

Business Funding Program Guidelines 2020-21

Application Timeline

Stages	Round One	Round Two
Programs	Small Business Grants (SBG) Business Event Sponsorship (BESP)	Small Business Grants (SBG) Social Enterprise Grants (SEG)
Applications open	Monday 17 February 2020 from 9am	Monday 6 July 2020 from 9am
Workshop sessions	Go to website for details ¹	Go to website for details
Applications close	Monday 16 March 2020 at 11.59pm	Monday 3 August 2020 at 11.59pm
Assessment period	March to June 2020	August to November 2020
Council Meeting	BESP - May 2020 SBG - June 2020	November 2020
Notification to applicants	BESP - June 2020 SBG - July 2020	December 2020

Council Contact Officer: 03 9658 8710

¹ <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/business/grants-tenders/small-business-grants/Pages/small-business-grants.aspx>

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Introduction

The City of Melbourne acknowledges and embraces the transformative role that business plays in building all aspects of a bold, innovative and sustainable city.

An estimated 14,000 small businesses currently operate in the City of Melbourne, representing over 80 per cent of all businesses within the municipality. While our business event delegates stimulate the visitor economy and delegates experience all the city has to offer.

Council's vision is to consolidate Melbourne's strengths as a 'prosperous city': a place that is regarded as the destination of choice amongst international and local business and enterprise by excelling in its ability to nurture a vibrant economy for those who work, live, study, visit and invest.

The City of Melbourne [Council Plan 2017-21](#)² establishes a framework for this vision through commitments including:

- Support to Melbourne's start-ups and innovative businesses.
- Opportunities for increased economic participation through social enterprise.
- Support to local, national and global events that stimulate the economy and contribute to a vibrant city life.
- Attraction of conferences and conventions to Melbourne.

The key objective of the business funding programs is to support small businesses and business events that will enhance the City of Melbourne's reputation for innovation, and contribute to a thriving, sustainable business culture.

General eligibility

The application must:

- be located or occur within the within the City of Melbourne [municipality](#)³.
- have a valid Australian Business Number (ABN).
- have documented evidence of an appropriate legal structure, such as a sole trader, an Australian registered company, business cooperative or partnership.
- demonstrate how the City of Melbourne will benefit from its proposal (please refer to the City of Melbourne Council Plan 2017–21).
- demonstrate sustainable business practices in line with the [Australian ethical charter](#)⁴.
- provide evidence of current public liability and professional indemnity insurance policies.
- the business activity or event must able to proceeded without support from the City of Melbourne.

Applicants must meet the above eligibility plus all category eligibility specific to the grant they are applying for.

Applicants who do not meet these eligibility requirements or do not provide the relevant documentation will not be considered.

² <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/about-council/vision-goals/Pages/council-plan.aspx>

³ <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/about-melbourne/melbourne-profile/Pages/City-maps.aspx>

⁴ <https://www.australianethical.com.au/australian-ethical-charter/>

General ineligibility

The program will not support applicants or events:

- located or occurring outside the City of Melbourne municipality.
- currently receiving support from another City of Melbourne grant, sponsorship or expression of interest program.
- that are political organisations or that have a political purpose.
- that are government departments of agencies, foundations or grant making bodies.
- that have a primary focus on fundraising.
- that are current City of Melbourne employees, immediate families and contractors.
- that denigrate, exclude or offend parts of the community
- organisations that have an outstanding debt to the City of Melbourne or that have failed to comply with the terms and conditions of any previous funding agreement with City of Melbourne.

Application process

How to apply

1. Read the program guidelines.
2. Register online at [SmartyGrants](https://www.smartygrants.com.au/)⁵ and preview a copy of the application.
3. Attend a workshop session.
4. Plan, research and gather information required for your application.
5. Complete and submit your application online via SmartyGrants.
 - Complete all questions and upload supporting documents.
 - Allow ample time to complete and submit your application before the closing date and time.
6. Submit only one application in each funding round. On submission, you will receive an electronic reply acknowledging receipt from SmartyGrants.

Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted and will be withdrawn from the assessment process. Any submitted applications deemed to be ineligible for the program will also be withdrawn from the assessment process.

