



COVID-19
Business Diversification
Grants Guidelines
2020-2021
Round 2

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Program Description & Objectives

1. What is the Business Diversification Grant?

The COVID-19 Business Diversification Grants program is one of the Colac Otway Shire Council's initiatives to assist businesses within our shire that have been impacted by COVID-19.

This program provides support for businesses that have had to significantly change the way their business operates as a result of the pandemic. A funding pool of just over \$23,000 will be available.

Please ensure that you refer to these guidelines when preparing your application.

Businesses that apply for this grant program are still eligible to apply for other Council grant programs such as the Building Façade Improvement Program as part of Council's annual grants program.

COVID-19 Business Diversification Grants

This is a flexible, one-off program whereby businesses are asked to outline their proposed project to Council. Grants are available up to a maximum of \$3,000, requiring a dollar for dollar cash contribution from the applicant to match the grant.

A total pool of \$23,000 is available for distribution.

2. Who can apply?

To be eligible businesses must:

- Operate in the Colac Otway Shire.
- Have an active ABN as at 1 March 2020.
- Have fewer than 20 FTE employees.
- Have been successful in receiving funding through a state or federal government COVID-19 grant/subsidy program, demonstrating that the business has been impacted by the pandemic.
- Spend at least 50% of this grant locally where possible.
- Understand that the program **has not** been designed to support business premise upgrades/changes or fit outs that may be required due to the directions provided by the Chief Health Officer and/or State Government.

Farming enterprises located in the shire that meet the above criteria are eligible to apply

3. What type of activities might be funded?

Examples of works that can be considered as part of this funding stream would include:

- New equipment purchases.
- Business fit outs/changes/upgrades.
- Staff training and education directly related to COVID-19 adaptation.
- Setting up a business website/e-commerce site or online booking software.
- Improving your online presence.

As part of this application, businesses must clearly demonstrate how the items to be funded support a fundamental change in the way their business operates, or how they have modified, pivoted or provided new services due to the pandemic.

Applications will be considered at Councils discretion for retrospective projects carried out between March 15, 2020 and the funding agreement being executed. It should be noted that priority will be given to projects that are yet to commence.

3.1 What will not be funded?

- Applications received after the closing date.
- Multiple applications from the same business.
- Businesses cannot receive a grant in any grant program in future years if they have not completed an acquittal report for a previous grant you have received. (Contact the Grants Officer to discuss).
- Requests for retrospective funding for costs incurred prior to March 15, 2020.
- Funding is not available for ongoing expenses including recurrent operating costs and salary subsidies eg: rent, utility costs, staff wages etc.
- Public Liability Insurance.
- Administrative costs
- Project Management costs
- Proposed works where a planning permit has been refused.

- Council will not enter into funding arrangements deemed inappropriate which are associated with or promote (including but not limited to):
 - any illegal activity
 - any activity not in accordance with relevant legislation; permitting; regulations etc
 - tobacco
 - offensive or sexually explicit material
 - discrimination on the grounds of race, gender or religion
 - activities violating human rights
 - political parties
 - gambling

4. What are the funding details?

- The grant recipient must enter into a funding agreement with Colac Otway Shire Council which sets out the conditions, payment details and reporting requirements.
- The project must be completed by the 30 April, 2021
- Funds must be spent on the activity as described in the application. Any proposed variation to the approved activity must be submitted in writing to Colac Otway Shire Council for approval prior to implementation.
- Grant recipients (or those managing the funds) without an Australian Business Number (ABN) must provide a completed Australian Tax Office form (Statement by a supplier) so that no withholding tax is required from the grant payment.
- Grants to recipients not registered for GST will have payments made inclusive of GST.
- Conditions included in the Funding Agreement must be met prior to the release of the grant payment.

5. What is the application process?

Applications will be accepted as part of an assessment round as detailed in the table below. If there are remaining funds after the initial round, the application form will be re-opened and assessed on a first come, first serve basis.

Funding available	Applications open	Applications close
COVID-19 Business Diversification Grant	12 October 2020	Until funds are exhausted or 30 April 2021, whichever occurs first

There are some important steps to consider before submitting an application.

