



# Business Grant Schemes

## Guidance

Start-Up Grant Scheme

Growth Grant Scheme

Shop Front Improvements Grant Scheme

Vacant Shops Grant Scheme

## **BUSINESS START-UP GRANT SCHEME**

This scheme is available to start-up businesses in the district of Mansfield.

It is hoped that these grants will help in supporting the development of a vibrant entrepreneurial business sector as well as increase the overall number of business start-ups across the district.

### **Am I eligible to apply for a grant?**

This scheme is available to:

- Individuals looking to start a business in the Mansfield district.
- Businesses already located in either district that have been registered as trading for less than six months (e.g. with HMRC or Companies House).

Eligible businesses can take the legal form of Sole Trader, Partnership, Limited Company or Social Enterprise/Community Interest Company (CIC).

### **How much grant could I receive?**

A maximum of £1,000 grant to contribute towards up to 50% of the total eligible cost of the project (excluding VAT).

### **What can I use the grant for?**

The grant can contribute towards expenditure including the following:

- Capital assets such as plant, equipment or machinery – the grant will not contribute towards costs associated with leased or rented equipment (vehicles, stock and consumables are excluded).
- Office equipment and furniture including purchase of computer systems.
- Shop fittings and refurbishment.
- Security equipment and installation.
- Business stationery.
- Advertising and other marketing costs including web design.
- The grant will only contribute towards 12 months of on-going costs, e.g. web hosting, licences etc.

## BUSINESS GROWTH GRANT SCHEME

This scheme provides grants for businesses that have a viable business growth plan which will encourage job creation.

### Am I eligible to apply for a grant?

The grant is available to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs)<sup>1</sup> who have been located in the district of Mansfield for at **least six months**, that either:

- Have a 'Strategic Business Growth Plan' in place and require additional funding to take it forward.
- Are at the planning stage of considering developments to grow the business.

In both cases, growth plans will need to encourage job creation. All businesses must have been registered as trading for at least six months (e.g. with HMRC or Companies House).

Businesses that are trading from a residential property are excluded from applying for a Growth Grant

### How much grant could I receive?

A maximum of £2,500 grant, to contribute towards up to 50% of the total eligible cost of the project (excluding VAT).

### What can I use the grant for?

The grant can contribute towards expenditure including the following:

- Land and buildings, including refurbishment.
- Plant, machinery and equipment costs – the grant will not contribute towards costs associated with leased or rented equipment (vehicles, stock and consumables are excluded).
- Costs relating to research and development work e.g. product development, including production of proto types and research of new marketing opportunities.
- Costs associated with staff training, to improve skill levels, in order to introduce the proposed developments into the business.
- The grant will only contribute towards 12 months of on-going costs, e.g. web hosting, licences etc.

## SHOP FRONT IMPROVEMENTS GRANT SCHEME

This scheme provides grants for retail businesses to improve their shop front.

It is hoped that these grants will enhance the visual appearance of the retail shopping areas, thus making them more attractive to shoppers and increasing footfall.

### Am I eligible to apply for a grant?

- The grant is available to existing independent retailers<sup>2</sup> who would like to replace, improve or carry out repairs to their shop front.
- Premises must be located in the Mansfield district.
- Retail units must have a ground floor and street facing frontage to be eligible.
- This scheme is available to retail businesses that are **already** occupying premises.

### How much grant could I receive?

A maximum of £2,500 grant to contribute towards up to 50% of the total eligible cost of the project (excluding VAT).

### What can I use the grant for?

The grant can contribute towards expenditure including the following:

- Replacement shop front, windows and doors.
- Reinstatement of traditionally styled shop fronts, sash windows and doors.
- Painting of existing shop fronts and upper floors (including render).
- Replacement gutter and downpipes.
- Replacement signage.
- Costs associated with planning permission and building regulations fees.
- Architects fees.

## VACANT SHOP GRANT SCHEME

This scheme provides grants to businesses that are moving into vacant shops.

It is hoped that these grants will help reduce vacancy rates of shops across the district by encouraging more retailers thus making the retail areas more attractive to shoppers and increasing footfall.

### Am I eligible to apply for a grant?

- The grant is available to independent retailers<sup>2</sup> who will be leasing a retail unit. Owners of retail premises are excluded from applying.
- Premises must be located in the Mansfield district.
- Retail units must have a ground floor and street facing frontage to be eligible.

