



**TENLEYTOWN MAIN STREET 2026 SMALL BUSINESS GRANTS  
APPLICATION GUIDELINES**

**I. SUMMARY**

Tenleytown Main Street (TMS) is a community-based nonprofit organization that works with residents and local businesses to strengthen the economic vitality of Tenleytown. We seek to achieve a business district that is a thriving, walkable, and friendly neighborhood center that retains its small town feel with up-to-date urban amenities. Tenleytown Main Street is a nationally accredited Main Street America  program and a designated DC Main Streets program, which is funded, in part, by the DC Department of Small and Local Business Development.

The 2026 Small Business Grants provide funding to businesses located within the Tenleytown Main Street corridor. Grant funds may be used for: interior and exterior renovations and storefront improvements; security upgrades; and select hard and soft costs to support business growth.

Applications are due by 11:59 pm on April 7, 2026. Grant awards will be announced no later than May 1, 2026. All funded projects must be completed no later than August 31, 2026.

**II. APPLICATION PROCESS**

Applications are available starting March 2, 2026 on the Tenleytown Main Street website at <https://tenleytownmainstreet.org/small-business-grants/>.

**ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN 11:59 P.M. ON TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2026.  
APPLICANTS WILL BE NOTIFIED OF THEIR AWARD STATUS BY FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2026.**

All awards are contingent on approval by Tenleytown Main Street and the availability of funds. Submission of an application does not constitute an agreement to issue a grant award. TMS reserves the right to amend this announcement and program description subsequent to its issuance.

All required documentation listed in the application must be submitted for the application to be considered complete. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed. TMS will evaluate applications and determine eligibility based solely on the documents provided by the applicant(s) and the availability of funds. Information provided as a part of this grant application



shall only be used in evaluating the proposed project. The information will not be made public nor shared with any government entity.

Applications should be submitted electronically via the online application form. To help businesses prepare their application, a copy of the application questions and required documentation is included at the end of this document. If an applicant is unable to submit their application electronically for any reason, they should contact Tenleytown Main Street by email at [info@tenleytownmainstreet.org](mailto:info@tenleytownmainstreet.org) prior to the application deadline. TMS will make all reasonable accommodations for businesses unable to submit online.

### III. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

To qualify for a grant, the applicant must:

- Be incorporated in the District of Columbia as demonstrated by a current DC business license.
- Be a for-profit entity; non-profit organizations are not eligible.
- Have a physical presence located within the boundaries of Tenleytown Main Street. A map of the TMS boundaries is included with these guidelines. Businesses can verify whether their business is within the boundaries by contacting Tenleytown Main Street. Businesses whose operations and/or sales transactions for the exchange of goods and services are conducted solely online are not eligible.
- Have at least 3 years left in their lease, verified by submitting a copy of the lease. For businesses that own their own property, they will need to provide proof of ownership.
- Have not received a Small Business Grant from Tenleytown Main Street within the last nine (9) months. Businesses that applied for, but did not receive, a Small Business Grant are eligible to apply.
- Submit a complete application and all required supporting materials by the deadline of April 7, 2026, at 11:59 p.m.

The following types of businesses are not eligible to receive grant funding:

- Adult entertainment and/or other age restricted businesses
- Gas stations or automotive repair
- Banks or other financial services



- Home-based businesses
- National chains or regional chains with more than 5 locations
- Seasonal businesses
- Any organization that discriminates against individuals on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, personal appearance, gender, sexual orientation, family responsibilities, political affiliation, physical handicap, or any other protected class under the DC Human Rights Act and/or any federal anti-discrimination statute or regulation
- Churches and nonprofit organizations
- District of Columbia government agencies

#### IV. PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

Businesses that meet the eligibility criteria above may apply for a small business grant for the following:

