

# **Businesses which are eligible can apply for discretionary grants from Wednesday**

**The new Discretionary Fund will open on Wednesday and small businesses are invited to apply for a £2,000 one-off award.**

The process was agreed by the Housing Committee at a special meeting, and all businesses are invited to step forward. The fund will be allocated on a first come, first served basis, and applications can be made through the council's website, for the funding which comes from The Scottish Government. The intention is to offer financial support to those businesses who have been without any financial support from other sources during the pandemic. There is funding for 1400 businesses to each receive a one-off payment of £2,000.

Applications open on Wednesday 3 February 2021 at 8.00am.  
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Businesses which may be eligible will include suppliers to businesses which have had to close, businesses which do not have premises on which they pay business rates (one of the criteria for other funding) and businesses which are deemed essential but who have lost customers.

It is anticipated that there will be too many applicants for the fund.

Councillor Kate Campbell, Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Convener, said: "We know how important this fund is to

businesses – in many instances it will be lifeline and as a committee we take that responsibility very seriously. It's a finite pot of money so we've worked hard to make sure we get this right – targeting the fund towards the businesses that need it the most and trying to reach as many as possible.

“The fund is aimed at businesses who have been ineligible for other Scottish Government support and who've suffered significant losses as a result of restrictions brought in since October. We've consulted with partners like the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) and the Chamber of Commerce who have been amazing at helping us to sense check our approach. They've shared their valuable knowledge and understanding of their members' experiences to help us draft the best framework we think is possible in the circumstances. And we've had very useful consultations and input from other elected members.”

Councillor Mandy Watt, Vice Convener said: “We've taken this report to a special committee so that we can start supporting those businesses in need as soon as possible. Sadly, there will still be small enterprises facing hardship who won't get one of these grants. Further government discretionary grant funding for businesses, as announced last week (28 January) by the Finance Secretary, should be released as quickly as possible so we can give them the assistance that they desperately need.

“From Wednesday 3 February, businesses that fit the criteria agreed today can start to apply and we hope to be able to start making the first payments within a few days of that. We must stress that businesses will be allocated funding on a first come, first served basis.”