



DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP

Downtown BOOST Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Downtown BOOST Program?

The Downtown Black Owned and Operated Storefront Tenancy (BOOST) Program is an initiative by the Downtown Partnership of Baltimore (DPOB) to support Black-owned small retail businesses by providing them with storefront tenancy in vacant Downtown locations.

2. Who is eligible to apply for the BOOST Program?

Locally owned small businesses in the sectors of Food/Beverage, Creative/Arts, Makers, and Services are eligible to apply.

3. What are the key dates for the application process?

The application process will be open for six weeks. Specific dates will be announced on our website and social media channels.

4. What information and documentation are required for the application?

Applicants must submit basic contact and demographic information, COVID-19 hardship eligibility, narrative responses, a written overview of fund usage, a proposed budget, a full business plan, financial statements, proof of Good Standing with the State of Maryland, and two potential locations.

5. How will the applications be evaluated?

Applications will be evaluated based on uniqueness, community impact, growth potential, and overall score.

6. What is the BOOSTing Business Program?

The BOOSTing Business Program provides foundational education and support to winning businesses, covering topics such as financial projections, lease negotiations, design/build out, HR, customer experience, marketing, intellectual property, taxes and accounting, banking and credit, and insurance.

7. Who will be leading the BOOSTing Business Program?

The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) will lead the BOOSTing Business Program for Round 3.

8. What are the benefits of participating in the BOOST Program?

Participants receive support in securing and building out a storefront, access to a comprehensive business development curriculum, ongoing coaching, and a network of supportive services.

9. What are the terms and conditions of the BOOST grant?

Terms and conditions include compliance with federal, state, and city laws, proper use of funds, nondiscrimination, recordkeeping, reporting, insurance requirements, and more.

10. What happens if a business fails to use the funds properly?

If funds are not used properly, DPOB reserves the right to demand the return of the funds.

11. Can DPOB request proof of fund usage at any time?

Yes, DPOB reserves the right to request proof of fund usage at any time, and the grantee must provide detailed documentation and evidence of how the funds have been utilized.

12. What types of businesses are prohibited from using BOOST funds?

Prohibited businesses include pawn shops, gun shops, tanning salons, massage parlors, adult video/book shops, adult entertainment facilities, check cashing facilities, gambling facilities, tattoo parlors, and liquor stores.

13. How will the storefront locations be selected?

Businesses must propose two potential locations and demonstrate how these locations align with their business vision.

14. Where can my business be located, and how do I know if it qualifies for the BOOST Program?

Your business location must be within the 106-block area that makes up the Downtown Management Authority (DMA) boundaries. This designated area is essential for ensuring the program's impact on revitalizing Downtown Baltimore. To check if a potential location is within these boundaries, please refer to the Downtown Management Authority & One-Mile Boundaries map available on our website.

15. What kind of support will businesses receive during the build-out process?

Businesses will receive guidance on lease negotiations, design/build out, and project management support.

16. What marketing support will be provided to BOOST participants?

DPOB will heavily market the BOOST Program through various channels, including TV, radio, and social media, and will also provide marketing support to the participating businesses.

17. How will the BOOST Program contribute to the local community?

By supporting minority-owned businesses, the BOOST Program aims to contribute to local economic growth, foster stronger community connections, and enhance the vibrancy of Downtown Baltimore.

18. How much funding will each BOOST Program awardee receive?

Each BOOST awardee will receive \$100,000 to support their business development and storefront build-out

19. How will the winners be selected?

After an initial review of applications, 10 finalists will be chosen. These finalists will present their concepts and storefronts, and winners will be selected based on their scores in various evaluation metrics.

20. What should businesses do if they have additional questions about the BOOST Program?

Businesses can refer to the FAQ document posted on the DPOB website or contact DPOB directly for further assistance.