

City of Whittlesea

Shopfront Improvement Program

Round Two - Co-contribution

Business owners in the City of Whittlesea are invited to submit an application for a co-contribution funding program through Council's Shopfront Improvement Program to upgrade their shopfronts.

Applications can be made by individual business owners of small, local retail stores in local retail activity centres.

Retail stores eligible, are those that are individually owned and operated, selling or providing goods and services directly to the consumer from a retail shopfront.

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

We recognise the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledges the Wurundjeri Willum Clan and Taungurung people as the Traditional Owners of lands within the City of Whittlesea.

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What is the Shopfront Improvement Program (SIP)?

Purpose of the SIP

The Shopfront Improvement Program (SIP) has been established to assist business owners with the cost of upgrading the look, vibrancy, and attractiveness of retail shop fronts and to encourage activation and engagement through a Council co-contribution, dollar-for-dollar project funding contribution with a maximum Council contribution of \$2,000 (\$4,000 project cost).

Objectives of the SIP

The SIP aims to assist business owners in upgrading the appearance and appeal of retail shopfronts to:

- Attract and retain customers
- Attract business investment and reduce vacancies for landlords and existing business
- Increase foot traffic
- Drive better economic outcomes for businesses

Key dates

Shopfront Improvement Pilot Program	
Applications open and close dates	2 November to 28 February 2024
Assessment	1 March 2024 to 29 March 2024
Works to be completed by	31 May 2024
Acquittals due	7 June 2024
Payments made by	30 June 2024

Eligibility requirements

To be eligible to apply for a co-contribution under the SIP, the project/business must:

- Own or operate a legal business located within the City of Whittlesea that has a retail shopfront in a local neighborhood retail centre (i.e. where everyday goods and services are provided to the community)
- Have written approval from the property owner or agent which must be submitted with the application
- Have a valid Australian Business Number (ABN), a maximum of 20 employees and registered for GST current 1 July 2023
- Businesses that have greater than 12 months remaining on their current lease at the time of submitting an application
- Hold all appropriate insurances, licences and permits with current public liability insurance proof of which must be submitted with the application
- Apply only for items in the 'What can be funded' list below
- Quotes from legitimate suppliers who hold a registered ABN and can provide a formal quote and invoice on business letterhead and tax invoice as the receipt for completed works
- Take before and after photographs of business premises
- Works completed by 31 May 2024.

Who is not eligible?

Businesses that will not be eligible to be assessed for consideration under this SIP include:

- Businesses that fall under the description of warehouse, manufacturing, or industrial
- An employee of the City of Whittlesea operating a business
- Trader Associations or large Owners Corporations
- Businesses that incur revenue relating to alcohol, tobacco and tobacco-related products i.e., e-cigarettes, shisha, hookahs and pipes, gambling, and electronic gaming machines
- Franchise businesses i.e., large corporations such as supermarkets and bottle shops
- Businesses that employ more than 20 employees
- Businesses that have been trading for less than 12 months or have not yet opened
- Businesses that do not have a retail shopfront in a local neighborhood activity centre

- Businesses that have less than 12 months remaining on their current lease at the time of submitting an application
- Any business that does not hold all relevant permits and licences to trade in the City of Whittlesea this includes but is not restricted to, building, and planning permits, health and liquor licences and any other statutory permits or licences that are required for a business to operate legally.
- Businesses that have outstanding acquittals, debts, or financial disputes with the City of Whittlesea.

What can be funded

- External works such as repairs or upgrades to the facade
- Painting the façade
- Replacement or new signage in accordance with relevant regulatory requirements
- Murals on the property facade
- Installation of new or upgrade of existing external lighting
- Upgrade or replacement of fixed awnings
- Accessibility access minor works including making doors automatic and installing a ramp
- Decluttering of facades, signage, and window displays

What won't be funded

- Upgrade or installation of either internal or external security (CCTV)
- Works previously completed and funded by the Shopfront Improvement Pilot Program
- Projects and activities that relate to politics or the advertising or promotion of gambling, alcohol, electronic gaming machines or tobacco in any way
- Upgrades that have already been completed or committed to prior to submitting an application
- Upgrades to warehouse, industrial and manufacturing business frontages with or without a retail outlet
- Changes to corporate branding schemes or logos
- Property extensions
- Temporary/loose street furniture or fixtures
- Statutory and regulatory fees
- Expenses that are considered ongoing costs to run the business such as rent and utilities
- Wages

Please note that only one application can be submitted per business owner/owner. Where a person or persons operate more than one business there can only be one project application submitted relating to one business.

How do I apply

1. Ensure you have carefully read the guidelines and that your business and project submission meet the eligibility criteria before submitting
2. Submit your project application online through Smarty Grants platform. Go to smartygrants.com.au to register an account and complete your application. For technical support using smarty grants, contact the support desk on 9320 6888 or email service@smartygrants.com.au
3. Submit your project application with valid supporting documentation including:
 - Copy of current commercial lease showing at least 12 months remaining in the term
 - Written approval from the property owner or agent authorising works
 - Copy of City of Whittlesea rates notice if you are the owner of the building as proof of ownership
 - Formal quote showing works to be completed with itemised costing, business name, business address and ABN for contractor/s
 - Completed application providing full details of works to be completed (matching the quote/s)
4. Applications and supporting documentation and quotes must be received by midnight 28 February 2024. Applications received after the closing time will not be considered.
5. Council advises businesses to support local where possible.

Application Process

- Only one application per business will be considered
- Applications received will be checked for eligibility. If all eligibility requirements are met, these applications will progress to an assessment process.
- Any application that is deemed ineligible or does not meet the eligibility criteria will not be assessed
- Applications will be assessed against the assessment criteria by the approval panel according to the weighted assessment ranking.
- The approval panel will consider all assessed applications and recommendations and make the final decision to approve or reject an application.
- Applicants will be notified of the outcome in early April 2024
- Business owners have until 31 May 2024 to complete the works described in the project application and to submit their acquittal to Council
- Any business that is unable to complete the works described in the initial application or that ceases to operate prior to 31 May 2024 will be deemed ineligible to receive a rebate. In the event of supply chain issues, any extension for variation must be submitted in writing and include evidence of the issues.
- In the event that more applications are received, applications will be assessed according to assessment weighted ranking.

Assessment criteria

- **Aims and Outcomes 50%** - The aim and outcomes of the project/works increase safety, attract and retain customers and make the retail shopfronts look and feel inviting
 - **Level of Need 25%** – Is the shopfront in a state of disrepair or overdue for a freshen up
 - **Project sustainability 10%** - Will the project/works include refurbished or recycled materials and will use materials be recycled. This can be shown as a commitment in a project plan.
 - **Budget 10%** - Is the budget reasonable for the project/works
 - **Quotes (City of Whittlesea) 5%** - Is the quote from a local provider within the City of Whittlesea or Melbourne's North (includes quotes from Banyule, Darebin, Hume, Merri-bek, Mitchell or Nillumbik).

Applicant commitments

Successful applicants will be required to:

- Be prepared to complete an online acquittal at the conclusion of the program by 7 June 2024 (rebates will not be paid to applicants that have not provided a full acquittal)
- The successful applicants and their projects may be acknowledged through Council's online media channels and participate in media opportunities.

Lobbying

Canvassing or lobbying administrators, employees of the City of Whittlesea or assessment panel members in relation to any grant is prohibited during the application process. Failure to comply will make the application ineligible.

Contact

If you have any questions regarding these Guidelines or to discuss project ideas, please do not hesitate to contact Council at 9217 2170 and ask to speak to the **Community Grants Team**, email community.grants@whittlesea.vic.gov.au