Step 1: Check your eligibility

Check the detailed information contained in these guidelines to see if your organisation or business, and your proposed activity is eligible.

It is highly recommended that applicants contact the Business Support Officer to discuss the prospective application and for assistance with applying online.

Business Support Officer - Vicki
Colac Otway Shire
2-6 Rae Street Colac
Ph: (03) 5232 9400
Email: EcoDev@colacotway.vic.gov.au

Step 2: To apply

The application online form is located on Council's website: www.colacotway.vic.gov.au/Business-investment/Business-Support/COVID-19-Grants-and-Business-Support

All grant information, applications, reporting and financial acquittals will be managed through Smartygrants, an online web based system.

Applicants will be required to register on Smartygrants before the application can be commenced. Please ensure that emails delivered from 'noreply@smartygrants.com.au' are not blocked or directed to your junk mail inbox. Your replies will be delivered to the Grants Officer.

Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

To complete your application, make sure you have the information you need on hand including required documents if applicable (e.g. recent quote(s), public

liability insurance, financial statements related to COVID-19 etc.)

If you require any assistance with lodging your application online in Smartygrants, please contact the Grants Officer to make an appointment to assist you. Please allow sufficient time to lodge your application before the closing date.

Attaching required information to your application

You can attach documents to your electronic application as long as they are in an acceptable file type (e.g. Word, Excel, PDF or JPEG) and don't exceed the maximum file size. Attached files must not be larger than 10MB in size.

IMPORTANT

The Colac Otway Shire Grants Program is a competitive funding program.

Applicants should note that the submission of an application does not guarantee funding of the proposal.

Information you will need to provide as part of your application

You will need to provide the following documents as part of your completed online application:

- Quote of works/services proposed. Please note a preference will be given to projects where at least 50% of works are carried out by local suppliers.
- Before photos of the site/location where works are planned to be carried out. If the projects is not for capital works, screen shots of websites or other evidence to show where the project will be implemented.
- If required, include land manager or land or building owner's consent for the project to be undertaken on their land. Please note, some projects may also need Council's Building Department or Planning Department permits.
- Public Liability Insurance to a minimum value of \$10 million – Certificate of Currency to be provided.

6. How will applications be assessed?

Eligible applications will be assessed based on responses provided in the application form. The assessment criteria are outlined in these guidelines.

Eligibility does not guarantee success. It is a competitive program and often more applications are received than can be funded.

An assessment panel of three (3) officers will assess applications against the guidelines and eligibility criteria.

Applicants will receive written notification of whether the application has been successful or unsuccessful.

NOTE: Applications submitted without an adequately detailed quote/s will not be recommended for funding.

6.1 Information you will need to provide as part of your application

All applications must provide a quote prepared within the past three (3) months for the project. The quote must include:

- Details of individual items to be purchased or project activity to be undertaken.
- Total project cost of items or services to be purchased.

6.2 What are the Assessment Criteria?

To be competitive, you will need to address each of the assessment criteria in your application.

Your application will be assessed against each of the assessment criteria using the weighting indicated in the application form and in these guidelines. The application form asks questions and provides tips that relate to the assessment criteria to assist you with your responses.

Assessment Criteria 1 – To what degree does the project support a fundamental change in the way your business operates? (Weighting 40%)

In your response, please describe:

- How the project changes your business operations?
- Does the project affect interaction with customers or your route to market?
- How the project helps your business adapt to COVID-19 market conditions?
- How the project will help your businesses recovery?
- If the project enables your business to move into a new market or become more sustainable.

Assessment Criteria 2 – To what extent does the project help create new jobs or retain existing jobs? (Weighting 20%)

In your response, please describe:

- Any affects or pressure on staffing levels as a result of COVID-19.
- How the project will assist in retaining existing staff?

Assessment Criteria 3 – To what extent does the project provide benefit to your customers and the community? (Weighting 20%)

In your response, please describe:

- Ways in which the project improves the customer experience.
- Positive flow on effects from the project to the wider community.
- If the project strengthens the Colac Otway Brand.

Assessment Criteria 4 – What local providers and supply chains are being used to deliver the project? (Weighting 20%)

In your response, please describe:

- Which works are being performed by local suppliers.
- Any materials being sources locally.
- Benefits from the project that reduces leakage of discretionary spending to other regional or neighbouring areas.

