



Belfast
City Council



Department for
Communities



Department of
Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Grant 2020/21

Guidance Notes

The COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Grant ('the Scheme') is funded by the Department for Communities ("the Department") and Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs as part of the COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme.

The Scheme is being administered by Belfast City Council ('the Council')

There is **one rolling application process** until all funds are spent. The total value of the fund is £400,000.

Grants will be issued to successful applicants in the order in which applications are received and accepted by the Council, but will only be issued to those applications who meet the eligibility criteria for the scheme, until the funds available to the Council have been allocated.

If you have any queries or you wish to discuss your project with a member of staff before submitting your application, please contact Economic Development via email on economicdevelopment@belfastcity.gov.uk or telephone 02890270482.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the Scheme

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in many businesses in our city finding it difficult to work in a challenging operational environment. As restrictions are being lifted gradually, most businesses have commenced trading again, albeit at a reduced level in many cases. The new operating environment is presenting many challenges for these businesses.

The COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Grant is funded by the Department for Communities and Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs as part of the COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme.

Please note - If you have/are applying for DAERA TRIPSI fund (Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Inclusion) you may be eligible for this funding stream also, but the funding request must be for completely different items.

The primary aim of the scheme is to help revitalise urban and rural areas within the Belfast City Council area. The objectives of the scheme are to ensure that:

- By March 2022, footfall levels return to at least 80% of levels recorded prior to the public health crisis
- By March 2022, surveys completed by traders indicate that sales figures return to a level which is at least 80% of levels recorded prior to the public health crisis
- By March 2022, attitudinal surveys indicate 80% of the public are satisfied that the measures taken in the scheme areas respond to safety issues raised by the COVID-19 pandemic
- By March 2022, attitudinal surveys indicate 80% of the public view the scheme areas positively, as a place people would want to live, work, visit and invest.

1.2 Levels of Grant Award

The Scheme can provide funding of up to 100% of costs for capital items up to a maximum of £2,500 per applicant. The minimum application value is £500.00.

1.3 Who can apply

- An applicant must be based within the Belfast City Council area and must be a business, social enterprise or charity
- Multi-national businesses are not eligible to apply
- Organisations with multiple locations in the Belfast City Council area will be able to apply for funding for a maximum of three different locations - separate applications must be submitted for each of the locations
- To be eligible for a grant under the scheme, the organisation must be an existing, registered business, social enterprise or charity that has been actively trading for at least the last 3 months at the date of application. They must be able to provide appropriate proof of registration through Companies House; Charity number or HMRC self-assessment number
- Organisations must provide bank statements (or other financial institution account) in the name of their organisation and for the sole purpose of the organisation, i.e.

separate from personal financial accounts or details of any person involved in the organisation for the last 3 months must also be provided.

- To be eligible under the scheme organisations must:
 - Confirm that the scheme will support them to achieve overall objectives of the scheme as outlined above
 - Confirm that they will participate in an evaluation of the scheme post award.

Only organisations which meet this criteria are eligible to apply.

Please note that this financial assistance provided under this scheme may be considered as State Aid and successful applicants will be required to complete a State Aid declaration form.

1.4 General Principles

It is a prime responsibility of Government to ensure the proper and efficient use of and the accountability for public monies. To this end, applicants will be required to provide relevant supporting information when applying for funding.

Following completion of the scheme, applicants will be required to engage in an evaluation process which will aim to demonstrate the effectiveness and impact of the project on their business and on the wider business environment.

It is anticipated that grant offers will be made from September 2020, and your project, if you are successful, cannot commence until you receive a formal letter of offer from the Council. Projects must be completed by 31 January 2021, with all works finished, paid and through the bank account by this date.

Any personal applicant must be aged 18 or above at the application deadline. You may be asked to provide evidence of this at some point in the assessment process, if you are awarded a Letter of Offer.

If you wish to discuss your application with a member of Council staff prior to submission please email economicdevelopment@belfastcity.gov.uk and a member of our team will contact you or telephone 02890270482.

