

Advancing
Small Business
Queensland

Small Business Digital
Grants Program

Queensland

the place for small business
to **start, grow & employ**



Queensland
Government

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Small Business Digital Grants Program

Application guidelines 2016–17

The Small Business Digital Grants Program provides small businesses with access to digital technologies and services to enable them to work smarter, engage with the global economy and make the most of online business opportunities arising from digital disruption.

These guidelines contain essential information on the Small Business Digital Grants Program. They outline who is eligible to apply for a grant, how to apply, and your obligations as an applicant.

You should read these guidelines before completing an application.

About the program

The Queensland Government through the Office of Small Business (OSB), Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games (DTESB) has made these grants available to help eligible businesses be in a stronger position to respond to competition and grow into globally competitive businesses through utilising new technologies. The objectives of the program are to:

- assist small businesses to access the latest digital technologies to increase their productivity and competitiveness
- enable small businesses to employ more staff and grow to medium-size businesses
- provide access to training to allow small businesses to use new technologies more effectively
- generate improved business confidence and increase business sustainability
- enable regional small businesses to expand their market reach through an online presence
- assist small businesses to work smarter, be more innovative and work fewer hours
- create an environment that makes it easier to do business.

How much can you apply for and what can it be used for?

Matched funding of up to \$10 000 (excluding GST) may be provided to eligible businesses for the purchase of hardware, software and services – such as digital coaching. The business must show that the digital technology or service purchased and adopted will enhance the digital capabilities of their business and help them to be more competitive and employ more staff.

Up to 20 per cent of the applicant's co-contribution amount can be an in-kind element for their personal time being trained in new technologies.

The digital technology or service must fall under one of five identified priority areas:

- digital marketing and social media
- digital content (web pages, mobile apps, media etc.)
- receiving payments or selling online
- specialised digital technology or software (business specific)

- digital planning and advice / training.

Who can apply?

All Queensland-based small businesses can apply. The business must show that the digital technology or service purchased will enhance the digital capabilities of the business and help them to be more competitive.

What is the eligibility criteria?

To be eligible the business must:

- have fewer than 20 employees at the time of applying for the grant
- have an Australian Business Number (ABN) and be registered for GST
- have Queensland headquarters or significant Queensland-based operations
- declare if any owners or directors of the business are an undischarged bankrupt or insolvent.

The participating business must provide OSB with a project report on completion of the project detailing how the funds were spent and the impact it has had on the business.

Businesses will be surveyed 12 months after the completion of the project.

Only one application will be accepted from an individual ABN or business address.

What won't be funded?

The grant is specifically aimed at funding businesses to access to digital technologies and services, therefore there is a range of matters that will not be funded.

- fees for services provided by related parties (such as companies with common shareholdings or directorship with the applicant, and employees or immediate family of the applicant)
- franchise fees
- purchase of non-project related assets such as stock
- salaries
- maintenance of existing digital technologies, including website hosting or maintenance
- general business operating costs (including bookkeeping/accounting and tax returns).

When must the purchase be completed?

All purchases approved for funding must be completed within three months of the date of approval.

If these timeframes are not met the offer of funding may be withdrawn, and funding may not be available.

When and how can you apply?

Applications open 8 November 2016.

You can lodge an application online at www.business.qld.gov.au/digital.

Your application must contain all the information specified in the application form and should be submitted online. If you cannot submit an application online, email your details to smallbusiness@dtesb.qld.gov.au and you will be contacted about other options.

You may only lodge one application at a time. Successful applicants may not re-apply. Unsuccessful applicants will be able to submit a new application in subsequent rounds of the program.

What should you include in your application?

Your application must include:

- a detailed quote for the digital technology or service for which you are seeking funding
- clear outline of how the digital technology or service will enhance the digital capabilities of the business and make the business more competitive
- detail of the impact the digital technology or service will have on the business, for example revenue growth, cost savings, time savings, employment outcomes
- a declaration of employee headcount
- confirmation and breakdown of your matched financial contribution.

If you will be using a consultant to deliver a service, a project proposal and quote from the consultant must be submitted with your application, and include:

- the services the consultant will provide, including a break-up of key activities
- delivery timeframes
- consultant /service delivery costs
- names of the key people who will undertake the project work.

How will applications be assessed?

In addition to meeting the eligibility criteria, all applications must demonstrate:

- the extent to which the digital technology or service will enhance the digital capabilities of the business to make the business more competitive
- the potential and likelihood the activity will deliver jobs growth
- value for money.

What's the process?

OSB will assess eligible applications against the assessment criteria and will provide recommendations to the delegate for approval.

The delegate will consider the applications and recommendations, as well as the available funding. You can expect to receive a decision within two months of application.

OSB may also give consideration to ensuring successful applications are equitably distributed across the state and industry sectors, and to recognised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. Once the funds for a round have been exhausted no further grants will be made in that round.

If your application is successful, you will receive an approval letter advising that you have been successful. The letter will also reiterate that you have agreed to the terms and conditions stated in the application form.

You will then have three months from the date of the approval letter to purchase the product or service. OSB may withdraw the offer if the purchase is not made within this timeframe.

You must not begin or pay for the product or service, in part or full, until you receive the approval letter to ensure that you have confirmation that the project has been approved.

OSB will carry out random audits of a sample of applications to ensure that the information provided is true and correct. Where it is found that false or misleading information has been provided penalties may apply, including refunding the grant funding.

Application timeframes

The tables below summarise the important 2016–17 dates and timeframes in the application process.

Dates	
8 November 2016	Applications open.
9 December 2016	Applications close at midnight.

