



Community Grants Program

Business Innovation Grant Guidelines

2026/2027

The City of Rockingham invites applications from small businesses for funding under the Community Grants Program (CGP).

The Business Innovation Grant supports business growth through the adoption of innovative business ideas, digital tools, and skill sets.

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General Grant Guidelines

Scope

The City of Rockingham recognises that innovation and technology are essential for small businesses to stay competitive, adapt to change, and thrive in dynamic markets. They are key drivers of new product development, greater customer satisfaction, and long-term sustainability.

To support small local businesses to grow and prosper through the adoption of innovative business ideas, digital tools, and skill sets, the City has allocated a budget of up to \$50,000 per year for a period of two years, commencing in the 2024/2025 financial year.

Applicants can apply for matched funding of up to 50% of the total project cost, to a maximum grant value of \$5,000. The remaining project costs must be self-funded by the applicant.

Grant Rounds

Business Innovation Grants are open all year round. Applications may take up to 30 working days to process from the date of lodgement (as dated by the City's Records Department) to the applicant being advised of outcome.

If an application is incomplete or the applicant does not supply all supporting documentation, the application will be processed from the date that the application is received in full.

Eligible Stream

Below is a summary of projects and/or initiatives that may be supported under the grant.

Funding may be used for once-off or up-front initiatives that deliver clear, measurable improvements to a business's capability, competitiveness, resilience or growth. This may include outcomes such as increased productivity, efficiency, customer experience or market access.

Eligible projects may include, but are not limited to:

- Development, testing or enhancement of new or significantly improved products, services, experiences, programs or delivery models.
- Introduction of new systems, tools, equipment, infrastructure or processes that materially improve business operations, productivity, quality, customer experience or scalability (routine replacement or like-for-like upgrades are not eligible).
- Introduction of new ways of engaging customers or markets, including sales, booking, distribution, communication or operational solutions.

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- Engagement of specialist expertise (e.g. design, technical, operational, marketing, research, mentoring, training or consultancy) to support capability uplift, transformation or innovation.
- Research, development or piloting of more effective, efficient or sustainable business practices, including initiatives that improve environmental, social or economic outcomes.
- Exploration, testing or entry into new markets, customer segments or supply chains, including domestic or export-focused initiatives.
- Establishment of innovative business practices or models that support workforce participation, skills development, employment diversity or inclusion within the City.
- Development of programs, products or experiences that showcase Rockingham's strengths, support local identity and increase visitation or economic activity, particularly during off-peak periods.

Projects should demonstrate:

- A clear step change rather than business-as-usual activity
- Defined learning, testing or transformation outcomes
- Long-term benefit to the business and contribution to a diverse, sustainable and future-ready local economy

Eligibility

Grants will only be considered if:

- ✓ The applicant meets the definition of a small business (less than 20 employees full time equivalent, less than \$10 million turnover per annum)
- ✓ The business or project is located in the City of Rockingham with a valid ABN and minimum tenure of 12 months at the time of applying
- ✓ The business owns or leases premises within Rockingham
- ✓ The applicant has current public liability insurance at the time of the project
- ✓ The applicant has supplied quotes for all purchases in accordance with the application guidelines (stated below)
- ✓ The business will remain in the City of Rockingham for a minimum of 24 months after acquittal
- ✓ The applicant has consulted with a City staff member prior to submitting the Grant application.

Grants will not be considered if:

- ☒ The business/applicant is operating outside of the City of Rockingham.
- ☒ The applicant is a not-for-profit organisation or incorporated association.

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- ☒ The applicant is a school, government department or agency.
- ☒ The applicant is a trust fund, franchisee or subsidiary of a larger company.
- ☒ The applicant does not supply all supporting documentation, or the application is incomplete.
- ☒ The applicant is seeking funds for a project outside of those described in the eligibility streams.
- ☒ The applicant has already submitted an application within the current financial period and/or has failed to acquit any previous grants.
- ☒ The applicant is requesting funding for retrospective payments.
- ☒ Budget items listed include travel expenses, employee salaries/wages, or any other cost considered to be general operating costs for the business.

Budget

When preparing the budget breakdown, applicants must list all project expenditure items exclusive of GST. Where applicable, applicants must identify which items will be funded by which funding sources. The items identified in the City of Rockingham requested grant section, must be listed in order of priority.

Quotes

The City encourages the use of local businesses when sourcing quotes for the supply of goods and services.

The following table outlines the minimum quote requirements based on the value of each expenditure item (exclusive of GST):

Amount of Purchase	Minimum Requirements
Up to \$500	One verbal quote (documented in an email or table, including company, items and costs)
\$501 to \$3,000	One written quote
\$3,001-\$20,000	Two written quotes

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Definitions

The following definitions are used to guide eligibility assessment and decision-making.

Eligible v Ineligible Expenditure

Eligible Expenditure	One-off or upfront investment that forms part of a clearly defined project and introduces a new capability, system, or way of operating within the business. These investments are expected to deliver measurable outcomes, which may include: • Increased productivity • Improved cybersecurity • Expansion into new markets • Enhanced operational efficiency • Meaningful digital transformation
Ineligible Expenditure	Expenditure that relates to the ongoing operation, maintenance, or routine function of a business, and does not introduce new capability or represent a step change in how the business operates. This typically includes, but is not limited to: • Routine or ongoing costs required for day-to-day operations • Like-for-like replacement of existing assets or systems • Standard software subscriptions or tools used without implementation or integration • General marketing or promotional activity (e.g. social media advertising, search engine optimisation (SEO) activities) • Overhead costs (e.g. rent, utilities, insurance, accounting) • Travel expenses • Staff wages or salaries

How We Assess Projects

The following definitions help interpret and assess whether a project meets the eligibility criteria. They do not, on their own, determine eligibility.

