



Only in Seattle

The Seattle Office of Economic Development's Only in Seattle Initiative provides resources and support to strengthen and grow local business district organizations that work to achieve the vision and priorities of their communities.

The Only in Seattle Vision:

Seattle is a racially equitable and vibrant city with engaged neighborhood business districts that are centers of local commerce, community, and culture.

- **Vibrant** - Neighborhoods with a healthy ecosystem of strong businesses serving the community, equitable wealth creation opportunities, active public spaces and unique character.
- **Engaged** - Community led organizations and members have strong voices and the experience, tools and skills for self-determination to address their most pressing needs.
- **Racially Equitable** - Business owners of color and historically under resourced communities are benefiting from the city's growth.

Our Mission:

Support community members to build partnerships, unite around a common vision for neighborhood economic development and work together to achieve their priorities.

Examples:

From business coaching, community festivals, and litter cleanup, to murals, outreach and real estate development, neighborhood business districts apply multiple strategies simultaneously to affect desired changes. The five core strategy areas that OIS uses are based on best practices and decades of experience:

- **Organization** – Neighborhood organizations, residents, property owners and business owners collaborate and work together toward a common vision for the business district.
- **Marketing and Events** – Local businesses are supported by marketing strategies and events that bring customers and emphasize a positive, consistent image of the district.
- **Business Development** – Businesses prosper because they are supported by the community, know how to find help, and receive the assistance they need to strengthen and grow their business. New businesses move into the district that complement and improve the business mix. Long-term businesses can stay and grow in the district.

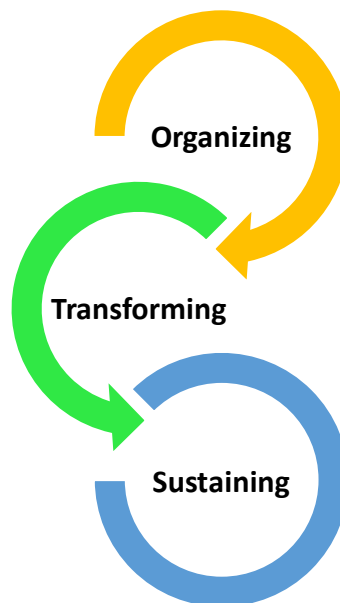


- **Placemaking** – The physical environment of a commercial district is inviting and easily accessible by multiple modes of transportation. Real estate development involves community input and vision. Public spaces are maximized to enhance vibrancy and promote social interaction.
- **Clean & Safe** – The district is clean and customers, employees, and visitors feel safe and welcome.

How the Program Works

Stages of Organizational Development

The Only in Seattle program supports neighborhood business districts at different stages of organizational development and community work to help them form, grow, get stronger and take on new projects. The program categorizes the stages of organizational development as the following:



The work depends based on the stage that the project is in.

Organizing

In this stage, one or more community members might be thinking about reaching out to see if others are interested in working together to develop a plan. There could also be one or more organizations working in the community that see potential for focusing on shared priorities or

new projects together. There might be interest in creating a Business Improvement Area that would follow a similar path.

Generally, districts in this stage are working on these milestones:

- Establishing a representative stakeholder group.
- Creating a Vision and Action Plan for the district that identifies early win projects.
- Developing a business directory and focus on inclusive outreach.

Transforming

In this stage, districts have a current action plan and an organization or established group working on the plan. They may have been working for many years or just getting started. There will be ongoing outreach and engagement of businesses and stakeholders, continual development of the organization's capacity to manage the work, fundraising, and work on priority projects.

Generally, districts in this stage are working on these milestones:

- Strengthen organizational structure to manage the action plan work with a representative board or committee
- Implement Action Plan strategies and identify metrics to track progress
- Develop partnerships and deepen inclusive business outreach and engagement
- Establish communication platform and strategies – neighborhood branding/ promotion, storytelling, info sharing

Sustaining

In this stage, districts have accomplished the milestones of the Organizing and Transforming stages and are moving toward financial and organizational sustainability with ongoing implementation of an action plan.

Generally, districts in this stage are working on these milestones:

- Strengthen the organization board, increase volunteers and hire and train staff
- Increase neighborhood level investments in the work, such as membership dues, donations, sponsorships, or establishing a Business Improvement Area
- Deepen inclusive business outreach and engagement, provide support and technical assistance to local businesses



- Track commercial spaces in the district, build relationships with property owners, facilitate connections between businesses and property owners
- Track and influence development projects in the business district
- Update or revise Action Plan to respond to neighborhood needs

Trainings and Resources

Staff and volunteers working on Only in Seattle projects will have access to several trainings to help them learn new tools and approaches to expand their work and connect with others in the city. Some trainings will be mandatory, and others are optional.

