

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Relaunch Small and Medium-sized Business Grant Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation

Key Messages:

- The B.C. government is making enhancements to the Small and Medium Sized Business Grant program that will make it easier for businesses to qualify for these important grants.
- We have been listening to businesses and stakeholders and working with them to expand the eligibility challenges so that more businesses are able to access the grant program.
- We have made several adjustments including a simplified application process and streamlined criteria that will make it easier for businesses to apply and get funding that will help them get back on their feet.
- This means even more businesses that have been impacted by the pandemic will be eligible to receive between \$10,000 and \$30,000 in a non-repayable grant — as many businesses cannot afford to take on more debt at this time.
- We also have increased the additional amount available to tourism related businesses for up to \$15,000 on top of the base grant.
- Our number one priority now is to get the money out the door to eligible businesses.
- This pandemic is something no one anticipated and something we have not lived through before. There is no formula on how to respond to the many variables it has brought our way.
- Since the outset of this pandemic our government has said we will be there for people and businesses. If a program needs to be reviewed or expanded so it better achieves the outcomes we all want, then we are ready and willing to do that work.
- One of our most valuable assets in B.C. are our businesses and the people who operate them, and we remain steadfast in our committed to helping them.

Q&A:

1. What eligibility criteria changed?

- No two businesses operate in the same manner and they have different ways of record keeping and reporting.
- We have made several adjustments to make the grant program more flexible to meet the operating conditions of various businesses.
- We have lowered the requirements for businesses to be in operation from three years to 18 months at the time of application. Right now, that means that businesses in operation 9 months before the pandemic can apply to the grant program.
- We have removed the onerous requirement to list a variety of remittance accounts like GST, PST and WorkSafe Registration numbers.
- Instead of requiring a revenue loss of 50% or more, the criteria has been reduced to 30% at the time of application.
- Applications can now be submitted by sole proprietors.
- Businesses that are temporarily closed or seasonal are now eligible for the program.
- For more information on eligibility criteria and to apply, visit www.BCBusinessRecoveryGrant.com

2. Why change from three years to 18 months – why not just remove the operation criteria, period?

- We have made significant adjustments to make the Small and Medium Sized Grant program accessible for many more B.C. businesses.
- We are confident these changes are going to make a difference to many businesses.
- It is always important, as we considered these adjustments, to ensure public accountability.
- One way to achieve that was by keeping a reasonable timeline for the business to be operational.

- We heard from businesses that were doing very well before the pandemic, but they were outside of the three-year operation requirement. This made them ineligible for the grant.
- After review, we determined that a requirement of 18 months will allow many more businesses to apply while still providing the public accountability for these investments.
- Right now, that means that businesses in operation 9 months before the pandemic can apply to the grant program.

3. Why did you wait so long to make these changes and further impact B.C. businesses? By not having a Minister in place, were you unable to make any decisions on the program?

- The Small and Medium Sized Business Grants were not held up in anyway due to the election.
- We have hard working public servants who have been committed to launching this program and getting the funding out the door as quickly as possible.
- The program was put in place quickly after the September 17th Stronger BC announcement, with applications open on October 9th.
- This pandemic is something we never anticipated and something we have not lived through before. There is no formula to how to respond to the many variables it has brought our way.
- But we are learning, we are listening, and we have been nimble, bringing the streamlined criteria into place quickly.
- One of our most valuable assets in B.C. are our businesses and the people who operate them, and we remain steadfast in our committed to helping them.

4. What funding is available?

- A business can receive \$10,000 - \$30,000 in non-repayable grants.
- An extra \$10,000 to \$15,000 is available for businesses in the tourism sector.

5. Why a recovery grant ?

- We know that many businesses have accessed federal loan programs to help get them through this challenging time.
- For many, taking on more debt with another loan is simply not an option.
- The grant will provide businesses with one-time funding that will help them regain their footing on the path to economic recovery.
- The grant does not need to be paid back.

6. How soon will these changes be in effect?

- The changes will be in place on December 21, 2020.

7. If I have already submitted my application, do I have to apply again?

- You do not need to resubmit your application again.
- Any applications received prior to the program changes will be reviewed under new program criteria.
- Businesses that have already been approved for funding are not affected by these changes.

8. What size does the business need to be to qualify?

- The business must employ between two and 149 people in B.C. for at least four months of the calendar year. This includes businesses that had employees prior to COVID (February 1, 2020).
- Or, the business can be a sole proprietor with fixed costs.

9. How can a business use the money?

- This money is intended to support businesses through this difficult time and to give them the ability to get their business back on its feet.

- Businesses can purchase anything from equipment to ecommerce support to help them get their business back on track.

10. Can a business receive funds from the Small and Medium-Sized Business Recovery Grant if they received federal funding?

- Generally, yes. Businesses should be able to benefit from programs provided by the Government of Canada and the B.C. government.

11. When does the program expire?

- The program will run until March 31, 2021.

12. Why isn't anything immediately available for businesses now?

- The Small and Medium-Sized Business Recovery Grants are open for application right now.
- There are also other measures in place to help businesses find their feet and build their confidence.
 - We're providing a temporary PST rebate on select machinery and equipment to make it easier for businesses to make the kinds of investments that will allow them to grow and become more productive.
 - We have a new hiring incentive rebate. Employers that hire new people or bring people back who lost their jobs during the height of the pandemic measures is eligible for a credit equal to 15% of any increase in total payroll in the last quarter of 2020.
 - We deferred the planned carbon tax rate increase to April 1, 2021.
- Employer Health Tax quarterly instalment dates have been extended so that businesses will have more access to cashflow during recovery and more time to determine their annual payroll.
- These actions build on the measures we already introduced as part of the COVID-19 Action Plan, including:

- Extending a number of taxation deadlines for businesses, including the employer health tax, PST, hotel tax, tobacco tax, motor fuel tax and carbon tax to Oct. 1, 2020.
 - Reducing most commercial property tax bills by an average of 25%.
 - Postponing late penalties for commercial property taxes, which gives businesses and landlords more time to pay their reduced property tax bill without penalty.
- These are all important steps that have helped businesses and will help many businesses get back on their feet, create good jobs for people and set us up for recovery in the longer term.

