

Financial Assistance for Businesses

The information below does not fully represent all supports for businesses available by the Government currently, to view all available supports, please see the links at the bottom of this document.

The Department of Business, Enterprise, and Innovation is operating a Business Support Call Centre to advise on the Government supports available to businesses and enterprises that are affected by COVID- 19. The Call Centre can be contacted at 00 353 1 631 2002. Businesses can also email infobusinesssupport@dbei.gov.ie.

SUPPORT AVAILABLE

COVID Restrictions Support Scheme (CRSS): A new COVID Restrictions Support Scheme (CRSS) has been set up, aimed at businesses impacted by Covid-19 restrictions.

Qualifying businesses can apply to Revenue for a cash payment. The scheme will run from 13 October 2020 until 31 March 2021.

- Payments will be made when Level 3 restrictions or higher are in place in line with the Plan for Living with COVID-19
- Businesses qualify where government restrictions directly prohibit or restrict customer access to their premises.
- Payments are calculated on the basis of 10% of the first €1 million in turnover and 5% thereafter, based on average VAT exclusive turnover for 2019.
- A self- assessment of 75% disruption in turnover is required (decreased from 80% on 20 October 2020)

You can get more information from [Revenue's guidelines \(pdf\)](#) and the [CRSS overview and examples \(pdf\)](#).

Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme (EWSS)

EWSS is an economy-wide enterprise support that focuses primarily on business eligibility. The scheme provides a flat-rate subsidy to qualifying employers based on the numbers of eligible employees on the employer's payroll and gross pay to employees.

The EWSS replaced the Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme (TWSS) from 1 September 2020. It is expected to continue until 31 March 2021.

- Employers must possess valid tax clearance to enter the EWSS and continue to maintain tax clearance for the duration of the scheme.
- A reduced rate of employer's PRSI of 0.5% is charged on wages paid which are eligible for the subsidy payment.
- Seasonal and new hires are eligible for the EWSS and claims can be backdated to 1 July 2020 (subject to limited exceptions). Employers can complete a 'sweepback' template providing details for each eligible employee.
- Subsidy is based on an employee's gross weekly wage, including notional pay, before deductions, and excluding non-taxable benefits.

Restart Grant: Grants of between €4,000 up to a maximum of €25,000 are available. To qualify for the scheme, enterprises must have:

- 250 employees or less.
- Turnover of less than €100,000 per employee.
- Reduced turnover by 25% as a result of COVID-19.
- Those that accessed funding through the previous round of the scheme are eligible for a second top-up payment to a total combined value of the revised maximum grant level.

Under the Restart Grant Plus scheme, support will also be provided for enterprises that could not access the original grant scheme, including rateable sports businesses and trading charity shops. Non-rated B&Bs will be eligible for a grant payment of €4,000.

Please view the Restart Grant FAQ - [Restart Grant Plus FAQs »](#)

COVID-19 Business Loans COVID-19 Business Loans up to €25,000 are available through Microfinance Ireland with zero repayments and zero interest for the first 6 months and the equivalent of an additional 6 months interest-free subject to certain terms and conditions. The loans can range from €5,000 to €25,000. Repayments will commence in month 7 for the remaining period of your loan.

The Government will rebate to you the interest paid in the following 6 months (months 7-12 of your loan). The interest rate after the first 6 months will be a reduced interest rate 4.5% APR if submitted through the Local Enterprise Office Network (or other referral partners) or 5.5% APR if you apply directly to Microfinance Ireland.

The loan terms are typically up to 3 years and there are no fees or charges. Businesses can apply through their [Local Enterprise Office](#) or directly at microfinanceireland.ie. Eligibility criteria apply. - [Microfinance Ireland COVID-19 Business Loan FAQs](#)

Waiver of Commercial Rates: With limited exceptions, all businesses will be granted a waiver to 31 December 2020. Updates will be available on housing.gov.ie and from local authorities.

COVID-19 Working Capital Scheme: The SBCI COVID-19 Working Capital Scheme for eligible businesses supports loans from €25,000 up to €1.5 million (first €500,000 unsecured) with a maximum interest rate of 4%. Applications can be made through the SBCI website at sbci.gov.ie. Eligibility criteria apply.

SME Credit Guarantee Scheme: The purpose of the SME Credit Guarantee Scheme is to encourage additional lending to SMEs by offering a partial Government guarantee (currently 80%) to banks against losses on qualifying loans to eligible SMEs. The Credit Guarantee Scheme does not substitute for conventional lending that would otherwise have taken place. - [Credit Guarantee Scheme](#)

Pandemic Stabilisation and Recovery Fund: The Ireland Strategic Investment Fund will focus on investment in medium and large-scale enterprises in Ireland through a Pandemic Stabilisation and Recovery Fund. The fund, worth up to €2 billion, will make capital available to medium and large enterprises on commercial terms.

ReBounce – Back to Business. Safely: The Skillnet Ireland ReBounce initiative offers guidance to SME owners and managers on implementing the Return to Work Safely Protocol.

Business Continuity Planning COVID-19 Checklist: The DBEI checklist on Business Continuity Planning provides a checklist for businesses in responding to COVID-19. - [checklist for businesses in responding to COVID-19](#).

General grant supports: The full range of [Enterprise Ireland](#), [IDA Ireland](#), [Local Enterprise Office](#) and [Údarás na Gaeltachta](#) grant supports continue to be available to eligible firms to help with strategies to access finance, commence or ramp-up online trading activity, reconfigure business models, cut costs, innovate, diversify markets and supply chains and to improve competitiveness.

Return to Work Safely Protocol: The Return to Work Safely Protocol is designed to support employers and workers to put measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace, when the economy begins to slowly open up, following the temporary closure of most businesses during the worst phase of the current pandemic. - [Return to Work Safely Protocol »](#)

Please open the hyperlinks below for more info on all support available to businesses:

<https://dbei.gov.ie/en/What-We-Do/Supports-for-SMEs/COVID-19-supports/>

<https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/Supports-for-businesses-impacted-by-COVID-19.pdf>