



2026-2027

Business to Business Grant Program

Stream 1: Business Improvements and Innovation

Stream 2: Elevating Your Business



City of
Whittlesea

Whittlesea
2040
A place for all

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Cover Image:
Turners Bakehouse Eatery



Above: Mill Park Physiotherapy

What is the Business to Business (B2B) Grant Program

The City of Whittlesea is committed to supporting a thriving local economy by encouraging and supporting innovation, creation, growth, and opportunity.

The Business to Business (B2B) Grant Program is aimed at supporting existing small businesses to procure local products or services from a list of approved local vendors to encourage B2B interaction and transactions.

The B2B Grant Program is designed to:

- build membership of the City of Whittlesea Business Network (WBN)
- strengthen local supply chains, generate wealth in the community, and improve long-term sustainability
- encourage and support new and existing business activity, and activation in activity centres and commercial precincts.

The B2B Grant Program is offered through a competitive merit-based selection process. Qualification on the assessment criteria alone does not guarantee approval of financial incentives or funding. The final decision is at the discretion of Council's Grant Steering Committee and may be impacted by the number of applications submitted.

Objectives

The Business-to-Business (B2B) Grant Program supports local City of Whittlesea businesses to strengthen their operations, grow their capabilities, and build long-term resilience.

The program encourages businesses to engage local suppliers and service providers, helping to keep investment within the municipality while fostering a stronger and more connected local economy.

The B2B Grant Program aims to:

- strengthen business-to-business relationships and local supply chains
- support businesses to access professional services, expertise, and resources that can enhance performance and growth
- encourage the purchase of locally provided products and services
- build a more prosperous, resilient, and inclusive local economy.

Examples of eligible activities may include marketing and business development services, tender-writing support, digital improvements, sustainability audits, specialist advice, and other initiatives that help businesses grow and succeed.

The B2B Grant Program offers up to \$10,000 per individual application through two streams for businesses to choose from:

- **Stream 1: Business Improvement and Innovation**
- **Stream 2: Elevating Your Business**

Funding must be matched dollar-for-dollar by the business and will only be paid following successful project completion and demonstration of business co-contribution.

Who can apply

Your business must be a member of the City of Whittlesea Business Network to apply.

The Business Network is free to join. Visit:

whittlesea.vic.gov.au/BusinessNetwork

A business can submit one application per round. The second application cannot duplicate the first.

Eligibility criteria

The Business to Business (B2B) Grant Program is designed to assist local City of Whittlesea businesses. To be eligible for funding, applicants must:

- be the owner or tenant named on an existing or pending lease agreement (not subletting space from another business). The lease must have a minimum of 12 months remaining
- have an active Australian Business Number (ABN)
- provide evidence of insurance including certificate of currency (public liability, professional indemnity, or any other relevant insurances). Have Public and or Professional Liability Insurance with a minimum of \$20 million covering the delivery period of this program
- be able to demonstrate business financial viability
- have 20 or fewer employees (Stream 2 applicants only)
- have successfully acquitted previous City of Whittlesea grants
- hold the relevant permits and registrations to be operating
- not have an outstanding debt to the City of Whittlesea
- not have received funding through a City of Whittlesea business grant in the past two financial years.

When applying:

- services and/or products exceeding \$500 must have a quote to support
- services and/or products exceeding \$2,000 must have a minimum of three quotes
- quotes obtained from Business Network members are preferred.

Who is not eligible for this grant program

The following groups are ineligible for all Council grants:

- businesses that have an electronic gaming license
- councillors, members of their household, immediate family, and close friends
- businesses owned or operated by Council staff or councillors
- political organisations or groups
- groups, projects, events, and organisations applying with discriminatory views against a person or group's Protected Characteristics as identified in the *Victorian Government Equal Opportunity Act 2010*, including but not limited to:
 - age
 - disability
 - race, including colour, national or ethnic origin, or immigrant status
 - sex, pregnancy, marital or relationship status, family responsibilities, or breastfeeding
 - sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status
 - religious beliefs.
- groups that have not complied with acquittal conditions from previous Council grants.



Stream 1: Business Improvement and Innovation

The Business Improvement and Innovation stream provides the opportunity for businesses to improve their business acumen and operation or introduce efficiencies and/or innovations. Stream 1 is available to businesses operating from a physical business location (owned or leased premises) and home-based businesses.

