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Digital Grant

Aim

The aim of the Digital Grant, introduced by Highland Council within the UKSPF Investment Plan for Highland, is to develop small organisations located and operating within the region. This will provide financial support to assist them with the development and implementation of new digital systems which will improve business performance and enable growth. A discretionary grant of 80% towards eligible expenditure is available. The maximum grant amount is £5,000 with a minimum of £1,500 (requires expenditure of £1,875) towards an eligible project.

What is available:

Grant support of 80% of project costs towards introducing new digital capabilities to a business to achieve the following digital business improvement projects:

- Reducing (non-staff) operational costs;
- Increasing profit margin;
- Moving business online;
- Improving market share;
- Increasing revenues;
- Improving cyber security;
- Enable employment to be safeguarded or increased.

Applications must clearly demonstrate how the digital project will improve performance and safeguard or increase employment.

Am I Eligible?

Below is a brief summary of eligibility criteria for applicants:

- organisations must be headquartered, located in and trading in the Highland area, from premises owned by the applicant or for which there is a legally constituted signed lease/ rental/ licence agreement in place;
- trading for a minimum of 6 months i.e. business must have been receiving sales;
- individual must be a UK resident with the right to work in the UK;
- meet the definition of an independent small enterprise with under 50 employees world-wide;
- most industry sectors are eligible for consideration;
- Only one grant per business.

What Can I Use the Fund For?

- Reducing (non-staff) operational costs;
- Enabling employment to be safeguarded or increased;
- Increasing profit margin;
- Moving business online;
- Improving market share;
- Increasing revenues;
- Improving cyber security.



Eligible expenditure will introduce new digital capabilities to your business:

- enhance digital skills of workforce necessitating external training;
- purchase of new software, ICT, or digital communications, hardware related to the project;
- developing an online booking/ticketing system or a new Ecommerce website;
- developing an app for service or sales (through an external contractor);
- building or re-development of websites incorporating interactive functionality.

Ineligible expenditure (for the grant element of the project) is classed as:

- initiatives which reduce employment in the business;
- renewal of existing product or software licences, or minor updates to existing products (e.g. a software version update);
- statutory costs, property development or the purchase of stock;
- Any advertising costs (i.e. digital marketing);
- Software, hardware rental or charges (unless paying for new installation and support contract with minimum 12 months in advance), for platforms, hosting, or online content management;
- hardware that is a replacement to existing hardware i.e. through wear and tear;
- consumable items (i.e. toner/ink printer cartridges);
- products acquired through a third party not licensed to the applicant for its own use.

Claims process

Successful applicants will be required to submit evidence of all payments in relation to the project. Payments made in cash cannot be included in any claim. All grant payments will be made retrospectively, at the successful conclusion of the project phases.

Where projects are not fully completed, claims will not be processed, and no grant payments will be made with funding already released due for repayment.

Conditions for applicants

- clearly demonstrate how the digital investment project will improve performance and/or will safeguard or increase employment;
- provide a business strategic statement outlining their digital investment project, and demonstrating the commercial viability of their business;

Further Eligibly criteria

The applicant must have a dedicated business bank account providing details as part of the application process - this is the account your grant will be paid into if successful).

Confirmation that the applicant organisation;

- is independent & a Micro/ Small Enterprise (less than 50 employees world-wide);
- has no personal or business debt to the council e.g. Council Tax or Business rate arrears;
- must operate on a full-time basis;



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- is not or considering administration, bankruptcy, liquidation or similar;
- is not a community group, not for profit organisations, voluntary or charitable organisations (except if there is trading activity/ income)

We anticipate a high level of interest in the fund and applications will be processed in chronological order. Please be patient - we will try and process applications as quickly as we can. This could take up to 15 working days.

If you want to ask a question regarding your application, you can email us at BusinessGrants@highland.gov.uk