Wandsworth Borough Council
Discretionary Business Fund Scheme

Introduction

1. In response to the Coronavirus, COVID-19, the government announced there would be support for small businesses, and businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors, delivered through the Small Business Grant Fund and the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Grant Fund.

2. This additional scheme is aimed at small and micro businesses which have suffered a significant reduction in income as a result of COVID-19, have significant ongoing property costs but were not eligible for the Small Business Grant Fund or the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Fund.

Funding available for the scheme

3. The scheme is funded via a grant from central Government and is calculated as 5% of the combined values of the Small Business Grant Scheme and the retail Hospitality and Leisure Grant Scheme. For Wandsworth, this gives a total amount of £2.883m.

4. The demand for this scheme will be high for the limited level of resources available. We therefore anticipate that awards from this scheme will be approximately £5,000 per business, although the exact amount will vary in response to the level of demand measured against the criteria set out within the scheme.

Eligibility

5. This grant funding is for businesses that are not eligible for other grant support schemes. Businesses which have received cash grants from any central government COVID related scheme are ineligible for funding from the Discretionary Grants Fund. Such grant schemes include, but are not limited to:

   • Small Business Grant Fund
   • Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant

   Businesses making use of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to furlough staff are eligible for this scheme.

   Self-employed individuals who have claimed under the Self Employment Income Support Scheme are eligible for this scheme.

6. Only businesses which were trading on 11 March 2020 are eligible for this scheme.

7. Companies that are in administration, are insolvent or where a striking-off notice has been made are not eligible for funding under this scheme.

8. Organisations in receipt of any other Council administered Covid-19 related financial assistance will not be considered for an award under this scheme.

9. Any business, other than those in receipt of Mandatory Charitable Rate Relief, with a current business rates assessment (as at 11th March) will not be considered for an award under this scheme.
10. Applications will only be considered from small or micro businesses (as defined in the guidance document). This generally means businesses with fewer than 50 employees.

11. Applications will only be considered from businesses/organisations which are able to demonstrate that their income has dropped significantly as a result of Covid-19 and that they have significant ongoing fixed property costs.

**Council priorities in awarding grant**

12. Because this scheme has a fixed funding level, the Council must apply certain priorities to which types of business it is able to support and how much support it is able to provide to each business.

13. Priority will therefore be given to the following business types, consistent with the Government guidance:

- Regular (trading in the same place for at least 5 days per week) retail market traders with ongoing property costs, such as rent or pitch fees, who do not have their own business rates assessment

- Businesses in shared offices or other flexible workspaces with fixed ongoing property costs (lease / rental agreement etc.) for a minimum of 3 months from 11th March 2020.

- Properties in receipt of mandatory charitable business rates relief which would otherwise have been eligible for Small Business Rates Relief. For properties in receipt of Mandatory Charitable Relief, applications will not be considered in respect of properties where Housing Associations, Educational establishments, Government funded organisations or organisations which are spin offs from local authorities are the liable parties for business rates.

- Bed and breakfast businesses which currently pay Council and where the applicant is resident in the property. The Bed and Breakfast must be the owner’s main source of income and be appropriately licensed. For the avoidance of doubt, applications will not be considered from properties being rented via AirBnB or similar platforms)

14. The level of funding provided to successful applicants will be determined as per the process set out in paragraphs 17.

**Application process**


16. The following information must be provided:

All applicants:

- Name and address of applicant business:
- Nature of business:
- Name and contact details of person making application:
Position within the organisation:

Number of employees at the specified address:

Business Bank account number and sort code:

Proof of ongoing fixed property costs:

(This must show an existing rental / lease / mortgage agreement etc valid for at least 3 months from 11th March 2020)

Proof of loss of income arising from the Covid-19 emergency:

This may take the form of published accounts, management accounts, a letter from your accountant etc. The information must be verifiable and show a clear drop in income

Non charity applicants

Companies House number (if applicable)

VAT registration number (if applicable)

Charities

Charity Commission number

17. The application process will be open for a period of 11 working days with effect from 05/06/20. Applications received after 5 pm on 19/06/20 will not be considered. This is because of the limited funding available for this scheme and the uncertain level of demand.

18. Once all applications have been considered, the Council will allocate the available funding with the criteria being used to calculate the allocation being published alongside the grant awards. These criteria may include, but are not limited to, relating value of awards to level of property costs, paying a flat rate to all successful applicants or applying a de-minimis limit to awards.

Fraudulent applications and errors

19. The Council reserves the right to check the information provided by applicants and, if found to be false, will institute recovery processes for the repayment of any grant and consider taking appropriate legal action. In addition, the Council reserves the right to recover any payments made in error.