

INCREASED COST OF BUSINESS (ICOB) GRANT

What is the purpose of the grant?

As part of Budget 2024, the Government agreed a package of €257 million for the Increased Cost of Business (ICOB) Grant as a vital measure for small and medium businesses. Local Authorities funded by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE), will manage the rollout of the grant to qualifying businesses.

The grant is available to qualifying businesses as a contribution towards the rising costs faced by businesses. This is not a rates waiver; rates must continue to be paid to your Local Authority.

How much is the grant?

The grant amount depends on the value of the Commercial Rates bill received by an eligible business in 2023.

- For qualifying businesses with a 2023 Commercial Rate bill of <€10,000, the ICOB grant will be paid at a rate of 50% of the business's Commercial Rate bill for 2023.
- For qualifying businesses with a 2023 Commercial Rate bill of between €10,000 and €30,000, the ICOB grant will be €5,000.
- Businesses with a 2023 Commercial Rates bill greater than €30,000 are not eligible to receive an ICOB grant.

Who can register for the Grant?

Your business must be a commercially trading business currently operating from a property that is commercially rateable and in receipt of a Rates Bill in 2024.

The Local Authority will write to businesses with further information and guidance on how to register for the grant.

How do I qualify to receive the grant?

To qualify for the grant, you need to meet the following criteria:

1. **Commercial Rates Bill:** Your business must have received a Commercial Rates Bill equal to or less than **€30,000** in 2023.
2. **Commercially Trading Business:** Your business must currently operate from a property that is commercially rateable. Businesses failing to meet this criteria will be excluded.
3. **Exclusions:** Public institutions and financial institutions do not qualify (with exceptions for Credit Unions and specific post office services, excluding Company Post Offices).

4. **Trading Duration:** Your business must have been trading on **February 1, 2024**, and you must intend to continue trading for at least **three months** from the date you verify your information.
5. **Bank Details:** You must provide confirmation of your **business bank details**, including a bank header from the last **3 months**.
6. **Rates Compliance:** Compliance will be verified by the Rates Department in the Local Authority. Businesses with approved performing payment plans may be deemed compliant.
7. **Tax Compliance:** Your business must be tax compliant and possess a valid Tax Registration Number (TRN).
8. **Property Entry Levy (PEL):** If your business operated from a property subject to a Property Entry Levy (PEL) in 2023, you are eligible to receive the grant based on the annualized (grossed-up) value of the PEL bill issued for that property.
9. **Vacant Properties:** Vacant properties do **not** qualify.

Please be aware that your local authority reserves the right to reclaim any grant payment found to be incorrect. This includes cases of error by the recipient business or the local authority making the payment, or where a business provides false eligibility declarations.

How can I register for the Grant?

Businesses are encouraged to use the **ICOB portal**, accessible via www.icob.ie. To complete your application, make sure you have the following information:

1. **Council Customer Number and PIN:** You will need to provide your council customer number along with the associated PIN. You would have received these in a letter from your local authority.
2. **LAID Number:** This number is available on your Rate Bill.
3. **Legal Business Name:** Your business's official legal name.
4. **Property Address:** Include your property address along with the Eircode.
5. **Email Address:** Provide a valid email address.
6. **Contact Number:** This may be used to validate your bank account details.
7. **Bank Header:** A statement showing your bank account details, company or individual name, and date within the last three months.
8. **Tax Registration Number (TRN):** Ensure you have a valid TRN.
9. **Tax Clearance Certificate:** Depending on the grant value, a tax clearance certificate may be requested.
10. **Employee Count:** The number of employees you employ (for statistical purposes, not grant validation).
11. **Self-Declaration:**
 - Your business is tax compliant.
 - Your business has been commercially operating in 2024, trading since February 1, 2024, and intends to continue trading for at least 3 months following the submission of the self-declaration.

The Portal will be the most efficient mechanism in which to avail of the grant but if you need assistance in relation to the grant, please contact your Rates team.

Can I register per Business Property?

Businesses can register per property within their local authority area. However, each property must meet the specified criteria to qualify for the grant.

What category of business properties are excluded from availing of the grant?

Detailed below is a list setting out the category of properties which are excluded from availing of the grant. Please note that this list is not exhaustive and if there is any doubt you should contact your local authority.

Excluded Category of properties			
Advertising Station	Data Centre	Library	Plant/Other – Cables
Aerodrome	Demolished/derelict	Lighthouse	Port
Airport	Detention Centre	Local Authority	Prison
Airport Control Tower	Easement	Mast	Public Body/Semi State
ATM	Easement of Gas Pipelines	Mast / Antenna	Public Utility
Bank	Easement of Mast	Military Camp	Railway Line
Barracks	Electricity	Monument	Railway Station
Bike Stations	Fire Station	Network (Broadcasting)	Reservoir
Broadcasting Station	Garda Station	Network (Cable)	Terminal
Building Ground	Gas Installation	Network (Esb)	Telephone (Exchange)
Bus Depot	Gas works	Network (Luas)	Telephone (Kiosk)
Bus Shelter	Generating Station	Network (railway)	Terminal/Control Centre
Bus Station	Hangar	Network (Storm Water)	Tolls
Civil Service	HSE	Network (Telecommunications)	Transformer Station
College	Landfill	Network (Water)	Transmission Station
Courthouse	Landfill Site	Pipeline	Wind Farm

How do I register if I have Business Properties in different local authorities?

If your business owns multiple properties in separate local authorities, you should register with the specific local authority where you pay rates for each individual property. Each property must meet the qualifying criteria to be eligible for the grant.

What is the closing date?

The deadline for businesses to confirm eligibility and upload verification details is May 1, 2024. The portal for this process will be accessible starting from March 14, 2024. Prompt registration will expedite your payment, which will commence late April, 2024.

When will I receive my Grant?

After you have submitted your grant submission, your local authority kindly requests your patience as they review and validate submissions across the county.

Can I appeal the decision?

If your business's grant submission is denied, you have the option to appeal. To do so, submit a written appeal to your local authority within **7 days** of receiving the notification.