



Market Center Community Merchants Association

Charm City's Most Connected Neighborhood

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MARKET CENTER MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES STOREFRONT COMPETITION *Two Howard Street storefronts to be awarded to local small businesses ready to grow*

BALTIMORE, Maryland – December 3, 2019 – Baltimore small businesses are in for a treat this season: The inaugural **Howard Row Small Business Storefront Competition** kicks off today. Local developer **Poverni Sheikh Group (PSG)** is sponsoring the contest in partnership with **Market Center Merchants Association** and **Charles Street Development** in an effort to increase foot traffic, attract new businesses, and increase awareness in the burgeoning Market Center district of Downtown Baltimore. The commercial spaces are part of the new **Howard Row project** at 407-415 N. Howard Street and include large storefront windows.

Contest winners will receive one year of free rent, though they will need to contribute financially to tenant improvements, put down a security deposit, and pay insurance and utilities. Each space will be delivered as a shell and includes one customer bathroom, one HVAC unit, and vinyl flooring. PSG anticipates allocating two of the following three addresses for the selected businesses: **409, 411, or 413 N. Howard Street**. Each unit measures between 664 and 779 square feet.

The application process includes an information session in early January, with a **deadline of January 31, 2020**. Selected finalists will interview with a panel of judges, including community stakeholders, in February. Winners will be announced before the beginning of March. **The application is online at <http://marketcenterbaltimore.org/competition/>.**

Application criteria for businesses include how well they can meet the needs and desires of neighborhood residents and employees, increase foot traffic in Market Center, and offer goods or services that do not currently exist in the area—or bring a unique twist to an existing concept

“We’re proud to be at the forefront of Market Center’s revival,” stated **PSG CEO Eugene Poverni**. “The upcoming Lexington Market renovation offers an opportunity for businesses and developers to get in on the ground floor—and we want to do as much as we can to provide opportunities to some of Baltimore’s most driven and creative entrepreneurs.”

In a recent survey, neighborhood residents were most interested in bars and restaurants, grocery and specialty food offerings, small boutiques, and arts & entertainment spaces. Over 275 businesses currently reside on the ground floor of buildings in the neighborhood surrounding Lexington Market, but many empty storefronts exist, rife with opportunity for new businesses.



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The competition is focused on providing opportunities to creative-sector projects, small scale “makers”, and businesses rooted in cultures from around the world. Minority, women, immigrant, city resident, and/or veteran-owned businesses that offer accessibly priced options are especially encouraged to apply.

The Howard Street Storefront Competition is open until January 31, 2020. Learn more and apply here: <http://marketcenterbaltimore.org/competition/>.

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Howard Row Storefront Competition Key Dates:

- Application Opens: **12/3/2019**
- Information Session: **1/8/2020 - 6pm, 409 N. Howard Street**
- Application Deadline: **1/31/2020**
- Finalist Interviews: **2/18/2020**
- Finalist Selection and Announcement: **2/28/2020**

About the Market Center Neighborhood:

Once the retail epicenter for Baltimore, the 27-block Market Center is a diverse community of commerce, arts, entertainment, anchor institutions, and residential buildings. Its location in the heart of downtown is rich with history and landmarks and is home to world-class live theater, the famed Lexington Market, long-time businesses and major employers.

Market Center is roughly bounded by Baltimore Street to the south, Greene to the west, Cathedral/Liberty to the east and Madison to the north.

About [Poverni Sheikh Group \(PSG\)](#):

Poverni Sheikh Group is a 30 person vertically integrated sponsor with in-house development, construction, bridge debt and property management platforms with a key focus on development, lending and construction in the prime high growth Baltimore & Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area. The PSG leadership team includes Eugene Poverni, Ibrahim Seikh, and Greg Kostrikin.

About [Market Center Merchants Association](#):

The Market Center Merchants Association focuses on supporting commerce, retaining and attracting businesses, and improving the consumer and residential experience in one of Baltimore's most historic neighborhoods.

About Charles Street Development

The Charles Street Development is a non-profit organization, 501 (c)(3), whose mission is to support and promote the businesses, cultural attractions, entertainment venues, restaurants and retail establishments along the Charles Street corridor. HCSA serves as a problem solving and information resource for its members, as well as provides a forum for networking, communication and collaboration.

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