

GUIDELINES

First Peoples' COVID-19 Business Support Fund - extension

Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) assistance to Aboriginal small businesses

1. Program summary

The Victorian Government has announced the First Peoples' COVID-19 Business Support Fund - extension to support Aboriginal businesses that have been subject to temporary closure, trading restrictions or otherwise impacted by the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19).

This extension program is for eligible Aboriginal businesses that have not received funding under the First Peoples' COVID-19 Support Fund that closed March 2021. Businesses that did receive this previous funding may be eligible for an additional automatic payment amount under the Program.

Aboriginal businesses are eligible to apply for funding if they meet the criteria listed below.

Once approved, eligible businesses will be provided with a grant of up to \$6,000¹ to support them in these unprecedented circumstances.

The program will be administered by the Department of Jobs, Precincts & Regions (the Department).

Please read these guidelines before completing the application form.

2. Eligibility criteria

2.1. For new applicants

The fund is open to Victorian Aboriginal businesses (including sole traders and self-employed businesses) that meet ALL the following criteria:

- a) can demonstrate that the business operates and is located in Victoria²
- b) hold an Australian Business Number (ABN) and have held that ABN on and from 27 May 2021;
- c) are certified as an Aboriginal business through Kinaway Chamber of Commerce Victoria Ltd (Kinaway);

¹ Refer to Section 4.

² Business location may be confirmed through the ABN principal place of business and applicants may be requested to demonstrate operation and location.

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- d) can demonstrate a minimum turnover of \$30,000 per annum or pro-rata turnover for three months prior to 27 May 2021 (refer to section 3.5); and
- e) have been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) or subject to temporary closure or trading restrictions as declared by the Victorian Government;³
- f) has not received a grant under the Business Costs Assistance Program/s or the Small Business COVID Hardship Fund.⁴

2.2. For previously successful applicants

Businesses that have previously received a grant under the First Peoples' COVID-19 Business Support Fund may receive an automatic payment if the business meets the following eligibility:

- a) has received a grant under First Peoples' COVID-19 Business Support Fund.
- b) continues to meet the program eligibility criteria under First Peoples' COVID-19 Business Support Fund
- c) has not closed and remains operating in Victoria.
- d) has not received a grant under the Business Cost Assistance Program/s or the Small Business COVID Hardship Fund.

2.3. Charitable organisations, community organisations, co-operatives and Australian public companies are ineligible to apply.

3. Evidence of eligibility

3.1. Applicants must attest that they meet the eligibility criteria.

3.2. Applicants are required to provide **a copy of their business certification documentation from Kinaway Chamber of Commerce (Kinaway)** as evidence that the business is an eligible Victorian Aboriginal business.

³ For example, booking cancellations, utilities, wages, paid leave for staff unable to attend work, rent or the loss of perishable goods or any other direct costs affecting the operation of the business related to COVID-19 restrictions. These costs may have been incurred prior to, on or after 27 May 2021, but must be new costs incurred only in relation to COVID Restrictions. The costs must be incurred by the applying business, as defined by its ABN.

⁴ Businesses that have applied, and are eligible for either of the Business Cost Assistance Program/s, the Small Business COVID Hardship Fund AND the First Peoples' Business Support Fund Extension will receive the larger grant amount available.

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3.3. If the business is not currently a **Kinaway certified** business, the applicant will need to **contact** Kinaway to complete the process of certification prior to lodging the application.

3.4. Contact can be made with Kinaway at <https://kinaway.com.au/>

3.5. Applicants are required to submit **evidence that the business meets the minimum annual turnover of \$30,000** (or pro-rata turnover) in the form of one of:

- a letter from a qualified agent⁵ declaring annual turnover or pro-rata turnover⁶ for-three months prior to 27 May 2021

Or

- an annual Business Activity Statement (BAS) statement from 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21 or at least one Quarterly BAS from 2019/20 or 2020/21

3.6. The Qualified Agent cannot be: an employee or director of the applicant, or an associated entity of the applicant, or a director or employee of an associated entity of the applicant.

4. Available funding

4.1. The grant amount provided to eligible businesses is \$6,000 per ABN.

4.2. **The following restrictions relate to those businesses that have received funding from other Business Support Funds.**

⁵ A Qualified Agent is any of the following:

- Qualified accountant who belongs to one of the following professional bodies at the declared membership classification i) CPA Australia (i.e. CPA and FCPA), ii) Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand (i.e. CA, ACA and FCA) and iii) Institute of Public Accountants (i.e. AIPA, MIPA and FIPA) and comply with the body's continuing professional education requirements; or
- A registered BAS Agent who belongs to one of the following associations at the declared membership classification, including i) the Institute of Certified Bookkeepers (FICB, MICB, AICB), and ii) the Australian Bookkeepers Association (Member), and iii) Association of Accounting Technicians (Australia) Limited and comply with the body's continuing professional education requirements; or

⁶ For businesses that cannot provide an annual BAS statement of minimum \$30,000 GST revenue, the applicant must submit evidence of turnover of \$7,500 or more for a three-month period from financial year 2019/2020 or 2020/21.

