

Small Business Support Pool Funding Guidelines

Introduction

The Small Business Support Pool is one component of the suite of programs delivered under the revitalised Back to Work initiative, which is designed to give businesses the confidence to employ Queenslanders who have experienced a period of unemployment and help workers facing disadvantage in the labour market.

Under Back to Work, there is a strong focus on supporting businesses to keep or retain their employees on a long-term and ongoing basis.

Overview and objectives

The Small Business Support Pool (SBSP) provides financial support to small businesses that need assistance in retaining employees supported through the Back to Work Incentive Payments.

Businesses approved for a Back to Work Incentive payment for an employee employed on or after 1 July 2021 may make an application for SBSP funding to support the retention of that employee.

The suite of programs delivered under the Back to Work initiative, including the SBSP, is administered by the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT). For more information on Back to Work, refer to the website <https://backtowork.initiatives.qld.gov.au/>.

Who can apply for funding?

Businesses with a current Back to Work Incentive payment agreement for an employee who commenced employment on or after 1 July 2021.

Businesses are eligible for one SBSP application per approved Back to Work Incentive Agreement.

To be eligible to apply, the business must (at the time of applying):

- have a current Back to Work agreement for an employee who is currently employed with the business and whose employment commenced on or after 1 July 2021;
- have employed the Back to Work employee for at least 12 weeks;
- employ less than 20 people; and
- detail, to the Departments satisfaction, how the funding will help the business retain the employee.

Funding available

Eligible businesses can access a payment of up to \$2,000 to support the retention of a Back to Work supported employee.

What can be funded

Funding can be used for the following activities and/or improvements and must be linked to how the business will retain the employee:

Category	Example activities
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professional development and upskilling to ensure compliance with industry regulations and standards - Professional business advice - Personal development (e.g. Microsoft suite, customer service skills) - Industry specific or job skills training/coaching - Retraining to assist with diversification
Digital solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specialised software, including subscription costs
Workplace fit out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adjustments to building to improve accessibility (e.g. installation of ramps, lifts) - Furniture and/or equipment to improve accessibility or facilitate the employee to work independently - Machinery/vehicle alterations (e.g. hydraulic lifts) to improve ability to work independently

The above list of examples is not exhaustive. DESBT will consider similarly scoped project activities.

Eligible businesses must source their own quotes from an ABN registered supplier/vendor.

What won't be funded

Funding cannot be used for:

- any item that does not clearly enable or support the retention of the BTW employee;



- any costs relating to marketing, advertising or promotions, or associated activities and materials;
- business operating costs (rental leases, utilities, stock, tax);
- support already funded through the Australian Government*;
- retrospective payments for goods or services already purchased;
- personal and corporate/business debt;
- costs associated with employing (payment of wages, superannuation, WorkCover and other tax); or
- fees for services and/or goods provided by related parties (such as companies with common shareholdings or directorship with the applicant, and employees or immediate family of the applicant).

* For instance, where the Back to Work-supported employee is a person with disability and the employer is seeking funding to renovate their workspace that has been previously funded under the Australian Government's Employment Assistance Fund.

What is the application process?

Applications can be made through [QGrants](#) after the initial 12 weeks of employing a Back to Work-supported employee.

Businesses must:

- complete their application and provide all supporting evidence; and
- submit their own application. DESBT will not accept applications submitted by agents or other parties.

Supporting information

The application must include the following information:

- the employee's most recent pay slip (no older than 30 days)
- a retention statement from the applicant that clearly describes how the proposed activity/activities will directly support or enable the Back to Work employee to retain employment with the business.
- one or more quote/s for the proposed activity/activities, supporting your application. Quotes must be provided from an ABN-registered vendor/supplier detailing item costs and GST details. Note that quotes provided may be verified with the vendor.
- confirmation that the applicant is not eligible for or has not previously received funding for the same activity/service from any other funding source including other Queensland Government or Australian Government funding sources.

Note: Applicants who are applying for workplace fit out, will be required to provide written evidence that they own the business premises, or have approval to update the premises from the rental manager or owner of the premises.

You will need to provide a correctly witnessed Statutory Declaration, from your rental manager or the owner of the premises detailing and approving the proposed workplace fit out.

How will applications be assessed?

