

SWEF – Business Grants for Young Entrepreneurs: Start-Up and Established Business Support

Are you a young entrepreneur in Wiltshire or Swindon looking for financial support to launch or grow your business? Wiltshire Community Foundation, in partnership with **SWEF**, offers two targeted grant programmes to help you take your business to the next level, whether you're just starting out or already trading.

Start-Up / Early Stages Grant – up to £500

If you're in the early stages of setting up your business or currently earning less than £500 per month, this grant could help you get things off the ground. This funding can support essential start-up costs such as equipment, materials, stock, website creation, product development, or training.

Who can apply - you are eligible if you:

- Have not previously received funding from this programme for another business
- Are aged 18 to 30
- Live in Wiltshire or Swindon
- From a low-income household or face other challenges that are making it difficult to develop your business
- Are in the pre-revenue, early start-up stage, or currently earning under £500 per month
- Own 100% of the business or are the majority shareholder

Established Business Grant – up to £2,000

If your business is already trading, less than 2.5 years, and generating over £500 in monthly revenue, you can apply for up to £2,000 to support your business growth. This funding can be used to expand operations, upgrade equipment, or invest in other areas that will help increase your income.

Who can apply - you are eligible if you:

- Have not previously received funding from this programme for another business
- Are aged 18 to 30
- Live in Wiltshire or Swindon
- From a low-income household or face other challenges that are limiting your ability to grow your business
- Running a business that has been trading for less than 2 years and turning over £500 per month
- Own 100% of the business or are a majority shareholder

Whether you're just getting started or looking to grow your business, we're here to help. **Apply today** and take your next step toward entrepreneurial success.

What the grant won't cover

While the grants are designed to support many areas of your business, there are some things it doesn't fund:

- Businesses offering invasive beauty treatments – Botox, aesthetics, semi-permanent make-up, dermal fillers or facial tattoos
- Salaries or wages
- Debt repayment
- Software or app development businesses
- Rent or utility bills
- Purchasing stock for existing product lines
- Ongoing software subscriptions
- International travel
- Brand new computers, phones or tablets

However, we may consider funding refurbished technology on a match-funded basis. If you're applying for a refurbished laptop, tablet or phone, please include a link to the item and explain how it will benefit your business.

will be asked to enter your email and a password so you can login at another time, this will also be emailed to you as well.

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

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

Section 1 - Applicant details

This section will collect your contact details and allows you to tell us about yourself, help us understand your circumstances and any challenges you may have faced e.g. if you or someone in your home has a disability or additional need, or you come from a low-income family claiming benefits etc.

- **Please tell us about yourself** - provide a brief paragraph which includes where you grew up, what you have done since you left school, what qualifications you hold, are you currently claiming any benefits e.g. DLA, PIP, Universal Credit
- **Is your business your sole focus** - provide a brief paragraph to tell us what you are currently doing; if you are in paid employment where and how many hours you work each week. If you are in education, what are you studying including length course and level. If you are working on your business how many hours you spend working on this each week

Section 2 – Your Business

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

In this section, you will need to tell us:

1. Business Setup

- Name of your business and address (if it is different from your home address)
- If you have already set them up provide website links to the business social media accounts or website pages
- Area your business operates in e.g. is it in health, beauty and wellness, food and catering, gardening, or another sector?
- How the business is structured - sole trader, limited company, other
- How long the business has been trading, or when you hope to start trading
- What your business does - you will need to provide a brief paragraph which tells us the products you hope to make or sell, or the services you will provide and how much you charge for your products or services.
- What skills, training or work experience you have to help you run your business e.g. this could include formal qualifications, previous work experience, or skills you've learned while running your business.

- How you attract customers, or how you plan to - you will need to provide a brief paragraph which tells us how you market your business e.g. do you use social media, word of mouth, advertising, or another method and who your customers are and where they are based.
- Are there other businesses like yours in the area - if you have competitors and who they are.
- What time and money have you invested in your business so far – be as specific as you can about what you've invested, for example, how many hours do you spend working on your business each week? How much money have you spent on things like equipment, materials, or marketing?

2. Business Finance

- Do you or your business have any debts or loans? If yes, provide details such as the amount owed and what it was used for
- What has your business earned in the last 12 months, giving an estimate of your total sales or revenue for the past year. If your business is new, you can estimate what you expect to earn.
- How much income have you taken from your business in the last 12 months, include any salary or personal earnings you've taken from the business.
- Provide a breakdown of your monthly costs and earnings, this helps us understand how your business is doing financially. For example, you could list your typical monthly costs like rent, materials, or marketing, and your average income from sales or services.
- Where do you see your business in a year? What goals would you like to achieve over the next 12 months, this could be increasing sales, reaching more customers, launching new products, or something else.
- Do you have a business bank account; if you are successful grants can only be paid to business bank accounts.

Section 3 - Grant Request

Whatever you would like to use the grant for, you will need to provide a breakdown of how you would use the grant, with specific costs as well as weblinks where it can be purchased or a quote. Avoid general terms like 'marketing' that do not provide enough detail about how you will spend the grant. Applications for 'match funding' are particularly welcome - this means that you already have some funding but need an additional contribution. Please note that the item that the grant funding is going towards should not exceed **£10,000** in value.

