

GUIDELINES

Business Costs Assistance Program

COVID-19 assistance to businesses

Program Summary

The \$92.06 million Business Costs Assistance Program is part of the Victorian Government's \$143 million Circuit Breaker Action Business Support Package and will assist small businesses and non-employed businesses (such as sole traders) who were most impacted by the recent COVID-19 circuit breaker action, particularly those in hospitality, food wholesaling, tourism, events and selected retail who have incurred costs such as the loss of perishable goods, flowers and booking cancellations, and cancellation fees and charges as a result of the circuit breaker action.

1 Standard Eligibility Criteria

1.1 To be eligible for the Program, a business must:

- a) Be located within Victoria¹; and
- b) Be registered as operating in an eligible industry sector identified in [the List of Eligible ANZSIC classes](#) (as defined by the industry classification (ANZSIC) linked to the business' ABN²); and
- c) Have incurred costs (as outlined in Section 5) as a direct result of the circuit breaker action announced on 12 February 2021; and
- d) Have an annual Victorian payroll of up to \$3 million in 2019-20 on an ungrouped basis³; and
- e) Be registered for Goods and Services Tax (GST) on 12 February 2021⁴; and
- f) Hold an Australian Business Number (ABN) and have held that ABN at 12 February 2021.

2 Other eligibility conditions

2.1 Businesses that received a grant under the Licensed Hospitality Venue Fund (LHVF), including the associated Circuit Breaker Payment to LHVF recipients, are not eligible for a grant under the Program.

2.2 Businesses that meet the Program eligibility criteria that have received assistance through the three rounds of the Business Support Fund, payroll tax rebate/waiver, or

¹ Business location is determined for employing businesses using workplace addresses registered with WorkSafe Victoria and for non-employed businesses using the ABN registered 'primary operating address'.

² Your industry ABN registration includes your self-nominated ANZSIC industry classification and this will be used to determine your eligibility for this criterion. Applicants are encouraged to check that these details are up to date and reflect their current business activity prior to submitting their application. For information on how to update your ABN details, go to the [Australian Business Register website](#). Superannuation trusts are not considered to be operating in an eligible ANZSIC class.

³ Where a business is in a payroll group, the payroll eligibility criteria applies to each business in the payroll group. That is, any member of a group with an annual Victorian taxable payroll of up to \$3 million in 2019-20 can apply.

⁴ A business or enterprise must register for GST if it has a GST turnover of \$75,000 or more. Not-for-profit entities with annual turnover between \$75,000 and \$150,000 that are not registered for GST and are registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission are eligible to apply. Businesses with annual 2019-2020 turnover of \$75,000 or more that are not required by relevant taxation legislation to be registered for GST are eligible to apply.

other COVID-19 programs are eligible to apply for assistance under the Program.

- 2.3 Accommodation businesses that apply to both the Program and the Victorian Accommodation Support Program will only be eligible for the maximum grant available under either program.

3 Demonstration of eligibility

- 3.1 Applicants must certify that they meet the eligibility criteria at the time of application and are continuing to trade. To be eligible, applicants will need to meet the eligibility criteria at the time the application is assessed by the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR).
- 3.2 Industry sector: To be eligible, an Applicant's primary business activity must be in an eligible industry sector and this must be reflected in the Applicant's ABN registration information. Applicants should check that their details on the [Australian Business Register website](#) are correct prior to submitting an application. This includes ensuring that the industry classification (ANZSIC class code) linked to their ABN registration correctly captures their primary business activity.
- 3.3 Demonstrating costs incurred: Businesses must identify, attest to and retain evidence of applicable costs (see Section 5) incurred as a direct result of the circuit breaker action. Evidence does not need to be lodged with the application form. The evidence retained should reflect the types of costs indicated by the applicant in the submitted application. Applying businesses are required to retain this evidence for a period of 12 months after approval of the grant and provide it upon request.
- 3.4 WorkSafe Number (Employing Businesses only): Applicants must demonstrate that they employ people by providing the WorkCover Employer Number or WorkSafe Application Reference Number linked to the business.
- 3.5 Identity Documents (Non-Employing Businesses only): Applicants must provide details of a current proof of identity document. This must be one of the following:
- a driver licence issued in any Australian jurisdiction; or
 - an Australian Passport; or
 - a Medicare Card; or
 - a foreign passport for those issued with an Australian Visa.

The identity document details provided should be for a person listed on the Australian Business Register as either the owner or co-owner of the business or authorised contact of the business.

4 Available funding

- 4.1 The total value of a grant under the Program is \$2,000.
- 4.2 A business as defined by its ABN can only receive one grant under the Program.

5 Applicable costs

- 5.1 The program seeks to assist eligible businesses that have incurred costs as a direct result of the circuit breaker action announced on 12 February 2021 which may include, but are not limited to:
- i. the loss of perishable goods (e.g. food or flowers)
 - ii. cancellation fees and charges (e.g. venue/performer/instructor)
 - iii. booking cancellations
 - iv. other costs and losses incurred due to the circuit breaker action that could not be reasonably avoided.
- 5.2 These costs may have been incurred prior to, on or after 12 February 2021. The costs must be incurred by the applying business, as defined by its ABN.

6 Assessment Process

- 6.1 Funding will be allocated through a grant application process.
- 6.2 As part of the assessment process, any information provided by applicants will be subject to verification with other government agencies (state and federal) including the Victorian State Revenue Office, WorkSafe Victoria, the Australian Business Register and the Commonwealth Department of Home Affairs.⁵
- 6.3 Any of the following circumstances may be taken into consideration in any decision whether to award a grant:
- Any adverse findings by a regulator regarding a business;
 - A business is placed under external administration;
 - There is a petition to wind up or deregister a company or business; and
 - The business is or becomes deregistered or unregistered (including cancellation or lapse in registration).

7 Compliance and Audit

- 7.1 Applications will be subject to audit by the Victorian Government or its representatives and applicants will be required to retain evidence of costs incurred as a direct result of the circuit breaker action for a period of 12 months after the grant has been approved, and provide it at the request of the Victorian Government.
- 7.2 If any declarations or statements made or information provided by the applicant is found to be incomplete, inaccurate, false or misleading, the application may not be approved or any grant will be repayable on demand.

⁵ DJPR is not responsible for any delays caused by third party validation of an Applicant's eligibility.

8 Other information about this Program

- 8.1 DJPR reserves the right to amend these guidelines and application terms at any time as it deems appropriate.
- 8.2 DJPR will endeavour to notify all applicants of the outcome of their submitted application within 10 business days.

9 Closing date and how to apply

- 9.1 The Program will be open for applications until the date the Program funds are exhausted or 11.59pm on 16 March 2021, whichever is earlier.
- 9.2 Applicants are required to submit an application online via the Business Victoria website (business.vic.gov.au). All questions in the application need to be completed and requested information provided to ensure timely assessment and grant payment.
- 9.3 If you have any queries about your application or require further information on the program visit business.vic.gov.au or contact the Business Victoria Hotline at 13 22 15.