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MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release

Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation

Dec. 18, 2020

MEDIA ADVISORY – Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation – teleconference; livestream

Media are invited to join Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation; along with Ian Tostenson, CEO and president, BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association; and Cybele Negriz, vice-chair, Small Business Roundtable, and CEO and co-founder of Webnames.ca; for an announcement about changes to the Small and Medium-Sized Business Recovery Grant program.

Event date: Monday, Dec. 21, 2020

Time: 10 a.m. (Pacific time)

Livestream with a sign language interpreter will be available on:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BCProvincialGovernment/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/BCGovNews?s=20>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/ProvinceofBC>

Special instructions: Media are requested to dial in 20 minutes prior to the announcement. Media are asked to have the participant pass code ready when they dial in to save time. Failure to do this may mean a delay in you or others joining the call.

Note: in line with the BC Centre for Disease Control's physical distancing guidelines, media must call in rather than attend in person.

Media dial-in information:

From anywhere in B.C. and Canada, toll-free: 1 888 892-3255

Participant pass code: 619025

Contact:

Lori Cascaden

Communications Manager

Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and
Innovation

778 698-2892

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: news.gov.bc.ca/connect

**StrongerBC Small and Medium-Sized Business Recovery Grants
Communications Kit for MLAs
Date: Dec. 21, 2020**

Background

- The B.C. government is making enhancements to the Small and Medium Sized Business Grant program that will make it easier for businesses to qualify for these important grants.
- We have been listening to businesses and stakeholders and working with them to expand the eligibility challenges so that more businesses are able to access the grant program.
- We have made several adjustments including a simplified application process and streamlined criteria that will make it easier for businesses to apply and get funding that will help them get back on their feet.
 - We have lowered the requirements for businesses to be in operation from three years to 18 months at the time of application.
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 - Applications can now be submitted by sole proprietors.
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- We also have increased the additional amount available to tourism related businesses for up to \$15,000 on top of the base grant.
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MLAs are encouraged to share the information about the changes to the Small and Medium Sized Business Recovery Grant program on your social media channels. Content options are below, or feel free to draft your own.

Links/Hashtags

- Website: www.BCBusinessRecoveryGrant.com
- Hashtags: #BCPoli #BC

Social media posts for use on different platforms: Facebook, Twitter Images available below	
Social Media Channel	Content
	The small & medium-sized businesses grant is a lifeline for businesses impacted by COVID-19. We've streamlined the program so more businesses can access the help they need. Visit: www.BCBusinessRecoveryGrant.com #BCPoli #BC
	To help get businesses back on track, we have made the small & medium-sized business grant more accessible. Learn more: www.BCBusinessRecoveryGrant.com #BCPoli #BC
	Grants are available to help businesses recover as we rebuild from the COVID-19 pandemic. Learn more: www.BCBusinessRecoveryGrant.com #BCPoli #BC
	We improved the business recovery grant making them more accessible for businesses to rebuild. Apply today: www.BCBusinessRecoveryGrant.com #BCPoli #BC
Facebook	BC businesses can access grants to get back on track during the pandemic. We're doing everything we can to ensure a strong economic recovery. Apply now: www.BCBusinessRecoveryGrant.com #BCPoli #BC

Images – To follow



Speaking notes for

Minister Kahlon

Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation

Small and Medium Sized Business Grants – Relaunch

Monday, Dec. 21, 2020

Time of event - 10:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Pre-brief (9:45 a.m.)

Speaking time: approximately 4.5 minutes

Location:

Vancouver Cabinet Offices
Room 740
999 Canada Place
Vancouver

On Site Contact:

Marlene Behrens
Cell – 778-584-1253

Note: Shruti Joshi, Government Communications and Public Engagement will facilitate media portion of the event.

Event Description:

Minister Kahlon announces the changes to the Small and Medium-Sized Businesses Recovery Grant program. He is joined by Ian Tostenson, CEO and president, BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association; and Cybele Negris, vice-chair, Small Business Roundtable, and CEO and co-founder of Webnames.ca.

A pre brief will be held in the Cabinet Boardroom at the Vancouver Cabinet Offices (VCO). All attendees will be required to check in with Danny Loubert at the front desk on arrival, then he can direct them if needed.

Samantha Scholefield, Marketing & Event Manager, BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association will join Ian Tostenson at the event and will be present in the pre-brief. However, a maximum of four people are allowed in the event room. Physically distanced chairs outside the doors to the room so staff can watch through the open door and listen in via a speaker set up for them.

There will be markers in the room to show where people should stand during the event. Masks must be worn until speaking, at which point it can be removed, but

then put back on after the person is done speaking. Mask are available onsite if needed.

There will be a pool camera at the event that is fed into the major outlets. Media will be able to dial in to listen to the event. The event will be livestreamed with a sign language interpreter.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BCProvincialGovernment/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/BCGovNews?s=20>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/ProvinceofBC>

Background:

The audience will be interested in hearing about the changes to the Small and Medium-Sized Businesses Recovery Grant program and how the changes will benefit them.

Audience Demographic:

Small and Medium-Sized Businesses and industry associations like the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, BC Chamber, BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association, Small Business Roundtable, etc.

Latest Industry Relevant News:

- **CFJC today (Dec. 11)** notes that the NDP wasted six months of time before announcing that \$300 million of StrongerBC supports would be used to fund the Small and Medium Sized Business Recovery Grant, a week before John Horgan called the snap provincial election – which delayed flowing these supports by another couple months.
- **Reporter Tom Fletcher (Dec. 11)** wrote about the Tourism Task Force and the business grants. He cited B.C. Liberal jobs critic Todd Stone as saying the snap election in October added to delays, and called the

restrictive application process for small business a “red tape disaster.” Businesses have to show they lost at least 50 per cent of their revenue every month of the COVID-19 restrictions, and 1,400 business owners who have applied still don’t know when they will receive help.

