

Business Partner Program Guidelines

LAST UPDATED February 2023

PURPOSE

Gunnedah Shire Council's Business Partner Program is a grant funding program that aims to promote economic activity in the Gunnedah Shire by encouraging business growth and innovation. Support offered by this program supplements the Gunnedah Economic Development Strategy and specifically, the following priorities of the strategy:

- To encourage business expansion and increase employment numbers.
- To target new businesses and economic activity.

TYPES OF ASSISTANCE

The following list shows the types of projects that may be eligible for funding under this program:

- Business frontage upgrade where it can be demonstrated that such upgrades will assist the business to grow and increase employment.
- Business training
- Assistance with business planning.
- Assistance with business succession planning to help provide sustainability and the continuity of employment and growth.
- Assistance with sustainability research, including triple bottom line reporting (social, environmental and financial).
- Support following natural disaster.
- Assistance in transitioning to larger premises (e.g. from home-based to commercial premises).
- Assistance in advertising business expansion.
- Shop Gunnedah Shire campaigns.
- Assistance in the recruitment of staff.
- Supporting organisations that develop networks to strengthen business opportunities/combining advertising/events/initiatives and acknowledging successes.
- Assist in the coordination and/or provision of onsite utilities.
- Assistance with water and sewerage reticulation establishment charges.
- Assistance with Council charges for the provision of services.
- Assistance with site establishment.
- Assistance with pre-approval processes.
- Proactive commitment to expedite statutory approvals within minimal timeframes.
- Facilitation of State and Federal Government licensing compliance.
- Costs included with accessing financial assistance and advisory programs available from Federal and State agencies.
- Website costs
- Other infrastructure upgrades, not listed elsewhere herein, to assist business growth and employment.
- Other Council fees not listed elsewhere herein.

The following list shows the types of projects that are **NOT** eligible for funding under this program:

- Staff wages
- Store merchandise

CO-CONTRIBUTION

A minimum co-contribution from the applicant of 25% will be required. Funding will not be provided for greater than 75% for the total project cost.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

Each application for assistance will be assessed by the Business Partner Program Advisory Group on a case-by-case basis.

Specific incentives offered by the Gunnedah Shire Council will complement assistance available from Federal or State Government agencies.

Applications will be considered on their individual merits, with priority given to those demonstrating regional benefit, i.e. employment generating and value-adding businesses.

Projects may include but are not limited to manufacturing, processing and wholesale distribution activities. Consideration will also be given to service sector activities that can generate wealth and significant employment of the wider regional economy.

The assistance offered may be staged upon successful completion of certain stages of the project.

Assistance Eligibility Criteria may include:

- The ability for firms to export (outside the region) or replace imports.
- The business will demonstrate evidence of business planning including investment, turn-over and employment levels with reference to the longer term viability of the business.
- General compliance with Council requirements.
- Ecologically and environmentally sustainable development.
- Demonstrated innovative production and/or marketing systems.
- Demonstrated benefit to the local community.
- Number of jobs created and/or retained.
- Investment attracted.
- Extent to which the business adds to the diversity of economic activity of Gunnedah.
- Linkages with other businesses, in particular local business.
- Must demonstrate benefit to the community.
- The impact if assistance is not provided.
- Provide support to other sources, goods and services from other local businesses.

The proponent must identify other support received from Council in the current and previous financial year in relation to the project.

Applicants are eligible for funding once every 12 months, irrespective of business name change, unless there are demonstrated extenuating circumstances.

Applicants must supply quotes as evidence to support the costing break-down.

PROJECT TIMELINE

The funds need to be acquitted within 12 months of being awarded and a Declaration of Expenditure on the prescribed format certifying that the Business Partner Program funding was expended for the purpose for which it was granted.

It should be noted that projects will not be funded if the project was completed greater than 12 months prior.

COUNCIL CONSENT

If development is required as part of the project, it is recommended that the applicant make an appointment with a Council Duty Planner to determine if a Development Application is required before considering the Business Partner program grant.

Applications will not be considered for businesses trading without Council consent.

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

The Program will be offered in three rounds per year as follows:

- Round 1 closing 30 June
- Round 2 closing 31 October
- Round 3 closing 28 February

Applicants must complete an online Expression of Interest Form – Business Partner Program, available from Council's website: www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au

Completed Expression of Interest forms should be returned to:

General Manager
Gunnedah Shire Council
PO Box 63 (63 Elgin Street)
GUNNEDAH NSW 2380
Email: council@infogunnedah.com.au

Once applications have closed, the Business Partner Program Advisory Group will meet at its earliest convenience, assess the applications, and report to Council with a recommendation. Unsuccessful program applicants will be provided with feedback on their application and will be given advice in respect to the application's potential for success in a sequential period.

The amount of funding provided for each period shall be determined by Council on an annual basis and Council reserves the right to not allocate funding in any given period, should it not be warranted.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Information provided in a business application will be used by the Business Partner Program Advisory Group to set conditions of assistance, including employment targets where appropriate.

Any letter of offer of financial assistance will require agreement by the applicant to provide regular progress reports to allow ongoing monitoring.

Payment of a subsidy or provision of assistance may also be withheld at the discretion of the Advisory Group if information provided in an application is found to be incorrect or misleading in any way.

In offering assistance through the Business Partner Program, Council reserves the right for such assistance to be the subject of publicity or used for case studies that promote Gunnedah as an investment location.

Council reserves the right to request a return of Business Partner Program Grant funds if it becomes evident that the funds have not been spent in line with the application in a timely manner.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Client confidentiality will be respected at all times.

Council's records are kept securely with security controls to protect against unauthorised access.