

Working Washington Grants: Border Business Relief (WWBBR) Program Overview

The Washington State Department of Commerce will open applications for the Working Washington Grants: Border Business Relief Program on October 4. Commerce will post information and a link to the application portal at www.commercegrants.com.

The program's focus is to offer targeted relief in the form of grants to small businesses that continue to be adversely impacted by the extended US-Canadian border closures as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Grants to eligible businesses will be up to \$50,000. Award amounts will vary and will take into account previous Working Washington awards received from Commerce or affiliated partners. All grant amounts are subject to review and adjustment pending applicant volume and magnitude of reported losses.

These targeted grants are aimed at providing support to customer-facing businesses that generate significant revenue from Canadian visitors or businesses that require access to the US-Canadian border crossings. These grants intend to help mitigate the added hardship experienced by businesses due to the continued US-Canadian border restrictions.

Website: www.commercegrants.com

Requirements for Eligibility:

- Active business (identified by UBI number or EIN number) physically located in one of the following counties in Washington state: Clallam, Jefferson, Skagit, San Juan, Island, Whatcom, Okanogan, Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille
- Reported annual gross receipts or revenue of \$5,000,000 USD or less to the Washington State Department of Revenue for calendar year 2019
- Documented reduction in business income or activity related to COVID-19 or as a result of state or local COVID-related public health measures
- Adherence to all mandated COVID-19 public health measures

Eligible applications will be reviewed based on the following priority criteria:

- Customer-facing businesses that require direct, in-person interaction with individuals for a significant portion of their business activity (examples include a retail shop or nail salon)
- Businesses located within a 20 mile radius of a Canadian border crossing or port in Clallam, Jefferson, San Juan, Island, Skagit, Whatcom, Okanogan, Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille counties*
 - *Any business located in Clallam, Jefferson, San Juan, Island, Skagit, Whatcom, Okanogan, Ferry, Stevens or Pend Oreille counties will be considered for this round of Working Washington grants if they meet the requirements for eligibility.
- Industry sectors most impacted by the closure, which includes but is not limited to, retail, tourism, hospitality, recreation and entertainment
- Size of the business (measured by 2019 revenue)
- Lost revenue between 2019 and 2020 and/or added expenses to maintain safe operations
- Businesses operating in a rural or low-income community and/or or owned by someone from a historically disadvantaged or underserved population (minority, veteran, LGBTQ+ or women-owned)

Ineligible to apply:

The following business/organization types are not eligible to apply for this round of grants:

- Property management/real estate (including owners or operators of short-term rental properties)
- Host/operators of a vacation or short-term rental unit (like Airbnb or VRBO)
- Licensed marijuana/cannabis operation (this does not include CBD retailers)
- Drivers of shared ride companies (e.g., Lyft or Uber)
- Government entities or elected official offices
- Passive business, investment companies and investors who file a Schedule E on their personal tax returns
- Financial business primarily engaged in the business of lending, such as banks, finance company and factoring company
- Businesses that have permanently closed or intend to permanently close in 2021
- Businesses engaged in any socially undesirable activity or activity that may be considered predatory in nature (such as rent-to-own businesses and check cashing businesses)

- Businesses of a prurient sexual nature (“adult” businesses)
- Speculative businesses
- Businesses primarily engaged in political or lobbying activities
- Businesses without a physical location in Washington state
- Businesses that restrict patronage for any reason other than capacity or age restrictions per regulations
- Businesses found to be in violation of any COVID-19-related order issued by the governor. This includes remaining open when ordered to close, or disregarding COVID-19 health or safety measures applicable to the business.
- Businesses found to have compliance or regulatory issues as of March 2020
- Businesses that are actively engaged in current/pending lawsuits
- Businesses disbarred by the federal government
- Businesses actively pursuing a bankruptcy declaration

Eligible Uses of Grant Funds:

Successful grantees must use the funding for costs incurred between March 1, 2020 and December 31, 2021, as required by [HB 1368](#)

(<http://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2021-22/pdf/bills/sessionlaws/house/1368-s.slpdf#page=1>). All funds must be spent by December 31, 2021. Awardees are able to expend grant funding for any eligible expenses due to the impact of COVID-19 as long as they have not been previously funded through other grant awards.

If all responses for the particular incurred cost are “true” for all five statements below, then the applicant can feel confident the cost is eligible:

- 1) The expense is connected to the COVID-19 emergency
- 2) The expense is “necessary” to continue business operations
- 3) The expense is not to be used to pay government related fees (i.e. taxes, licenses, state, county, federal, and/or city fees)
- 4) The business will self–attest that the expense is not funded by any other funder, whether private, state or federal
- 5) The business wouldn’t be requesting assistance with expenses if they had not been impacted by COVID-19

Grant Funds May NOT Be Used For:

- Lobbying
- Alcohol (other than for inventory needs of their business)
- Salary increases, bonuses, and dividends to owner(s) or investor(s)



- Costs already reimbursed previously by federal programs (e.g. SBA Paycheck Protection Program) or expenses previously reimbursed by any grant or loan program
- Personal expenses

The Grant Application may be completed and submitted online at any time. The portal will be open October 4 and will close October 18 at 5:00 PM PT. To access the online portal application please visit www.commercegrants.com

- Applications must be submitted no later than 5:00 PM PT Monday, October 18, 2021.
- Applications will be reviewed and final determinations made after the portal closing date. If selected for a grant, notice of grant amount and next steps will be sent out from our partner, Submittable, via email from commercegrants@submittable.com in mid-November.
- All payments will be disbursed through Submittable via US Bank using a direct bank transfer of funds referred to as an ACH. Awardees who do not bank with an institution in the United States will be able to receive a paper check via mail.

What you will need to complete this application:

Applicants will need:

- WA State Unified Business Identifier (UBI)* number (check this website to make sure your business license is active and in good standing: <https://secure.dor.wa.gov/gteunauth/>).
- *Tribal member-owned businesses without a UBI may provide alternative business validation such as a license or registration with a federally recognized tribal nation
- Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN), if applicable
- 2019 and 2020 gross annual business revenues
- Valid Government-issued photo ID

What documents will I need to upload?

Valid government-issued photo identification (ID):

- A valid government-issued photo ID of the applicant who is signing the grant application. Washington state-issued driver's license/ID card, U.S. Passport book or card, or other valid, state issued or federal issued photo ID.

Verification of Tribal-member owned business, if applicable:

- A registration, or license, (or, may include official letters of Tribal ID) information from a federally recognized tribe.

For Questions and More Information:

Visit our website: www.commercegrants.com for the most up-to-date program information and Frequently Asked Questions.

Working Washington Grants: Border Business Relief Program FAQ's

<https://commercegrants.com/working-washington-grants-border-business-relief/bbr-faqs/>

The Technical Support Center opens on Wednesday, September 29 and will provide support to applicants with questions related to the Working Washington Grants: Border Business Relief Program.

Email and phone support will be offered in English and Spanish and is managed by our partner, Submittable. The public can access it by calling (855) 602-2722 or emailing commercegrants@submittable.com.

The hours are as follows:

8 AM – 5 PM PT Monday-Friday

8 AM – 5 PM PT Saturday & Sunday (through October 17)

Email & Voicemails: Response provided within 48 business hours

Spanish phone support will be available starting October 4.