Audio and Visual Media	Activities related to the development of digital or visual assets used to support business operations, branding or customer
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	engagement (e.g. websites or digital platforms). These activities are typically considered in the context of a broader project where they contribute to: • A new capability • A step change in operations or customer experience
Capability Building	Investments that strengthen a business's ability to operate more effectively or competitively by introducing new skills, knowledge, systems, technologies or processes. This may include activities that build internal capability, such as: • Targeted training or upskilling that enables new or improved business functions • Business representation at trade events and/or industry forums where there is a clear link to adopting new practices, technologies or market opportunities • Access to specialised knowledge or expertise that supports implementation of a defined project Capability building typically results in: • A new business function, or • A significant improvement to an existing function Activities must demonstrate a clear link between the capability gained and how it will be applied within the business. Activities that are exploratory in nature, without a defined application to the project, are unlikely to demonstrate capability building.
Consultancy/Advisory Services	The engagement of external expertise to support delivery of a defined project outcome. Consultancy activities should: • Be directly linked to project implementation • Deliver tangible outputs (e.g. system rollout, prototype, operational change) General advice, mentoring, or exploratory work without implementation does not demonstrate project impact.

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Digital Transformation	The integration of digital technologies that fundamentally change how a business operates, delivers value, or engages customers. This typically involves: • Integration across multiple systems or functions • Automation or data-driven decision-making • Creation of new or enhanced business models or services Basic digitisation or standalone tools without integration do not constitute transformation.
Implementation	The execution phase of a project where new systems, processes, or capabilities are actively introduced, embedded, or tested within the business. Projects should demonstrate: • A clear transition from concept to action • Deployment within real business operations Activities limited to research, planning, or strategy alone are unlikely to demonstrate implementation.
Innovation	A purposeful change that introduces a new capability, process, product or method of service delivery not previously used within the business. Innovative activities typically: • Add a new function or significantly enhance an existing one • Deliver measurable operational or customer benefits • Support long-term competitiveness or growth
Market Expansion	Entering new customer segments, geographic markets, or distribution channels that the business does not currently service. This involves: • Reaching new audiences or industries • Establishing new sales or delivery channels Routine promotion to existing customers is not considered market expansion.
Measurable Outcomes	Clear, verifiable results that demonstrate the impact of a project. Examples include:

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	- Increased revenue or sales capacity - Reduced costs or processing time - Increased customer reach or engagement - Improved efficiency, quality, or productivity Outcomes should be specific and capable of being assessed at project completion.
New Capability	A function, system, or capacity that the business did not previously possess, enabling it to operate in a new way, reach new markets, or significantly improve performance. A new capability must be: - Demonstrable - Enduring beyond the project period
Pilot Project / Testing	A structured, time-limited initiative used to trial a new concept, system or process under real operating conditions. Pilot projects typically include: - Defined objectives - Measurable outcomes - A pathway to broader implementation if successful
Routine Activities	Activities that: - Maintain existing operations - Replace like-for-like assets - Deliver ongoing business-as-usual functions
Scalability	The ability of a project to expand its impact (e.g. revenue, customers, or output) without a proportional increase in costs. Projects that support scalable growth: - Enable replication or expansion - Improve efficiency at larger volumes
Step Change	A material improvement in business capability, performance or market position that is significantly beyond incremental or routine improvements. A step change typically: - Introduces a new system, process, or capability not previously used - Delivers measurable improvements (e.g. time savings, cost reduction, increased revenue potential or reach) - Creates lasting impact beyond the life of the project Minor upgrades or incremental improvements are not considered a step change.

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Application Process

All grant applicants are strongly encouraged to read the [City's Community Grants Program Policy](#) before applying.

Applicants must complete all sections of the Business Innovation Grants application form and attach all relevant supporting documents. The completed application must be submitted to the City for assessment through the designated submission process.

Application Assessment

All fully completed applications will be assessed by City Officers. All decisions are final and not subject to an appeals process.

Applicants will be notified of the outcome in writing within 30 working days of application lodgement. Successful applicants will receive a letter of success, outlining the awarded amount and any conditions that are associated with the grant. Funds will be electronically transferred to the incorporated organisation's main operating account, as stated in Step 5 of the application form.

Approval Conditions

Successful applicants will be required to sign an agreement committing to compliance with all legislative and planning requirements, and any other conditions imposed on grant funding.

It is applicant's responsibility to determine which approval (if any) is required and submit the appropriate documentation. Projects must not commence without formal approval received from the appropriate authority, including but not limited to the City's Planning and Development Department, Building Service and Health Services.

Acquittal

Formal acquittal processes are mandatory. Successful applicants will be required to submit a grant acquittal as outlined in the letter of success issued by the City. Applicants must retain appropriate receipts and records. The acquittal must be submitted within 60 working days of project completion. For the acquittal purposes, copies of receipts up to the total amount of the City's awarded grant (funded expenditure items only) must be provided.

Further Enquiry

If you have questions or need clarification about the application process, please contact the City's Economic Development and Tourism Team at

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EconomicDevelopment@rockingham.wa.gov.au.

City officers are happy to provide further information and/or to discuss potential grant ideas before an application is formally submitted to ensure the project is aligned with the Business Innovation Grants Program priorities.

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