What can be funded

- Web design and development, and E-commerce platforms
- Business coaching and consulting
- Financial planning and marketing activities
- Cyber security or AI education
- Leadership training identified by the business owner or general manager
- Sustainable opportunities such as:
 - energy efficiencies
 - waste audit and action plan
 - recycling waste initiatives such as diversion of food waste and zero-waste packaging.

Stream 2: Elevating Your Business

The Elevating Your Business stream provides the opportunity for businesses to evolve from a micro or small home-based business model by activating a commercial or activity centre premises, or improve the physical appearance, operation, or accessibility of an existing commercial premises.

This stream is offered to businesses with a maximum of 20 employees.

What can be funded

- Façade improvements including painting, murals, signage, awnings and lighting
- Outdoor or indoor furniture to elevate or activate the shopfront
- Equipment to activate the operation of the business premises
- Accessibility upgrades including ramps, handrails, automatic or easy-to-open entrance doors, and upgrades to accessible restrooms for customers.

Local procurement

In both grant streams, preference will be given to applications including services and/or products sourced from Business Network members. Applications that include quotes from local suppliers will receive a higher score, unless a clear and justified reason is provided for sourcing elsewhere. For further details, please refer to the budget selection criteria outlined in the application.

To find a local supplier head to our directory at whittlesea.vic.gov.au/BusinessDirectory

What cannot be funded

- **Permanent security fixtures.** This includes security cameras, roller shutters or bollards.
- **Activities, events or projects that do not comply with relevant federal, state and local government legislation.**
- **Gambling or alcohol.** In line with Council’s Gambling Strategy and Action Plan, grant applications for projects or events held in venues that have both an electronic gaming machine license and liquor licence will not be funded.
- **Projects or activities that are the responsibility of the state or federal government.** Applicants can include state or federal government funding as co-contribution in their application. For example, if a school or university applies for a grant, they must make transparent aspects of the project covered through their own contributions.
- **Political activities.** Council grants cannot be used by or for political party activities or initiatives.
- **Costs associated with Council permit applications and fees.**

Assessment criteria

Each application will be assessed, relative to the business type and size, against how well it addresses each of the following criteria:

Funding selection criteria	Weighting
Strong Local Economy key directions	40%
Project objectives	30%
Budget	20%
Risk and mitigation strategy	10%

Applicant response will be scored the average across each criteria rated 1 to 5 as follows:

Rating score	Score justification
5	Application meets criterion to a high level. A clear understanding of the selection criterion is demonstrated and there are no further questions regarding how the applicant will meet the criterion.
4	Application meets the criterion well, but a few details could have been a little more specific.
3	Application meets the criterion, but there are questions regarding the application.
2	Application largely fails to meet the criterion.
1	Application completely fails to meet the criterion.

Key dates

Open dates	Round 1 17 September - 31 December 2026 Round 2 1 February - 30 April 2027
Close date	30 April 2027 or until funds are expended
Program delivery period	Must be completed within 12 months of being approved for the grant
Notification period	Six weeks after each round
Acquittal due dates	Must be within three months of project completion
Payment dates	At completion of successful acquittal and demonstration of business co-contribution

Key contacts

If you have any questions regarding these guidelines or to discuss your potential ideas for this grant program, please contact our Economic Development department:

 business@whittlesea.vic.gov.au
 9217 2170

Alternatively, please contact our grants team
 Community.Grants@whittlesea.vic.gov.au
 9217 2170

Mandatory conditions

The following conditions are standard requirements included in all grants offered by Council.

Declaration of conflict of interest

To ensure fairness and transparency a Declaration of a Conflict of Interest must be completed by all applicants who are affiliated with Council with any of the following roles:

- a. Councillors
- b. Council staff
- c. volunteer
- d. appointed to committee or working group
- e. contractor or consultant.

Failure to disclose your affiliations and subsequent completion of the Conflict of Interest section in your application will result in your application being deemed unsuccessful due to not disclosing your conflict of interest.

Acknowledge Council support

All grant recipients are required to acknowledge Council for their support. Acknowledgement requirements will be set out in the ‘Conditions of Grant’ once a grant is approved and offered.