### How much grant could I receive?

A maximum of £2,500 grant to contribute towards up to 50% of the total eligible cost of the project (excluding VAT).

### What can I use the grant for?

The grant can contribute towards expenditure including the following:

- Improvements to premises.
- Fixtures and fittings.
- Equipment and furniture (vehicles, stock and consumables are excluded).
- Up to two months rental payments.
- Security equipment and installation.
- Business stationery.
- Advertising and other marketing costs including web design.
- Costs associated with planning permission and building regulations fees.
- Insurance premiums.

## How do I apply for a grant?

All applicants will need to complete the on-line application form and also submit the following supporting documents:

- A business plan.
- A 12-month cash flow forecast and profit & loss.
- Latest accounts (existing businesses only).
- Three written quotes for any single item costing over £2,000.
- Confirmation of any necessary approvals, if required, e.g. planning permission, building regulations<sup>3</sup>.

We strongly recommend that applicants applying for the Start-up grant seek support to undergo an appropriate course of business advice that leads to the production of the business plan demonstrating the viability of the business idea.

As the grants are paid in arrears applicants will initially need to pay for the total project. For example, to obtain a grant of £1,000 applicants will need to spend at least £2,000 (excluding VAT) and for a grant of £2,500 applicants will need to spend at least £5,000 (excluding VAT).

All applications will be subject to an assessment by a Panel and the amount offered will be at the discretion of the Panel and only whilst funds are available. The Panel's decision is final.

In all cases applicants need to apply for the grant by submitting their full application and obtain a written approval of the application, **before** any work is undertaken or items/equipment purchased. The grant will not be paid towards the cost of transactions that have occurred before the date of the approval.

If the grant application is successful the applicant agrees to remain trading within the district for at least 12 months. The council reserves the right to seek repayment of part/all of the grant if this condition is not met.

## How do I apply for a grant?

If the grant application is approved, applicants will have up to four months to submit copies of relevant invoices and bank statements showing that eligible expenditure has been made. All invoices and bank statements must be dated **after** the grant approval date. **Items purchased using cash will not be eligible for grant payment.**

The grant amount paid will be the lesser of the agreed amount or half of the eligible expenditure (excluding VAT).

The grant payment will be made directly into the applicant's \*business bank account via BACS.

**\*Business bank account** definition: A business bank account is a trading commercial account in the name of the applying business. All purchases must be made via the business account and all claim payments will be made to the same business account. Personal or current accounts are NOT eligible.

## Important notes

The amount of funding a business can apply for is restricted to £2,500 in a 12 month period. This can be made from multiple eligible grants that total up to a maximum of £2,500.

Applicants may only apply to a particular grant scheme once. Any applicant who is offered and claims an amount from a grant scheme will not be eligible to apply to the same scheme again.

Certain businesses are excluded from applying for these grants and these include pawn brokers, adult/private shops, betting shops, charity shops, vaping shops, licenced premises (where the consumption of alcohol is permitted), national and international chain stores. Businesses that are trading from a residential property are excluded from the Growth, Shop Fronts and Vacant Shops grant schemes.

Applications submitted by Agents or Consultants **will not** be accepted. All applications must be submitted by the applicant.

If your project includes shop front improvements, you will need to visit the interim planning guidance which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/planning-building-guidance/planning-guidance-1>

## Next steps

If you believe you have a project that meets the criteria and would like to apply please complete the on-line application form ensuring that you include all the supporting documents that are required. If you have any queries before completing the application please e-mail [regeneration@mansfield.gov.uk](mailto:regeneration@mansfield.gov.uk).

<sup>1</sup> SMEs – A small or medium-sized enterprise, or SME, is defined as a business or company: that has fewer than 250 employees; and has either (a) annual turnover not exceeding 50 million Euros (approximately £40 million) or (b) an annual balance-sheet total not exceeding 43 million Euros (approximately £34 million).

<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of this scheme an independent retailer is defined as a single retail outlet, or a chain of two or three stores managed and owned by either a Sole Trader, Partnership or Limited Company.

<sup>3</sup> Businesses will need to evidence that all required permissions have been obtained, or produce written evidence that all required permissions are required before a grant can be paid.