In this section, you will need to tell us:

- How much grant are you applying for.
- Breakdown of how you will use the grant including website links and the price of the items you will purchase.
- How the grant will help your business grow – provide a brief paragraph to tell us what this funding will allow you to do e.g. will it help you reach more customers, buy equipment, or launch new products? If possible, share how much more money you hope to make or how your business could expand with this support.
- If you don't receive this grant, how would you pay for the things you need? E.g. would you use savings, take out a loan, or find another way to fund your business? Let us know how you would manage if the grant isn't available.

Remember - while the grants are designed to support many areas of your business, there are a few things it doesn't cover which includes:

- You can only apply and or be awarded a grant for one business per person
- Single items costing more than £10,000
- Salaries
- Repaying debts
- Software businesses or app development
- Rent and utility bills
- Purchasing stock for an existing product line
- Invasive beauty treatments
- Ongoing software subscriptions
- New computers, phones, or tablets

However, we do make an exception when it comes to refurbished technology. If you need a refurbished laptop, tablet, or phone for your business, SWEF may consider this on a match-funded basis. In your application you'll need to explain how this technology will transform your business and provide a link to the specific refurbished item you need.

Supporting evidence

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

1. Proof of identity - driving licence, passport, birth certificate
2. Proof of Wiltshire address - driving licence, bank statement, bill
3. Evidence of your current income - benefit statement, recent payslip
4. Evidence of your business - please include anything that helps show your business is active and genuine. This could be:
 - A business card or flyer
 - Photos of your products, workspace or recent jobs
 - A link to your website or social media pages
 - Invoices or receipts you've issued
 - Proof of registrations or memberships (Companies House, HMRC, trade bodies)

Top Tips for a Successful Grant Application

Before you start your application, keep in mind that **applications solely based on business ideas** won't be considered. You'll need to show that you've already taken some steps to get your business off the ground, even if it's just in the early stages.

Taking the time to carefully think through your business idea and showing why your product or service is needed will make your application stronger. The more groundwork you've done, the better your chances of success!

Here are a few tips to help strengthen your application:

- **Market Research:** Have you explored whether there's demand for your product or service? You don't need to overcomplicate this—ask friends, family, or local businesses for feedback or advice. It's a great way to gauge interest and gather helpful insights.
- **Cost Planning:** Have you thought about your monthly expenses? Consider things like staff wages, rent, utilities, taxes, insurance, and any other costs that may come up as you build or grow your business.
- **Income Projection:** How much do you expect to earn each month from sales or services? Estimating your potential income will give you a clearer picture of your business's financial health.

By addressing these points, you'll demonstrate that you're serious about your business and ready to make the most of the grant.

What Happens After I Submit My Application

1. **Initial Review** - within five working days, we'll confirm that we've received your application. We'll check that it's complete and eligible. If anything is missing, we'll contact you, usually by email to ask for the additional documents.
2. **Meeting** - you may be invited to a meeting where you can tell us more about your business. This will typically be an online meeting with a staff member from Wiltshire Community Foundation and someone from SWEF. We aim to make a decision on your application within six weeks.
3. **Grant Award** - if you're successful, you'll need to accept the grant terms and conditions. The funds will be transferred directly to your business bank account via BACS. If you don't have a business bank account yet, you'll need to set one up. Payments will usually be made a month after accepting the terms, and the grant should be used within one month of receiving it.
4. **After the Award** - we'll check in with you around 12 months after you receive the grant to see how your business is progressing. You'll also be invited to join a network with other grant recipients, providing a great space to share ideas and experiences.

Sources of Support

You may find the below websites useful they include tools, templates and other sources of funding

Business Tools & Templates

- Kings Trust - Business Support
 - www.kingstrust.org.uk/how-we-can-help/tools-resources/business-tools
- Prospects - How to Start a Business / How to Write a Business Plan
 - www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience/self-employment/how-to-start-a-business

Business Support in Wiltshire & Swindon

- Business West - www.businesswest.co.uk/start
- Wiltshire's Enterprise Network - www.theenterprisenetwork.co.uk
- Future Smiths - www.thefuturesmiths.co.uk
- School Social Entrepreneurs - www.the-sse.org.uk
- Digital Boost - www.digitalboost.org.uk
- Wiltshire Council – Help to Grow www.wiltshire.gov.uk/article/3434/Grow-small-and-medium-sized-businesses

Business Funding

- www.businesswest.funderfinder.co.uk
- www.gov.uk/business-finance-support
- www.british-business-bank.co.uk/finance-hub/grants-finance
- www.swigfinance.co.uk
- www.startuploans.co.uk
- www.kingstrust.org.uk/how-we-can-help/support-starting-business/funding-your-business

Grantee Network

If you are successful with a grant, you will also have the opportunity to take part in a business forum with other businesses that have been awarded a grant. The forum offers a space to share, exchange ideas, experiences and learn and **meet other like-minded business founders and hear their stories and insights.**