- **News 1130 (Nov. 26)** The head of Surrey’s Board of Trade says urgent relief funding is needed to keep many small businesses from permanently closing their doors. Surrey Board of Trade CEO Anita Huberman tells NEWS 1130 many small operators are at risk of going under if “meaningful” grants are not provided soon. So far, one out of 25 local businesses have already been forced to close temporarily, Huberman said.

Itinerary:

Time	Event
9:45 a.m.	Pre-brief takes place at the Cabinet Boardroom at the Vancouver Cabinet Offices (VCO). Marlene Behrens will lead.
10:00 a.m.	Minister Kahlon speaks
10:05 a.m.	Ian Tostenson, CEO and President, BC Restaurant & Foodservices Association speaks. At the end of his speech, he invites Cybele Negriz to speak
10:09 a.m.	Cybele Negriz, Vice-Chair, Small Business Roundtable speaks and closes out the event, then invites Shruit from GCPE to open up for media questions. Note: Minister Kahlon can return to the podium after Cybele is done speaking to lead on questions.
10:13 a.m.	Open for media questions – Shruti Joshi, Government Communications and Public Engagement will facilitate
10:25 a.m.	Event concludes

Introduction

- Good morning.
- I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are on the territory of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh [Slay-wha-tooth] peoples.
- A warm welcome to everyone.
- I extend greetings from our Premier, John Horgan.
- I am pleased to be joined today by Ian Tostenson [Toss-ten-sen], CEO and President of the BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association, and Cybele [Se Bell] Negris [Ne Griss], Vice-Chair of the Small Business Roundtable and CEO and Co-Founder of Webnames.ca.

- Without a doubt, 2020 has been a difficult year for so many.
- We have experienced loss, hardship and challenges that we never knew would come our way.
- For businesses, the pandemic has had a profound impact.
- While I am not in your shoes, I understand the difficulties you face at the best of times, as my parents owned a small restaurant in Victoria for over a decade.
- To own a business during these uncertain times brings challenges that no business owner could have ever imagined.
- Today, I want to let you know that we are doing our utmost to ensure that small and medium-sized businesses have the support they need to get through, and beyond, COVID-19.

- On October 9th the B.C. government launched the Small and Medium-Sized Business Recovery Grant program.
- This program was put in place to support businesses hit hard by the pandemic.
- Over the last while, businesses and stakeholders have shared their feedback on how we could make the program better.
- They identify ways we could adjust the program to make it more accessible and inclusive for businesses.
- To all of you that shared your feedback, thank you.
- Since the outset of this pandemic our government has said that we will be there for people and businesses.

- If a program needs to be reviewed or expanded so it achieves the outcomes we all want, then we are ready to do that work.
- Effective today, we have made enhancements to the program.
- The changes will make it easier for you to apply and access the funding that will help you get your business back on track.
- For example, instead of requiring a revenue loss of 50% or more, the criteria have been reduced to 30% at the time of application.
- This change will allow more businesses to be eligible for the grant.
- In addition, the time that a business is required to be in operation has been reduced to 18 months.

- This is a significant reduction from the previous criteria, which required that a business be in operation for three years.
- To help improve the application process, we have removed the requirement for a business to have a variety of remittance accounts like GST, PST and WorkSafe Registration numbers.
- We want businesses to have access to the grants offered in this program as we know for many of you, they will serve as a lifeline right now.
- For businesses that are temporarily closed or seasonal, we have shifted the criteria so that you are also eligible for the program.
- In terms of the funding available, businesses impacted by the pandemic will be eligible to receive between \$10,000 and \$30,000 in non-repayable grant funding.

- For those of you in the hard-hit tourism sector, we have increased the additional amount available up to \$15,000.
- This means that tourism businesses will now be eligible for a grant up to \$45,000.
- We feel positive that these changes are going to make a difference for many businesses.

Conclusion

- I would like to thank the industry associations and business groups that met with us and provided their insights on how we could make this grant program better.

- Your voices matter and I want you to know that we are listening, we are learning, and we will continue to be nimble in our response.
- For those interested in applying, the new criteria and application process is now in place.
- You can access the application and other important program information from the StrongerBC website.
- For those of you that have already applied, you do not need to resubmit your application, it will be reviewed under the new program criteria.
- In close, I would like to let you know that Minister Mark will have more to say about support for the tourism sector tomorrow at 10:00 a.m.

- I would like to thank Minister Mark for the work she is doing on this very important file.
- I would also like to acknowledge Lisa Beare who previously served as the Minister for Tourism and is now Minister of Citizens' Services.
- Her commitment to the tourism industry was unwavering and we thank her for her work.
- I would now like to invite Ian Tostenson [Toss-ten-sen] up to say a few words.
- Thank you.

-END-

NEWS RELEASE

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Media contact:

Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport
Government Communication and Public Engagement
250-208-4309

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2020JERI0044-002118
Dec. 21, 2020

Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation

Grant program now accessible to more B.C. businesses

VICTORIA – The B.C. government has enhanced the Small and Medium-Sized Business Recovery Grant program to make it easier for businesses to qualify and has increased support for those in the hard-hit tourism sector.

The program is part of StrongerBC: BC's Economic Recovery Plan. The plan outlines the latest steps the Government of British Columbia is taking to help people, businesses and communities come out of COVID-19 stronger and better prepared.

"We know that small businesses are struggling as they contend with the challenges of operating during a global health pandemic," said Ravi Kahlon, B.C.'s Minister of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation. "While many businesses have benefited from our government's supports and programs, we wanted to do more. As part of our government's commitment to an economic recovery for all British Columbians, we developed the recovery grant program for businesses. We recently engaged stakeholders, listened to their ideas and responded quickly to adjust this program. Now, more businesses can access this much-needed funding."

Adjustments made to the Small and Medium-Sized Business Recovery Grant program include a streamlined application process and simplified criteria. For example, the criteria has been expanded from a minimum revenue drop of 50% to a drop of 30%. This change will allow more businesses to be eligible. Additionally, the previous three-year operation requirement has been reduced to 18 months. This means that businesses only need to have been in operation nine months before the pandemic to apply for the grant.