Mandatory Trainings:

- Racial Equity in Business Districts training
- Operationalizing Racial Equity facilitated work sessions
- Only in Seattle orientation

Other Typical Trainings:

- BIPOC Cohort: A Collective Organizing and Power Building Space
- New programs and resources for businesses
- Community Clean & Safe Strategies
- Tips for Events and Activations in Public Spaces

Resources

Only in Seattle has assembled a variety of resources to support business districts in their journey through the stages of development. Districts will have an OIS staff person as their primary point of contact who will work with them to determine which resources to access and help identify others that may be useful. Available resources are:

- Community Liaison support to improve outreach and build relationships with business owners of color
- Assistance in forming a Business Improvement Area (BIA), modifying an existing BIA's boundaries or rate payment structure, exploring the feasibility of a BIA, or BIAs interested in support to strengthen or improve operations
- Access to PlacerAi and Costar Data



- Business technical assistance and financing services and referrals
- Peer-to-peer connections and learning events
- Affordable commercial tools and workshops

OIS staff will work closely with business districts to assess their progress along the OIS stages. Much of the work includes making connections with other City staff and resources to help resolve issues faced by the neighborhoods and businesses. Often business district organizations are under-resourced, understaffed and relying heavily on volunteer support. OIS staff will endeavor to provide support to districts as time and capacity allow but are not able to lead or manage work on behalf of the organization.

Program Elements

Business District – The program focuses on serving neighborhood business districts, which generally describes the commercial center, corridor or area within a residential neighborhood. Typically an application is focused on addressing the comprehensive needs of one neighborhood and not serving all or multiple neighborhoods in the city.

Coordination and Collaboration – The program seeks to foster collaboration toward a common vision and set of collective priorities. If multiple organizations are working within a business district on similar activities and applying for funds separately, priority will be given to efforts that are coordinated, supportive of one another, and working on a shared action plan.

Engagement and Participation – The more inclusive outreach and organizing efforts are, the more representative the final priorities and plan will be. Diverse perspectives within the leadership of the group or organization, volunteers and staff will strengthen the work. Ideally representatives with different perspectives and interests in the district will be involved in developing plans and leading the work such as business owners, local institutions, non profits, residents, community groups, property owners, and individuals from different races, genders, sexual orientations, incomes, ages, abilities, etc.

Impact and Long-Term Sustainability - The Action Plans should be focused on making an immediate impact in the district and developing organizational and program structures that will allow the work to be sustainable over time.

Investment - OED will make an investment of grant dollars, technical assistance, training resources and staff time in each participating business district. The grant funding can reimburse operating and direct costs incurred such as staff costs, supplies, admin, etc. within a calendar year. Awards are often based on cost estimates; if actual project costs are lower than estimated, the unused funds may be maintained by OED.

Reporting Requirements – Business districts are required to keep track of outcomes in their contract, including a list of businesses receiving direct support. All reporting requirements will be included in the contract.

Code of Conduct - The Office of Economic Development’s Only in Seattle Initiative is committed to providing a friendly, safe and welcoming environment for all, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, ability, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and religion. Participants in Only in Seattle Initiative include City of Seattle staff, neighborhood and business organization staff, volunteers, board and committee members, businesses, residents and property owners involved in action planning and implementation of Only in Seattle action plans and projects. We invite all those who participate in Only in Seattle to help us create safe and positive experiences for everyone.

Eligible Projects and Activities

The types of projects funded through the Only in Seattle Initiative relate directly to the process of organizing, transforming and sustaining neighborhood business district organizations and their action plans. The specific activities vary based on the stage of development that a business district is in. For the 2023 application, there are three options for funding:

Option 1: Organizing

For a business district just getting started or at the early stages of organizing and action planning, the OIS program can pay for consulting, staff and other costs related to getting started. For example, typical activities include: conducting outreach to businesses and stakeholders, holding focus groups, analyzing the district, facilitation of meetings to develop a vision or action plan, and writing the plan.

- Outreach to bring stakeholders together and identify the issues and needs of local businesses

- Scheduling and facilitating planning meetings
- Data and analysis to study the business district
- Development of contact databases to support outreach and engagement
- Collaborative identification of business district issues and priority solutions
- Collaborative development of a shared vision for the business district
- Collaborative creation of an action plan for the district
- Support to create a nonprofit organization that will accomplish the vision
- Hiring staff or consultants to support the above activities

Option 2: Short Term Project

This option is for business districts that have a local organization such as a chamber of commerce, Business Improvement Area, community development organization, or other similar group focused on supporting the business district. The OIS program can fund a one-time investment in a specific project that will allow the organization or business district to enhance services, build its capacity and/or meet an immediate need. The project should align with the OIS program model and goals. Funding can cover costs such as consulting, staff and project costs to help strengthen organizational capacity, update the vision or action plan, or complete a discrete project in the action plan. The types of projects generally fall into the categories:

- **Organizational development:** strategic plans for organizations, community outreach and consulting to update the district vision and action plan, development of a BIA, etc.
- **Marketing and Events:** startup costs to launch a marketing project or event that will become self-sustaining and support the district and its local businesses
- **Business Development:** projects that will improve the organization's ability to serve local businesses, particularly business owners of color
- **Placemaking:** one-time investments that will enhance public spaces within business districts for many years
- **Clean and Safe:** one-time investments that can help a district cover excess cleaning and maintenance needs or establish a new program or service that will be sustained into the future.

Option 3: Current OIS Partner

This option is reserved for organizations that were OIS partner grantees in 2021 and/or 2022 and are making progress with the OIS model, at whichever stage: organizing, transforming or sustaining. Funding can cover consulting, staff and project costs to support the work within the action plan and build organizational capacity to continue working. Grants in this stage will support any activities mentioned above. Here are other examples of typical funded activities:

- Costs to complete priority projects in the action plan
- Organizational costs to administer the grant and build internal systems
- Outreach, technical assistance, and support to local businesses
- Websites, databases, social media platforms, communication plans
- Consulting to establish a district brand, develop marketing strategies, purchase collateral, etc.
- Fundraising to support the action plan, business membership campaigns, business improvement area petitions, etc.
- Training, conferences, board retreats, and consulting to learn about nonprofit management, establishing internal systems and practices, strategies to support business districts, racial equitable practices, etc.

Organizations that received Neighborhood Economic Recovery Funds in 2021 or 2022 but did not receive OIS funds are not considered OIS partner grantees and are eligible for Options 1 and 2 but not 3. Please contact an OIS team member if you are not sure.

Award Amounts

Awards will be given based on the stage of development, the applicant's proposed budget and application review scores. Applicants should make a reasonable and detailed budget request with specific cost estimates determined based on experience and/or research of probable costs. A modest contingency for cost overruns can be included. OED reserves the right to award an amount that is more or less than the budget requested, which may require a revision of the project budget and scope. General award amounts will fall into these ranges based on the type of request:

- Option 1, Organizing: **Up to \$50,000**
- Option 2, Short Term Project: **\$25,000 - \$100,000**
- Option 3, Current OIS Partner: **\$25,000 – \$200,000**

Timeline for Spending Awards

Awards must be contracted within three months of the award announcement and fully expended by December 15, 2023. Contracts cannot be backdated.

Application Process

Applicants will complete the Only in Seattle 2023 application using the [Fluxx grant portal](#). Instructions for registering and using the portal can be found [here](#).

Application Timeline:

- September 20, 2022: Application opens for Current OIS Partner Grantees (Option 3)
- September 22, 2022: Save the Date announcement of the upcoming release
- September 29, 2022: Application opens for all
- October 18, 2022: Deadline for Current OIS Partner Grantees (Option 3)
- October 31, 2022: Application closes at 5:00 pm PST
- November 2022: Applications reviewed by panel and funding decisions made
- Early December 2022: Grant awardees will be notified and contracting will begin

Community Workshops/Information Sessions

Two information sessions will be held to describe the intent of this funding opportunity and answer questions such as: the types of activities that can be funded, the application process, and how to use the online grant portal. One online session will be hosted on Webex and will be recorded and posted to OED's website.

- **Friday, September 30, 2022, 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.:** Virtual Webex Session, the password is OIS2023. The recording will be posted to OED's website
- **Friday, October 14, 2022:** In Person Info Session, time and location TBD (same information will be covered)

OED Staff Support

To ensure a fair and equitable process, OED staff are available during scheduled information sessions and for individual assistance. Applicants must contact OED to request assistance in advance of the application deadline and give sufficient time to schedule a follow up meeting to discuss the assistance needed. Applicants must review all written materials and addendums related to this funding opportunity. OED reserves the right to make an award(s) based on the

application submitted. Therefore, the application should be submitted on the most favorable terms.

Language Support

Bi-lingual staff are available in the following languages to answer questions and help applicants complete their applications: Vietnamese, Mandarin, Cantonese, Spanish, Korean, Amharic, Somali. Other languages can be supported using a language-line for simultaneous translation. Call the OED Resource line for language assistance: 206-684-8090.

Minimum Applicant and Awardee Eligibility Requirements

Eligible applicants can be business organizations, community organizations, cultural districts, consultants, or a collection of individuals that are supporting neighborhood business district strategies. To receive an award, there must be a legally constituted entity that meets the following minimum eligibility requirements. If the applicant does not meet these requirements, they can have a sponsor organization to accept and manage the grant funds on their behalf (fiscal sponsor).

