



2025-2026 Financial Year

Business to Business Grant Program

Stream 1: Business Improvements and Innovation Program

Stream 2: Elevating your business



**City of
Whittlesea**

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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.

It is envisaged that the B2B Grant Program will;

- Build membership of the City of Whittlesea Business Network (WBN).
- Strengthens local supply chains and generates wealth in the community and long-term sustainability.
- Encourages and supports new and existing diverse business activities 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 number and size of applications requested may impact decision.

Objectives

The B2B Grant Program aims to provide support to local City of Whittlesea businesses looking to grow their presence and resilience in the municipality. The range of initiatives offered are designed to contribute toward building a prosperous and inclusive economy for all.

The objectives of the B2B Grant Program are to:

- Build business-to-business capability and relationships.
- Enable access to services and suppliers that will help elevate or improve your business. An example may be developing a marketing plan, tender writing assistance, or carrying out a sustainability audit of your business.

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 and**
- **Stream 2 – Elevating your business**

The funding offered must be matched dollar-for-dollar by the business and will only be paid after the project is completed and successful demonstration of matching dollar-for-dollar.

Who is eligible to apply

Businesses that are a registered member of the City of Whittlesea Business Network (WBN)

WBN is free to join. Information can be found online at whittlesea.vic.gov.au/Business/Support-for-businesses/Business-Network

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

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 and members of their household, immediate family or close friend
- Businesses owned or operated by Council staff or Councillors
- Political Organisations or groups
- Groups, projects or 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 the following;
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Race, including colour, national or ethnic origin or immigrant status,
 - Sex, pregnancy, marital or relationship status, family responsibilities or breast feeding,
 - Sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status
 - Religious beliefs
 - Groups who have not complied with acquittal conditions from previous Council grants.

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)
- Have an active Australian Business Number (ABN)
- Provide evidence of insurance including certificate of currency (public liability, professional indemnity, or any other relevant insurances).
- Be able to demonstrate business financial viability
- Stream 2 applicants must have 5 or fewer FTE (Full Time Equivalent) employees
- Have Public and or Professional Liability Insurance with a minimum of \$20 million covering the delivery period of this program.
- Not have overdue acquittals
- Not have an outstanding debt to City of Whittlesea
- Services and/or products exceeding \$500 must have a quote to support
- Services and/ or products exceeding \$2,000 must have a minimum of 3 quotes
- Quotes obtained from WBN members are preferred.



Stream 1 - Business improvement and innovation

The Business Improvement and Innovation stream provides the opportunity for businesses to improve their business acumen and operation and supporting improvements that deliver efficiencies and/or innovations.

What can be funded

- Web design and development and E-commerce platforms
- Business coaching and consulting
- Financial planning, 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 to assist businesses to elevate from a micro or small business model to activate a commercial or activity centre premises. This stream also provides the opportunity to improve the physical appearance or accessibility of their current commercial premises.

This stream is offered to businesses with a maximum 5 FTE (Full Time Equivalent) employees.

What can be funded

- Façade improvements including painting, murals, signage, awnings and lighting
- Outdoor furniture or improvements that activate the shop front
- Indoor furniture and equipment to activate the operation of the business premises
- Accessibility upgrades including ramps, handrails, automatic or easy-to-open entrance doors and upgrade to accessible restrooms for customers.

Local Procurement

In both grant streams, preference will be given to applications where services and/or products sourced from a WBN member. 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/Business/Business-directory

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 license 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 apply 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%
➤ Strong Local Economy Strategy 2022–2026	
Project Objectives	30%
Budget	20%
Risk & 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 is no further questions regarding how the applicant will meet the criterion.
4	Application meets criterion well but a few details could have been a little more specific.
3	Application meets the criterion, however there are still questions regarding the application.
2	Application largely fails to meet the criterion.
1	Application completely fails to meet the criterion.

Key dates

Open Date	Round 1 1 October – 31 December 2025 Round 2 1 January – 30 April 2026
Close Date	30 April 2026 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 at least within 3 months of the project completed
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, please contact Michael Schiller, Senior Investment Attraction Officer at michael.schiller@whittlesea.vic.gov.au or on 0499 732 748

Alternatively, please contact our Grants Team via email at Community.Grants@whittlesea.vic.gov.au or by calling 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 where you have completed your project or event, and 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 applied for
- show the impact of your project or event to the community through stories, photos, media and other means (e.g. web links, YouTube links, posts etc)
- Confirm how you used the grant money, provide receipts and return any unspent funds.

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 on-line through SmartyGrants. You will require 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

On every screen (page of the form) you will find a Form Navigation contents box, this 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.

Once you have reviewed your application you can submit it by clicking on ‘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 the compulsory questions are completed and there are no validation errors.

Once you have submitted your application, no further editing or uploading of support materials is possible.

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; however, we do 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 log in 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 Smarty Grants.







COUNCIL OFFICES

Civic Centre
25 Ferres Boulevard
South Morang VIC 3752

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

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