

# PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FUND GRANT – GUIDELINES

## Key points

- The Professional Services Fund Grant offers funding up to \$5,000.
- Small businesses need to be located in rural or regional Southern Queensland.
- To be eligible, small businesses need to be active clients of the SBFCS Southern Queensland's Regional Small Business Support Program.

## About the Regional Small Business Support Program

The Regional Small Business Support Program (RSBSP) provides free, impartial and confidential planning and support services to small businesses who:

- have been impacted by drought, flooding, COVID-19 or bushfires
- are experiencing or at risk of financial hardship
- are located in rural and regional Queensland.

The focus of this service is to empower small businesses to engage in strategic business and financial decision-making that encourages improvements in their financial situation. Support may be provided on either an ongoing basis or to access other Government programs or assistance as required.

Our local small business specialists can come to your business and help you:

- improve your understanding of your businesses financial position
- analyse the benefits and drawbacks of different options to manage financial issues
- develop of budgets and cashflow forecasts
- assist you with creditor negotiations
- access dispute resolution services
- understand your rights and accessing broader professional advice and support, and access government and community grants, programs and assistance schemes.

## About the Professional Services Fund Grant

The Professional Services Fund Grant offers funding up to \$5,000 (excluding GST) to successful applicants who are participating in the RSBSP.

The purpose of the grant is to enable clients to access specialist 3<sup>rd</sup> party advice, services or activities (professional services) when the inability to afford these professional services is a barrier to recovery, or to resolve an issue that has been identified through the RSBSP financial counselling case management process.

The grant is intended for small business owners who can show a real commitment to making the necessary changes to improve their situation, but who do not have a way of accessing the resources needed for the required eligible professional services.

## Available funding

Expenditure for eligible professional services up to a cap of \$5,000 (excluding GST) can be applied for, per eligible client. Multiple applications up to this cap can be made.

## Eligible professional services

Eligible professional services are defined as advice, services and activities directly related to business recovery and the long-term viability of the small business, including:

- financial advice (including financial planning, credit advice, financial product advice) typically requiring the provider to hold an Australian Financial Services Licence or Australian Credit Licence
- specialist taxation, accounting, legal and business planning advice about:
  - business structures and relationships, and business plans
  - monitoring and reviewing business performance
  - managing risk or succession planning
  - preparing for drought and natural disasters or diversifying the business enterprise
  - adding value to products and services produced by the business enterprise
- strategic marketing and communication advice
- workforce planning and work health and safety advice
- specialist training and study directly related to the core functions of the business.

## Ineligible professional services

Ineligible professional services include advice, services and activities that form part of routine business management and operations, or advice, services and activities that sit outside of a commercial business operating environment (i.e. personal financial matters), including:

- servicing creditors or personal debts
- annual business tax or accounting services
- purchase, hire or lease of physical goods and equipment
- travel costs and incidentals incurred by the client in the process of obtaining professional services
- cost of marketing activities, advertising placements and marketing and communication production costs i.e. graphic design, printing etc.

## Eligibility

To be eligible for the Professional Services Fund Grant, you must:

- be a small business owner
- hold an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- employ 19 or fewer full time equivalent employees
- be located in a rural or regional area, defined as 'MMM2' to 'MMM7' on the [Department of Health's Modified Monash Model](#). To search for eligible areas visit [Health Workforce Locator](#)
- be, in the opinion of the Financial Counsellor, experiencing, or at imminent risk of, financial hardship as a result of drought, flooding, COVID-19 and/or bushfires
- be a case managed client of the RS BSP.

## Supporting documentation

You will need to provide quotes for the specialist 3<sup>rd</sup> party advice, services or activities you would like to obtain funding for.

All quotes must be GST inclusive and should clearly identify the:

- provider
- scope of the work
- deliverable described
- timelines provided.



Attach copies of two quotes. If two suitable service providers are not available, please provide an explanation why.

## How to apply

To apply for the Professional Services Fund Grant:

1. download and complete the [application form](#)
2. obtain the required supporting documents
3. email the completed application form and supporting documents to [smallbusiness@rfcssq.org.au](mailto:smallbusiness@rfcssq.org.au)

If you have any questions or need assistance, please:

- email [smallbusiness@rfcssq.org.au](mailto:smallbusiness@rfcssq.org.au)
- call 1300 732 777.

## Terms and conditions

Applications must be approved prior to the client engaging any service provider. Applications for activities which have already been ordered, invoiced or completed prior to the date of application cannot be considered.

Applicants must retain all tax invoices, official receipts, bank statements, quotations or other similar records for assistance received under the fund until one year after they submit their application.

Applicants must consent to SBFCS Southern Queensland conducting an audit of quotations, tax invoices, official receipts, bank statements or other similar records to verify the amounts given under the scheme have been used in accordance with the claim. Penalties may apply for false or misleading information

## Conflicts of interest

A conflict of interest may arise due to a business dealing with SBFCS Southern Queensland, if the applicant's private interests' conflict with their obligations under the agreement.

Conflicts of interest could affect the awarding or performance of the applicant's agreement.

A conflict of interest can be: a) real (or actual); b) apparent (or perceived); or c) potential.

SBFCS Southern Queensland will ask the applicant to declare, as part of the application, any business dealings that may be considered an actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest or that, to the best of the applicant's knowledge, there is no conflict of interest. If the applicant later identifies that there is an actual, apparent or potential conflict of interest or that one might arise in relation to the agreement, the applicant must inform SBFCS Southern Queensland in writing immediately.

## Definitions

**Small Business** is a business that:

- a) holds an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- b) is not a public company, charitable business (charitable business means a business that does not operate to make a profit) or a body corporate under the Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997, and
- c) employs 19 or fewer full time equivalent (FTE) employees. A full-time equivalent employee engages in a minimum of 37.5 hours of paid work per week. If two or more persons combined work in the business for a combined total of 37.5 hours in a week, they are one full-time equivalent employee.
- d) if operated by a sole trader and the business has no employees other than the sole owner, the sole owner must derive the majority of their income from the business.

**Small business owner** is a sole trader, partnership, private company or trust that carries on a small business.

*This initiative is funded by the Australian Government via the National Recovery and Resilience Agency.*