Budget

A completed budget that accurately reflects your project must be included in your application. The budget should include details on anticipated income (all sources of funding which will be used to deliver the project) and expenditure (all costs involved in the project).

The budget must include the matching contribution required for your event including cash and in-kind contributions.

Any other source of funding provided by Colac Otway Shire towards your project cannot be used as a matching contribution.

Assessment Criteria	Weighting
Support Fundamental change	40%
Help create new jobs or retain existing jobs.	20%
Provide benefit to your customers and the community	20%
What local providers are being used in the project	20%

Level of Funding Available

Businesses can apply on \$1:\$1 cash basis up to a maximum of \$3,000.

Businesses can contribute over the \$3,000 amount if they want to complete to a higher value of works/services but a maximum grant from Council is \$3,000.

An example of a business applying to the program would be:

A funding example is:

- Business contributes \$3,000 and Council contributes \$3,000, bringing the total value of the project to \$6,000. Grant request maximum is \$3,000 your cash contribution is \$3,000.

Applications for smaller amounts of funding would still be eligible. An example would be:

- Business contributes \$1,000 and Council contributes \$1,000 providing a total of \$2,000. Grant request maximum \$1,000, your contribution is \$1,000.

7. Conditions that apply to applications and funding

7.1 Funding Agreements

Successful applicants must enter into a Funding Agreement with the Colac Otway Shire Council. Funding Agreements establish the parties' commitments and obligations to each other and set out the general terms and conditions of funding.

Terms and conditions may vary for each grant recipient, depending on the requirements of the application. These terms and conditions will be outlined in the Funding Agreement and can be discussed with the successful applicant prior to finalising the agreement.

Public Liability Insurance of at least \$10 million is required for all projects. A certificate of Currency must be submitted with your application.

In addition, the following conditions will apply to activities that receive a grant:

- Funds must be spent on the activity as described in the application. Any proposed variation to the approved activity must be submitted in writing to Colac Otway Shire Council for approval prior to implementation.
- Grants to recipients not registered for GST will have payments made inclusive of GST.
- Conditions included in the Funding Agreement must be met prior to the release of the grant payment.
- Businesses will have until April 2021 from the date funding is awarded to implement the Diversification Grant. However please note, all projects must be completed and acquitted by May 31, 2021.

What is an Acquittal Report?

Successful applicants will be provided with an acquittal report that requires completion and return when the project has been delivered.

An acquittal asks for all associated documentation, invoices and other evidence as proof that the project has been completed, such as receipts, remittance advice and photos.

7.2 Acknowledging the Council's support and promoting success

Successful applicants need to acknowledge the Colac Otway Shire Council's support through the provision of a grant from *COVID-19 Business Diversification Grants Program*.

Promotional guidelines form part of the Funding Agreement and include the requirement that all activities acknowledge Colac Otway Shire Council support through logo presentation on any activity-related publications such as show programmes, media releases and promotional material, social media, written or verbal acknowledgement at presentations or 'openings'.

Successful applicants may be required to contribute information on activity outcomes for use in program evaluation reviews or the Council's marketing materials.

7.3 Privacy

The Colac Otway Shire Council is committed to protecting your privacy. We collect and handle any personal information about you or a third party in your application, for the purpose of administering your grant application and informing the public or successful applications.

In order for us to administer your grant application effectively and efficiently, we may need to disclose your personal information with others for the purpose of assessment, consultation and reporting. This can include Council staff or Councillors.

Any personal information about you or a third party in your correspondence will be collected, held, managed, used, disclosed or transferred in accordance with the provisions of the *Privacy Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)* and other applicable laws. The Colac Otway Shire Councils Privacy Policy can be found at www.colacotway.vic.gov.au enter Search – Privacy Statement.

Council uses an online grant application program called Smartygrants. [Click Here](#) to view Smartygrants Privacy Policy.

8. Resources and additional information

For questions relating to the program, applications or your proposal, contact Colac Otway Shire Council on (03) 5232 9400 between 9.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday or EcoDev@colacotway.vic.gov.au