



# Innovate DC

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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If you have additional questions or require further clarification about the **INNOVATE DC** grant, you are strongly encouraged to call 202-724-5613 or contact:

- Derek Younger, Special Assistant at [derek.younger2@dc.gov](mailto:derek.younger2@dc.gov)  
or
- Moshe Adams, Director of Grants at [moshe.adams@dc.gov](mailto:moshe.adams@dc.gov)

### ***Does Innovate DC require a one to one match?***

No, Innovate DC does not require a one to one match. *However, DCCAH will not fund 100% of the project costs.* The ceiling amount is set at \$100,000. Applicants are encouraged to apply for amounts that they deem appropriate for their project activities.

The panel of experts will determine the level of commitment, just as they would determine personnel expertise, timeline, and other factors that make for a successful project. This requirement is a departure from the regular grants programs, which typically requires a 1:1 cash match for organizations, with a few exceptions.

***In-kind contributions are allowable for Innovate DC and can count toward the match!*** Yes, in-kind contributions are allowable. The matching requirement can be demonstrated through a combination of cash and in-kind match. Some examples of in-kind resources are: donated services, financial resources, donated venue use, etc. The only budgetary restriction on Innovate DC projects is that there must be other resources put toward the completion of the project outside of the DCCAH grant award.

***Do you have to be an arts and humanities organization to be the lead applicant?***

No, you do not have to be an arts or humanities organization to be a lead applicant. However, a history of providing arts and humanities programs does greatly strengthen an application. You must be a nonprofit organization located in the District of Columbia.

***Are fiscal agents allowed to apply?***

Fiscal agents are strictly prohibited from applying; however, partnerships are strongly encouraged. Applicants must determine the most appropriate lead applicant based on DCCAH eligibility. All lead applicants must be eligible according to DCCAH eligibility requirements stated in the Innovate DC guidelines. Applicants may include fiscal partners as a part of the overall partnership.

***Can project activities start within the April 1-September 30 period and continue from October 1 and beyond?***

No, Innovate DC project activities and expenditures must be completed by September 30, 2015.

***What is meant by a “strategic departure” from my standard practices?***

Innovate DC is a new approach to grant making from the DCCAH. The goal is to support creative, innovative and groundbreaking projects that are outside of an applicant’s “business as usual.” The DCCAH is looking to encourage pioneering and inventive projects that use the arts, humanities and Creative Economy to impact District residents.

***Will projects outside the District of Columbia be considered?***

Only projects presented in the District of Columbia will be considered, however collaborations are encouraged with individuals and entities inside and outside the District of Columbia. The lead applicant must have their principal place of business located in the District.

***My organization is located in Laurel, MD but we work almost exclusively in DC. Am I eligible to apply for Innovate DC?***

No, in order to be a lead applicant, you must meet all of the eligibility requirements that are listed in the Innovate DC guidelines. The partners and collaborators that you choose are entirely up to you.

***What are some types of organizations that my organization can collaborate with?***

Applicants may collaborate or partner with organizations such as private corporations, government agencies, artists consortiums, financial institutions, research firms, political think tanks, etc.

***Can I partner/program with DCPS or a charter school if my organization is an eligible lead applicant?***

Yes, applicants may partner/program with DCPS or a charter school if the organization is an eligible lead applicant and meets the funding criteria for consideration?

***Can I partner with organizations outside of the District of Columbia?***

Yes, the Innovate DC grant allows partnerships with any organization, business or artist outside of DC. However, the lead applicant must meet all of the eligibility requirements that are listed in the Innovate DC guidelines. All types of partnerships and collaborations are encouraged.

***Is adding 2 weeks of programming to our annual festival an eligible project for Innovate DC?***

It is eligible but it is not a strong proposal. On its own, the project does not speak to a “visionary idea that is a strategic departure... from standard practices,” which is the most heavily weighted criteria for Innovate DC. Additionally, the Innovate DC grant is created to support initiatives that are original, in development, or have not yet been realized. Simply adding programming onto a preexisting project is not the strongest fit for Innovate DC.

***My organization has a small budget. Will my application be compared to organizations with large budgets?***

No, the DCCAH’s panel review process is not comparative. All applications are scored individually according to the Innovate DC criteria listed below. Innovate DC panelists will review applications in groups according to the applicant’s organizational and project budget size.

- **Innovation 40%:** The project is a visionary idea that represents a strategic departure from the applicant’s standard practices.

- **Responsiveness 30%:** The project responds to an unfulfilled need within the community, with particular emphasis on citywide impact.
- **Impact 30%:** The project is transformative, having the potential to initiate change within the District of Columbia's arts, humanities and creative economy communities.

***Can my organization submit more than one application?***

Yes. Applicants can submit more than one application to Innovate DC.