Businesses impacted by the pandemic will be eligible to receive a grant up to \$30,000. The grant for the tourism sector has been increased, meaning those hardest-hit businesses in the tourism sector will be eligible for a grant up to \$45,000.

The changes to the Small and Medium-Sized Business Recovery Grant program were made in consultation with industry associations and business groups that represent the small and medium-sized business community.

"B.C. restaurants need the support of government to get through the significant impacts of COVID-19 on our industry," said Ian Tostenson, president and CEO, BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association. "Helping business owners pivot and get through this tough time is essential. We are grateful for the revisions to the grant program and the support it offers to businesses facing financial pressures."

Cybele Negriz, vice-chair, Small Business Roundtable, and CEO and co-founder of Webnames.ca, said, "B.C. businesses create meaningful jobs for people throughout the province. They are vital to helping communities thrive and spur economic growth. Collectively,

we need to do everything we can to support the future of businesses. The new structure of the grant program will allow more businesses to benefit from funding that will help position them for a better future.”

The revised application process and eligibility criteria are now in place. Small- and medium-sized businesses are encouraged to apply online:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/economic-recovery/business-recovery-grant>

Quick Facts:

- Businesses impacted by the pandemic will be eligible to receive between \$10,000 and \$30,000 in a non-repayable grant.
- The additional amount available to tourism-related businesses has been increased up to \$15,000. This amount is available on top of the base grant, for a total of up to \$45,000.
- Eligibility changes include:
 - instead of requiring a revenue loss of 50% or more, the criteria has been reduced to 30% at the time of application;
 - the requirement to list a variety of remittance accounts, like the registration numbers for the goods and services tax, provincial sales tax and WorkSafeBC, have been removed;
 - businesses that have been in operation for the last 18 months are now eligible (reduced from three years);
 - applications can now be submitted by sole proprietors; and
 - businesses that are temporarily closed or seasonal are now eligible for the program.

Learn More:

For more information on the Small and Medium-Sized Business Recovery Grant program, including the application process and eligibility, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/economic-recovery/business-recovery-grant>

For more information on StrongerBC, visit: <https://strongerbc.gov.bc.ca/>

For a Punjabi translation: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020JERI0044-002118#translations>

Contact:

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Innovation
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778 698-2892

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MINISTRY OF JOBS, ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND INNOVATION

DECISION NOTE

Cliff #: 151433

Date: December 16, 2020

PREPARED FOR: Bobbi Plecas, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation

ISSUE: Streamlined adjudication process and delegation of authority to approve application and recovery plan batches for Small and Medium Sized Business Recovery Grant Program.

DATE DECISION REQUIRED BY: Friday, December 18, 2020

BACKGROUND: The Business Recovery Grant program is a \$300 million grant program under StrongerBC that was launched on October 9, 2020 with the policy objective of helping small and medium businesses access grant funding to continue operations and assist in mid-term recovery.

While the current eligibility criteria and adjudication process has achieved the intended objectives of the program, it has also had unintended consequences. The approach includes a highly complex program eligibility and recovery plan approvals process,

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DISCUSSION: The current process is multi-stage including two sub-processes^{s.13} during both the program eligibility and recovery plan approval stages.

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Learning from this and based on stakeholder engagement, the Ministry has pivoted the program to more inclusive criteria and streamlined process. Improvements include:

- Information that was not needed or redundant is no longer requested of the applicant and reviewed by the team.
- Financial viability of the business is determined at the Phase 1, not again in Phase 2.
- The recovery plan has been reduced from 12 pages to 2 and simply requests how the business plans to spend the grant funding. This is viewed by the adjudicators from a test of reasonableness s.13
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- Administrative oversight will remain intact with four layers of approval: the adjudicator, team lead, PM team lead, and the ED.

OPTIONS:


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RECOMMENDED OPTION: ^{s.13}

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ATTACHMENTS: ^{s.13}

Approved / Not Approved	Date: December 22, 2020
Deputy Minister's Signature: 	

ADM Contact: Christine Little, Phone # 778 698-1708

Prepared by: Aman Ghag, Manager, Small Business, Jobs and Workforce Division

Reviewed by		
ED: Liz Vickery	ADM: CL	DM: BP

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B.C. Small and Medium Sized Business Recovery Grant Program

Key changes make it easier to apply and access grants

Small and medium-sized businesses are vital to British Columbia's economy. That's why the B.C. Government has made changes to the Small and Medium-Sized Business Recovery Grant program that make it easier for businesses to apply and access the funding they need to support them during and beyond COVID-19.

Since the program launched on October 9, 2020, we've been listening and working with the business community to simplify the application process and streamline the criteria. The program changes took effect December 21, 2020.

Note: businesses that have already submitted applications will not have to reapply and will be reviewed under the revised criteria.

How the program works

The Small and Medium-Sized Business Recovery Grant program will invest \$345 million in targeted financial support for some of the hardest hit businesses in B.C. To be eligible, a business must employ between two and 149 B.C. residents or be a sole proprietorship with fixed costs. The business or the sole proprietorship, must have experienced declines in revenue since March 10, 2020.

Grants of \$10,000 to \$30,000 are available. An additional \$5,000 to \$15,000 grant is available to eligible businesses in the hard-hit tourism sector.

The program runs until March 31, 2021 or until the funds are fully allocated.

Five Steps to Grants

1. Businesses apply for funding and provide information to demonstrate they meet the eligibility criteria.
2. A business that meets the eligibility criteria is matched with a professional services provider who will help develop a recovery plan or assess the business's current plan (a value up to \$2,000 in professional services, in addition to the grant amount). Businesses can use their own service provider at their own cost.

Helping more businesses, faster.

