

Back to Work Small Business Support Pool Guidelines for Funding 2021-22

Effective 1 July 2021

Overview

What is the Back to Work program?

The Back to Work program 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. Incentive payments and other supports are available to employers who hire an eligible previously unemployed Queenslander from a vulnerable cohort who has experienced a minimum period of unemployment directly prior to commencing work with them. The revitalised Back to Work program (launched 1 July) now focusses on intensive support for jobseekers, employers and their employees.

What is the Small Business Support Pool?

Under the revitalised Back to Work program, there is a stronger focus on supporting employers to keep or retain their employees on a long-term and ongoing basis. The Small Business Support Pool recognises that small businesses often require more support than medium and larger businesses. The Small Business Support Pool is aimed at providing financial support to employers, who are small businesses, who need assistance in retaining employees supported through the Back to Work Incentive Payments.

Access to the Small Business Support Pool is available under these guidelines to employers who have been approved for a Back to Work Incentive Payment.

Further information on the Back to Work Incentive Payment Guidelines for Funding, including terms and conditions, definitions, frequently asked questions and other employer/jobseeker wrap around support is available on qld.gov.au/backtowork

How much can you apply for?

Back to Work Incentive Payments are available to support eligible employers over a 52-week period. The Back to Work supported employee must still be employed with the business to be eligible to apply for a Small Business Support Pool payment.

Employers who have been approved for a Back to Work Incentive payment from 1 July 2021 may make an application for the Small Business Support Pool.

Eligible employers can access a \$2,000 payment to support employee retention.

What can funding from the Small Business Support Pool be used for?

Funding can be used for the following categories of support which must be linked to employee retention:

- Training (including professional development and upskilling)
- Digital upgrades (including software) that supports employee retention
- Small business mentoring and coaching
- Workplace fit out
- Workforce development.

Eligible employers must source their own quotes.

What won't be funded?

The following activities are not considered to support the retention of employees and are therefore, ineligible categories of support:

- 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)
- 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).

Eligibility Criteria

- Applicant must have an approved Back to Work application for an employee who commenced employment from 1 July 2021 and is currently employed with the business.
- Be a small business that employs less than 20 people.
- The Applicant must be able to articulate how the Small Business Support Pool will support them to retain their Back to Work employee beyond 52 weeks of continuous employment.
- The approved Back to Work employer is eligible for one application per approved Back to Work employee.
- Employers must provide quote/s to the value of at least \$2,000.
- Employers must declare that they have not received or are eligible for funding for a similar purpose under the Australian Government. For instance, where the Back to Work supported employee is a person with a disability and the employer is seeking

funding to renovate their workspace that has been previously funded under the Australian Government's Employment Assistance Fund.

- Applicants who are seeking to access the support pool for workplace fit out, additional information will be required to demonstrate they own the business premises and/or they have approval to update the premises.
- Applications must be submitted by the employer, not an agent or other party.

What should be included in the application?

In making an application for the Small Business Support Pool, the approved Back to Work employer must demonstrate need and how the funding will support the retention of their employee.

The application should include the following information:

- A statement describing how the funding will support the employer and the retention of the Back to Work supported employee.
- Quotes from the proposed suppliers that are least \$2,000 in total.
- An acknowledgement 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.

How will applications be assessed?

In addition to meeting the eligibility criteria, applications will be assessed against:

- Funding availability;
- Submission of a complete application form, with all requested supporting documentation included; and
- Value for money, as determined by the Queensland Government.
- Where the Back to Work employer has previous approved Back to Work applications, further checks will be undertaken to examine the retention of the previous Back to Work employees.

A final decision will be made based on the assessment criteria and the information contained within the submitted application. Failure to submit all required documents will result in your application being rejected.

The Small Business Support Pool Terms and Conditions allow the Queensland Government to validate and check the authenticity of applications and the applicant's details at any time.

Applicants who are awarded funds must refund the grant to the Queensland Government if the grant is subsequently found to have not met the eligibility criteria.

How long do I have to apply for a Small Business Support Pool payment?

Applications can be made any time via QGrants within the 52 weeks of the employment commencement date and when the payment agreement is created in QGrants.

Please note, if employment of the Back to Work supported employee has ceased, then an employer will not be eligible for Small Business Support Pool funding in this circumstance.

Ready to apply

Applications must be made through QGrants at <https://ggrants.osr.qld.gov.au/portal>

The online application form contains a series of questions you must answer to progress the application.

Processing your application

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

You can review the status of your application at any time by logging in to QGrants. Please note, in cases where additional information is requested, the 20 business days commences again upon the Back to Work team receiving the additional information.

Approved applicants will have funds transferred into their nominated bank account in QGrants.

Will I need to provide additional information?

When assessing an application, the Back to Work Team may request additional information and documents to assist in determining whether the eligibility criteria have been met.

If you have been requested to provide more information following an initial review, your application will remain open for 30 business days to allow you to upload the requested documentation. If you require additional time, you should notify the Back to Work Team in writing and send to backtowork@desbt.qld.gov.au.

If the required information is not provided within 30 business days, the application will not be approved for funding. If you choose to provide this information after the applications non-approval, you may contact the Back to Work Team to request they re-open the application.

If it is determined that an applicant has received a payment they were not eligible for, the Queensland Government will seek to recoup that payment from the applicant.

If an application is not approved, can a review of the decision be requested?

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 a 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. The team will only review decisions once the statement and relevant

supporting material have been provided. All program eligibility criteria must be met for an original decision to be overturned.

Review requests and the additional supporting material must be lodged in writing to:

Review Officer, Back to Work Program
PO Box 15483
City East
Brisbane QLD 4002

Or compliance@desbt.qld.gov.au

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

After your application has been approved

Ceased employment/changes to employment

If the employee ceases employment with you after a payment has been made, you do not need to return the payments already received, but you will not be eligible for any further payments for that employee, including Back to Work Incentive payments.

If your employee ceases employment after an application has been approved, you must notify the Back to Work Team in writing at backtowork@desbt.qld.gov.au providing:

- The date employment ceased; and
- An explanation of the reason why the employee ceased employment.

Acquittal process

If you have an approved application for the Small Business Support Pool you will be required to undertake a short survey and provide an update on what the funding was used for and how it benefited the retention of the Back to Work supported employee.

Approved applicants will be asked to complete their acquittal as part of making their 26 week or 52 week claims for the Back to Work Employer Incentive Payment.

Approved funding granted under the Small Business Support Pool should be expended prior to making a later payment claim for the Back to Work Employer Incentive Payment.

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

Further information

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 and confidentiality

The Terms and Conditions available on the Back to Work website and QGrants 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 in order to support delivery of the Back to Work program.

For further information about the management of personal information, please email the Privacy Contact Officer 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 program 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 also assist you at www.ato.gov.au