Funding for the scheme is provided to the Council by the Department. The payment of any grant under the Scheme, by the Council, is strictly dependent upon the Council having received prior payment from the Department.

The Council accepts no liability in respect of any loss, damage, charges or expense which are incurred by any applicant and are attributable to any delay in payment under the Scheme or due to any suspension, reduction or cancellation of funding.

1.5 Risks and Insurance

The applicant, his/her/its agent(s) and/or contractor is/are responsible for all risks in connection with public or employer liability associated with any works funded by a grant under the Scheme.

The Council and the Department do not, and will not accept liability or responsibility in respect of any grant-aided work carried out to the applicant's property/premises; accordingly the

applicant cannot and should not rely on the payment of grant monies by the Council as any proof or guarantee that the contractor engaged to execute the works has completed said works to a proper standard prior to payment. All successful applicants should satisfy themselves that all work has been carried out to a satisfactory standard and meets all statutory requirements.

Ongoing and future inspection, maintenance or repair of any items purchased under the scheme are the responsibility of the applicant. The Council accepts no responsibility, financial or otherwise, for expenditure or liabilities arising out of any work carried out by or on behalf of an applicant under the scheme. Any financial commitment incurred by the applicant which exceeds the amount of any approved grant, shall be the sole responsibility of the applicant.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that it is appropriately insured (including satisfactory building, contents and public liability insurance). The applicant must confirm that insurance is in place as part of their application.

1.6 Cleansing

Applicants who plan to put furniture outside premises will be responsible for obtaining any statutory consents or permissions that are required and also for the maintenance/cleanliness of this area whilst the furniture is on the street. It is in the interest of each organisation to do this for their customers. Applicants should adopt a good waste management plan and clear the area outside of their premises on a regular basis throughout the day, and at the end of the day's trading.

1.7 Statutory Consents

Applicants must comply with all statutory obligations regarding the delivery of and access to their services/premises eg. Disability considerations, environmental health, licensing, adhering to latest COVID-19 guidelines, etc.

For proposed applications which include works that require statutory approvals e.g. planning permission, building control approval, café pavement licensing, it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure they have all necessary approvals in place. Letters of offer may be issued in advance of full approval, but payment will be strictly conditional on applicants having necessary approvals in place and providing satisfactory copies of same to the Council. For advice and guidance on these please contact;

Planning

Telephone: 028 9050 0510

E-mail: planning@belfastcity.gov.uk

Building Control

Telephone: 028 9027 0650

Email: buildingcontrol@belfastcity.gov.uk

Licensing

Telephone: 028 9027 0650

Email: buildingcontrollicensing@belfastcity.gov.uk

Please refer to Café pavement guidelines available at <https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/pavementcafes>

1.8 What can be funded

This is a capital grant scheme to support the purchase of new capital items only, including infrastructure, between £500 and £2,500.

Eligible items can include but are not exclusive to:

- Minor works to external layout of premises to assist meeting compliance with COVID-19 social distancing protocols
- Any adaptations necessary to the internal layout of the business premises to ensure compliance with COVID-19 social distancing protocols (e.g. flexi-panels/screens at counters, one way systems, building / remodelling works, etc.)
- Capital costs to facilitate health and safety changes to working practices and alterations to premises needed due to COVID-19 restrictions. This can include screen protectors and free-stand sanitiser stations
- External COVID-19 signage to promote awareness of social distancing measures in place (for external signage planning permission may be required)
- External modifications to premises, such as awnings/canopies to protect customers who may have to queue before entering
- Internal/external collection and delivery points to avoid customers or suppliers having to fully enter the premises
- Infrastructure to facilitate use of outdoor space including furniture, outdoor heaters (where possible solar powered solutions should be used), barriers to facilitate queuing, planters
- Equipment to facilitate digitisation e.g. hardware, such as laptops/iPads/contactless payment terminals. Please note that software may only be purchased if purchased at the same time as the appropriate computer hardware for that software.