- *Lowered the requirement for the amount of time a business had to be in operation from three years to 18 months.*
- *Removed the requirement to list a variety of remittance accounts such as GST, PST and WorkSafeBC registration numbers.*
- *Extended the grants to sole proprietors with fixed costs.*
- *Expanded the revenue requirement to include businesses that continue to earn 30% or less in revenue.*
- *Streamlined the required recovery plan to a two-page form.*
- *Increased the total amount of funding from \$300 million to \$345 million, which includes \$100 million for the tourism sector.*
- *Increased the top-up funding to up to \$15,000 for tourism businesses.*

3. Once a recovery plan is developed, submitted and approved, funding is provided to the business to implement the actions outlined in their recovery plan.
4. Businesses must provide regular updates that account for the spending and status.
5. All businesses must agree to participate in a third-party audit at the end of the program.

For more information on this program and other supports for your business visit:
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/economic-recovery/business-recovery-grant>

More Supports for B.C. Small and Medium Sized Businesses

In addition to the Small and Medium Sized Business Recovery Grant Program, there are a number of other supports available to help B.C. businesses.

- Providing a temporary PST rebate on select machinery and equipment.
- Creating a new hiring incentive rebate for employers that hire new people or bring people back who lost their jobs.
- Deferring the planned carbon tax rate increase to April 1, 2021.
- Extending a number of taxation deadlines for businesses, including the employer health tax, PST, hotel tax, tobacco tax, and motor fuel tax October 1, 2020.
- Reducing most commercial property tax bills by an average of 25%.
- Postponing late penalties for commercial property taxes.

Small and Medium Sized Business Recovery Grant Program

Fact Sheet for MLAs and Constituency Offices

The Small and Medium Sized Business Recovery Grant program provides fully funded grants to B.C. businesses to ensure they have the support they need throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The program runs until March 31, 2021 or until the funds are fully allocated, whichever comes first.

How much funding is available?	<p>A \$10,000 to \$30,000 grant is available to eligible small and medium sized B.C. businesses impacted by COVID-19.</p> <p>An additional \$5,000 to \$15,000 grant is available to eligible tourism-related businesses.</p>
Who is eligible?	<p>Eligibility criteria were streamlined on December 18, 2020, to make it easier for businesses to qualify.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B.C. businesses must meet all eligibility criteria to receive a base grant of \$10,000 to \$30,000 (see Page 2). • Tourism-related businesses can qualify to receive an additional grant up to \$15,000 if they meet all the base grant eligibility criteria and the tourism grant top-up eligibility criteria (see Page 2). <p>Businesses may determine their eligibility online.</p>
How does the Grant program work?	<p>Step 1: Apply Businesses apply for funding online.</p> <p>Step 2: Develop a plan If eligible, a business must develop a recovery plan. Professional service providers are available to help businesses plan for their recovery as needed.</p> <p>Step 3: Receive funding Once a recovery plan is submitted and approved, funding is provided to implement plan.</p> <p>Step 4: Report Businesses may be asked to submit to an audit of their recovery efforts and spending supported by the grant funding.</p>
More information:	<p>Visit the Small and Medium Sized Business Grant program website at: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/economic-recovery/business-recovery-grant</p>
Need help?	<p>Email: BusinessRecoveryGrantProgram@gov.bc.ca</p> <p>Phone: 1-833-254-4357</p>

Small and Medium Sized Business Recovery Grant Program

Fact Sheet for MLAs and Constituency Offices

Eligibility Criteria:

Base grant	<p>A business must meet all eligibility criteria to receive a base grant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority share of the business is owned by one or more B.C. residents • Business has been operating in B.C. for at least 18 months as of the date of application • Business's sole or primary operations are located and conducted in B.C., is registered in B.C., is current and pays taxes in B.C. • Business is currently operating (seasonal or temporarily closed businesses are also eligible) • Business employs up to 149 people in B.C. for at least four months of the calendar year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Includes businesses that had employees or contracted staff prior to February 1, 2020 ○ Businesses such as sole proprietorships and partnerships that do not have staff must have fixed costs related to tangible assets: property, plant or equipment • Business had positive cash flow for the last financial statement, prior to February 1, 2020 • Business experienced revenue losses compared to the same period of 2019 of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ At least 70% at some point during March or April 2020 and ○ At least 30% at some point during May 2020 to present • Business's ownership has not prepared the business for closure, dissolution or for sale following February 1, 2020 <p>Businesses may determine their eligibility and find out what they need to apply online.</p>
Tourism grant top-up	<p>To receive the tourism grant top-up, a business must meet all base grant eligibility criteria and declare that a majority (50% or more) of their business is tourism-related as defined in the eligibility criteria.</p> <p>Tourism-related businesses are those that cater to persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure business and other purposes.</p> <p>A list of eligible tourism sector and accommodation businesses is online.</p>

Small and Medium Sized Business Recovery Grant Program

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More information:	<p>Visit the Small and Medium Sized Business Grant program website at: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/economic-recovery/business-recovery-grant </p>
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Small and Medium Sized Business Recovery Grant

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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Relaunch Small and Medium-sized Business Recovery Grant **Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation**

Key Messages:

- The B.C. government is making enhancements to the Small and Medium Sized Business Recovery Grant program that will make it easier for businesses to qualify for these important grants.
- We have been listening to businesses and stakeholders and working with them to expand the eligibility criteria so that more businesses are able to access the grant program.
- We have made several adjustments including a simplified application process and streamlined criteria that will make it easier for businesses to apply and get funding that will help them get back on their feet.
- This means even more businesses that have been impacted by the pandemic will be eligible to receive between \$10,000 and \$30,000 in a non-repayable grant — as many businesses cannot afford to take on more debt at this time.
- We also have increased the additional amount available to tourism related businesses for up to \$15,000 on top of the base grant.
- Our number one priority now is to get the money out the door to eligible businesses.
- This pandemic is something no one anticipated and something we have not lived through before. There is no formula on how to respond to the many variables it has brought our way.
- Since the outset of this pandemic our government has said we will be there for people and businesses. If a program needs to be reviewed or expanded so it better achieves the outcomes, we all want, then we are ready and willing to do that work.
- One of our most valuable assets in B.C. are our businesses and the people who operate them, and we remain steadfast in our committed to helping them.

