



OFFICE OF THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

ANTONIO REYNOSO

Brooklyn Borough President

BROWNSVILLE SMALL BUSINESS INCUBATION INITIATIVE – REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

The Office of Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso (BKBP) issues this Request for Applications (RFA) from qualified not-for-profit organizations to lead the BKBP's Brownsville Small Business Incubation Initiative (Brownsville Initiative). As established by data captured in the BKBP's [Comprehensive Plan for Brooklyn](#), Brownsville (Brooklyn Community District 16) remains Brooklyn's neighborhood of greatest need. Brownsville residents suffer the shortest life expectancy and highest rates of adult asthma, diabetes, avoidable adult hospitalizations, food insecurity, and COVID-19 death rates in New York City, let alone the borough. Moreover, the median income in Brownsville is \$125,000 less than in Park Slope, with Brownsville among those Brooklyn neighbors containing the borough's highest concentration of rent-burdened tenants, residents living in congregate shelters, service workers, and households earning less than \$39,000 a year.

Toward meeting these challenges, the BKBP, as Chief Executive of Brooklyn, has launched an initiative announced during his 2023 State of the Borough Address. Through the Brownsville Initiative, the BKBP seeks to stimulate citywide accountability to Brownsville through demonstrating that government support can produce two outcomes: (i) the spurring of multiple successful and resourced Brownsville small businesses, especially microbusinesses, and (ii) the revitalization of a commercial corridor by supporting an ecosystem of local entrepreneurs.

Accordingly, the not-for-profit organization that may, in BKBP's discretion, be awarded the discretionary grant mentioned below through this RFA process will be one that (i) demonstrates its capacity to coordinate private and public partnerships in service of Brownsville's revitalization, and (ii) states a plan for helping Brownsville microbusinesses secure resources toward their longevity. The selected applications will be demonstrating past experience with incubating successful microbusinesses and articulating a proposal on how it will, for Brownsville microbusiness, negotiate affordable leases within a local commercial corridor, provide management training and professional development opportunities such as workshops, webinars, and virtual or in-person trainings, offer technical assistance, educate on accounting principles and compliance, and contribute leadership training. If awarded, the organization is eligible to receive up to \$150,000 in discretionary funds from the BKBP, to be paid on a reimbursement basis and over each of Fiscal Year 2025 and Fiscal Year 2026, for a total of \$300,000. Contingent upon Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso's re-election to the Office of the Brooklyn Borough President and in the BKBP's discretion, the BKBP may renew this grant for one (1) year, to be paid



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on a reimbursement basis over the course of Fiscal Year 2027. This contingent and discretionary decision to renew the grant will be based on BKBP's assessment of successful outcomes. As a result, the total awarded under this grant may be up to \$450,000. The terms and conditions of the eligibility for the grant and the use of funds are stated in the application mentioned below and linked to this RFA.

Why A Request For Applications?

Despite the flexibility with source selection that the BKBP enjoys with discretionary funding as recognized by Section 1-02[e] of the Procurement Policy Board Rules, democratic accountability to Brownsville motivates the BKBP to adopt an application method for the award of this discretionary grant. Consistent with the data-driven metric for all the BKBP's decision-making stated on page 3 of the [2022 Transition Team Report](#), the BKBP is awarding a discretionary grant in support of Brownsville based on an organization demonstrating ability to produce the outcome of revitalizing a Brownsville corridor. A focus on successful outcomes is necessary in view of what a 2017 study of Brooklyn's economic development observes: for decades Brownsville has seen city, state, federal, and philanthropic money support a plethora of programs to improve the area with job programs, juvenile-justice programs, juvenile-health programs teaching leadership skills, and civil engagement skills.¹ "Many of them are capably run and thoughtfully designed, far more than the experiments of the War on Poverty years, but one has to wonder whether they amount to a little more than damage control."² The study argues that public-private expenditures have been ineffective because they have not addressed the root cause: isolation depriving Brownsville of the social capital driving upward mobility.³ So, the Brownsville Initiative seeks to stimulate a marshalling of social capital and more effective use of resources to solve root causes. By exercising discretion within defined parameters focused on producing successful outcomes, the BKBP can more effectively drive change on behalf of the Brownsville microbusinesses and residents that are the grant's intended beneficiaries.

Application Submission Requirements

The Brownsville Initiative application is online only. A link to it is [here](#). Note that the application invites attachments, which also may be sent by email to funding@brooklynbp.nyc.gov. Please note that BKBP will only accept one (1) email per applicant consisting of all requested and supporting documentation from each section of the application. Multiple emails will be considered as an incomplete application. Consistent with New York City Comptroller Directive 23 governing

¹ Kay Hymowitz, THE NEW BROOKLYN: WHAT IT TAKES TO BRING A CITY BACK 122 (2017).

² *Id.*

³ *Id.* at 124.



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borough presidents' award of discretionary funding, only not-for-profit organizations may receive the discretionary grant awarded under this RFA. In addition, the BKBP independently requires that applicants (i) be exempt from federal and state taxation, and (ii) be formed in the State of New York or possess authority to do business within the State of New York. To that end, applicants must submit documentation of such qualified status such a determination letter and filed New York certificate of incorporation or New York certificate of authority. Applicants lacking these qualifications that are relying on a fiscal conduit to qualify may apply if they include a letter, memorandum of understanding, or agreement demonstrating the fiscal conduit relationship. In the case of an application relying on a fiscal conduit relationship, applicants must also include a copy of the fiscal conduit's federal tax-exemption determination letter and New York certificate of incorporation or certificate of authority.

The RFA application period will be open for a period of eight (8) weeks, closing on July 17, 2024, at 5:00pm. The BKBP will only review complete applications during a period of eight (8) weeks. Following review, the BKBP will announce the awardee, if any, by September 30, 2024. The awardee, if any, will be selected according to the criteria below, all of which are stated in the application. Applicants are strongly encouraged to include documentation establishing that they meet these criteria, including documentation of previous clients' success:

- Demonstrated ties to Brownsville, Brooklyn such as being headquartered in, or having its principal office located within, Brownsville (Brooklyn Community District 16).
- Demonstrated experience serving residents of Brownsville (Brooklyn Community District 16).
- Demonstrated experience with and ability to incubate successful small businesses, and microbusinesses in particular, within Brooklyn, especially a history of incubating successful Brownsville (Brooklyn Community District 16) small businesses. For what counts as a small business, the BKBP follows the definition stated in Section 131 of the New York State Economic Development Law. For what counts as a microbusiness, the BKBP follows the definition stated in Section 22-1001 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York.
- Demonstrated experience with coordinating or negotiating with private landlords to secure commercial real estate for microbusinesses.
- Demonstrated experience with providing or coordinating management training, leadership training and professional development for microbusinesses.
- Demonstrated experience in offering technical assistance and educating microbusinesses in establishing accounting departments and implementation of sound accounting principles.



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- Articulation of a vision and plan for revitalizing a commercial corridor within Brownsville (Community District 16).
- Articulation of a vision and plan for how such revitalization efforts can employ Brownsville residents.
- Adequacy of resources, including staff/independent contractors, revenue, and assets, private and public partnerships, to carry out an incubation program on a reimbursement basis.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Antonio Reynoso", followed by a horizontal line.

Antonio Reynoso,
Brooklyn Borough President