1.9 What cannot be funded

- Any spend that has already taken place i.e. the scheme cannot cover costs that have already been incurred as part of reopening
- Any spend where the applicant, or a person having a controlling interest in the applicant organisation, will have a personal financial benefit
- The Council will not fund;
 - The cost of any consumable items e.g. Hand sanitiser/ masks/ gloves/ visors/ alcohol
 - Costs that are not auditable (e.g. cash payments) will not be eligible for Council funding
 - Mortgage payments, rent, rates, salaries, insurance costs or utility costs
 - Debt, retrospective costs or second hand equipment
 - Fees for professional services or statutory applications
 - Websites
 - Warranty or training costs
 - Costs relating to running vehicles or transportation
 - Purchase of stock for general trading.

1.10 How does the fund work?

- There is **one rolling** application process until all funds are spent. Grants will be issued to successful applicants in the order in which applications are received and accepted by the Council, but will only be issued to those applications who meet the eligibility criteria for the scheme, until the funds available to the Council have been allocated
- Individual businesses/social enterprises/charities can apply for grant aid from £500 up to a maximum of £2,500 per property, up to a maximum of three properties per business
- The total grant amount can make up 100% of the total cost of any work to be carried out or equipment purchased
- The fund will cover eligible costs only. Please note equipment purchased must be new and must meet any environmental or licensing standards
- Applicants cannot start any work or purchase any items of equipment until they receive their Letter of Offer. Work or purchases made prior to receipt of the Letter of Offer will not be eligible.

2. Preparing your application

The dates for the scheme are shown below.

Applications open	Closing date	Notice to applicants with our decision
2 September 2020	13 October 2020, or until all funds are spent (if that occurs prior to or after 13 October 2020). The council will not accept applications received after the closing date and time, unless the funds have not been spent by that date.	On a rolling basis

Supporting Information

The scheme accepts applications via the grants portal only and can be accessed at www.belfastcity.gov.uk/funding. Applications must include all supporting documentation as outlined below:

1. Copies of company bank/building society statements – these must be for the last three months. Note: the applicant organisation must be named on the statement and this must be the same account that project items are purchased from
2. A number of quotes for relevant items of expenditure, in line with the guidance set out below.

Procurement Guidance

The council's procurement thresholds must be complied with where grant funding is used to purchase goods. If you intend to purchase (or contribute to the purchase) of any goods or services costing £500 or over with this grant you **MUST provide 3 quotations**.

The following guidelines must be complied with;

Total Estimated Cost	Action & Minimum Number
£0 - £499	No quotes required
£500 to £3,000	At least 3 quotations/price checks from different suppliers
Over £3,000 to £8,000	At least 3 companies invited to provide written quotations
Over £8,000 to £30,000	At least 4 companies invited to provide written quotations

- Quotes from suppliers should be sought as per the guidance outlined above
- Quotes must be sought from suppliers who can realistically supply the good/service i.e. suppliers who normally stock the item
- Where there is limited competition in the market for the good/service you are procuring (i.e. niche/specialist items) resulting in you being unable to request the minimum number of quotes required, then this should be documented and an explanation provided
- You or a business that you are an owner/partner/director of, are excluded from quoting for the supply of goods/services/works to a project that you may be offered funding for
- Where possible quotes should be from suppliers who are Belfast based
- Quotes should be 'like-for-like', particularly where goods/services are specific e.g. laptop etc. Quotations for the same make and model of products are acceptable and should be obtained where possible. All quotations must meet the specification provided and demonstrate 'like for like' comparison in order to verify value for money
- You should ensure that all costs are quoted and accounted for, e.g. delivery and installation should be part of the quote
- Email quotes are acceptable and the covering email from suppliers must be provided.
- Quotes must be dated prior to closing date and contain the supplier's full details
- If VAT is applicable to the items quoted, this should be clearly noted on the quotations to establish total project costs
- The lowest quotation should be selected with corresponding costs detailed on the application form. If the lowest quotation has not been accepted as a result of quality considerations the applicant must provide a clear rationale for this.
- Details of the quotes received must be listed in the application form.
- Quotes in other currencies should be compared using the rate of exchange through www.x-rates.com.