Q&A:

1. What eligibility criteria changed?

- No two businesses operate in the same manner and they have different ways of record keeping and reporting.
- We have made several adjustments to make the grant program more flexible to meet the operating conditions of various businesses.
- We have lowered the requirement for businesses to be in operation from three years to 18 months at the time of application. Right now, that means that businesses in operation 9 months before the pandemic can apply to the grant program.
- The requirement to list a variety of remittance accounts like, the registration numbers for the goods and services tax, provincial sales tax and WorkSafeBC have been removed.
- Instead of requiring a revenue loss of 50% or more, the criteria has been reduced to 30% at the time of application.
- Applications can now be submitted by sole proprietors, with fixed costs.
- Businesses that are temporarily closed or seasonal are now eligible for the program.
- For more information on eligibility criteria and to apply, visit www.BCBusinessRecoveryGrant.com

2. Why change from three years to 18 months – why not just remove the operation criteria, period?

- We have made significant adjustments to make the Small and Medium Sized Recovery Grant program accessible for many more B.C. businesses.
- We are confident these changes are going to make a difference to many businesses.
- It is always important, as we considered these adjustments, to ensure public accountability.
- One way to achieve that was by keeping a reasonable timeline for the business to be operational.

- We heard from businesses that were doing very well before the pandemic, but they were outside of the three-year operation requirement. This made them ineligible for the grant.
- After review, we determined that a requirement of 18 months will allow many more businesses to apply while still providing the public accountability for these investments.
- Right now, that means that businesses in operation 9 months before the pandemic can apply to the grant program.

3. Why did you wait so long to make these changes and further impact B.C. businesses? By not having a Minister in place, were you unable to make any decisions on the program?

- The Small and Medium Sized Business Recovery Grants were not held up in anyway due to the election.
- We have hard working public servants who have been committed to launching this program and getting the funding out the door as quickly as possible.
- The program was put in place quickly after the September 17th Stronger BC announcement, with applications open on October 9th.
- This pandemic is something we never anticipated and something we have not lived through before. There is no formula to how to respond to the many variables it has brought our way.
- But we are learning, we are listening, and we have been nimble, bringing the streamlined criteria into place quickly.
- One of our most valuable assets in B.C. are our businesses and the people who operate them, and we remain steadfast in our committed to helping them.

4. What funding is available?

- A business can receive \$10,000 - \$30,000 in non-repayable grants.
- An extra \$5,000 to \$15,000 is available for businesses in the tourism sector.

5. Why a recovery grant ?

- We know that many businesses have accessed federal loan programs to help get them through this challenging time.
- For many, taking on more debt with another loan is simply not an option.
- The grant will provide businesses with one-time funding that will help them regain their footing on the path to economic recovery.
- The grant does not need to be paid back.

6. How soon will these changes be in effect?

- The changes will be in place on December 21, 2020.

7. If I have already submitted my application, do I have to apply again?

- You do not need to resubmit your application again.
- Any applications received prior to the program changes will be reviewed under new program criteria.
- Businesses that have already been approved for funding will receive additional funding increases if eligible.

8. How will you encourage increase applications for this grant program?

- We will work with community level organizations and stakeholders and business associations like the Chamber of Commerce, the BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association and the BC Hotel Association to share the news about the changes to the Small and Medium Sized Recovery Grant program.
- We will also communicate directly with business owners to let them know about the changes.
- And, we will work within our own B.C. government channels to raise awareness about the grant program changes.

9. How do you determine what range of funding from the \$10,000 – 30,000 a business will receive?

Base grant, based on total revenues

Pre-COVID revenue	Grant amount
Up to \$100,000	\$10,000
\$100,001 to \$1,000,000	\$15,000
\$1,000,001 to \$2,000,000	\$20,000
\$2,000,001 to \$3,000,000	\$25,000
More than \$3,000,000	\$30,000

Tourism Top-Up, based on:

Number of pre-COVID B.C. residents employed	Grant top-up amount
0 to 1	\$5,000
2 to 4	\$10,000
5 to 149	\$15,000

10. What size does the business need to be to qualify?

- The business must employ between two and 149 people in B.C. for at least four months of the calendar year. This includes businesses that had employees prior to COVID (February 1, 2020).
- Or, the business can be a sole proprietor with fixed costs.

11. How can a business use the money?

- This money is intended to support businesses through this difficult time and to give them the ability to get their business back on its feet.
- Businesses can purchase anything from equipment to ecommerce support to help them get their business back on track.

12. Is a recovery plan still required?

- Yes, the recovery plan is still an eligibility requirement, but it has been streamlined.
- The recovery plan template has been reduced to a simple two-page form, where the business is asked to detail how they will spend the grant funds.
- The program covers \$2,000 in consulting so businesses can get expert advice on how best to plan for their recovery.
- The Small and Medium Sized Business Recovery Grant is set up to help businesses succeed for the long term.
- The recovery plan becomes a valuable tool to help a businesses demonstrate the steps they can take to help keep their business viable.
- The recovery plan template can be accessed through the Stronger BC website or at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/economic-recovery/business-recovery-grant>

13. If asked about professional service providers:

- The professional services providers were engaged through a B.C. government expression of interest via Small Business BC.
- Professional services provider are approved to provide professional services up to \$2,000 per small or medium-sized business, with this amount will be paid directly to the provider.
- A professional service provider is assigned to the business through Small Business BC and they will help guide you through that process.
- The business can also prepare their recovery plan with support from their own service provider.

- The B.C. government will provide up to \$2,000 to the service provider, on behalf of the business, to develop the recovery plan.
- However, the service provider must register with Small business BC at: expressionofinterest@smallbusinessbc.ca

14. Does this simplified process mean that applications will be approved more quickly? What do you expect the timeline to be from application to funding be received by the business?

