

INVEST TELFORD

Frequently Asked Questions for the Thrive Telford Large Grants Fund, Small Grants Fund, Export Grants Fund, and Business Development Programme.

This is a general programme FAQs. Applicants should also refer to specific fund criteria and guidance ahead of submitting their applications. If you have any additional questions, please follow the **CONTACT US** page.

What is the Thrive Telford Programme?

Utilising UK Shared Prosperity Funding, Telford and Wrekin Council has made an allocation of grant funding available to Telford SME's, to support growth projects. Under Thrive Telford there are 10 funds:

1. The Large Grants Fund
2. The Small Grants Fund
3. Export Grants Fund
4. Business Development Fund
5. Marches Energy Grant
6. Business Advice Service
7. Business Start Up Service
8. Innovate Telford
9. The Upskilling Fund Grant
10. Business Growth Enabler

See individual fund overviews for what the focus of each fund is and associated criteria including specific further FAQs to develop eligible and suitable propositions.

1. How much can I apply for?

You can apply for a grant of between £1,000 and £20,000. See individual fund for limit.

2. What can I use the grant for?

See individual fund for further guidance.

3. When will I be able to complete an on-line grant application?

See individual fund for specific dates.

4. Is there any match funding required?

For business applying to the:

The Large Grants Fund – The grant will support 70% of eligible project cost, up to £20,000. Business is required to match fund 30% of the project cost.

The Small Grants Programme – The grant will support 100% of eligible project cost, up to £2,499. Any cost over the value of £2499 is payable by the applicant.

Export Grants Fund – The grant will support 100% of eligible costs up to a maximum grant award of £3,000.

Business Development Fund – The grant will support 70% of the project cost, up to £7000 for business seeking professional support through a 3rd party business, and up to £9000 in support for business partnering with a Higher Education Facility.

5. When can I begin my project?

Applicants applying to **The Large Grants Fund, Small Grants Fund, Export Grants Fund, and the Business Development Programme**, can only begin their project once a Grant offer letter has been received, signed, and returned. From this point the applicant will then be able to begin their project.

Once returned, the business will need to financially complete the project (pay in full) for the work, services or goods before they can claim the money back from the Grant Fund.

Once again - A key requirement is that you cannot start your project until a Grant Offer Letter has been received, signed and returned. We cannot fund any expenditure incurred for projects that have already started or start before a grant offer letter is signed. This will result in your grant offer being withdrawn.

For administrative purposes all payments for purchases must be paid in full and upfront. We will need to see copies of supplier's invoices and a copy of the statement from the dedicated bank account for the business, evidencing that payment has been made to the relevant suppliers. The bank statement must correspond with the supplier's invoice.

We cannot accept payments that have been made by cash, credit cards or any other alternative payment arrangements where payment is staggered and not paid in full.

If you are in doubt, please contact us before making any payment for confirmation.

6. How do I apply?

All applications will follow through a 3-stage process. Overall, the process is the similar for all funds, but applicants are advised to read the individual fund guidance notes.

- Stage 1: Submission of a fund specific Expression of Interest form. If your project meets the scheme criteria you will be invited to apply.
- Stage 2: Discuss your project with a member of the Invest Telford team to scope out the project, and to make sure the project aligns with the respective fund assessment criteria.
 - Please note this is a **MANDATORY** requirement for any business applying for **The Large Grant Fund, Export Grant Fund, and the Business Development Fund**.
 - Please note this is an **OPTIONAL** requirement for **The Small Grants Fund**.
- Stage 3: Applicants will be invited to submit a full application. Submissions will then be assessed.

Links to the respective EOI forms can be accessed via the individual fund scheme overview.

7. Do I have to submit an EOI?

All applicants are required to submit an EOI to begin their application journey. Once your EOI has been received and reviewed, you will be notified of the outcome.

8. Can I apply to all grant funds?

Whilst businesses can apply for all grant funds, we would advise business who are looking to apply for multiple funds to discuss their projects with us so that we work through timing and stagings of project.

