

North West Leicestershire ARG Business Start-Up Grant Programme and Grants

Guidance Notes

The following guidance notes provide information to those interested in applying for a North West Leicestershire ARG Business Start-Up Grant.

North West Leicestershire District Council (NWLDC) are collaborating with the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) to deliver a 6 month programme of business start-up support activity targeting businesses under 2 years old or those who are looking to start their business in the near future. This programme will provide eligible businesses access to qualified business advisors and will be free to use at point of access.

On top of this start-up support there will be a £75,000 grant fund made available. This new grant fund will be accessible to businesses that undertake the support and who are identified as having growth potential by the business advisors.

NWLDC have launched the new grant fund to help support the new businesses and business start-up across the District. Grants will be made available to eligible businesses who have participated in the Start-Up Support programme and who have been invited to apply by the business advisor. The funding is designed to give new local businesses the best chance to succeed in their new venture.

Due to suspected oversubscription this grant will be invite only in the first instance, albeit the council reserves the right to welcome all applications should it choose to do so at a later date.

Will my business be eligible to apply for a North West Leicestershire Business Start-Up Grant?

This programme will provide small grant funding for eligible businesses by providing one off grant of up to £5,000 to eligible businesses who participate in the business start-up support programme and who are identified as having growth potential by the business advisors.

To be eligible to apply for a North West Leicestershire Business Start-Up Grant, you must:

- Have participated the Business Start-Up support programme (Further details can be found here: www.bizgateway.org.uk/support-for-businesses-whose-start-up-was-interrupted-by-covid)
- Have been invited by a recognised business advisor to be considered for a grant
- Have been trading no longer than 2 years and must be trading at the time of application
- Be based in North West Leicestershire (i.e. registered for business rates or council tax to NWLDC)
- Be a small sized enterprise (i.e. less than 50 employees and a turnover under £10 million.)

- Be trading as a business whose company type is either: Limited Liability, Limited Liability Partnership, Partnership, Sole Trader, Franchise or Social Enterprise.

And

- Be in good standing with NWLDC. For example, fully paid up on any money owed to the council such as business rates.

Who can apply?

Grant applications will only be considered from eligible businesses who have participated the Business Start-Up support programme.

Any individual, company or partnership that meets the schemes eligibility can apply to other Business Start-Up support programme.

When applying for a grant, if a company or partnership is making the application, the person completing the form must be authorised to apply on behalf of that business.

If the grant application is successful the applicant will enter into a legal agreement which will set out specific and general terms and conditions relating to the North West Leicestershire Business Start-Up Grants. This agreement will be between the business and NWLDC.

How can I use the money?

Grants are intended to fund investment projects that can demonstrate business growth or diversification. Your investment should reflect any investment needs identified following your engagement with the business advisors and could include:

- New equipment
- Improvements to your businesses premises
- New technology, IT or telecommunications

Grant applications will not be considered for:

- Salaries / wages
- Business rates
- Council fees

How much money can I ask for?

The Council are offering one off grants of up to £5,000 for eligible businesses.

No match funding is required and there are no contracted job output requirements. However, any match funding provided and outputs such as new jobs or apprentices will be taken into consideration as part of the assessment process and recorded as outputs from the grant investment.

What will the application process involve?

Businesses looking to apply for a Business Start-Up Grant will need to have participated in the business start-up support programme and have been identified as having growth potential by the business advisors.

Once you have been referred to the NWLDC to apply for a grant you will be emailed a simplified one stage application to complete and submit back to NWLDC Economic Development team for assessment.

Once you have submitted your application we will review it to make sure what you are proposing meets the agreed eligibility criteria.

The application will ask you to provide some details of your business and the nature of the investment project that you are proposing. You will also need to provide a breakdown of the costs involved in the project and what economic benefits your project will achieve.

We will ask you whether you have received financial support from any public sector organisation within the last three years. There are limits to the financial support that can be offered to individual private sector organisations and we need to make sure that you and the council stay within the law.

Submission of an application form to this fund does not guarantee funding will be awarded and this will be determined by the content of the application.

Whilst not a complete list consideration will be given to the following when assessing the outcome of an application:

- Whether the business is planning on matching any funding award
- 3 year growth projections to demonstrate sustainability over the long term.
- Level of funding received to date (if applicable)
- What the funding will be used for and explanation as to why it is needed

How do I submit my application?

Please send your completed application to businessgrowthgrants@nwleicestershire.gov.uk.

We will not be able to accept applications in hard copy posted to, or handed in at, the Council Offices.

Is there support filling in my application?

For more information please contact the Economic Development and Regeneration Team on email at businessgrowthgrants@nwleicestershire.gov.uk.

How will North West Leicestershire District Council decide whether my application is successful?

Once your application has been submitted, along with all of the requested supporting documentation, we will check to make sure your business meets the agreed eligibility criteria and that your investment project is in line with the intended purpose of the grant scheme.

Your application will be considered by a grants officer who, if your application meets the criteria of the fund, we will present your application to a panel for determination.

There will be frequent panel meetings scheduled to help speed up the grant application process. We aim to give you a decision on your application **within 4 weeks (twenty working days)** of submission of your complete application and all necessary supporting documents.

The decision of the panel will be final. There is no opportunity to appeal against the panel's decision. If your application is not successful we will give you feedback on the reasons behind the panel's decision. We may invite you to submit a revised application.

When will the grant be paid?

Once your grant application has been determined by the panel we will issue you with a formal grant offer. You will be required to sign and return the grant offer letter to acknowledge you will accept the grant and the grant conditions.

Upon receipt of your sign grant offer letter will make the grant payment to your nominated bank account **within 2 weeks (10 working days)**.

As a minimum, we recommend maintaining records of all of the following items associated with your project:

- Quotes for works
- All invoices
- All receipts of payments including cash and credit card.
- Bank statements showing payments associated with your project.

We will also issue you with a confirmation letter of subsidy control.

Is there a deadline?

Applications will be considered on a 'first come first served' basis.

The ARG Business Start-Up Grant is a discretionary fund that will close to new applications on **Friday 14 January 2022** or earlier should the grant become oversubscribed.

We will insist that all grant funding is claimed no later than **Friday 25 February 2022**.

Up-to-date information about this deadline for submission of applications will be provided at www.nwleics.gov.uk/businessgrants.

Can you take back the money after you've granted it?

Yes. During the application process, you will be asked to explain the nature of your investment and how it meets the eligibility criteria of the fund.

We will monitor the progress of your project to ensure the investment is made in accordance with your application and that you comply with all other conditions of the grant scheme.

We will consider whether to seek to recover some or all of the grant paid if you do not meet the conditions agreed with you when the grant was approved or if you fail to provide evidence of your projects expenditure.

Are there any other restrictions?

We've already explained that you'll be asked to confirm that the grant applied for will not result in breaking the laws about organisations receiving public money.

We will require your business and your investment proposal to comply with all regulations that apply to your business and the project for which the grant is requested.

If your project involves work on a property, in addition to planning permission, you will be expected to comply with all other usual legislation such as Building Regulations.

What if I change my mind?

You will be free to withdraw from the application process at any stage.

Once your application has been reviewed and approved, you will be asked to sign to confirm your acceptance of the conditions that will apply to the grant offer. Once you have signed the grant agreement we will expect the project to go ahead.

Once you have received the grant you will be expected to comply with all conditions set out in the agreement between your business and North West Leicestershire District Council. As mentioned above, there will be a risk of clawback in certain situations.

Who should I contact?

Just call the LLEP Growth Hub Business Advisers on 0116 366 8487 or complete an enquiry form here: www.bizgateway.org.uk/contact-us