- The B.C. government has a dedicated team of professionals reviewing all applications.
- Once an application has been reviewed by the public service to ensure that it meets the eligibility criteria, applicants will be matched with a professional service provider.
- The provider will help develop a recovery plan within the expected time frame of two-weeks.
- Grant funding will be disbursed as soon as possible upon the completion of the recovery plan.

15. To-date, how many businesses have applied for/received the grant?

- Since the intake opened on October 9, 2020, over 1,500 applications have been received.
- B.C. government staff are working on those applications now.

16. Can a business receive funds from the Small and Medium-Sized Business Recovery Grant if they received federal funding?

- Generally, yes. Businesses should be able to benefit from programs provided by the Government of Canada and the B.C. government.

17. Can you apply if you are thinking of selling your business?

- The program is intended to develop recovery plans that will support businesses to remain in operation, and wherever possible, retain their employees until COVID-19 restrictions are behind us.

18. When does the program expire?

- The program will run until March 31, 2021.

19. What happens if all of the grant funding isn't allocated by March 31?

- Right now, our focus is getting these grants to as many eligible businesses as possible.
- We will continue to review the program to assess how it is meeting its objectives.

20. Who was consulted on these changes?

- We have been listening to businesses and stakeholders and working with them to expand the eligibility challenges so that more businesses are able to access the grant program.
- We have met with the BC Chamber, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Members of the Small Business Roundtable, the BC Hotel Association, BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association, ABLE BC, and Restaurants Canada.
- Collectively, these organizations know firsthand the concerns that their membership had with the program's eligibility criteria.
- They are supportive of expanding the eligibility criteria.

21. Why isn't anything immediately available for businesses now?

- The Small and Medium-Sized Business Recovery Grant program is open for application right now.
- There are also other measures in place to help businesses find their feet and build their confidence.
 - We're providing a temporary PST rebate on select machinery and equipment to make it easier for businesses to make the kinds of investments that will allow them to grow and become more productive.

- We have a new hiring incentive rebate. Employers that hire new people or bring people back who lost their jobs during the height of the pandemic measures is eligible for a credit equal to 15% of any increase in total payroll in the last quarter of 2020.
- We deferred the planned carbon tax rate increase to April 1, 2021.
- Employer Health Tax quarterly instalment dates have been extended so that businesses will have more access to cashflow during recovery and more time to determine their annual payroll.
- These actions build on the measures we already introduced as part of the COVID-19 Action Plan, including:
 - Extending a number of taxation deadlines for businesses, including the employer health tax, PST, hotel tax, tobacco tax, motor fuel tax and carbon tax to Oct. 1, 2020.
 - Reducing most commercial property tax bills by an average of 25%.
 - Postponing late penalties for commercial property taxes, which gives businesses and landlords more time to pay their reduced property tax bill without penalty.
- These are all important steps that have helped businesses and will help many businesses get back on their feet, create good jobs for people and set us up for recovery in the longer term.

22. If asked about the Tourism Sector?

- We're acting quickly on the recommendations of the Tourism Task Force to provide further relief for people in the tourism sector.
- On Dec. 22, we announced \$105 million in dedicated relief funding for the tourism sector.
- This includes \$100 million in relief funding dedicated to the tourism sector under the Small and Medium Size Business Recovery Grant program.
- The Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation has made several adjustments to the grant program, including a simplified application process and streamlined criteria that will make it easier for businesses, particularly those in the hard-hit tourism sector, to apply and get funding that will help them get back on their feet.

- We are also allocating \$5 million in relief funding to be administered through Indigenous Tourism BC for Indigenous tourism, one of the fastest growing sectors of the industry.
- Thousands of B.C. tourism businesses will be eligible to receive up to \$45,000 to help pay their rent or lease costs, move to more online services, or modify their operation to increase safety and improve consumer confidence.
- This additional funding responds to requests from the industry for financial support to the tourism workforce and to help businesses stay afloat until its safe again to travel.

Appendix A – Previous vs. Streamlined Criteria

Current Eligibility Criteria	Streamlined Eligibility Criteria
Business must be currently operating	Businesses that are currently operating, temporarily closed or seasonal are eligible for the program. This change is aligned to the Tourism Taskforce recommendations.
Maintains a variety of remittance accounts and numbers including: CRA; GST; PST; Worksafe Registration; Municipal & Regional District; Business licence	Applicants are still required to provide Notices of Assessment for the 2018 and 2019 years.
3 years in operation	Business operating as of July 1, 2018 to meet 18 months of operations prior to COVID. This change is aligned to the Tourism Taskforce recommendations.
Employs between 2 and 149	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Business employs between 2 and 149 people in B.C. for at least four months of the calendar year. This includes businesses that had employees or contracted staff prior to COVID. - Or, the business can be a sole proprietor with contracted staff or can be a sole proprietor with fixed costs.
Continue to earn 50% or less in revenue	Expanded to be 30% or less in revenue.

Current Eligibility Criteria	Streamlined Eligibility Criteria
Prior to COVID, had positive cash flow for the last financial statement.	Criteria stays the same.
Disclose all federal funding	Criteria stays the same, but is not mandatory.
Tourism Top Up	Increase Tourism top up to maximum of \$15,000 and expand the definition of Tourism. This change is aligned to the Tourism Taskforce recommendations.
Financial records submission	Reducing the number of financial records that are needed. Financial Records to determine program eligibility (at stage 1) will also be used to determine Recovery Plan approval (at stage 2). This will streamline process for applicants.
Has accessed federal supports	Criteria stays the same but is not mandatory
Recovery plan submission	Criteria stays the same, but the plan is vastly streamlined.
Must be matched to a government-identified service provider	Can also use personal service provide however the B.C. government will not cover the costs.
Service providers	Criteria stays the same.

