

South West Enterprise Fund – Business Grants

Wiltshire Community Foundation is working partnership with the [South West Enterprise Fund](#) which helps young people from Wiltshire and Swindon develop their business idea and need support with business investment that they would otherwise not be able to afford.

Grants of up to £2000 are available to help start a new business or, if it has been trading for no more than 2 years, help a business expand or become more sustainable. The grant can be used for equipment, materials, stock or services you need in order to get your business running or support the development of the business.

Eligibility:

To be eligible to apply, you need to:

- Be aged 18 to 30
- Live in Wiltshire or Swindon
- Planning to start your own business within the next 6 months or running your own business which has been trading for no more than 2 years
- Without easy access to other sources of finance

Applications will be open all year round and will be considered periodically throughout the year.

We prioritise applications from groups that are often underrepresented in business, including people on low incomes, women, migrants, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, people with few or no formal qualifications.

Before starting an application

It is important that you think about your business idea and explore why you think the product or service you will provide is needed or will succeed before applying for a grant. The more steps you have taken to start or grow your business, the more likely you are to receive a grant.

For example:

- Have you undertaken any market research to find out if anyone would buy your products or use your services. A good starting point would be to ask friends, family or even approaching other local businesses to see if they would use your service or if they have any advice
 - Your potential costs each month such as staff wages, rent, energy costs, taxes, insurances, purchasing of capital items etc
 - The potential income you will earn each month from sales such as services, goods etc

You may find the below websites useful they include tools, templates as well as online video for startup business tips or free courses or workshops:

- **Princes Trust Business Support**
 - www.princes-trust.org.uk/help-for-young-people/tools-resources/business-tools
 - www.princes-trust.org.uk/help-for-young-people/support-starting-business
 - Online videos on starting up business - www.youtube.com/freebusinesstips
- **South West Growth Hub** (Swindon & Wiltshire)
 - <https://growthhub.swlep.co.uk/support/starting-a-business-in-swindon-wiltshire>
- **Business West**
 - www.businesswest.co.uk/start
- **Outset Swindon**
 - www.outset.org/swindonandwiltshire/events/

- **Open University** - offers a range of free business courses including, understanding your business, entrepreneurship from ideas to reality
 - www.open.edu/openlearn/money-management/free-courses?filter=date/grid/132,102/all/all/all

Completing the online application form

You do not have to complete the application form in one go. If you wish to leave the form and come back to it at another time, press the '**Save my progress and resume later**' button at the bottom of the form. You will be asked to enter your email and a password so you can login at another, this will also be emailed to you as well.

If you would like to apply in a different format i.e. filmed presentation, a podcast that showcases your business and answers the application form questions please contact us.

If you find anything unclear or confusing or would like to talk to us, call us on 01380 738985 or email info@wiltshirecf.org.uk.

Applicant details

This section will collect your contact details and allows you to tell us about yourself:

- **Please tell us about yourself** - provide a brief paragraph which includes where you grew up, where you went to school, what have you done since you left school, what qualifications you hold.
- **What are you currently doing** - provide a brief paragraph to tell us what you are currently doing e.g. if are you still in education, tell us where and what qualifications you are studying; if you are working, tell us where and how many hours you work each week; if you are unemployed, tell us how long you have been out of work and if you are claiming any benefits.
- **Tell us about anything particular in your background, including your economic background, which would help us to understand any challenges you have faced or still face** - you don't have to answer this question if none of these things describe you. If you do answer it, then what you write will help us understand your circumstances and any challenges you may have faced e.g. if you or someone in your home has a disability or additional need, or you come from a low income family claiming benefits etc.

Business and grant request

This section allows you to tell us about your business and how a grant would help you to make it more successful or support start-up costs. There are no "right" answers or the "right" sort of words to use in the application. If a question has several parts, use bullet points to answer each part:

- How much grant are you applying for
- Why you need this grant, include where the other funds you need to start or grow your business will come from
- How will this grant help you start your business or improve/sustain/grow the one you are already running
- What time and money have you already put into the business

Grant Budget Breakdown

Please provide a breakdown of specific costs to help us understand how you would use the grant. List all the items you will spend the grant on, the individual cost of each item and include website link. Avoid general terms like 'marketing' that do not provide enough detail about how you will spend the grant.

If you ask for £500 or less and are successful, you will be able to re-apply for a second grant at a later stage. Very early-stage businesses should consider if an initial smaller grant is helpful, before applying for a larger amount.

You cannot apply for your salary or living costs.

Additional Information

You don't need to put anything in this part of the form unless you wish to do so. However, you can use this section if you wish to explain, clarify or add any additional information to support your application and why you need the grant.

Supporting evidence

As well as completing the form, we also need you to provide supporting documents to confirm you are eligible to apply. The below documents can be uploaded at the end of the form on page 9 'Supporting Documents'.

1. Proof of identity - driving licence, passport, birth certificate
2. Proof of Wiltshire address - driving licence, bank statement, bill
3. Evidence of your current income - benefit statement, recent payslip
4. Evidence of your business – a business plan or if you have already started your business - evidence of trading e.g. premises rental agreement, recent invoice, accounts if trading for 1yr +

What happens after I have submitted my application?

1. **Initial assessment** - when we have received your application, we will check it is complete and eligible. If you have not submitted all the supporting documents, we will contact you, usually by email and ask you to send them to us.
2. **Meeting** - we may invite you to a meeting where you will be able to tell us more about your business. The meeting will usually take place online with 2 people, a member of staff from Wiltshire Community Foundation and someone from the South West Enterprise Fund.
3. **Award** - if you are awarded a grant you will be asked to accept the terms and conditions of the award and the grant will be paid directly to you by BACS. You will need to spend the funds within 1 year.
4. **After the award** - we will contact you, usually at 6 and 12 months after you received the grant to find out how your business is progressing. You will also have the opportunity to take part in a business forum with other businesses that have been awarded a grant. The forum offers a space to share, exchange ideas, experiences and learn.

