



Small Business Grants Program

2018/19 Guidelines

Timelines

Applications open	Monday 9 July
Workshop sessions	Dates and bookings¹
Application close	Mon 6 Aug 2018, 11:59 pm AEST
Assessment period	Aug to Nov 2018
Council meeting	Late Nov 2018
Notification of outcome	Early Dec 2018

¹ <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/o/city-of-melbourne-10778667187>

Introduction

Helping passionate, innovative small businesses realise their dreams and reach new markets is the primary aim of our small business grants program.

The program provides financial assistance to 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.

Start-ups and established businesses from any sector are welcome to apply as long as you have a great idea and a sound business proposal that is going to proceed regardless of grant funding.

Grants are open to forward-thinking small businesses currently located or intending to locate within the City of Melbourne including the central business district as well as Docklands, East Melbourne, Fishermans Bend, Jolimont, Kensington, North Melbourne, Parkville, South Wharf, West Melbourne and parts of Carlton, Carlton North, Flemington, Port Melbourne, South Yarra and Southbank.

It does not cover the Melbourne metropolitan area. Prospective applicants are encouraged to review the [City of Melbourne municipality map \(PDF 315 KB\)](#)².

Eligibility Checklist

Before you continue, please complete the checklist to determine whether your business is a good candidate for a small business grant. Applicants who do not meet the requirements or do not provide the relevant documentation will not be considered.

- Are you located within the City of Melbourne boundaries or are you planning to relocate within the municipality within the next three months?
- Do you have 20 or fewer employees?
- Do you have an Australian Business Number (ABN)?
- Is your proposal genuinely innovative, creative and does it demonstrate a strong point of difference?
- Can you demonstrate how the City of Melbourne will benefit from your proposal?
- Does your proposal create employment opportunities and increase the level of business investment in Melbourne?
- Does your proposal demonstrate solid market potential and ready to launch?
- Can you demonstrate that you will be able to proceed without the grant?
- For exporters, does your proposal increase the overall value and volume of exports from the city?
- For business expansion grants, are you introducing a completely new product/service into your company portfolio?

²http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/cityofmelbourne_boundarymap.pdf

Grant objectives

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

What do we mean by innovation?

Innovation is not invention, nor is it doing things slightly differently to the way others are doing them already or bundling together existing products and services. Innovation means doing something in a new, creative or novel way. It may involve improving on an existing service or product that increases its utility or opens up new markets. It may mean that an idea is radically different, but equally it may mean that an idea addresses an everyday process in a revolutionary or original way.

You could ask: what is the point of difference between my idea and that of the enterprise next door? The City of Melbourne is looking for enterprises that indicate, through their innovation, that they can add to the city's economic prosperity and diversity.

Grant Eligibility

Who is eligible to apply?

Small businesses that will make a measurable contribution to the small business grant objectives are eligible to apply.

An applicant must:

- have a registered Australian Business Number (ABN)
- be located within or committed to relocate promptly to the City of Melbourne municipality within three months from the letter of grant offer
- employ 20 people or less
- have an appropriate legal structure, such as a sole trader, an Australian registered company, business cooperative or partnership and have documentary evidence of an appropriate legal structure.

Who is not eligible to apply?

Franchisees, subsidiaries of larger companies, unincorporated associations and government departments or agencies are not eligible to apply.

Branches of foreign companies that are not registered as an Australian company are also not eligible to apply. Individuals / organisations providing trade facilitation services to businesses are not eligible to apply under the export entry grants category.

Those who are not located in or considering relocation to the City of Melbourne are ineligible to apply. Potential applicants should give consideration as to why their business model dictates a need to be located in the City of Melbourne, not just because a grant is on offer.

Grant Categories

Businesses can only apply for one category in each funding round. If you apply for more than one category you will be asked to choose one category and your other application/s will not be considered.

Start-up

Start-up grants are designed to assist with the establishment of new, creative and innovative businesses that will increase the diversity of the city's business community and boost Melbourne's capability in key business sectors.

Grants of up to \$30,000 are available.

Business expansion

Business expansion grants are targeted to assist the expansion of existing innovative businesses, defined as

- an existing City of Melbourne small business introducing a new, innovative activity/product/service as part of its expansion phase, or
- an existing innovative small business relocating to the municipality as part of its business expansion process.

Grants of up to \$30,000 are available.

Export entry

Export entry grants are focused on helping companies enter and expand into new overseas markets. They support export-ready small businesses looking to enter the international market for the first time, as well as more experienced exporters who wish to expand into new markets.

Export entry grants are offered on a matched-funding basis and claimed after the proposed activities have been undertaken.

Grants of up to \$10,000 are available. Businesses can apply under two sub-categories; new exporter and current exporter.

A new exporter

- has export turnover of less than 5 per cent of total annual dollar turnover
- has an export strategy and demonstrated export readiness/capability.

A current exporter

- has demonstrated export experience in one or more overseas markets
- seeks to explore export opportunities in a new market or launch a new product/service in an existing market.

Up to three export grants may be awarded to a business, with each grant occurring in three separate financial years. The approval of subsequent grants will be subject to the satisfactory completion of agreed performance measures of the previous grant.