ADVICE TO MINISTER

CONFIDENTIAL ISSUE NOTE Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation Date: Jan. 13, 2021 Updated: Jan. 26, 2020 Minister Responsible: Hon. Ravi Kahlon	Small- and Medium-Sized Business Recovery Grant
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ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- **Small and medium-sized businesses are vital to British Columbia's economy.**
- **Ensuring they have the support they need through and beyond COVID-19 is critical to B.C.'s economic future.**
- **We know that many businesses have accessed federal loan programs to help get them through this challenging time.**
- **For many, taking on more debt with another loan is simply not an option.**
- **We launched the Small and Medium Sized Business Recovery Grant to provide eligible businesses with one-time funding that will help them regain their footing on the path to economic recovery.**
- **The grant will invest \$345 million in targeted financial support for businesses that have experienced significant declines in revenue. This includes \$100 million dedicated to the tourism sector.**
- **A business can receive \$10,000 - \$30,000 in non-repayable grants.**
- **An extra \$5,000 to \$15,000 is available for businesses in the tourism sector.**
- **Applications are now open for B.C.'s Small and Medium-Sized Business Recovery Grant.**

ADVICE TO MINISTER

If asked, despite the changes the program criteria are viewed to still be restrictive.

- **We enhanced the program criteria so that even more business that have been impacted by the pandemic can qualify.**
- **It is important to have criteria in place to ensure public accountability.**
- **Without criteria in place, then the program could be at risk of fraud.**
- **The program has a strong uptake and we continue to see a steady increase in applications.**
- **Currently there are almost 6,000 applications working through the system with applications in progress and under review.**

If asked about the amount of time it is taking for applications to be processed:

- **It's important to remember this is a two-step process.**
- **As part of the first step, staff work closely with businesses to make sure the right information is provided,**
- **The second step involves staff and businesses working collaboratively to develop a recovery plan that will help businesses have a roadmap for the future.**
- **We are focused on getting the grant money to those businesses that need it to recover from this global pandemic.**
- **We are seeing more and more applications come in everyday and we are working as hard as we can to get funding out the door as quickly as possible to help businesses.**

If pressed on funding:

- **The applications that are in the process equate up to \$65 Million in support for businesses.**
- **Currently, about \$10 Million has been approved for businesses.**

ADVICE TO MINISTER

If asked about changes to the program:

- **On December 21, 2020, the B.C. government announced enhancements to the Small and Medium Sized Business Recovery Grant program to make it easier for businesses to qualify for these important grants.**
- **This means even more eligible businesses that have been impacted by the pandemic will receive between \$10,000 and \$30,000 in a non-repayable grant. An extra \$5,000 to \$15,000 is available for eligible businesses in the tourism sector.**
- **The changes include:**
 - **lowered the requirement for businesses to be in operation from three years to 18 months at the time of application.**
 - **The requirement to list a variety of remittance accounts like, the registration numbers for the goods and services tax, provincial sales tax and WorkSafeBC have been removed.**
 - **Instead of requiring a revenue loss of 50% or more, the criteria have been reduced to 30% at the time of application.**
 - **Applications can now be submitted by sole proprietors, with fixed costs.**
 - **Businesses that are temporarily closed or seasonal are now eligible for the program.**
 - **For more information on eligibility criteria and to apply, visit gov.bc.ca/businessrecoverygrant**

BACKGROUND

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ADVICE TO MINISTER

On Dec. 21, 2020, the B.C. government announced changes to the Small and Medium-Sized Business Recovery Grant program (grant program). The changes were made as a result of the feedback received from stakeholders and business organizations, citing that the existing criteria was cumbersome and left many businesses behind due to the eligibility criteria.

Changes were made to the grant program to make it more flexible and to allow more businesses to apply. The changes include:

- Lowered the requirements for businesses to be in operation from three years to 18 months at the time of application.
- The requirement to list a variety of remittance accounts like, the registration numbers for the goods and services tax, provincial sales tax and WorkSafeBC have been removed.
- Instead of requiring a revenue loss of 50% or more, the criteria have been reduced to 30% at the time of application.
- Applications can now be submitted by sole proprietors, with fixed costs.
- Businesses that are temporarily closed or seasonal are now eligible for the program.

The grant program was originally announced on Sept. 17, 2020, as part of B.C.'s Economic Recovery Plan, StrongerBC. Originally, it committed \$300 million. On Dec. 22, 2020, Minister Melanie Mark announced that the fund was increased to \$345 million, with \$100 million of the funding dedicated to tourism businesses that have been hit-hard by the pandemic.

Grants of \$10,000 to a maximum of \$30,000 are available, with up to an additional \$5,000 to \$15,000 available to tourism-related businesses.

Eligible businesses will also need to have a recovery plan showing how they will return to a healthier position. As part of the grant intake process, the B.C. government will provide eligible businesses with access to professional services, such as accounting or legal advice, valued at up to \$2,000 to help assess their situation and develop a recovery plan.

Once the recovery plans are received from the business, funds will be disbursed as soon as possible after the business' recovery plan is approved.

The Small and Medium-Sized Business Recovery Grant program will support those hardest hit businesses like restaurants, the retail sector, the tourism sector and other businesses that need targeted one-time help to adjust their operations to the COVID-19 realities.

The business must employ up to 149 people in B.C. for at least four months of the calendar year and must demonstrate that they experienced an initial COVID-related revenue reduction of at least 70% at some point during March or April, 2020 and at least 30% at some point during May 2020 to present. Sole proprietors with fixed costs can also apply.

To be eligible the business must be registered in B.C. and currently operational, having operated for at least 18 months at the time of application and the majority share of the business be owned by one or more B.C. residents with the sole or primary operations located in B.C.

A business that has prepared for closure or dissolution (i.e. announced a permanent closure to

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their customers, held a closing-out sale, listed their business for sale or given notice to their employees) following March 10, 2020 is not eligible for the grant.

This is not a loan program that will need to be repaid. Instead, this grant will provide direct support to ensure that eligible small businesses have the resources they need to recover and pivot their businesses to be successful within the new normal.

Grant funding can be used to implement the items identified in the business's recovery plan. Funds can also be used to support fixed costs such as rent/lease or other overhead costs. It is important to recognize that grant funding in this program is finite and provided on a one-time basis.

The program will run until March 31, 2021, or until the fund is fully allocated; whichever comes first.

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