- Awardees or their Fiscal Sponsor must meet all licensing requirements that apply to its organization. Companies must license, report, and pay revenue taxes for the Washington State Business License (UBI#) and Seattle Business License, if they are required by the laws of those jurisdictions.
- Awardees or their Fiscal Sponsor must have a Federal Tax ID number/employer identification number (EIN) to facilitate payments from the City of Seattle.
- Awardees or their Fiscal Sponsor must be established as a legal entity in the State of Washington OR a federally recognized or Washington State-recognized Indian tribe
- The Awardee or their Fiscal Sponsor's status as a legal entity must be in good standing and must not have been revoked in the previous calendar year.
- The Awardee or their Fiscal Sponsor cannot be on the list of current entities disbarred or suspended from receiving federal funds.

If you do not meet these legal requirements and do not have a fiscal sponsor, you can complete the application but will need to find a fiscal sponsor before you can receive a grant contract. The application has a question for you to indicate that you need help finding a fiscal sponsor.

Screening, Rating and Selection Process

Selection Criteria

The following criteria will be used to evaluate applications and determine funding awards.

- **Equity:** Projects serving high displacement risk neighborhoods and/or projects focusing support for BIPOC businesses and communities.
- **Progress:** Does the district and/or partners demonstrate a record of collaboration and successful project completion? If the request is for a one-time project, does the project fit into a typical OIS action plan for business district development? If applicant is ongoing OIS grantee, are they making progress on their action plan?
- **Community Supported:** Is the project directed by and directly benefiting the community, and does the organization(s) have a history of work in the community?
- **Program Alignment:** Will this proposal advance or sustain organizational capacity to serve the district following the OIS program model? If new or organizing, does the district show potential and willingness to engage in the model? If district is ongoing OIS applicant, are they keeping their action plan current? If request is for a one-time project, will it help the district make progress on building capacity and/or achieving goals? If the district has other resources, are they proposing to match the request?

Screening

Applications that are started in the system but not submitted by the deadline, those that are incomplete, or do not meet minimum eligibility requirements upon initial eligibility screen will be deemed ineligible and will be eliminated from further consideration. OED reserves the right to seek clarification and accept or waive any nonmaterial irregularities or informalities in determining whether an application is complete, submitted, and eligible. OED may contact the primary contact person listed on the completed application to clarify application contents.

Rating and Selection

All eligible and complete applications will be reviewed and individually scored using the Selection Criteria by members of the review committee. OED may schedule and conduct interviews and/or site visits with some or all applicants prior to making funding recommendations to the OED Director. Following the review process, including interviews if any, the review committee will forward its funding recommendations to the OED Director for final decision regarding the award(s). Notification of investment awards will be sent to the primary contact of the applicant indicated on the application.

OED reserves all rights not expressly stated in the funding opportunity, including making no awards or awarding partial funding and negotiating with any applicant regarding the funding amount and other terms of any contract resulting from this funding opportunity.



Appeals Procedures

If an unsuccessful applicant wishes to appeal the decision, they must do so by submitting in writing the reason for the appeal to the Director of the Office of Economic Development. Any such appeal must be received within three (3) business days of receipt of notification of decision. The Director shall consider all the facts available and issue a decision within five (5) business days after receipt of the request for rehearing, unless additional time is necessary, in which case, the affected respondent will be notified of the delay. The decision of the Director will be final and conclusive. A request for reconsideration will be denied. Questions about these Appeals Procedures should be directed to Theresa Barreras at theresa.barreras@seattle.gov or (206) 963-9288.

Annual Application Process

Comprehensive business district development can take many years to accomplish. Every year there is a process to determine the annual awards for the upcoming year. Any districts seeking to join or continue in the program will need to follow the current guidelines for making a funding request. New applications will be considered along with work plans and budget requests from participating districts to determine final grant awards for the upcoming year. Requests may be reviewed by multiple City staff from the OIS team and may also include other departments such as Seattle Department of Transportation, Department of Neighborhoods, Office of Planning and Community Development, Office of Arts & Culture, to inform decisions and discuss collaboration opportunities.

Contracting Process

If the application is selected for funding, applicants should be prepared to enter into a contract resulting from this funding opportunity. Grantees will receive a one-year grant commitment and contract. Each year the investments are contingent upon the availability of funds for this program and the grantee's progress on activities during the previous year(s).

Contracts need to be written and signed before work is eligible for reimbursement. Contracts can be developed immediately after investment notifications in November. Contracts become active once they have been signed by the applicant and OED and can not be back-dated. The contract will include specific activities, milestones and a budget based on an action plan that is accepted by OED and the district.