Application

A series of individual grant category lunchtime briefing sessions will be held during the application period to allow prospective applicants to seek more information about the program and seek advice. To make a booking or for more information visit [small business grants](http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/business/opportunities/grants-sponsorships/small-business-grants/pages/small-business-grants.aspx)³.

These sessions are not compulsory but highly recommended.

How do I apply?

To apply, simply follow these steps.

- Visit and review the information on [small business grants](http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/business/opportunities/grants-sponsorships/small-business-grants/pages/small-business-grants.aspx)⁴ program.
- Book and attend a category-specific lunchtime briefing session. Attendance at a session is strongly encouraged but not mandatory for submitting an application.
- Complete the appropriate online application form.
- Attach all relevant supporting documents, including a full set of required financial statements.
- Submit your application online by Mon 6 Aug, 11:59 pm AEST.

Submit your application

Your application must be received by the nominated closing date and time for each funding round. Late applications will not be accepted.

You will not be able to amend or submit your application online after the closing date. You will receive an email confirming receipt of your application.

Claimable items

What can I claim?

All expenditure items must be directly related to the proposal. Refer to each category listed below for more details. Please note only expenditure items that have not yet been incurred prior to lodging your application will be eligible in any of the grant categories.

What can't I claim?

We do not fund operational expenses that are considered as ongoing costs such as rent, utilities, wages and personal expenses.

Start-up and business expansion

The start-up and business expansion grants support expenditure items directly related to establishing a business or as part of a business expansion process.

³ <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/business/opportunities/grants-sponsorships/small-business-grants/pages/small-business-grants.aspx>

⁴ <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/business/opportunities/grants-sponsorships/small-business-grants/pages/small-business-grants.aspx>

Export entry

The export entry grants support the following categories of export-related activities:

Overseas representation and marketing consultants

- Costs associated with engaging an overseas representative acting on behalf of the business to market or promote the product/service. Cost associated with engaging an overseas representative or consultant for business matching activities.

Market research

- Cost of engaging a consultant to undertake targeted export market research.

Marketing visits

- Cost of economy airfares, on-ground travel and accommodation.

Free samples

- Cost of providing free samples to non-residents.

Communications

- Cost of communications directly associated with the export project.

Promotional literature

- Production cost of internationally-branded promotional materials, advertising and translation.

Trade fairs and exhibitions

- Cost of participating in international trade fairs, seminars or exhibitions.

Outbound missions

- Cost of participating in a City of Melbourne business/trade mission.

Export product development and protection

- Cost of modifying a product/service or its packaging in order to tailor it to the export requirements of an overseas market. Cost associated with product/service protection including intellectual property rights, patents and trademarks.

Expenditure not directly related to export-related activities will not be considered.

Assessment process

What is the assessment process?

Each application will be assessed against the small business grants assessment criteria. An assessment report is prepared for consideration by an external review panel made up of experienced small business operators and advisors.

The panel will consider the conforming applications on a competitive and merit basis and make recommendations for approval. On the basis of these recommendations, the Melbourne City Council will determine the final grant funding.

Lobbying

Canvassing or lobbying councillors, employees of the City of Melbourne or assessment panel members in relation to any grant or sponsorship application is prohibited during the application process. No further consideration will be given to an application submitted by an applicant who canvasses or lobbies a councillor, City of Melbourne employee or assessment panel member in relation to their application.

Assessment criteria

Applications considered to offer the most valuable contribution to the achievement of the program's objectives and consistent with the City of Melbourne's goals will be offered grants. The assessment criteria for individual grant categories are outlined below.

Start-up and Business expansion

- **Innovation and creativity (30 per cent)**
Able to clearly demonstrate via a market analysis and by a subsequent market strategy, a strong point of difference, not duplicating existing products/services available in the city, and can demonstrate unique, hard to copy, or extensive intellectual capital or property.
- **Business readiness (25 per cent)**
Able to demonstrate 'business readiness' that the product/service is well-researched, planned and financially viable and ready to be launched.
- **Financial viability (20 per cent)**
Able to demonstrate financial viability, sound management and that the proposal will be able to proceed without a grant.
- **Benefits to the City of Melbourne (20 per cent)**
Able to deliver measurable economic benefits to the City of Melbourne in areas such as job creation, investment, revenue generation and capability building.
- **Ethical and other consideration (5 per cent)**
Able to demonstrate sustainable business practices and alignment with Council's policies.

For business expansion applicants:

You must also be able to demonstrate the proposed business expansion activity is a new product/service, not just organic growth of the existing suite of products or services.

Export entry

- **Export potential (30 per cent)**
Able to demonstrate the potential demand for the product or service in an overseas market and deliver direct export outcomes.
- **Export readiness (25 per cent)**
Able to demonstrate 'export readiness' in that the proposed export product/service is well-researched, planned and financially viable.
- **Financial viability (20 per cent)**
Able to demonstrate financial viability and sound management including ability to match approved funding on a dollar-for-dollar basis.
- **Benefits to City of Melbourne (20 per cent)**
Able to demonstrate your proposal will deliver measurable economic benefits to City of Melbourne in the areas of export earnings, investment and job creation.