9. Can I apply for grant funding and the Business Advice Service?

Yes.

10. I have more than one business, can each business apply for the grant?

In principle, yes, provided that the businesses are separate legal entities and delivering different activities. They will be judged on their own merit.

11. How do I know if I will be eligible to apply?

As part of the application process, applicants will need to confirm the following before accessing the Full Application:

- The business base is located within Telford & Wrekin
- The business has been trading for 12 months at the point of application.
- The project has not already started.
- The business has the ability to cash flow the project.
- You have dedicated bank account for your business. For the purposes of these Grants, a dedicated bank account is one that holds only business-based transactions and is kept separate from any personal payments or receipts.
- Comply with UK Subsidy Control (formerly state aid).
- Business is advised to read the fund guidance notes, and scheme specification to assess full eligibility.

We cannot accept applications from businesses who operate in the following sectors:

- Fisheries and agriculture
- Processing and marketing of agricultural products
- Shipbuilding
- School/school age educational establishments
- Insurance companies
- Primary production, coal or steel or synthetic fibres
- Banking

12. What are the terms and conditions of the Grant?

- Only one business can apply per application. Per fund. Multiple attempts to apply may invalidate your application.

- As part of the application, work must not have started on the project, goods must not have been purchased, or orders placed before a grant offer letter is awarded.
- Applications must be fully and correctly completed with the supporting evidence provided.
- The grant is recoverable from the applicant if it is proved that their application and/or claim contained false or fraudulent information.
- The project must clearly address individual fund objectives.
- The grant funding must not be used to fund any other equipment that has previously been grant funded.

13. What information will I need to hand when I complete the application?

Please read the fund specific guidance notes.

14. What can the funding be spent on?

See individual funds.

15. What can't the funding be spent on?

See individual funds for their specific funding aims – but as a general rule we will **not support the following:**

- Support businesses with working capital i.e. stock.
- Support businesses to fund the payment of wages.
- Purchase of equipment and consumables associated with PPE.
- Fund activities which would contradict, duplicate or undermine HM Government domestic initiatives.
- Fund structural building work.
- Purchase of nonindustrial vehicles
- Computer equipment, laptops, mobile phones, screens and TV's etc...
- Fund retrospective activity or purchases.
- General business expenses,
- Professional fees – legal, accountancy etc.
- Property expenses

This list is not exhaustive, if you have any questions about you intended project and purchases – please contact us.

16. Can I purchase second hand goods?

Yes. The purchase costs of second-hand equipment are eligible for grant funding under the following conditions:

The seller of the equipment shall provide a declaration stating its origin, and confirm that at no point during the previous seven years has it been purchased with the aid of national or European grants/

The equipment must come with a minimum 6-month warranty.

17. Do I have to use local suppliers?

No. You can use any supplier you want to, so long as they are a business, and the service or product is eligible for grant funding and is relevant to support your business. However, you will need to confirm the supplier is independent of you and your business and that there is no conflict of interest.

18. When do I pay the supplier?

All expenditure will need to be paid before you can claim your grant.

For administrative purposes all payments for purchases must be paid in full and upfront. We will need to see copies of supplier's invoices and a copy of the statement from the dedicated bank account for the business, evidencing that payment has been made to the relevant suppliers. The bank statement must correspond with the supplier's invoice.

We cannot accept payments that have been made by credit cards or any other alternative payment arrangements where payment is staggered and not paid in full.

19. What if I am having problems with my supplier?

You will be wholly responsible for ensuring the work you commission is carried out to specification and is of a satisfactory standard. The agreement will be between you and your supplier. We cannot be held responsible for any issues or the quality of the work.

20. Can I claim the VAT?

VAT Registered Businesses

You will not be able to claim the VAT element though the Telford Growth and Recovery Fund.

Businesses that are Not VAT Registered

You will be able to claim the VAT if your business is not VAT registered.