Grant acquittals summary

Grant acquittals are the last step of the grant process. After you have completed your project or event, you provide a report on how the grant money was spent and how successful your activity was. This is also a great opportunity to showcase your activity through photos, videos and other media. Acquittals must be completed to:

- capture the great initiatives delivered across City of Whittlesea through grants
- be sure successful grant recipients use the grants for the intended purpose
- show the impact of your project or event to the community through stories, photos, media and other means such as web links and social media posts
- provide evidence of the work completed in alignment with the approved grant conditions
- submit legitimate receipts to ensure payment of the grant

Please note actual grant money is only provided after the project is complete and the grant acquittal has been submitted and approved.

Consent

Through the application process, Council will seek consent to contact third parties noted in your application in order to verify details where required.

To facilitate delivering all-year grants that are open and competitive, if consent is not provided at the application stage and we cannot verify information on your application, priority will be given to applicants who have provided all information and consent to liaise with third parties.

Contact with third parties noted in your application will be to verify only details specific to your application for the grant, where required.

How to apply

All applications for our grants will be online through SmartyGrants. You will need an email address to apply for the grants. This email address will be the main form of communication for any details regarding your application, conditions of grant, grant variations and acquittal.

How to complete the application form

One each page of the online form, you will find a Form Navigation contents box that links directly to every page of the application. Click the link to jump directly to the page you want.

You can also click ‘next page’ or ‘previous page’ on the top or bottom of each page to move forward or backward through the application.

Saving your draft application

If you want to save an application and return to it later, press ‘save and close’ and log out. When you log back in and click on the ‘My Submissions’ link at the top of the screen, you will find a list of any applications you have started or submitted. You can reopen your draft application and start where you left off.

You can also download any application, whether draft or completed, as a PDF. Click on the ‘Download PDF’ button located at the bottom of the last page of the application form.

Submitting your application

You will find a ‘review and submit’ button at the bottom of the navigation panel. You need to review your application before you can submit it.

After you have reviewed your application, you can submit it by clicking ‘submit’ at the top or bottom of the screen, or on the navigation panel.

You will not be able to submit your application until all compulsory questions are completed and there are no validation errors.

Once you have submitted your application, you can no longer edit or upload any additional support materials.

When you submit your application, you will receive a confirmation email with a copy of your submitted application attached. This will be sent to the email you used to register.

Attachments and support documents

You may need to upload/submit attachments to support your application. This requires you to have the documents saved on your computer, or on a storage device.

You need to allow enough time for each file to upload before trying to attach another file. Files can be up to 25MB each, but we recommend trying to keep files to a maximum of 5MB – the larger the file, the longer the upload time.

Completing an application in a group/team

A number of people can work on an application using the same login details as long as only one person is working at a time. Ensure you save as you go.

Confirmation of submission

You should receive an email confirming your grant application was submitted.

If you do not receive a confirmation email, check your spam or junk email folder.

If you can’t find the email, your application is not submitted. Double-check in SmartyGrants.



Examples of funding ideas

Stream 1: Online retail business

An online home-based candle retail business in South Morang recently expanded its range of candles for sale. It needs a new website that can effectively showcase the full range of products and provide a seamless buying process for its customers on all devices. The website is not currently responsive on mobile and does not offer standard payment options such as Apple Pay or Google Pay. The business feels this is limiting sales and a new modern website would help to improve this.

The business is a member of the Whittlesea Business Network and has identified local web design businesses through the network that can provide a solution. The project will cost \$6,000 and include a new responsive website integrating with the business’ social media accounts, creating a streamlined process for reaching new customers and turning leads into sales.

The business will contribute \$3,000 to the project and apply for a grant total of \$3,000.