Applications will be assessed against the eligibility criteria in these Guidelines, taking into consideration:

- funding availability;
- submission of a complete application form, with all requested supporting documentation included;
- prior application history including retention of prior employees; and
- value for money, as determined by the Queensland Government.

How long will the assessment take?

Applications submitted with all the required information and documentation are usually processed within 20 business days, depending on application volume.

You can review the status of your application at any time by logging in to [QGrants](#). In cases where additional information is requested, the 20 business days recommences upon the submission of the additional information.

Approved applicants will have funds transferred into the bank account nominated in their Back to Work agreement application, within 5-10 business days.

Will I need to provide additional information?

Additional information and/or documentation may be requested to assist in assessing your application.

If additional information is requested, your application will remain open for 30 business days to allow you to upload the requested information and/or documentation. If you require additional time, you should notify the Department in writing to backtowork@desbt.qld.gov.au.

If the required information and/or documentation is not provided within 30 business days, the application may not be approved for funding. If you choose to provide this information after the after the 30 business day period, you may contact the Department to request your application be re-opened.

The decision to re-open the application will be at the discretion of DESBT.

Can I request a review of the decision?

If the application has been processed and assessed as not meeting the eligibility criteria, the applicant will be notified that it has not been approved.

Applicants may request a review of this decision. This request must be lodged within 30 calendar days of the decision being provided to the applicant.

This request should state in detail the grounds the applicant believes the original decision should be overturned. The applicant should also attach all relevant material that supports their request. Decisions will only be reviewed after the statement and relevant supporting material have been provided.

Review requests and the additional supporting material must be lodged in writing to: compliance@desbt.qld.gov.au

Or

Review Officer, Employment Pathways
PO Box 15483
City East
Brisbane QLD 4002

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of the review in writing within 60 business days from the receipt of the request.

What are the funding conditions?

By receiving notification of an approval, applicants acknowledge they have entered into a formal agreement with DESBT to undertake the approved activities as outlined in the approved application.

Approved applicants are required to undertake a short survey and provide information on what the funding was used for, and how it benefited the retention of the Back to Work supported employee.

If at any stage the Back to Work support employee ceases employment, you must notify the Department as soon as possible, by email to backtowork@desbt.qld.gov.au and provide the following details:

- the date the employment ceased; and
- the reason the employee ceased employment.

Approved applicants must submit evidence of expenditure of funds by providing a tax invoice, issued by an ABN registered supplier/vendor to DESBT. The item/s detailed in the tax invoice must correspond with the item/s quoted and approved via the SBSP grant application.

You can submit your tax invoice by logging in to your [QGrants](#) account and accessing your SBSP agreement.

DESBT reserves the right to pursue recovery action if funding has not been expended in accordance with the

SBSP Guidelines and Terms and Conditions and at least 80% of the total amount of funding granted.

Approved applicants will be asked to complete their acquittal prior to approval for further Back to Work funding.

Please note, if you have not acquitted your SBSP agreement, the Department will be unable to process any subsequent Back to Work Employer Incentive Payments for the related employee. We will commence assessment of these claims after your SBSP funding agreement has been acquitted.

A sample audit of documentation of goods and services related to the payment may be undertaken by the Queensland Government at any time.

What happens if the program is discontinued?

Advice will be published on the [Back to Work website](#) if funding is no longer available or the program has been discontinued.

Privacy collection notice

Applicants are required to read and agree to the terms and conditions on the [Back to Work website](#) and [QGrants](#). These set out how information collected as part of the application process will be used by the Queensland Government.

Broadly, the information can be used to evaluate, administer, assess, monitor and audit compliance with the eligibility criteria for the program to support delivery of the Back to Work initiative.

If you have any questions regarding how DESBT will use your information, please contact DESBT at corporate.legal@desbt.qld.gov.au.

Information/records collected as part of the application process are stored in line with the DESBT Records Management Policy and the *Public Records Act 2002 (Qld)*.

Tax implications

The taxation implications of any payment made to an applicant under the Back to Work initiative may differ depending on the applicant's personal circumstances. The Queensland Government is unable to provide taxation advice and accordingly we recommend consulting your own professional adviser to determine any taxation implications that may apply.

The Australian Taxation Office has information that may assist at www.ato.gov.au.

More information

For more information on SBSP or the Back to Work initiative please contact 13 QGOV (13 74 68) or email at: backtowork@desbt.qld.gov.au