

Business Assistance Grant Guidelines

Council is committed to attracting new and expanding existing business and industry to the municipality. Council is willing to provide assistance to businesses in certain circumstances to commence or expand business operations within the shire.

To be eligible for assistance these businesses must demonstrate that they will be financially viable and provide a long-term benefit to the West Wimmera community.

West Wimmera Shire Council's Business Development Department is committed to:

- Encouraging job creation, business growth and investment
- Attracting new business and capital to the region
- Supporting local businesses that enhance local economic development
- Supporting local businesses to connect with government and
- Facilitating investment in business infrastructure to support industry development.

Purpose

This guideline provides a framework to enable Council to provide targeted assistance to businesses to commence or expand operations within the shire. Assistance may include the offsetting of some costs of establishing or expanding businesses which may include permit and fee offsets, and/or may include professional business advice including marketing and business planning.

Program Objectives

The over-arching goals of the Business Assistance Grant is to provide a sustainable and growing shire economy through:

- Support for local businesses that will enable them to enhance their profitability and growth
- Competitiveness and provision of employment opportunities. Council recognises that the creation of employment for the region is one of the most critical challenges that we face.
- The attraction of new businesses to the region.

Level of funding available

Tier 1 – Grant Writing support to the value of up to \$1000 +GST Grant writing support via GrantGuru.

Tier 2 – New Business or expanding existing business – Up to \$10,000 +GST per business.

Eligibility and assessment criteria

Applicants for funding will be assessed against the following criteria and will be awarded until the financial allocation for the program has been exhausted.

The following matters will be assessed in determining if a grant application is successful:

- a) Must have a current/active Australian Business Number (ABN)
- b) Must be based within the municipality of West Wimmera Shire.
- c) Have 20 or less full-time equivalent employees.
- d) Has acquitted any previous Council grants and have no overdue debts with West Wimmera Shire.
- e) Must demonstrate a benefit to the Community.

Tier 1 – Grant Writing Support

To the value of up to \$1000 +GST. Grant writing support via GrantGuru for external funding e.g. State and Federal Government. Additional gap fees will be required to be paid by the business.

Eligible Activities

Activities that will be eligible for grant funding include:

- Grant writing services via GrantGuru
- Grant writing support and assistance via in kind Council support if available

If insufficient information is provided on the application form, Council may seek clarification on the proposed activities before deciding about the grant application.

Ineligible Activities

The type of activities/items that are not eligible for the program are:

- Grant writing services provided outside of GrantGuru or Council
- Associated costs for grant related activities that may be required as part of a grant application. An example might be a survey of an area that may need to be completed in order to submit a grant application. Council can provide support via grant writing, but not for grant requirements.

Application requirements

- Detailed proposal, describing the nature of your business and funding stream intended on applying for.

How to claim grant funding

To claim the funds the applicant must provide Council with:

- A tax invoice from the service provider (including ABN) to Council for the agreed grant sum (+GST).
- A completed acquittal must be submitted once a service provider has been engaged and grant application submitted.

Tier 2 – New or expanding existing business.

Up to \$10,000 +GST per business.

Eligible works

Works that will be eligible for grant funding include:

- Refurbishing or replacing equipment
- Upgrading of facilities
- Repair of building
- Extension to current facilities

If insufficient information is provided on the application form, Council may seek clarification on the proposed works before deciding about the grant application.

Ineligible works

The type of works that are not eligible for the program are:

- Works that have not been approved via the applicable planning and development laws.
- Works on a building that has received grant funds from this program in the past five years.

Application and Assessment

Applications are made through SmartyGrants which can be accessed on Council's Grants web page:
<https://westwimmera.smartygrants.com.au/>

- All directors/principals named.
- Applicants are to provide a business plan, detailing the nature of the business including sufficient financial details to demonstrate the business is sustainable.
- SWOT analysis
- Owner consent (if applicable)

A report will be submitted to Councillors for a decision.

How to claim grant funding

To claim the funds the applicant must provide Council with:

- A tax invoice (including ABN) to Council for 80% of the agreed grant sum (+ GST).
- On completion of works an acquittal must be submitted.
- A tax invoice (including ABN) for the remaining 20%.

Council will inspect the works and only pay the grant funding when the works have been satisfactorily completed in accordance with the agreed schedule of works listed in the agreement.

