

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT SERVICES (DOES)

NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY (NOFA)

FISCAL YEAR 2026

Building Opportunities & Sustainable Startups (BOSS Up)

Application Release Date: June 12, 2026

Application Submission Deadline: July 13, 2026

Pursuant to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Youth program (29 U.S.C. § 3164) and its implementing regulations at 20 C.F.R. Part 681, the District of Columbia Department of Employment Services (DOES) will issue a Request for Applications (RFA) for the Building Opportunities & Sustainable Startups (BOSS Up) Grant. The RFA will be online on the District Grants Clearinghouse and on the DOES website at the following page:

<https://does.dc.gov/page/grant-opportunities>

The BOSS Up program is a new initiative designed to empower out-of-school youth with the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to become successful entrepreneurs. This program will provide hands-on business development training, mentorship, financial literacy education, and startup capital to support young entrepreneurs in launching sustainable businesses.

DOES seeks applications from qualified organizations with expertise in small business development, financial literacy, and youth workforce training. The selected grantee(s) will be responsible for delivering a structured entrepreneurship curriculum, facilitating mentorship, providing entrepreneurial related certifications, and offer work experience opportunities in startup and small businesses.

Eligibility: DOES will make these grants available through a competitive process. Eligible applicants include public and private non-profit and for-profit organizations eligible to do business with the District government, including but not limited to community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, public, charter or alternative secondary schools and post-secondary institutions, trade associations or chambers of commerce and private service providers. Applicants shall have demonstrated effectiveness providing the requested services and meeting the needs of the target population.

Available Funding for the Award: Up to \$200,000 is available in total for awards through this RFA. DOES intends to award at least one (1) grant award. The \$200,000 grant is 100% funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration through the District of Columbia's Program Year (PY) 2025 WIOA Title I Youth Grant. Awarded funds shall be used only for activities outlined in the scope of the RFA and in accordance with applicable federal and District requirements. DOES will use the applicant's grant proposal to identify the number of participants the applicant plans to serve and determine an award amount. However, DOES maintains the right to adjust the grant award and amount based on funding availability.

Determinations regarding the number of competitive grants to be awarded will be based on the quality and number of applications received and available funding. Successful applicants may be awarded amounts less than requested.

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A review panel or panels will be convened to review, score, and rank each application for a competitive grant. The review panel(s) will be composed of external neutral, qualified, professional individuals selected for their expertise, knowledge, or related experiences. Each application will be scored against a rubric, and applications will have multiple reviewers to ensure accurate scoring. Upon completion of its review, the panel(s) shall make recommendations for awards based on the scoring rubric(s). The Director of DOES or her designee will make all final award decisions.

Length of Award: The award period for this grant starts on the date of the grant award notification and ends one (1) year thereafter with three option years contingent upon funding availability.

Pre-Application Conference: All interested applicants are encouraged to attend the virtual pre-application conference on June 26, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. Please email OGAgrants@dc.gov if you will be attending the pre-application meeting to receive the meeting invite link.

Contact: For additional information regarding this grant competition, please contact:

Vanessa Black
Department of Employment Services
Office of Grant Administration and Resource Allocation (OGARA)
Email: OGAGrants@dc.gov

Deadline for Applications: The deadline for application submissions is July 13, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. Late or incomplete applications will not be forwarded to the review panel.