

COVID-19 Business Grants

Frequently Asked Questions

As part of its response to the COVID-19 emergency, the Scottish Government is making grants available for certain businesses and has asked the Council to administer the Grant Scheme on its behalf within the Highland Council area.

Is my business eligible for the grant?

Which business types are eligible or not for the grant – has been defined by the Scottish Government.

Small businesses

Businesses operating in an eligible premises that was in receipt of the Small Business Bonus Scheme and Rural Relief as at 17 March 2020, can apply for a one-off grant (external link) of £10,000.

Other retail, hospitality and leisure businesses

Retail, hospitality and leisure businesses with a rateable value between £18,001 and up to and including £50,999 will be able to apply for a one-off grant of £25,000. Not all business types will qualify - to check eligibility please see the details on the government's website at <https://www.mygov.scot/non-domestic-rates-coronavirus>

What if I get Nursery Relief or Disabled Relief?

If you applied for Nursery Relief or Disabled Relief but are eligible for the Small Business Bonus Scheme you can also apply for the £10,000 grant.

What if I have more than one eligible property?

The Scottish Government have advised that **only one grant** is allowed per ratepayer regardless of the number of premises held.

I own a property but it is not in use / unoccupied at present - do I still qualify for the grant?

No – unoccupied properties are not eligible for the grant.

I run a Bed & Breakfast but pay Council tax rather than Non-domestic Rates – do I qualify for the grant?

No – only properties on the Non-domestic rates register are able to apply for the grant. However, you may be able to access other forms of support – see the Business Gateway website at <https://www.bgateway.com/resources/coronavirus-support> .

I have self-catering property(ies), but self-catering is shown as being ineligible – will the Council still pay me the grant?

The Council is administering this scheme on behalf of the Scottish Government who have deemed that self-catering properties are not eligible. The Council can only provide grants to those on the Scottish Government’s permitted list.

My business had not yet opened for the season when restrictions began – do I still qualify for the grant?

For the £10,000 grant, qualification requires occupation of the business premises as at 17 March 2020 although you do not have to have been taking guests at this time – i.e. a seasonal business is still eligible as long as they were registered for Non-domestic rates.

How do I apply for the grant?

Applicants can download the application form from the Council webpage at <https://www.highland.gov.uk/coronavirus/businessgrant>

How long do I have to apply for the grant?

Eligible ratepayers can apply for the one-off grant payment up to 31 March **2021**.

The form asks for my rates reference number, where can I find this?

This is your 11 digit property reference number as shown on the front of your bill to the left of the Property address and description. If you are unable to access your paperwork you can also retrieve your property reference number from the Assessors website – simply add your postcode in the “Search for a Rateable Value” box on <https://www.saa.gov.uk/>

Do I need to include any supporting evidence with my application?

You do not have to provide any evidence of loss of business, **BUT** you do need to provide **bank details and documentary evidence** as described below to allow the grant payment to be made.

What details do you need to allow the grant payment to be made?

It is essential that bank account details are sent at the same time as the application form otherwise no grant payment can be made. This must include a **scanned bank statement or image** (photo taken on mobile phone will do if good quality) of the nominated online account dated within 3 months of the application date.

Do I need to sign the application form?

If you are able to sign the application form and scan it, please do so before submitting your application form. If you are unable to scan, please either use an electronic signature (if you have one) or print off the page and sign it and then take a mobile phone photo of it and send it to us with your application form. If you are unable to do this – then type in your name and explain in your cover email.

What other business support schemes are available?

The Council has details on other forms of support that is available to businesses and individuals from both the UK Government and the Scottish Government. This can be seen at www.highland.gov.uk/coronavirus/supportforbusiness

When will I receive the grant and will I be notified payment has been made?

Our target is to have your grant payment to you within 10 working days of your application **being acknowledged**. However, this will be very challenging given the volume of applications we expect to receive (over 5500 applications), the fact that our small team are following Government advice and working from home and that we are still required to do appropriate checks to comply with financial regulations. When we have authorised the grant you should receive an automated email advising you that the BACS payment is due (on that or the next day).

What if my question hasn't been answered?

If after referring to the information on the application form and on the linked websites the Council will endeavour to assist. However, please bear in mind that Council is administering this scheme on behalf of government so may have to seek advice from the Scottish Government on some questions.

If you are unsure which business type your business is, you can:

- complete the application and submit it and the Council will determine when assessing whether you are eligible

email COVID-19grants@highland.gov.uk and we will seek to answer queries.

In view of the expected demand, the Council will however, prioritise processing completed application forms submitted and getting grant payments to businesses.