Funding

Requested funding must be directly related to the proposal. Please note only expenditure items that have been incurred from the day after lodging your application will be eligible.

Environmental sustainability

Applicants are encouraged to use resources wisely in the creation and delivery of their business or event. Applicants will be required to describe their environmental sustainability practices in their application. Further information and ideas can be found in the environmental sustainability practices [fact sheet](#).⁶

⁵ <https://www.smartygrants.com.au/>

⁶ <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/business/sustainable-business/Pages/sustainable-business-events.aspx>

Support material

Support material is a critical part of your application and reviewed as part of the assessment process.

Support material requirements will vary depending on which program you are applying for. Applicants should consider quality of support material over quantity, only including material that is relevant and strengthens their proposal.

Support material may include:

- proof of the business or event being located in City of Melbourne municipality.
- certificates of currency.
- certificate of incorporation or registration of business name.
- skills and qualifications of key business personnel.
- marketing strategy and SWOT analysis.
- financial statements (including Profit &L, Cash Flow and Balance sheets).
- examples of marketing, PR or other evidence to support your application.
- evidence of diversity of participants.

Assessment process

- Applications are assessed against the program's criteria in a competitive process.
- Council officers check applications to establish that all eligibility criteria are met.
- Applications are evaluated by an assessment panel consisting of external peers and senior staff from City of Melbourne. The full list of current assessment panel members is published [online](#).⁷
- Applications are confidential. The contents will not be disclosed to any person outside the application and assessment process. A short summary of the project concept will be utilised in publicly available reports to Council.
- The City of Melbourne does not seek to correct errors in applications or supporting material. Applications are assessed as they have been submitted.
- The City of Melbourne reserves the right to request further information in considering any application, as well as the right to reject any application that is ineligible or does not meet the grant category criteria.
- Assessment panels may recommend part funding.
- Assessment panels make recommendations to Council who approve final funding.
- All funding decisions are final. Unsuccessful applicants are eligible to re-apply in future funding rounds in accordance with the grant guidelines.
- All applicants will be notified of the result of their application.
- The applicant names, project names and funding amounts of recommended/ successful applicants will be made publicly available, including publication on Council's website and in Council media releases.

⁷ <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/about-council/governance-transparency/Pages/grants-and-sponsorships.aspx>



Lobbying

Canvassing or lobbying of Councilors, employees of the City of Melbourne or assessment panel members in relation to any funding application is prohibited. No further consideration will be given to an application submitted by an applicant who has canvassed or lobbied City of Melbourne staff, Councilors or assessors in relation to their application.

Terms and conditions

Applicants are required to comply with the following terms and conditions:

- Comply with any additional conditions associated with the funding program for which they are applying.
- Eligible applicants for Small Business Grants and Social Enterprise Grants can only receive one grant per calendar year.
- Successful applicants must sign a funding agreement or letter of agreement detailing the funding obligations.
- The City of Melbourne will pay the first 50% of the approved grant amount, plus GST; and the remaining half will be paid after the 6 months acquittal.
- Payment terms are 30 days from the date of invoice, subject to the receipt of a signed funding agreement, tax invoice and other requested information.
- The City of Melbourne will not be responsible for shortfalls in project budgets if the grant recipient is unable to meet project costs.
- Successful applicants must provide a final acquittal. For Small Business and Social Enterprise grants recipients, they will be required to provide 6 and 12-month progress reports.

Assistance available

Telephone and email enquiries

Businesses are encouraged to contact a Council Officer to discuss any specific needs or additional support that may be required to complete and submit an application.

Call 03 9658 8710 or email businessfunding@melbourne.vic.gov.au

Information sessions

New applicants are encouraged to attend a workshop session prior to submitting their application. A number of sessions are available to applicants in each program. Visit website for details and bookings.

Please contact us if a language or Auslan interpreter is required.

Technical assistance

Refer to the [SmartyGrants help guide](https://applicanthelp.smartygrants.com.au/help-guide-for-applicants/)⁸ for technical assistance related to submitting your application.