Please note you will not be eligible to claim the VAT back from HMRC in the future if it has been paid by the Telford Growth Fund.

Checks will be made to ensure the VAT status of applicant businesses; incorrect information may lead to your application being declined.

21. I am a sole trader, can I apply?

Yes. As long as you are based in Telford and Wrekin, pay council tax to Telford and Wrekin, and have a unique tax reference you are eligible to apply.

22. What does 'dedicated business account' mean?

All businesses must have a dedicated business account.

Businesses that have a separate business bank account:

- The account will need to have the same name as the business applying for the grant.
- The account holds only business-based transactions and is kept separate from any personal payments or receipts.

Businesses that use their personal bank account for business transactions:

- The account must be used for both personal and business use.
- The bank account provided must be used to pay your relevant suppliers.
- Grant payment will be paid into the bank account provided.
- For all businesses using a personal bank account, assessment will be made on a case-by-case basis.

23. Can I change supplier once I've received my grant approval?

If you wish to change suppliers once the grant has been approved, you will need to get a new quote from the new supplier and submit that to the funding team. You will not be able to commence work with your proposed new supplier until the change has been confirmed by a project officer. Any deviation from the grant agreement letter without project officer approval will lead to your grant offer being withdrawn regardless of how far you have proceeded with your project.

24. Can I change what I want to spend my grant on after I have received my Offer Letter?

Under certain conditions applicants will be able to make certain adjustment to their grant application providing it has been approved by a member of the funding team. Any change incurred without approval from the funding team will invalidate any grant claim. Applicants seeking to make a fundamental change to their application may have their grant request withdrawn if the new project no longer supports the same outcomes originally agreed to in their grant application.

If after approval you are seeking to make any change (minor or major), please discuss it with a member of the funding team. Failure to do so will result in your funding application being withdrawn.

25. How long does it take to know the outcome of my grant application?

Please see individual fund guidance notes for timings.

26. If I am successful, when will I receive the grant?

Please see individual fund guidance notes for timings

27. If I am turned down for a grant, can I appeal?

Due to the level of funding for grants available, and the high volume of applications anticipated, there will be no appeal process.

The onus is on the applicant to complete the application correctly, provide the necessary information and demonstrate that it meets the requirements of the Grant scheme. If you have any question you are encouraged to contact us through the support feature on the website.

An early application does not guarantee a grant approval. If your application is eligible, complete and in order then the application will be progressed, however this does not

guarantee that funding will be awarded. If your application is not complete it will not be assessed. If further funding becomes available, you will be able to re-submit your application at this stage.

28. Do I have to pay the grant back?

The grant is recoverable from the applicant if it is proved that their application and/or claim contained false or fraudulent information, or the applicant is unable to evidence their unique outputs.

29. The General Data Protection Regulation

The data we collect is for the purposes of the Thrive Telford Programme which is a business support programme to help business grow. The programme requires your data to be added to the Telford and Wrekin Council CRM Database called Evolutive.

We will use the information you supply:

- Telford and Wrekin Council use in its role of Accountable Body for the scheme.
- To provide business support to you and make referrals to partners and other providers of relevant services as appropriate.
- To share National Government / the Marches Growth Hub / MHCLG (or their sub-contractors) and/or BEIS.

30. Is the Grant taxable?

Yes. It should be treated as income. Any tax would be built into the accounting process.

31. Grant Aid / Subsidy Control

You will be expected to inform us within your application form of any grants and other support you have received from the public sector over the last 3 financial years.

This scheme is covered by the current [UK Government Subsidy Control Act \(2022\)](#). The total amount of Minimum Financial Assistance (MFA) received over a rolling period of three fiscal years should not exceed £315,000 per business.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to monitor the level of MFA received; you will be asked to declare that this has not been exceeded in the event of an offer being made. [* The MFA financial threshold applies at company group level.]

Where applicants do not adequately demonstrate that the proposed project is compliant under the UK Subsidy Control Regime it may be considered ineligible, and your application could be rejected.