

Business Growth and Adaptions Grant Application Guidance



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About the Grant

The West of England Combined Authority Business Growth and Adaptions Grant is designed to support Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the West of England with their plans to grow by investing in products or equipment to drive production of physical, tangible products. The funding can also be used to adapt to regulatory change related to production practices, enacted in the last three years.

Who can apply for funding?

SMEs in the West of England Combined Authority area. That's businesses with a registered and/or trading address in the Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, or South Gloucestershire local authority area. [Check your postcode](#) to find out which local authority area you're in.

There are two funding streams available from the Business Growth and Adaptions Grant. The eligibility criteria for each scheme can be found below.

To apply for Fund 1, you must:

- Have a registered and/or trading address in the Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, or South Gloucestershire local authority area
- Be able to provide a minimum of 20% match funding for your purchases
- Have traded for at least 1 year
- Be a sole trader, limited company, limited liability partnership, or a co operative
- Be a small or medium sized enterprise (SME), this means you must not employ more than 249 people. There is not a minimum level of employment for the Business Growth and Adaptions Grant.

To apply for Fund 2, you must:

- Have a registered and/or trading address in the Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, or South Gloucestershire local authority area
- Be able to provide a minimum of 20% match funding for your purchases
- Have traded as a limited company, limited liability partnership, co operative or a registered charitable company for at least 3 years
- Be a limited company, limited liability partnership, cooperative, or a registered charitable company.
- Be a small or medium sized enterprise (SME), this means you must not employ more than 249 people. There is no minimum level of employment for the Business Growth and Adaptions Grant.
- Provide your latest full filled accounts with Companies House where the previous year's figures are also included. These should consist of the Profit & Loss Statement, Balance Sheet Statement and Notes to the Accounts. We will not accept abbreviated or draft accounts.

Applications must be submitted by the proprietor, a director, or a partner of the applicant company. Applications not submitted by a registered proprietor, director

or partner will be rejected. You do not need to be VAT registered. Non-VAT registered and VAT exempt businesses can apply.

What value of funding is available?

Apply to Fund 1 for grants between £6,000* and £10,000

Apply to Fund 2 for grants between £10,001 and £30,000

Your business will need to be able to provide at least 20% match funding

In exceptional circumstances applications for a grant below the minimum level will be acceptable. You must contact the team at EnterpriseGrants@WestofEngland-CA.gov.uk in the first instance to discuss this.

***It should be noted that the minimum grant value has to take into consideration the minimum 20% financial match an applicant will have to provide. If a project proposal was submitted with a total project cost of £6000, it would in fact fall below the minimum grant value, as it would equate to a grant of £4,800, due to the requirements of a minimum of 20% financial match from an applicant. With this in mind the minimum total project cost must be no less than £7,500, to receive the minimum grant value of £6,000.**

What can the grant be used for?

Grants can be used for products or equipment to help the business achieve one of the following:

- increase or improve production
- start production, including bringing production ‘in-house’
- adapt to regulatory change related to production practices, enacted in the last three years.

All projects should support operations or processes to maintain or increase turnover.

Your application must be for planned future expenditure. Items purchased before you are awarded a grant will not be eligible for funding.

What can't the grant be used for?

- Additive manufacturing and 3D Printing
- The Industrial Internet of Things (sensors)
- Artificial intelligence and cognitive learning
- Data and systems integration
- Robotics and process control automation
- Virtual, augmented, and mixed realities
- Industrial cybersecurity
- Big data and analytics
- Costs associated with the production and protection of [intellectual property](#)

- Products that only improve [energy efficiency](#) of the business' own buildings and operations
- Vehicles not used in the production line
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Research activities
- Pre-production, proof of concept and prototyping activities
- Standalone* training
- Professional qualifications, accreditations/standards
- Revenue costs including utilities, rental, existing staff costs, memberships, marketing plans and advertising
- Capital works to non-commercial premises
- Capital works to commercial premises, without a min 5-year lease.
- Standalone* consultancy, salaries/overheads. See our FAQs guidance for further information about salary costs.
- Standalone* IT hardware and software
- Stock
- Proposals that have the potential to cause environmental or social harm
- Video, audio and photographic equipment
- Infrastructure, works and products to support the delivery of live performances and events.
- Printing production equipment for the purpose of printing third-party designs or concepts as a service. See our FAQ guidance for further information about printing equipment.
- Kitchen equipment, machines or appliances for the purpose of increasing the service provision of food and drink, that are not required due to change in regulation, enacted in the last three years. See our FAQ guidance for further information about kitchen equipment costs.

Projects that support some of the above ineligible items can be accessed through [the West of England Growth Hub](#).

*By standalone we mean the item must support the product or equipment you have applied for in your application or supports a piece of equipment you already own. If you already own the equipment, we may require proof of ownership.

Applying for a Business Growth and Adaptions Grant

Applications to the Business Growth and Adaptions Grant must be submitted by the proprietor, a director, or a partner of the applicant company.

To apply for the grant, you will first need to create an account on [the West of England Grant Portal](#), this will provide you with your own secure account. We will also use this portal to manage the grant award and claims process.