The following diagram provides an example of the supporting information required to apply for the grant;

Expenditure *

	Item Description	Quantity	Unit Cost(£)	Total Cost(£)	Amount Requested(£)
1	Hand sanitising station	1	500	500	500
2	Laptop	2	400	800	800
3	Awning and installation	1	3,500	3,500	1,200
4					
5					
		4	4,400.00	4,800.00	2,500.00

+ Add Row

A minimum of three quotations from different suppliers or internet price checks must be uploaded for goods/services valued between £500 and £3,000

A minimum of 3 written quotations from suitable suppliers must be uploaded for goods/services valued between £3,000 and £8,000

If applying for awnings or any other building works - copies of any relevant statutory approvals (e.g. planning permission/ listed building consent (where applicable) /advertisement consent (where applicable)/evidence of ownership of property/5 year lease) must be provided before any grant payment can be made.

Your application and supporting documents must be submitted to Belfast City Council via the grants portal as soon as possible: www.belfastcity.gov.uk/funding

You must use the same email address throughout the process.

Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

3. How your application will be assessed

Every application received will be assessed to ensure:

- That the business/social enterprise/charity is eligible to apply to this particular Scheme
- That the proposal meets the organisation's needs and supports the project objectives
- That the proposed expenditure is eligible under the scheme.

An acknowledgement receipt will be issued to you electronically once your submission has been received. Your application will be assessed for eligibility and will be processed if it is deemed eligible for grant support.

All applications will be assessed and letters of offer issued on an ongoing basis.

3.1 Eligibility assessment

All applications are checked for completeness and eligibility against the guidelines. If your application is incomplete or ineligible, we will send you an email telling you why. We regret that we are unable to progress incomplete or ineligible applications.

3.2 How decisions are made

Belfast City Council may not be able to fund all successful applications, or support 100% of eligible costs, as there may be more applications than there is funding available. However, all eligible applications that are received prior to the funding being fully allocated, and in advance of the scheme deadline, will be considered carefully. Successful/unsuccessful applicants will be notified on an ongoing basis.

3.3 What happens if application is successful

If an application is successful, the Council will issue an electronic Letter of Offer, which is an offer to the successful organisation to deliver on the proposal outlined in their application form.

Signed Letters of Offer must be returned by email within **14 days of receipt**. If the signed Letter of Offer is not received by the Council within this 14-day period, the offer of grant funding will be withdrawn without further notice and the application will be rejected. You must use the same email address to return the Letter of Offer as was used to submit your application form.

When you receive your Letter of Offer it must be signed by an actual signature by authorised signatory for your organisation (we cannot accept electronic signatures), scanned and returned by email. At this stage, applicants can proceed to purchase the items as outlined in their Letter of Offer, and monies can then be claimed back from the Council. Applicants cannot start any work or purchase any items or equipment until they receive their Letter of Offer.

Payment

100% of grant funding will be paid directly to the applicant within 28 days of the Council receiving the applicant's complete and satisfactory claim form with all requested evidence/documentation verifying spend against the Letter of Offer requirement, including;

- Electronic invoices for each item purchased
- Copy of bank statements showing payment for each item being paid from the bank account

If the requested documentation is not supplied, payment will be withheld. **Please do not apply for funding if you cannot supply these items.**

Payment of grant will be made to applicant via direct BACS payment.

Cash payments by applicants are not acceptable and will not be eligible for any refund from the Council.

Applicants are responsible for paying the contactor(s) and claiming back VAT, if applicable.

3.4 What happens if application is unsuccessful

If an application is not successful, officers from the Council can discuss the application and will provide written feedback to applicants explaining the decision.

If you believe the funding process has not been followed correctly or your application has been deemed ineligible incorrectly, you may request a review **within seven working days of receiving your Letter of Outcome via email to economicdevelopment@belfastcity.gov.uk**

A Senior Council Officer will review the process and accuracy of the decision and respond to your review request. The Senior Council Officer's review decision is FINAL.