The [SmartyGrants](https://www.smartygrants.com.au/sg/who/?menuId=7072)⁹ support desk is open 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday on 03 9320 6888 or by email service@smartygrants.com.au

⁸ <https://applicanthelp.smartygrants.com.au/help-guide-for-applicants/>

⁹ <https://www.smartygrants.com.au/sg/who/?menuId=7072>

Interpreter and translation services

If you need an interpreter when calling the City of Melbourne, please call the following relevant translation services:

If you are deaf, hearing-impaired, or speech-impaired, please call us via the [National Relay Service](#)¹⁰
Teletypewriter (TTY) users phone 133 677 then ask for 03 9658 8710 or 03 9658 8874
Speak & Listen users phone 1300 555 727 then ask for 03 9658 8710 or 03 9658 8874

Our multilingual information telephone service offers assistance to people from a non-English speaking background. Visit [Translation services](#)¹¹

¹⁰ <https://www.communications.gov.au/what-we-do/phone/services-people-disability/accesshub>

¹¹ <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/health-support-services/multicultural-services/Pages/translation-services.aspx>

Small Business Grants

The Small Business Grants program provides financial assistance to develop new ideas and support market-ready products and services that enhance the City of Melbourne's reputation for innovation and creativity, and contribute to a thriving, sustainable business culture.

Grants are open to forward-thinking small businesses currently located or intending to locate within the City of Melbourne.

Start-ups and established businesses from any sector are welcome to apply as long as they have a great idea and a sound business proposal that will proceed regardless of grant funding. The program offers two funding rounds annually.

Key objectives

- Encourage and support new, creative and diverse business activities that will contribute to a thriving and competitive business environment within the city.
- Create employment opportunities and increase the level of business investment in the municipality.
- Support businesses that demonstrate solid market potential and a sound business model, including financial viability.
- Increase the overall value and volume of exports from the City of Melbourne municipality.

Categories and funding available

Category	Description	Funding
Development	To support startups not yet generating revenue to test and validate their business proposal	Up to \$20,000 Requested funding must be directly related to the development activity including building and testing prototypes, conduct trials, pilot programs and test the market to validate a concept.
Start-up	To assist with the establishment of new and innovative businesses	Up to \$30,000 Requested funding must be directly related to the start-up proposal.
Expansion	To assist an existing small business operating in the City of Melbourne municipality that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• will introduce a new or additional activity, product or service or;• intends to relocate to or within the municipality as part of its expansion	Up to \$30,000 Requested funding must be directly related to the expansion proposal.

Category	Description	Funding
Export	<p>To help companies enter and expand into new overseas markets. Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • small businesses looking to enter the international market for the first time, • experienced exporters who wish to expand into new markets. 	<p>Up to \$10,000</p> <p>Export grants are offered on a dollar-for-dollar basis and claimed after the event or visit has occurred. The following categories of export-related activities are supported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overseas representation and marketing consultants. • Market research. • Marketing visits. • Communications. • Promotional literature. • Trade fairs and exhibitions. • Outbound missions. • Export product development and protection.

Operational expenses that are considered as ongoing costs to run the business, such as rent, utilities, wages and personal expenses are not funded.

Additional eligibility

Applicants must meet the Business Funding Program general eligibility.

In addition, they must:

- have fewer than 20 FTE employees at the time of applying for the grant.
- be prepared to relocate to the City of Melbourne within three months of receiving a grant (if not already in the municipality) or have majority of the developmental activity conducted in the City of Melbourne.
- demonstrate solid market potential and ready start trading (**start-up category**).
- introduce a completely new product/service into their company portfolio (**expansion category**).
- increase the overall value and volume of exports from the City of Melbourne (**export category**).

Additional ineligibility

The program will not support:

- franchisees.
- subsidiaries of larger companies.
- unincorporated associations.
- branches of foreign companies that are not registered as an Australian company.
- individuals or organisations providing trade facilitation services to businesses.