A letter from a qualified agent declaring pro-rata turnover or a quarterly Business Activity Statement will be accepted as evidence of pro-rata turnover.

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- Aboriginal businesses who have already received funding from the **Business Cost Assistance Program/s** or **Small Business Covid Hardship Fund** are NOT eligible for additional funding from this Fund.

4.3. The First Peoples' COVID-19 Business Support Fund - extension will pay one grant per eligible Australian Business Number (ABN), regardless of the number of business names attached to an ABN.

5. How the funding can be used

5.1. Grants are provided to support eligible businesses who have been subject to temporary closure, trading restrictions or otherwise impacted as a result of COVID-19. Grant funds may be used on:

- meeting business costs, including utilities, stock, salaries, rent
- seeking financial, legal or other advice to support business continuity planning
- developing the business through marketing and communications activities
- addressing supply chain and logistics challenges
- pivoting the business offering for the current environment
- other supporting activities related to the operation of the business.

6. Evidence of Compliance

6.1. Applicants may be subject to audit by the Victorian Government or its representatives and if so will be required to produce evidence (such as BAS reports to demonstrate impact) at the request of the Victorian Government for a period of four years after the grant has been approved.

6.2. If any information in applications is found to be false or misleading, or grants are not applied for the purposes of the businesses in accordance with the terms of funding as set out in these guidelines and the application, the grant will be repayable on demand.

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7. Assessment Process

- 7.1. Funding will be allocated through a grant application process, through which businesses are invited to apply for a grant.
- 7.2. As part of the assessment process, any information provided by an Applicant will be shared and subject to verification with other government agencies (state and federal) including the Australian Business Register and Australian Taxation Office, and reference organisations such as Kinaway.⁷
- 7.3. Any of the following circumstances may be taken into consideration in any decision whether to award a grant:
 - any adverse findings by a Government agency or local council regarding a business or its operation;
 - a business is, or notice has been given that it will be, placed under external administration;
 - there is a petition for bankruptcy or to wind up or deregister a company or business; and
 - the business is or becomes deregistered or unregistered (including cancellation or lapse in registration or any relevant permit).
- 7.4. Businesses must ensure that their ABN registration information is current and accurate as at the time of application.
- 7.5. Each application will be carefully considered and assessed against the eligibility criteria. If an unsuccessful Applicant considers that their application has been incorrectly assessed, they will have the opportunity to lodge a complaint. More information on the complaints process and a complaint form can be found at <https://business.vic.gov.au/contact-us/complaints>.

⁴ The Department is not responsible for any delays caused by third party validation of an Applicant's eligibility. By making an application the business and Applicant consents to the assessment and verification process

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7.6. Only final applications that are lodged with the Department will be considered and assessed, and applications in draft stage will not be considered.

7.7. The Department's decisions on all matters pertaining to the award of funding under this Program is at the Department's absolute discretion.

8. How to Apply

8.1. The person submitting the application should be the person registered as per the business certification by Kinaway Chamber of Commerce or a Qualified Agent.

8.2. Applicants are required to submit an application online via the Business Victoria website (www.business.vic.gov.au). All questions in the application need to be completed to ensure timely assessment, approval and grant payment.

8.3. On submission, a receipt of your application will be provided to your contact email address provided in the application.

9. Closing Date

9.1. Applications will be accepted until **7 December 2021** or until available funds are exhausted, whichever is earlier.

10. Application processing delays

- 10.1 There may be delays in processing an application if the application:
- does not meet all the eligibility criteria
 - does not have correct information, evidence or documentation to substantiate the eligibility criteria
 - requires amendment
 - is a duplicate application for the same business
 - has incorrect information, such as ABN or bank details (for successful applicants)

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- does not include current or accurate information registered with relevant regulators or partner agencies, such as the Australian Business Register, Australian Taxation Office or Kinaway.

11. Other information about this Program

11.1. The Department reserves the right to amend these guidelines and application terms as required without notice.

11.2. The Department will endeavour to notify all applicants on the outcome of their completed application within ten business days (noting that if evidence required is not submitted at time of application the process may take longer).

11.3. For further information you can contact the Aboriginal Small Business team at aboriginalbusinessvic@ecodev.vic.gov.au.