

Launch Pad Initiative

A forum for local businesses to pitch themselves for citywide development contracts.

City: Washington, D.C

Purpose: To facilitate a competition between local businesses for small contract awards tied to citywide development

Lead Stakeholders: Government, Business, Community

Process: In 2017, local businesses in DC were given the opportunity to pitch themselves as candidates for development contracts. To qualify, a business had to be designated a Certified Business Enterprise, with criteria including being physically based in DC with an ownership, workforce, or gross income primarily from the District.

For each launch pad event, the Department of General Services in DC solicited proposals. Ten qualifying CBEs were invited to make their pitch in-person about why they were best positioned to complete the contract. Local, Small and Disadvantaged Businesses were given preference points in the evaluation process. At the end of the launch pad event, one of the businesses was awarded the contract and began work on citywide development.

Contracts awarded included local school construction and community center comprehensive cleaning services. These competitions, and their local business participants, meant that communities were able to economically engage in their own development. In the case of Clean Decision, LLC, for example, the small business owners won a contract for servicing a community center that they and their families used daily.

Outcomes:

- Up to **100K in contracts** awarded for each launch pad event.
- Citywide development done by local businesses who have connections to the community they are developing.

