

# NEIGHBORHOOD CHALLENGE

## Program Guidelines



### Introduction

The Department of Small Business Services (SBS) supports community-based economic development organizations throughout the City in order to create the conditions under which local businesses can grow and thrive. To help achieve this mission, SBS is re-launching *Neighborhood Challenge* as a competitive grant initiative designed to encourage innovation and service delivery improvements for Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and Local Development Corporations (LDCs) with economic development budgets under \$2,000,000.

In 2012, the *Neighborhood Challenge's* predecessor, *BID Challenge*, received 37 project proposals from BIDs across New York City. Seven BIDs were awarded grants up to \$75,000 for innovative projects including storefront improvements, district marketing campaigns, and public art installations. These winning programs and initiatives are currently being implemented in business corridors across the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens.

This year, *Neighborhood Challenge* will expand its competitive reach across neighborhoods throughout New York City by accepting proposals from LDCs and BIDs with larger assessment budgets. The three to four boldest ideas will receive larger grant awards, ranging up to \$100,000. These projects will solve bigger district challenges, generate greater community impacts, and receive increased local recognition upon implementation.

### Requirements

#### ORGANIZATIONAL CRITERIA

##### **BID Applicants must:**

- Be incorporated BIDs located in New York City with an annual assessments less than or equal to \$2,000,000 (53 of 67 BIDs qualify in FY 2014)
- Demonstrate timely submission of audited financial statements and annual reports to SBS in the previous fiscal year

##### **LDC Applicants must:**

- Be incorporated as a nonprofit in New York State and be in compliance with the New York State Charities Bureau
- Be operating in the five boroughs of New York City
- Have a dedicated economic development budget under \$2,000,000

#### INNOVATION THROUGH COMPETITION

*Neighborhood Challenge* grants will be awarded to BIDs and LDCs that present the most inventive and impactful economic development and revitalization programs that would otherwise not be achieved due to

limited organizational capacity and/or funding. *Neighborhood Challenge* is intended to spark new ideas and approaches to common neighborhoods and commercial corridors issues. Projects should aim to leverage additional talent, partners, and resources outside of city government to achieve wide-ranging outcomes.

*Neighborhood Challenge* grant proposals should focus on one of the following project categories:

- Business Attraction, Retention, & Growth  
Projects include strategies to assist in the recruitment of new businesses or growth of existing businesses as well as raising the entrepreneurial profile of commercial districts
- District Planning, Streetscape Improvements, and Space Activation  
Projects include district planning/management initiatives as well as open space, streetscape, and storefront improvements that enhance the urban design, public use, or economic viability of a commercial area
- Districtwide Marketing & Events  
Projects include programs, events, and art installations that improve the image and vitality of a commercial district, as well as strategies that use print, electronic media, or multimedia efforts to promote retail corridors

## APPLICATION REVIEW & RANKING SYSTEM

Awards will be made on a competitive basis. Applications will be reviewed by a committee comprised of SBS staff and practitioners/leaders from the aforementioned project categories. The committee will judge each application on a competitive basis. Projects will be evaluated on the following categories:

- Innovative vision and approach to a neighborhood challenge
- Long-term impact of the project
- Overall strength of the application
- Organizational capacity
- Viability of the proposed budget
- Quality of the project design
- Ability to implement project in a timely fashion
- Leveraging of additional funding sources or in-kind partnerships
- Sustainability of project beyond the term of award

Please Note: Interviews and/or site-visits may be requested of respondents during the SBS proposal review process.

## SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All proposals should include the following items:

- A 1-page (maximum) project summary that outlines the project's Vision, Implementation, Outcome/Impact, Sustainability, Partnerships and Budget.
- A 10-slide (maximum) PowerPoint presentation (submitted in PDF form) illustrating the project's Vision, Implementation Timeline, Outcome/Impact, Sustainability, Partnerships and Budget.

- Project budget (line item description of project costs and related expenses)
  - A list of members of the Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers
  - Relevant letters of support or proof of additional resources being added to the proposed project
  - A FY2013 actual operating budget of the organization
  - A FY2014 approved operating budget of the organization
- Only New York City BIDs and LDCs can apply for the *Neighborhood Challenge*.
  - Respondents can submit one project application
  - Respondents are strongly encouraged to partner with neighboring BIDs, LDCs, and other organizations on their project proposals

## CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

*Neighborhood Challenge* funding is project-based. Funded organizations are expected to set measurable goals and to deliver completed projects at the end of the contract term.

Organizations applying for *Neighborhood Challenge* must be prepared to enter into a registered contract with the City of New York. The contract term will be for one year starting in November 2013.

Additionally, organizations that are awarded *Neighborhood Challenge* funding will be required to complete SBS-designed reports on their activities and progress.

## PROJECT TIMELINE

All proposals should adhere to the following timeline\*:

| TIMELINE                          | 2013      |         |          |          | 2014    |          |       |       |     |      |      |        |           |         |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|---------|----------|----------|---------|----------|-------|-------|-----|------|------|--------|-----------|---------|
|                                   | September | October | November | December | January | February | March | April | May | June | July | August | September | October |
| <b>Application Process</b>        |           |         |          |          |         |          |       |       |     |      |      |        |           |         |
| <b>Selection Committee Review</b> |           |         |          |          |         |          |       |       |     |      |      |        |           |         |
| <b>Awards Announced</b>           |           |         |          |          |         |          |       |       |     |      |      |        |           |         |
| <b>Contract Term</b>              |           |         |          |          |         |          |       |       |     |      |      |        |           |         |

\*This timeline is for estimation purposes only. The actual length of time required for the contracting process may differ from this plan.

## SUBMISSION PROCESS

All completed applications must be submitted through electronic form located at [http://www.nyc.gov/html/sbs/html/neighborhood\\_development/NDD\\_Neighborhood\\_Challenge\\_Project\\_Application.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/sbs/html/neighborhood_development/NDD_Neighborhood_Challenge_Project_Application.shtml). Organizations with questions on completing the application should direct their inquiries to SBS via email at [neighborhoodchallenge@sbs.nyc.gov](mailto:neighborhoodchallenge@sbs.nyc.gov).

Applications must be submitted via the *Neighborhood Challenge* application page by **Tuesday October 15<sup>th</sup>**, at **11:59 PM** in order to be considered for funding.

*Neighborhood Challenge* Awardees will be announced in **Early November**.