

COVID-19 Business Resilience Fund

Grant Guidance and Terms & Conditions

About our COVID-19 grants

Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) have created a business resilience fund to help support businesses impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. The fund is designed to complement the range of support available from HM Government and provide eligible businesses with unmatched grants ranging from £1k - £10k.

Revenue grants of up to £5k (e.g. for day-to-day running costs such as salaries, energy bills and items purchased which will be used up within 1 year), or capital grants of up to £10k (e.g. purchasing or improving assets) can be used to support Sole Traders and SMEs with activities which aim to:

- Build business resilience
- Strengthen growth
- Safeguard jobs

You can apply for both a revenue and capital grant (with appropriate justification) on the same application form. Each will be assessed individually and in combination.

There is £250,000 available for revenue grants and £500,000 available for capital grants.

Who can receive a grant?

Grants are available to organisations that:

1. Are an SME, Sole Trader, Social Enterprise or Charity.
(For the definition of small and medium sized enterprise (SME), see below.)
2. Have been trading from a base in Oxfordshire for at least 1 year
3. Have been in good financial health prior to 31st December 2019
4. Have not receive more than €200,000 de minimis aid within the current financial year or the previous two financial years. (see explanation below)
5. Will use the grant to build business resilience, strengthen growth and protect jobs.

Definition of a Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise (SME)

- *The definition of an SME, and guidance to check if you meet it, can be found at: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition_en*
- *An SME is defined as an organisation that:*
 - *Employs less than 250 people on a full-time equivalent basis.*
 - *Has an annual turnover not exceeding €50 million and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding €43 million.*
- *Parent and subsidiary organisations need to be considered. In general, if an organisation is:*
 - *Between 25% and 50% owned by another organisation, the respective percentage of the parent organisation's turnover, balance sheet total and number of employees must be included.*
 - *Over 50% owned by another organisation, the total turnover, balance sheet total and number of employees of the parent organisation must be included.*

De minimis – State Aid

- Covid-19 grants are provided as de minimis aid, under the Commission Regulation (EU) no. 1407/2013. In line with European Commission rules, an organisation cannot receive a grant, if on receipt, it will have received more than €200,000 de minimis aid over a three-year period. It has been deemed this amount will not affect competition.
- On payment of the grant you will also be sent a letter stating the amount of de minimis aid your organisation has received. This letter must be retained for three years and produced on request by UK public authorities.
- Any de minimis aid granted over the €200,000 limit may be subject to repayment with interest.
- Funding rules are designed to ensure that when public resource (i.e. state aid) is used to provide financial support or other assistance to an organisation, it will not distort fair competition and disadvantage other organisations.
- Under the rules, SMEs can receive up to €200,000 of publicly funded support over any three-year period, known as de minimis aid, as it has been deemed that this amount will not affect competition.
- Potentially any assistance from or funded by a public body might have been granted as de minimis aid. It could take many forms, including but not limited to:
 - Grant funding (including some National Lottery funding).
 - A loan at a favourable rate or a loan guarantee.
 - The purchase of land or property at less than market rate.
 - Training or consultancy advice provided either free or at a reduced rate.
 - Differential tax benefits.
 - Waiving or deferral of fees or interest normally due, e.g. deferral of rent. If you are in doubt whether you have received de minimis aid, contact the organisation that provided it. If you are still uncertain, assume that it was de minimis aid.
- The text of Commission Regulation (EU) no. 1407/2013 can be accessed at:
http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/legislation/de_minimis_regulation_en.pdf

Eligibility - What can the Covid-19 grants be used for?

Some examples of eligible business activities include:

- Cost & expenditure occurred in changing, modifying equipment, adapting production lines.
- Purchase of equipment to diversify.
- Equipment to aid working from home.
- HR consultancy.
- Accountancy fees.
- Legal fees.
- Marketing
- Business Planning
- Workplace risk assessments

Examples of what the Covid-19 grants CAN'T be used for

- VAT payments.
- To use as match funding for another grant scheme.
- To support or top up staff costs which are already being claimed through the HM Government's Job Retention Scheme.
- Hire purchases and/or asset finance arrangements.
- Debts incurred more than 60 days prior to the COVID-19 lockdown (23rd March 2020).
- Buying land or facilities for future use (for example where the community/public benefit will not be realised within the timescales for this funding programme or to stop future development).
- Business activities intended primarily for private gain.
- Business activities that are primarily for the promotion of politics or political beliefs.
- Unspecified expenditure.
- Any business activity where funding will be passported to other organisations (for example through a grants programme).
- Campaigning or lobbying business activities (we will however fund marketing and promotional activity).
- Any activity that would be in breach of State Aid rules.
- Business rates and subsidies.
- The allocation of grants to multiple limited companies with the same shareholders cannot be accommodated.

How are COVID-19 grants awarded?

It is expected that competition for these grants will be exceptionally high and as such priority will be given to those companies who can demonstrate benefits from receiving a grant to include:

- Build business resilience
- Strengthen growth
- Safeguard jobs
- Creation of new products / services and increasing productivity

Where businesses have received grant support through another COVID-19 related HM Government scheme (not including the Job Retention Scheme), this will be considered in the decision-making process.

Grants applications will be assessed by a grant panel whose decision is final.

How do I apply for a COVID-19 grant?

To apply for a grant, you must submit:

- A completed and signed COVID-19 Business Resilience & Growth fund Application form.
- A signed copy of the COVID-19 Business Resilience & Growth fund – Guidance and Terms& Conditions.

How do I claim the grant?

To claim the grant, you must provide:

- A completed and signed claim form – this will be supplied with the grant offer.
- The signed claim form must be returned via email within 7 days of receipt of the grant offer letter. **(No payment will be made until the claim form is received)**

Grant Payment terms

- Grant payments will be made within 30 days of receipt of a completed claim form.

How is my information used and stored?

- OxLEP has a published privacy policy on their website - <https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/gdpr-privacy-policy>
- By providing us with your email address you consent to receive emails for OxLEP. You may unsubscribe at any time.
- I understand that my organisations name and amount of any grant or grant awarded may be published on the OxLEP website, and other social media channels.

Declaration

I agree and accept these terms and conditions and understand that in the event a grant is paid, but if information comes to light indicating a violation of these terms and conditions, OxLEP reserves the right to retrieve the grant payment in full. I also accept that I may be contacted up to a year following grant payment and asked to take part in a case study or surveyed for a grant evaluation study.

Signed:		Print Name:	
Organisation name:		Date:	

If you wish to discuss this fund or your grant application please contact Lesley Parsons via email in the first instance Lesley.Parsons@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Mobile – 07813002208