

Micro Business Grant Scheme 2020/21

1. Introduction and Background to the Scheme

The Micro Business Grant Scheme is a county-wide scheme funded through the West Sussex Local Enterprise and Apprenticeship Platform (LEAP). A total of £71,000 has been allocated to Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) to support micro businesses (businesses with less than 10 employees) throughout the District.

The objective of the scheme is to support growth of micro businesses across the District by offering two types of grant to businesses. The first type of grant available is a 'Project Grant' which offers a maximum of £2,000 which can be used to support a new project or initiative which will result in business growth. The second type of grant is an 'Apprenticeship Grant' £1,500 to support the recruitment of an apprentice.

2. Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for the scheme, businesses must meet all the following criteria:

- Your business must be constituted in Mid Sussex and can provide evidence of establishment (such as accounts, VAT registration number, copy of Companies House documentation or evidence as registration as a sole trader). Registered charities are not eligible for this scheme and should refer to the Community and Economic Grant Scheme, details can be found [here](#)
- Your business must have fewer than 10 employees (this includes both part-time and full-time staff)
- For the Project Grants, your business must be able to commit a minimum contribution of 50% towards the cost of the project (this is not required for the Apprenticeship Grants)
- Your business must be available to be visited by officers for a due diligence review,

Returning applicants:

Businesses will be eligible for a maximum of two project grants over two consecutive years. Thereafter businesses will need to take a break of one year before being eligible to apply for the scheme again.

Businesses may apply for an Apprenticeship Grant every year if they wish.

The Panel reserves the right to decline returning applicants.

In the first month of launch, the Micro Business Grant Scheme will only be open for new applicants.

3. Project Criteria (Project Grant Only)

Projects must be activities which will contribute towards business growth and not 'business as usual' activities. Applicants are required to demonstrate how their project will achieve growth and meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Reach new customers
- Increase the number of employees
- Introduce new products or services
- Improve business premises
- Improve business productivity.

In addition to the criteria above, applicants are encouraged to demonstrate how their project aligns with priorities set out in the Council's Economic Development Strategy. This includes:

- The creation of jobs for local people
- Improving the skills of the workforce
- Supporting the local supply chain
- Enhancing the public realm or local amenities
- Promote or improves sustainability.

What to include and how to increase your chance of success:

To improve the chances of success, applicants should include following information in their submission:

- A clear statement on how the project meets stated criteria
- The reasons behind the project and key benefits. Where possible, applicants should also look to include supporting evidence demonstrating need for the project. This information could be in the form of consultation results, research or statistics
- Applications should clearly outline the activities required as part of the project. This includes a detailed cost plan and where possible, supporting quotations and a list of suppliers
- Applicants are also encouraged to provide information on how they will evaluate and measure the success of their project.

4. Eligible Expenditure

Examples of eligible project expenditure includes:

- New equipment
- Website development
- Marketing activities (including specialist research and consultancy fees)
- Training courses
- IT software improvements
- Business space improvements (including signage, lighting etc)
- Product development.

Non-eligible expenditure includes any on-going revenue costs, examples include:

- Membership/Subscription fees (one-off fees are eligible)
- Rent, bills or travel expenses
- Items considered business as usual (e.g. business stock, labels etc)

5. Apprenticeship Grant Criteria

Businesses interested in applying for the Apprenticeship Grant must meet the basic eligibility criteria as set out in section 2. In addition to these criteria, businesses must demonstrate their application will achieve the following:

- Apprentices must be individuals who live in England, not be in full-time education and are required to start an approved apprenticeship before 31st March 2021. Where possible, the apprentice should be recruited within the District.
- Applications must detail the type of apprenticeship which will be offered, the training provider (where possible, the provider should be located in West Sussex), the duration of the apprenticeship and the cost of the programme (this will be the salary of the apprentice).
- Should the application be successful, the Council will require a copy of the Apprenticeship Agreement signed by three parties (the learner, the training provider and the employer).

5. Conditions of the Grant

1. Grants will not be given for expenditure incurred prior to the applications submission date.
2. Grants are claimed retrospectively i.e. after purchase of eligible items and the submission of proof to the Council. Grants will only be paid for items identified in the application form and cannot be used to cover any additional or unexpected costs following the application submission.
3. Payments of grants will be for 50% of expenditure incurred up to the maximum amount of grant awarded. (e.g. if applicants are awarded a grant of £500, applicants would need to spend £1,000 to claim the £500 grant).
4. Payment of grants to successful applicants will be made in one sum on the receipt to the Council of evidence that the applicant has incurred the expenditure.
5. All expenditure must be evidenced. Where payments are made in international currency, businesses are required to evidence their expenditure in GBP.
6. For applicants who are awarded the Apprenticeship Grant, proof of employment will be required in the form of a signed Apprenticeship Agreement and contract.
7. Businesses who are VAT registered are unable to claim VAT as part of their expenditure, however if you are not VAT registered, VAT will be included in your project costs.
8. Projects must start and conclude before 31st March 2021.
9. Following the conclusion of a project, applicants are required to complete an end-of-project form and provide feedback on their experience with the scheme.

6. Next Steps and Application Process



7. Further Information and Contact Details

For further information on the scheme, please contact the Economic Development Team using the details below:

- Holly-Jade Ryder, Business Development Officer, Holly-jade.ryder@midsussex.gov.uk, 01444 477284
- William Hawkins, Economic Development Officer, William.hawkins@midsussex.gov.uk, 01444 477322