1. Facade and storefront improvements, including repair or replacement of glass, woodwork, masonry, or other facade components; repair or replacement of doors and/or windows; exterior painting; exterior lighting for business signs or that is integral to the facade of the commercial building; equipment or furniture for a permitted sidewalk cafe or summer garden, including tents, chairs, tables, partitions, or signage.
2. Repair or installation of a canvas awning if there is demonstrated environmental or aesthetic need that makes an awning a better choice than a business sign. If there is no business sign, the awning must have the name of the business and street number imprinted on the canvas. Repair or installation of vinyl awnings is not permitted.
3. Signage, including signs, mounting brackets and other hardware, and/or window lettering. Sign text must include the business name; additional text must be approved by TMS. Currently, neon and light-box style signs are not eligible for funding. Interior signage is not eligible.
4. Security cameras, including installation and equipment. Applicants who receive funding for security systems must apply for the DC Private Security Camera Rebate Program to receive up to a \$750 rebate on equipment costs. Information on the rebate program is



available online at <https://ovsjg.dc.gov/page/private-security-camera-rebate-program>  
Applicants should verify that their security equipment meets the rebate program's criteria. TMS can assist grant recipients in completing the rebate application.

5. Security upgrades, such as the purchase and installation of a monitored security system, exterior lighting, safety window film, or reinforced doors or locks. Exterior security improvements, as much as possible, should be consistent with good design principles and aesthetics.
6. Interior Improvements, which are primarily decorative, minor remodels, and permanent equipment. Examples include painting or repairing interior walls, floors, or ceilings; purchase, installation, or repair of retail storage or shelving; and/or purchase, installation, or repair of heavy equipment such as HVAC systems, refrigerators, stoves, dishwashers, or other permanent equipment necessary for running the business.
7. Business Development investments that promote sales growth, business expansion, the formation of strategic partnerships, or increased profitability. Examples of eligible expenses include: website development or upgrades, including up to 1-year of website hosting costs; e-commerce, including point-of-sale integration with online sales systems; and/or point-of-sale equipment or upgrades.

The small business grants may not be used for the following:

- design costs
- permit fees
- maintenance
- loan interest
- payment of past due bills
- reimbursements for expenses incurred for already completed projects
- any work that is not specified in the work order submitted with the application.

Each applicant and grant recipient is responsible for determining DC government permit and/or licensing requirements and obtaining required permissions prior to beginning any project funded through this program. Businesses proposing physical improvements to the business interior or



exterior must provide a signed letter or support from the property owner with their application materials.

Businesses with multiple locations within the Tenleytown Main Street boundaries may only submit one application.

#### **V. TIMELINE**

March 2, 2026	2026 TMS Small Business Grant Application Released
April 7, 2026	Applications due by 11:59 pm
By May 1, 2026	Grant awards announced, and grant agreements sent to awardees
By May 1, 2026	Grant funds disbursed subject to receipt of signed grant agreement
By August 31, 2026	Funded projects must be completed
By September 15, 2026	Grantee final reports submitted to TMS

All funds must be expended by August 31, 2026 and reported with documentation submitted to Tenleytown Main Street within 30 days of project completed and not later than September 15, 2026. Grantees shall submit a report to TMS that includes:

1. Brief description of completed project.
2. Copies of receipts, cancelled checks, and/or paid invoices for all grant expenditures.
3. If applicable: Before and After photos of improvements funded by the grant.
4. If applicable: Copies of any documents or materials developed with grant funds.

Any funds not expended as described in the grantee's agreement with TMS and/or not fully expended by August 31, 2026, must be returned to Tenleytown Main Street. Failure to comply with spending and reporting requirements may render a business ineligible to receive future funding.

#### **VI. CONTACT INFORMATION**

Businesses interested in learning more about the grant program or with questions about how to make storefront or other business improvements, may contact Tenleytown Main Street at 202-362-1815 or [execdir@tenleytownmainstreet.org](mailto:execdir@tenleytownmainstreet.org).

# TENLEY TOWN MAIN STREET

## VII. MAP OF TENLEYTOWN MAIN STREET BUSINESS DISTRICT

Businesses can verify whether their business is within the boundaries by contacting Tenleytown Main Street.

