  - The owners of more than 50% of the business enterprise are residents of the District;
  - or
  - More than 50% of the total sales or other revenues are derived from transactions in the District
- Is properly licensed under DC law; and
- Is subject to tax under DC law (Chapter 18 of Title 47)

**Will the District require any additional documents for The Bridge Fund?**

In its sole discretion, the District and/or its Fund Manager may elect to request additional documents at any point of the application and/or funding process. The District and/or its Fund Manager will notify applicants and/or potential awardees of the documentation requirements.