Assessment criteria

Development Category	
Innovation and creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate a strong and original idea for a new product or service. • Confirm that the proposition has a strong point of difference and does not duplicate existing products or services available in the City of Melbourne.
Proposal readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate that the idea is well-researched and that the proposed development activity has a clear set of objectives.
Financial viability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate financial viability and sound management. • Ability to contribute to a proportion of the cost of proposed developmental activity.
Benefits to the City of Melbourne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate that the proposed new product or service will primarily deliver benefits to the City of Melbourne. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Address a City of Melbourne commitment or priority - Provide direct benefits to a specific group of City community including city residents, city visitors, city workers. - Provide direct benefits to a specific location within City of Melbourne.
Ethical and other considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate sustainable business practices and alignment with Council's policies.

Start-up and Expansion Categories	
Innovation and creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly demonstrate a strong and original business proposition via market analysis and market strategy. • Confirm that the proposition has a strong point of difference and does not duplicate existing products or services available in the City of Melbourne. • Demonstrate intellectual property through a unique and hard to copy idea or have extensive intellectual capital. • Expansion applicants must demonstrate that the proposed business expansion activity is a new product or service, not just organic growth of the existing suite of products of services.
Business readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate the proposed product or service is well-researched, with a viable business plan, and able to proceed without the grant.
Financial Viability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate financial viability and sound management.
Benefits to the City of Melbourne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver measurable economic benefits to the City of Melbourne in areas such as job creation, investment, revenue generation and capability building.
Ethical and other considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate sustainable business practices and alignment with Council's policies.

Export Category	
Export potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate the potential demand for the product or service in an overseas market and deliver direct export outcomes. • Demonstrate the products or services for export are manufactured or produced in Australia.
Export readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate 'export readiness' in that the proposed export product or service is well-researched, planned and financially viable.
Financial viability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate financial viability and sound management. • Ability to match approved funding on a dollar-for-dollar basis.
Benefits to the City of Melbourne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver measurable economic benefits to the City of Melbourne in areas of export earnings, investment and job creation.
Ethical and other considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate sustainable business practices and alignment with Council's policies.

Social Enterprise Grants

Overview

The Social Enterprise Grants program provides financial assistance to support the establishment and expansion of businesses and organisations with a distinctly social purpose. It aims to enhance the City of Melbourne's reputation for business vitality, diversity and inclusiveness and contribute further to the city's thriving economy and community.

For the purpose of these grants, a 'social enterprise' is defined as an organisation that combines trade with a social purpose where this purpose is a defining part of the business. Applicants may include a social enterprise, charities and other philanthropic organisations. Applications will be accepted from both not-for-profit and for profit businesses. The program offers one round of funding annually.

Key Objectives

- Encourage the establishment and expansion of sustainable social enterprises that enhance the City of Melbourne's reputation for business vitality, diversity and inclusiveness.
- Support social enterprises that demonstrate a point-of-difference, solid market potential and a sound business model, including long-term financial viability.
- Increase the level of business and social investment in the City of Melbourne, which will contribute to a thriving economic and community environment.

Categories and funding available

Category	Description	Funding
Start-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To assist social enterprises in accelerating the establishment of their business.	Up to \$30,000
Expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To assist an existing social enterprise operating in the City of Melbourne municipality that:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• will introduce a new or additional activity, product or service or;• intends to relocate to or within the municipality as part of its expansion activity.	Funding requested must be directly related to the proposal.

Additional eligibility

Applicants must meet the Business Funding Program general eligibility.

In addition, they must:

- have fewer than 20 FTE employees at the time of applying for the grant.
- be prepared to relocate to the City of Melbourne within 3 months of receiving the grants (if not already in the municipality).
- be able to commence the proposed activity promptly upon receiving the grant.

Additional ineligibility

The program will not support:

- franchisees.
- subsidiaries of larger companies.
- unincorporated associations.
- branches of foreign companies that are not registered as an Australian company.
- individuals or organisations providing trade facilitation services to businesses.

Assessment criteria

Start-up and Expansion categories	
Social Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clearly demonstrate the social purpose of the enterprise, how it will be achieved and reported.
Business Viability and readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate 'business readiness' that the social enterprise is well researched, planned and financially viable.
Financial Viability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate financial viability and sound management.• Applicants will be expected to have the majority of their funding from other sources, in addition to the social enterprise grant.
Benefits to the City of Melbourne	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deliver measurable strong economic, social and/or environmental benefits to the City of Melbourne.
Ethical and other considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate sustainable business practices and alignment with Council's policies. Priority will also be given to applications helping to address Council's social priorities.¹²

¹² <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/about-council/vision-goals/Pages/vision-goals.aspx>

Business Event Sponsorship

Overview

The Business Event Sponsorship program (BESP) provides funding to support businesses hosting conferences, conventions, exhibitions and other business events.

