

# GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

## Department of Small and Local Business Development



### Open Government Report 2014

To institutionalize a culture of transparent and open government, accountability, and to expand opportunities for resident participation and collaboration, this Report describes how the Department of Small and Local Business Development has and will continue to develop and enhance transparency, public participation, and collaboration. In accordance with Mayor's Order 2014-170, this report addresses the following topics:

#### **Transparency**

The DC Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD) supports the growth, development, and retention of District based businesses and supports economic development throughout the District's commercial corridors. In order to increase accountability and transparency, promote informed public participation, and create economic development opportunities, DSLBD has expanded access to information by making it proactively available online. Updates regarding DSLBD programs and initiatives are shared with the public utilizing several methods including, press releases, special notices, and DC Register entries that are posted on DSLBD's website. DLSBD also releases information via an external mailing list available to media, community partners, and District small business owners. In an effort to increase public access to information, DSLBD continually seeks ways to better utilize its website and social media outlets.

Pursuant to the District's Freedom of Information Act, DSLBD has responded to every request received in a thorough and timely manner to the extent permitted by law and subject to valid privacy, confidentiality, security, or other restrictions. Any information requested by the public has been made readily available and annual Freedom of Information Act reports are accessible on the Department's website.

DSLBD is working closely with the Office of the City Administrator (OCA) and the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) to identify a significant number of datasets that OCA and OCTO expect to publish online later this year. If no dataset from DSLBD is selected to be included in this 2014 release, we will continue to work with OCA and OCTO to identify datasets appropriate to publish in 2015. In the future, requirements for open data reporting will be provided by the Chief Data Officer.

#### **Public Engagement and Participation**

In order to create more informed and effective programs that support small business development, DSLBD has enhanced and expanded opportunities for the public to have a voice regarding agency programs and services. Through online access to information and resources, such as frequently asked questions, GradeDC, and contact information for key programs staff, DSLBD ensures the public is properly informed. Public input and feedback is welcomed on the

agency's website and through social media activity. In an effort to improve public engagement and participation, DSLBD will publish a quarterly newsletter and welcome content suggestions from stakeholders and community partners.

## **Collaboration**

DSLBD has made great strides in enhancing and expanding its practices to further cooperation among departments, other governmental agencies, the public, and non-profit and private entities in fulfilling its obligations. In 2014 DSLBD transformed its office into a mobile, co-work space where agency staff, community development organizations, and small businesses collaborate daily to improve the DC small business environment. This concept is called the Small Business Inclusion Center. The SBIC supports co-location of federal government agencies, local government agencies, and nonprofit community development organizations. Modern business technology, updated policies and procedures for mobile working, and a performance-based culture allow the Center to attract organizations that collaborate to help small businesses succeed in Washington, DC.

The goal of SBIC is to improve the environment for small businesses in the District of Columbia by creating a space where agency staff and partners of the agency collaborate in real-time in setting reflective of the way business is done today – emphasizing mobility, adaptability, and accountability. Since implementation in FY14, the Center has added 14 new partner organizations such as the U.S. Department of Commerce, the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), and the Washington Area Community Investment Fund. Further, DSLBD averages a Grade.DC.gov score of 'A' due to the SBIC's creative approach to catalyzing small business programs.

Additionally, DSLBD has leveraged cooperative agreements with federal government agencies to provide business development programs for District small businesses in the areas of technology, export, and government procurement, all while continuing to collaborate with other District government agencies and community partners in educating and equipping the District small businesses with the tools they need to thrive.