There will be three rounds per year. Approximately 200 applications will be approved each year, distributed over the three rounds. It is expected the funding rounds will commence in March, June and November each year. The dates for funding rounds will be announced on www.business.qld.gov.au/digital.

Timeframes	
3 months	Number of months in which the purchases must be made after an approval letter is issued
4 months	Number of months in which the funding must be acquitted after an approval letter is issued

12 months

Number of months after project completion in which the business must complete a short survey (13 questions) on the impact the project has had on the business.

Funding Payment Timeframes

On completion A single payment will be made directly to the business upon acceptance of a final project report, a valid tax invoice and a completed grant acquittal.

NOTE: Successful applicants will be required to provide proof of payment for all products and services purchased as part of this grant along with sufficient details regarding any in-kind component.

The final project report and acquittal is a simple online document that provide information on the success and outcomes of the project to date, the activities that have taken place, and the learnings.

Feedback

If your application is unsuccessful, you may ask for feedback. Email a Small Business Digital Grants Officer on smallbusiness@dtesb.qld.gov.au.

Complaints about the outcome of an application will be dealt with according to DTESB's complaints management policy. To view this policy, visit www.dtesb.qld.gov.au.

Frequently asked questions

What do I need to do if I receive a grant?

You must:

- enter into a funding agreement with DTESB
- purchase the product or service as per the funding agreement
- deliver the project as per the funding agreement
- provide a final project report and grant acquittal within 28 days of the project's completion
- complete a follow-up survey 12 months after the grant has been acquitted.

When will funding be available?

If your application is successful, funding will be provided once you complete the project and your business will be reimbursed 50 per cent of the purchase amount to a maximum of \$10 000 on receipt of a copy of a valid tax invoice and proof of payment. The funding will be paid directly to you.

Can I alter my application after funding has been allocated?

If you decide not to proceed with purchasing the approved product or service, you must immediately notify OSB in writing. Any change to your application will need to be reassessed to ensure funding will still be granted. If you change your approved purchase without approval, DTESB can withdraw the funding.

Do I have to be operating an existing business?

Yes. Your application must be for an existing business operating in Queensland.

Do I have to be located in Queensland?

Yes. The business must have Queensland headquarters or significant Queensland operations.

Do I need to be registered for GST?

Yes.

How will payments be made?

Payments will be made to the applicant on completion of the project and on presentation of proof of payment for the product or service. The applicant will need to issue a valid tax invoice to OSB for 50 per cent of the cost to a maximum of \$10 000. The value of the grant payment will be increased to compensate for any GST.

What are my tax obligations?

Grants are treated as assessable income for tax purposes, unless exempted by law. We recommend you seek independent professional advice on your tax obligations.

Are there any other sources of funding available for businesses to increase their digital capability?

Yes, please take a look at the following programs:

<http://advance.qld.gov.au/entrepreneurs-startups/ignite-ideas-fund.aspx>

<http://advance.qld.gov.au/entrepreneurs-startups/startup-qld.aspx>

<http://advance.qld.gov.au/small-business/business-development-fund.aspx>

<http://www.impactinnovationgroup.com/innovate-queensland-2/>

Further information

For more information about the grants or advice on your application, call the Office of Small Business on **13 QGOV** (13 74 68) or email smallbusiness@dtesb.qld.gov.au.

Additional information for businesses

The Queensland Government's business and industry portal has a wealth of information on starting and developing businesses. Visit www.business.qld.gov.au to find out more.

You can also visit www.business.gov.au another online government resource for the Australian business community.

To find answers to your tax questions, go to www.ato.gov.au.

The Australian Business Licence and Information Service (ABLIS) helps you find the government licences, permits, approvals, registrations, codes of practice, standards and guidelines you need to know about to meet your compliance responsibilities. Find out more by visiting www.ablis.business.au.

My checklist

- Read and understand the guidelines
- Source a quote for the products or services
- Complete the online application form
- Read and understand the terms and conditions in the application form
- Submit your application
- Wait for notification
- Purchase product or service
- Submit request for reimbursement from DTESB
- Submit short report

Privacy statement

DTESB is collecting information to assess and coordinate grants in relation to the Small Business Digital Grants Program.

DTESB, its officers, employees, agents and subcontractors may use and disclose any of the information provided with the application to Queensland Government departments or agencies, Queensland Government bodies, non-government organisations and/or the Commonwealth, states or territories for any purpose in connection with the administration of the Small Business Digital Grants Program. Successful applications may also be the subject of media releases and disclosure as otherwise provided in the approval letter, the terms and conditions in the application, and the terms and conditions in these guidelines.

Submitted documents may be subject to disclosure under the *Right to Information Act 2009*, subject to the exemptions under that Act.

DTESB's privacy guide in relation to the treatment of personal information collected may be viewed at www.dtesb.qld.gov.au.

Disclaimer

This publication has been prepared as a guide only and all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure the information contained in this publication is accurate at the time of publication. The State of Queensland accepts no responsibility and gives no warranty, guarantee or representation about the accuracy, reliability, timeliness or otherwise of the information contained within the publication. No warranties or assurances can be given about the suitability of this information for any particular purpose. The State of Queensland expressly excludes legal liability in all jurisdictions in relation to the use or reliance of any information contained in this publication. Any direct or consequential loss or damage suffered as a result of reliance on this information is the sole responsibility of the user. Persons using this information should conduct their own enquiries and rely on their own independent professional advice. This exclusion shall extend to both the user himself or herself and to any other person who may suffer loss as a result of the use of material, and shall apply notwithstanding any negligence by the state.

Advancing Small Business Queensland

Find out more

To find out more about the Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy, visit <https://www.dtesb.qld.gov.au/smallbusiness>

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