

This grant scheme is open to Birmingham based businesses fulfilling the criteria below which are within the Retail sector. **Excluded activities are those of a political or religious persuasion, public houses & bars, clubs and betting & gaming establishments as well as activities involving pornography or clairvoyance and any business activity that is illegal or deemed as unsuitable for public support by Birmingham City Council.**

Criteria

- a) You need to be a small to medium sized enterprise (SME) [ie have between 1-249 employees, an annual turnover not exceeding 50m euros, a balance sheet not exceeding 43m euros and not be owned by a larger company or combination of larger companies].
- b) Your business should be profit-seeking and be in the Independent Retail Sector and comprise of no more than 3 outlets (being fixed premises). Of particular interest are businesses having a niche activity, offering specialist services, own designs/new brands.
- c) Your business should not have received more than 200,000 euros of State Aid over the last 3 years.
- d) Your identified business premises must, or will, be based within Birmingham, ie pay business rates to Birmingham City Council.
- e) Your business can either be new (has been trading for between 0-3 months) or existing (has been trading for 3 months or longer).

Type of assistance available

A package of support including:

- Grant assistance of between £2,500 - £10,000

Delivered by Birmingham City Council

Provides grant contribution of up to **50%** of eligible costs* of a project such as premises set up, shop refits and marketing/branding initiatives.

* Eligible costs can include connection costs, electrical & heating installation, fascia improvements/shop fitting, professional fees, a marketing campaign and rent & rates and removal costs for businesses intending to move into new premises.

- Business development support

i) delivered by Business Link West Midlands. Includes:

- Business Review/Action Planning (one day free consultancy support)
- access to Specialist Support and Training/New Start programme.

iii) Local Town Centre

- general advice and providing access to the Programme
- local support to businesses.

What to include with the application

- The signed and dated Retail Development Application Form posted to the address on page 7 of the application form
- The e-mailed Section 7 (Project Proposal of the Application Form) to the Business Officer contact
- 2 years annual accounts/management accounts (existing businesses only)
- a copy of the business plan (new start up businesses only)
- 1-year financial forecasts (new start-up businesses only)
- Copy of the lease on new premises for at least 12 months duration
- any additional information as requested in Section 11 of the Application form.

Do not include anything which has not been requested in the application form or by a Birmingham City Council business officer.

The Application Process

Once your application has been received by your business officer, they will prepare a short summary of it which will be submitted to a panel for consideration. The panel will be chaired by the Creative Development Team Leader and consist of the Retail Development Programme champion, and representatives from BCC Regeneration and one of the town centre managers. The panel will meet at least once a fortnight.

The Panel Process

The panel will make one of four decisions:

- a) Application approved.
- b) Application approved subject to certain issues being clarified. In this case, your business officer will contact you for the information.
- c) Application deferred as further information is required. Your business officer will contact you to discuss this decision in more detail. Applications with this decision can be resubmitted to the panel at a later date once updated.
- d) Application declined.

Once an application has been through the panel process, you will receive a formal letter from the City Council advising you of the decision. Approval is not guaranteed and, if approved, the City Council will not reimburse against invoices/receipts dated prior to the date when the application form was signed.

Notes

- a) Programme limits awards to **one Retail Development grant per SME/business owner**.
- b) Grant payments are issued as a **reimbursement of eligible expenditure** of the business and will be paid on production of relevant evidence and an invoice from your company to Birmingham City Council.
- c) Grant payments will be made directly into the bank account of the applicant business and not to third parties.
- d) Any work undertaken **before being approved** for a grant cannot be claimed for.
- e) Please note that once approval has been granted, any changes to the costs should be **notified in writing** to the business officer prior to being claimed for. Any costs not agreed to and subsequently submitted for reimbursement will not be refunded against.
- f) Grants will be assessed on a case by case basis, and as such, awards will vary depending on evidence provided/viability of the business.