Funding is open to businesses and organisations planning to hold business events within the City of Melbourne municipality. The program offers one funding round per year and is available for business events to be held between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021.

As well as helping to facilitate business networking opportunities and assisting delegates to experience all that the city has to offer, the program aims to attract visitors to the city and enhance Melbourne's reputation as a 'knowledge city' and an international destination.

Key objectives

The program provides support to organisations delivering business events that are aligned with the City of Melbourne's objectives. The business event must:

- Increase economic impact for the city by attracting more visitors to Melbourne and promoting the city as a destination.
- Foster a cohesive, smart community through events that encourage knowledge exchange, education and diversity.
- Enhance the profile and reputation of Melbourne as a 'knowledge city' through media exposure and strategic association with excellent and innovative events.
- Support businesses within the municipality through financial and in-kind investment in events that enhance their networks, income and profile.

Funding available

- Up to \$10,000 is available.
- Cash sponsorship cannot be used to cover ongoing costs to run the business or event. Rent or venue hire, utilities, wages, prizemoney, event equipment and personal expenses are not funded.
- Business Event Sponsorship must contribute directly to delegate boosting initiatives, program enhancement, public programming, marketing and additional event enhancing activities that are additional to the core program.

Additional eligibility

Applicants must meet the Business Funding Program general eligibility. In addition, they must:

- Be a business event (conference, convention, exhibition or meeting).
- Maintain for the duration of the event public liability insurance of no less than \$20 million which extends to cover any third parties.
- Ensure that an [Acknowledgment of Country](https://www.aboriginalvictoria.vic.gov.au/welcome-country-and-acknowledgement-traditional-owners)¹³ and/or a Welcome to Country, where appropriate should be given at the event receiving sponsorship through the BESP.

¹³ <https://www.aboriginalvictoria.vic.gov.au/welcome-country-and-acknowledgement-traditional-owners>

Additional ineligibility

The program will not support:

- Applications from individuals or sole trader.
- Political and religious events that denigrate, exclude or offend parts of the community.
- International aid appeals.
- Events that are already receiving support from Melbourne Convention Bureau (MCB).

Additional information

The City of Melbourne owns a variety of venues that may be of interest for your business event. More information on the City of Melbourne owned venues can be found [here](#).¹⁴

Additional benefits (non-funding)

Subject to agreement, successful applicants may use the following materials and services from the City of Melbourne at their event:

- welcome letter from the Lord Mayor.
- maps and brochures, including multilingual information.
- Lord Mayor or Councilor speech.
- [WhatsOn](#)¹⁵ and other marketing materials.

Assessment criteria

Criteria	
Quality of event	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate the merit of the event by describing the concept, rationale and benefits.
Access and participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outline the opportunities delegates/attendees will have to explore the city and surrounds in free time or planned activities.• Outline the value of event to the community.• Demonstrate the ways in which people can participate in the event through public programming.• Outline opportunities for business networking.
Financial Viability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide a realistic budget, timeline and program to deliver the event.• Able to deliver the event without the sponsorship funding.

¹⁴ <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/hubs-bookable-spaces/Pages/bookable-spaces.aspx>

¹⁵ <https://whatson.melbourne.vic.gov.au/Pages/Home.aspx>

Criteria	
Benefits to the City of Melbourne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate how the event will activate the city in interesting and engaging ways and contribute something different to Melbourne's business event calendar. • Deliver significant visitation and economic outcomes for the City of Melbourne. • Outline the sponsorship benefits the event will provide to the City of Melbourne by promoting Council, for example through speaking opportunities, logo placement and signage. • Ability to meet City of Melbourne's objectives and align with Council Goals.
Ethical and other considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate sustainable business practices and alignment with Council's policies.