If you are unable to use the grant portal, due to accessibility reasons, please contact us by e-mail EnterpriseGrants@WestofEngland-ca.gov.uk or phone [the](#)

[Growth Hub](#) on 0117 456 6955 to leave a message and we will do our best to support you.

Once registered, you will need the following company information:

- Your company's registered or trading address, which must be in the Bath and North East Somerset, City of Bristol or South Gloucestershire local authority area
- Date the business started trading
- Current annual turnover
- Where applicable, Companies House registration number
- Where applicable, VAT registration number
- Total number of employees directly employed by the business
- For fund 2 applications, you will also need your latest full filled accounts. Draft accounts will not be accepted.

In your application you will need to provide details about the project you are applying for. The application must demonstrate the need for the grant and its impact in terms of turnover and, where applicable, jobs created and safeguarded. You will also be asked to provide specific details about the product(s) you are applying for and their costs. Items applied for should be individually itemised we will not accept an application where individual costs have been grouped together in one gross figure.

In the application you will be expected to justify why debt finance is not available for this project, the impact of Covid-19 or Brexit on your business, and how the project will help your company to increase or improve the production of a product or start production of a product.

All projects should support a business operation or process to maintain or increase turnover.

You will not be able to save your application once you start and you will not be able to see the application once it has been submitted. We recommend preparing your answers and saving a copy for future reference.

The funding will be awarded on a competitive basis, this means the date you submitted your application has no effect on its likelihood of approval. Applications will be assessed on the eligibility compliance and stated impact of the funding.

You must be as accurate as possible in the figures you provide in your application form. You will be required to report on your progress after the grant is awarded.

Once submitted, you will not be able to amend your application. This includes adding additional documents to your application once submitted.

Declarations

Credit check

For your grant to be approved the Combined Authority must have consent to credit check your company. If consent is not given, your application will not pass our due diligence checks.

If you are a sole trader or a partnership, you will need to provide your self-assessment tax return for your credit check. This must be the full document showing your and/or the business name and address, it must not be redacted. This should also show the income and expenditure for the year. We will require the last form filed with HMRC and the previous year. You will also need to provide confirmation of the receipt of the Self-Assessment forms from HMRC.

State subsidy

This grant is awarded as Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA) in accordance with section 36(1) of the Subsidy Control Act (2022). You must not have or will not exceed the limit of £315,000 of publicly funded financial subsidy over the relevant three-year physical period, if you were successful in being awarded a grant.

Your declaration

Before starting your application, you will be asked to accept a declaration. Please read this carefully to ensure you are fully informed prior to completing your application.

Accepting a grant

The West of England Combined Authority will email you to inform you if your application for a grant has been successful. It is your responsibility to look out for our communications and regularly check your spam/junk folder.

If you have been successful, we will provide you with a Grant Offer Letter and Subsidy Control Declaration letter. To accept the grant offer, you must sign and return the Grant Offer Letter (your signature can be added as an image, instead of downloading the letter signing it and scanning it, before returning it). We cannot accept offer letters where a signature has been typed into the document or the returned copy is not legible.

You must also return the Subsidy Control Declaration letter, with any other state funding you have received in the last three financial years, this must not exceed £315,000, including the grant you have just been awarded.

Failure to return either of these documents within 14 calendar days of them being issued, will see your offer being revoked. If you are unable to provide a scanned copy of your documents, please contact EnterpriseGrants@westofengland-ca.gov.uk as soon as possible.

You should not make any purchases for your project until we have confirmed your returned forms have been accepted.

Making a claim

Successful applicants will have 3 months from the date of their Grant Offer Letter from the West of England Combined Authority, to start and complete the project identified in their application and submit their claim.

To claim the grant, you will need to submit the claim letter and schedule of costs included with the Grant Offer Letter accompanied by the necessary evidence of expenditure.

business bank statement, identifying each purchase. Your bank statement must clearly show the name of the bank, the name of the account, account number and sort code. Claims must be submitted in full, and funding cannot be claimed for in instalments.

This should include an invoice/receipt (which must be an official VAT receipt, including supplier details and the exact products and services itemised) for each item. Evidence of defrayal via a bank statement highlighting the expenditure which is linked to the invoice. This must be the same bank details, as those that you have supplied, including the name the account is in, which must be clearly visible on the statement. All other expenditure can be redacted.

Full details about claim requirements can be accessed in our Claim Guidance. This will be included in your Grant Offer Letter and Subsidy Declaration confirmation email. If you cannot find this document, please request a copy from EnterpriseGrants@westofengland-ca.gov.uk

Glossary

Product	Something that is made to be sold, usually produced by an industrial process or, something that is grown or obtained through farming
Production	The process of making or growing goods to be sold
Vehicle	A thing used for transporting people or goods, especially on land, such as a car, lorry, or cart.
Standalone	The item must support the product or equipment you have applied for in your application or supports a piece of equipment you already own. If you already own the equipment, we may require proof of ownership.
Software	The programs and other operating information used by a computer.
Hardware	The machines, wiring, and other physical components of a computer or other electronic system