



SWEF Grant Programme – Application Guidance

We've created this document so you can see the questions you need to answer in our online application form.

Please contact us if you can't use the online form, or if you are unable to attach or don't have any of the documents we ask for. We'll support you to make your application in another way if needed. For more information contact Alex by email alex@nottscf.org.uk or call her on 01623 620202.

You can use this document to plan and draft your answers if you want, but you still need to complete our online application form.

You do not have to complete the application form in one go. If you wish to leave the form and come back to it at another time, press the **'Save my progress and resume later'** button at the top or bottom of the form. You will be asked to enter your email and a password so you can log back in, this will be emailed to you as well.

There is no set word limit to answer the questions, but in most cases, a few hundred words will do.

In the application form you will have space to answer the following questions about yourself and your business.

About You:

In the application form you must provide some basic information about you:

- Your name
- Your address and postcode
- Your telephone and/or mobile number
- Your email address
- Your date of birth

We will use your answers to these questions to help check if you meet the criteria for the fund.

Your previous experience, training and qualifications:

Tell us a bit about yourself. We would like to know what qualifications you have, any jobs or other type of work experience you have completed, and what you are currently up to. How long have you been out of education, employment or training? You can also let us know about any hobbies, skills and talents you have so that we can get to know you a bit better.

You must answer this question. What you write will help us understand your current situation and to check whether you meet the criteria for the fund. You could start your answer like this: *"I had a hard time at school and left with four GCSEs (English grade 4, Maths grade 5 etc.), then did an apprenticeship at college. Unfortunately, I couldn't finish my apprenticeship and now..."*

If you don't have many qualifications or work experience don't worry, this won't harm your application and we will take your background and situation into account.

Please tell us why you would like to set up your own business. It could be because you have a skill or talent you would like to earn money from or because being self-employed is something you can fit around a disability, health condition or caring responsibility.

What experience or training do you have that gives you the skills or business knowledge to help you succeed with your idea? This could be through volunteering, training, work experience, or because your business idea is a hobby or talent you already have.

You must answer this question. What you write will help us understand whether you already have the skills to run your business or whether this is something you might need more help with. You could start your answer like this: *"I already have some work experience in the sector that my business will operate..."*

Please tell us why you are applying to the SWEF Grant Programme and what difference the financial support could make to you/or your family. Do you live in a low income household, low education attainment or identify as coming from a minoritised community, or do you have a disability?

You do not have to answer this question if none of these things describe you. If you do answer it, then what you write will help us understand your circumstances and any challenges you may have faced, e.g. if you or someone in your home has a disability or additional need, or you come from a low income family claiming benefits, etc. Use this space to tell us anything particular in your background, including your economic background, which would help us understand any challenges you have faced or still face. You could start your answer like this: *"I have ADHD and found school difficult..."*

We will also ask you if you receive Universal Credit and roughly what percentage of money that you use for living costs comes from your business income?

About Your Business:

In the application form you must provide some basic information about your business:

- The name and address of your business
- When did you start your business?
- The geographical area you trade from
- Have you already got paying customers
- Describe the products you make or sell, or the services you provide
- Estimates for monthly sales revenue and costs
- A rough idea of what percentage of your living costs comes from your business
- How do your customers pay you

Your Budget:

This section allows you to tell us about how a grant would help you to make your business more successful or support start-up costs. We need to know how much funding you will need and what you will spend it on.

- How much are you applying for?
- Provide a breakdown of costs

You must answer these questions. What you write will help us understand how well you would use this money, so you need to be clear about the different things you would buy and how much each would cost. You could start your answer like this: *"I would use the money to purchase the stock I need to start, which is ..."*. Please give the price of each item and a weblink to it, if you have one.

You cannot apply for your salary or living costs.

Your Business Plan:

This section allows you to tell us about your business plan. There are no "right" answers or the "right" sort of words to use in the application. If a question has several parts, use bullet points to answer each part. Some of this information may be in your business plan, which you should attach in the supporting documents section.

- Why do you need this grant? Please explain how the grant will make a difference and whether you have any other options for covering the costs of the items you need.
- How much of your own time, money or other resources have you committed so far to the business, including any equipment you own? List the things that you plan to use in your business, how much money will this save you?
- How / why do you think your business will be successful? What is your vision for the business and how will it impact your home life?
- Describe how and where you sell/plan to sell your products/services and how are you going to advertise/promote your business.
- Who are your competitors? (Businesses offering a similar product or service to you, to people who could be your potential customers).
- Why do you think your business will be sustainable - how do you know your product/service is wanted or needed? (If you have anything to show this, feel free to attach it to the form or email/post it to us).
- Who are your customers? Describe a typical customer. (Customers are people who will buy your products or services, they might be local people, children or other businesses - you can have more than one customer).
- Do you have a business plan and/or financial forecast, or are you seeking help with this?
- Provide links to your business' website if you have one, social media pages and seller pages such as Etsy, Ebay, Facebook etc.
- Do you run or plan to start any other businesses?
- Have you applied to anyone else for a grant or loan to support your business?
- Please provide details of the other support you are seeking.

Your Bank Details:

If you are successful and awarded a grant you will need a business bank account. If you already have a business bank account please provide details and attach a copy of a recent bank statement (from the last 3 months).

Your Supporting Documents:

Reference

Your referee should be a person who can tell us about your abilities and can confirm your circumstances. This might be a teacher, someone you have worked for or a youth worker. The referee form is available on our website and when completed should be emailed to us directly enquiries@nottscf.org.uk

As well as completing the application form, we also need you to provide supporting documents to confirm you are eligible to apply. The documents can be uploaded in this section, e.g. bank statement, business plan, sales forecast/cashflow forecast, proof of universal credit, other documents in support of your application. Any further documents or supporting evidence should be emailed to us at enquiries@nottscf.org.uk

Declaration:

This section of the application form contains the grant agreement, terms and conditions of grant. You must tick the declaration approved box and add your name and the date for us to be able to consider your application.

At the end of the form are a selection of standard questions on allowing publicity, where you heard about the grant and our equal opportunities monitoring.

What happens after I have submitted my application?

- 1. Initial assessment** - when we have received your application, we will check it is complete and eligible. If you have not submitted all the supporting documents, we will contact you, usually by email and ask you to send them to us.
- 2. Meeting** - we may invite you to a meeting where you will be able to tell us more about your business. The meeting will take place online with 2 people, a member of staff from Nottinghamshire Community Foundation and someone from the SW Enterprise Fund.
- 3. Award** - if you are successful the grant will be paid directly to you by BACS. You will need to spend the funds within 1 year.
- 4. After the award** - we will contact you at 6 and 12 months after you received the grant to find out how your business is progressing. You will also have the opportunity to take part in a business forum with other businesses that have been awarded a grant. The forum offers a space to share, exchange ideas, experiences and learn.

If you have any questions please contact us Alex by email alex@nottscf.org.uk or calling her on 01623 620202.