- Ethical and other considerations (5 per cent)
Able to demonstrate sustainable business practices and alignment with Council's policies.

All export category applicants must be able to demonstrate the goods/services for export are manufactured or produced in Australia.

For current exporter applicants:

You must also be able to demonstrate a level of existing business success, supported by financial documentation.

The City of Melbourne's priorities are to ensure its international connections contribute to Melbourne being a prosperous, internationally engaged and harmonious city. Key markets include China, Japan, the US, India, ASEAN and Korea.

Terms and Conditions

Grant recipients will be required to enter into a 12-month agreement with the City of Melbourne and meet agreed performance measures and conditions in relation to the anticipated outcomes, as identified in the application. Grant recipients are also required to have appropriate business insurances in place and be located within the City of Melbourne municipality for the duration of the agreement.

All recipients are required to submit two reports during the period of the agreement (at six months and 12 months), detailing progress against the agreed measures. Recipients will also be required to recognise the City of Melbourne's support, in an agreed manner and to participate in any public promotions organised by the City of Melbourne to promote the small business grants.

The City of Melbourne may also contact you to gain feedback about the progress of your business over the longer term. A City of Melbourne officer is likely to contact you up to five years after you receive the grant, to gain an understanding of how the grant made a difference to your enterprise and its development. This may include questions about how your business has grown including major milestones and achievements. The responses will be aggregated with those of other recipients to guide future refinement of the grants program.

Start-up and business expansion grants recipients may be required to use the Small Business Mentoring Service to assist the success of the proposed activity. The City of Melbourne will reimburse part of the cost of the service.

On average, applicants will be notified of the assessment outcome three months from the closing date of the application.

All decisions are final. There will be no review or appeal process. However, unsuccessful applicants are eligible to re-apply.

If successful, when will I receive payment?

Start-up and business expansion

Successful recipients will receive an initial payment of 50 per cent of the grant after both parties have signed the agreement. The balance of the grant payment will be made at the conclusion of the 12-month term of the agreement and will be subject to the receipt of a 12-month report detailing satisfactory completion of agreed performance measures as well as detailed invoices and proof of payment for completed items.

Payments will only be made for items invoiced after the application closing date. For example, if the closing date is 1 August, successful applicants are eligible to claim for items invoiced from 1 August onwards.

Export entry grants

Grant payments will be made on receipt of a post-activity report detailing satisfactory completion of agreed performance measures and an acquittal form including supporting documents such as invoices and receipts up to the approved amount.

No payments will be made prior to expenditure being incurred. Approved grants will remain valid for a period of 12 months from the date of approval.

Ethical Considerations

Preference will be given to applications that demonstrate sustainable business practices and business practices in line with the ethical charter.

Ethical charter

The City of Melbourne seeks to support small businesses that will contribute to one or more of the following:

1. production of high quality and properly presented products and services
2. development of locally-based ventures
3. development of appropriate technological systems
4. improvement of wasteful or polluting practices
5. development of sustainable land use and food production
6. preservation of endangered ecosystems, human happiness, dignity and education
7. the dignity and wellbeing of animals.

The City of Melbourne will avoid supporting small businesses that unnecessarily:

1. pollute land, air or water
2. destroy or waste non-recurring resources
3. extract, create, produce, manufacture, or market materials, products, goods or services that have a harmful effect on humans, non-human animals or the environment
4. market, promote or advertise, products or services in a misleading or deceitful manner
5. create markets by the promotion or advertising of unwanted products or services
6. acquire land or commodities primarily for the purpose of speculative gain
7. create, encourage or perpetuate militarism or engage in the manufacture of armaments
8. entice people into financial over-commitment
9. exploit people through the payment of low wages or the provision of poor working conditions
10. discriminate by way of race, religion or sex in employment, marketing or advertising practices
11. contribute to the reduction of human rights generally.

This Ethical Charter is based on the [Australian Ethical Charter](http://www.australianethical.com.au)⁵ (1989), Australian Ethical Investment Ltd.

⁵ <http://www.australianethical.com.au>

Other City of Melbourne funding opportunities

The City of Melbourne offers a wide range of grants and sponsorship opportunities to support the Melbourne community. Grants and sponsorships enable successful applicants to deliver quality programs, events, products and services significant to Melbourne, bringing social and economic returns. Full details including dates and guidelines are available from the website at [Grants and Sponsorships](#)⁶.

More information

Contact [City of Melbourne](#)⁷:

Email smallbusinessgrants@melbourne.vic.gov.au

Phone 03 9658 9658 (7.30am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, Public holidays excluded)

Applicants with a disability may contact us to discuss any additional support they need. If you are deaf, hearing-impaired, or speech-impaired, please email us or call us via the National Relay Service:

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

In person

Melbourne Town Hall – Administration Building
120 Swanston Street, Melbourne
7.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday
(Public holidays excluded)

In writing

City of Melbourne
GPO Box 1603
Melbourne VIC 3001
Australia

⁶ <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/grantsandsponsorships>

⁷ <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/pages/contact-us.aspx>