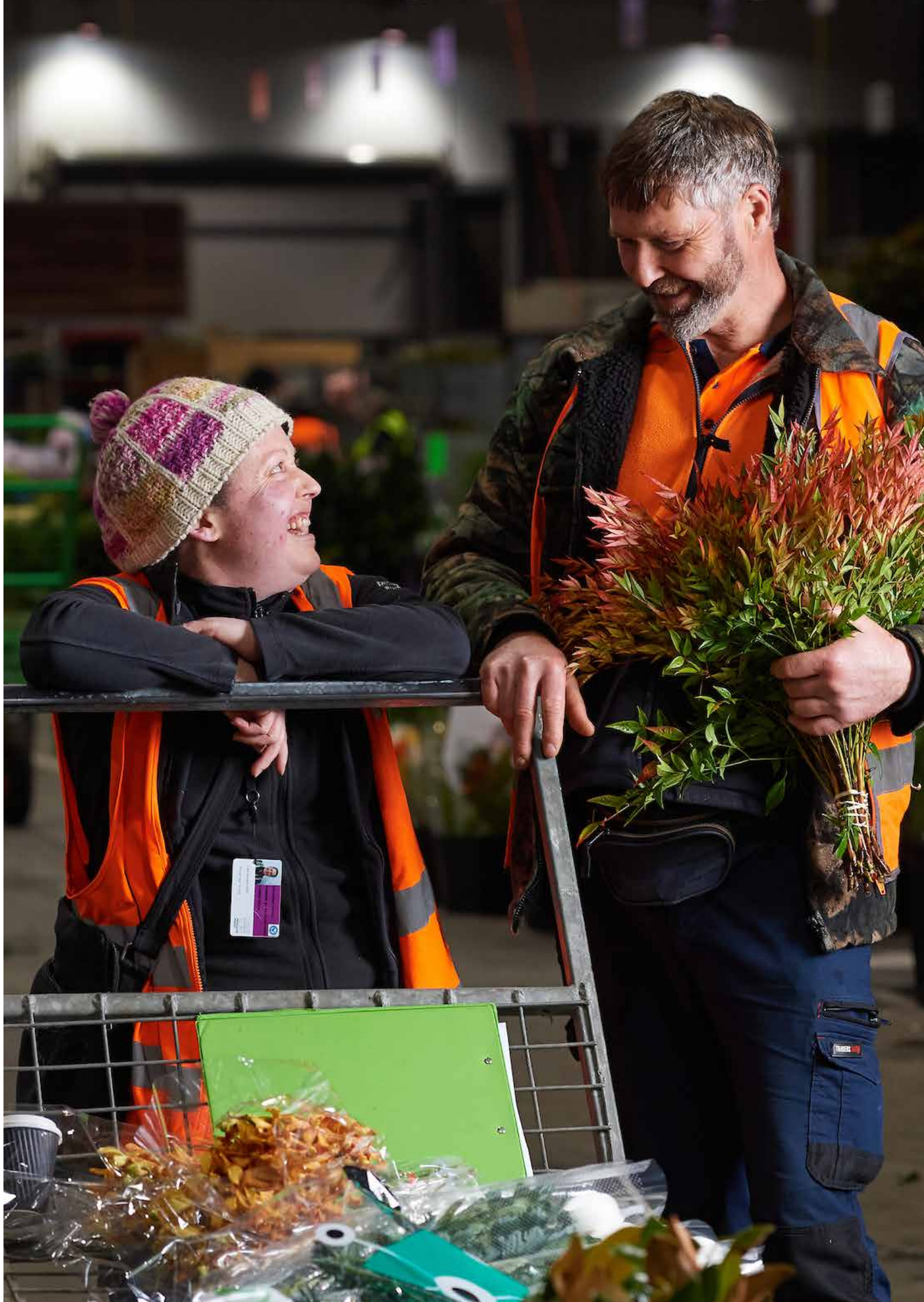
Stream 2: A local bakery

A bakery in Lalor would like to modernise its indoor design with new furniture and its entrance door to improve accessibility for the community and sustainability, enhancing the customer experience. The business would also like to introduce outdoor dining options, providing increased seating capacity, through the addition of specialised outdoor furniture.

The project is expected to cost a total of \$11,000. The business will contribute \$5,500 and apply for grant funding of \$5,500. The business will ensure the relevant permits are obtained from Council for the works to the door and outdoor dining permits.



Right:
Melbourne Market





COUNCIL OFFICES

Civic Centre
25 Ferres Boulevard
South Morang VIC 3752

Telephone 03 9217 2170
National Relay Service 133 677
(ask for 9217 2170)

 whittlesea.vic.gov.au

 facebook.com/cityofwhittlesea

 [CityWhittlesea](https://www.instagram.com/CityWhittlesea)

 linkedin.com/company/city-of-whittlesea



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