Terms and conditions

An applicant must comply with the following terms and conditions:

General

- a) The applicant is to submit a completed application form including all supporting information i.e. description of proposed works, a digital image/ photo of business area being upgraded before works commence, photograph.
- b) Eligible works that are successful and require a planning/ building permit will need to obtain a planning/ building permit prior to receiving funds for works. It is the responsibility of the applicant to investigate the requirement of any necessary permits through Councils planning/ building department.
- c) Costs associated with obtaining planning/building permits may be included in the total amount of the grant application, as a reimbursement, providing that the permits are approved and included in the application.
- d) Council will not provide funding for retrospective activities or equipment (activities that have occurred, or equipment purchased, prior to Council decision).
- e) The grant funding is to be used specifically for the project identified in the application.
- f) The applicant is to enter into an agreement with Council listing the agreed schedule of works and grant sum (+GST).
- g) Works should not commence until the applicant has signed the agreement with Council.
- h) You must actively participate in the grant writing process – Tier 1
- i) Works approved for grant funding are to be completed within 12 months from the date the agreement with Council is signed or grant funds will be reallocated.
- j) Funding cannot be used as a deposit or part of a financing agreements.
- k) Any overrun in costs is not the responsibility of Council and extra funds will not be granted.
- l) Applicants are required to partake in media and communications opportunities that promote the council's business grants program.

Works are to be carried out in accordance with the Victorian Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 and

Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017, the Victorian Electricity Safety Act 1998, the Victorian Electricity Safety (Installations) Regulations 2009 and other legislation as required.

Disclaimer

- Council will not be responsible for under estimation of costs.
- A successful applicant cannot be guaranteed funding to the level requested.
- An applicant meeting the key selection criteria will not be guaranteed funding.

OHS Requirements

1. Works are to be carried out in accordance with the Victorian Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004, and Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017, the Victorian Electricity Safety Act 1998, the Victorian Electricity Safety (Installations) Regulations 2009 and other legislation as required

Specifically, the applicant, building owner and licensed contractor must:

- Accord with the Occupational Health and Safety Amendments Regulations 2014, Australian Standards or Codes where they exist.
- Not obstruct and or hinder movement of persons on footpaths or roadways e.g. ladders and scaffolds etc. Traffic management for construction or maintenance work is to be in accordance with the requirements of the Road Management Act 2004 and related Regulations.
- Should a temporary road or footpath closure be required, a Council application for a temporary road or footpath closure must be completed at least ten days before the work is started.
- Not allow items such as drop sheets, ladders, trestles etc. to be a trip hazard for passers-by or motorists.
- Ensure that if any work is required to be done near electrical wiring that this work is completed strictly in accordance with the Victorian Electricity Safety (Installations) Regulations 2009 the Code of Practice on Electrical Safety for Work on or Near High Voltage Electrical Apparatus (the Blue Book 2012) to prevent electrocution or serious injury.
- Ensure the structural integrity of any awnings or structures if work is to be conducted on or from those places.
- Ensure the structural integrity of any ornamental work e.g. stone/brick rosettes, figurines etc. prior to beautification work commencing.
- Ensure when working above ground to inspect roof / awnings or access points for brittle sheets e.g. fibreglass etc. to prevent persons falling through.
- Ensure that any asbestos content of a facade or structure is appropriately handled and managed – reference to WorkSafe Victoria for information on safe handling of asbestos products is essential.
- Ensure that no asbestos cement surfaces are water blasted to prepare the surfaces for painting.
- Ensure that proper access and egress is provided to work areas above ground e.g. ladders should extend 1 metre above landing point; ladders used at a ratio of 4:1 etc.
- Do not work within 2 metres of an unprotected edge – if this is not possible then temporary handrails, fences to be erected to prevent falls or if not practicable, harnesses must be used.

BUSINESS ASSISTANCE GRANT GUIDELINES

- Arrange to have information sheets available (Material Safety Data Sheets) on chemicals used in beautification works e.g. Paint stripper and paints in general. MSDS's are available from the manufacturer and are generally available on the internet on the manufacturer's website.

Review

This program is to be reviewed annually in accordance with the review of Council's budget. The review of the program is to consider:

- The success of the program in achieving the program objectives
- The rate of take-up of the program.
- Feedback from post-grant survey results from building owners
- Whether the grant program information or process need to be revised
- Whether eligible works/activities need to change
- Whether the amount of grant funding should be changed.

To view and complete an application form for the Business Assistance Grant go to:
<https://westwimmera.smartygrants.com.au/>

- Visiting Council's Customer Service Centres
- Telephoning: 13 99 72
- Emailing: economicdevelopment@westwimmera.vic.gov.au