

SWEF Business Grants

Full application guidance



SWEF offers grants for young entrepreneurs in Norfolk who face financial or other barriers to developing their businesses.

Who can apply?

To apply, you must:

- Be aged 18-30
- Live and work in Norfolk
- Be from a low-income household or facing other barriers to business growth
- Be a majority shareholder, or all shareholders are aged 18-30

SWEF offers two types of grants:

Start-up Grant

Up to **£500** for young entrepreneurs looking to launch their business. This funding can help cover initial costs such as equipment, materials, stock, website building, product development, and training.

Your business should be at the pre-revenue stage or in the early stages of trading, making less than £500 a month. You must demonstrate that it has the potential to be profitable, provide an income, and eventually become your sole work focus.

Applicants should also show commitment by having relevant experience or training and taking initial steps to establish the business, even at a very early stage. This could include making a first sale, securing a client, or offering pro-bono work to build a portfolio. Your business must have visibility - i.e. social media presence, website, or registered on Companies House.

You must clearly explain how the grant will transform your business. If you apply for £500 or less, you may reapply for a second grant later.

Business Grant

Up to **£2,000** for young entrepreneurs with established businesses that have been trading for under 2.5 years and making £500+ a month.

Your business must be a sole trader, limited company, or CIC limited by shares, and applications must come from a majority shareholder. The business should already be your sole work focus, or you should have a clear plan for it to become so.

Applicants should have taken significant steps to develop their business. A strong application will clearly explain how the grant will help take the business to the next level.

Applications that include match funding (where you already have some funds) or request funding for second-hand items are particularly welcome. If applying for a single item, the total cost should be no more than £10,000, and you should be able to fund the remainder.

For both Start-up and Business grants, you must also:

- Provide contact details for an independent referrer who can confirm your character and business potential
- Demonstrate a clear financial need
- Provide a detailed breakdown how the funds will be used, avoiding vague terms like “marketing”. Please also include evidence of costings.
- Have or be in the process of setting up a business bank account.
- Spend your grant within one month of receipt.

The most successful applicants:

- Request a specific amount and provide a clear reason for their funding request
- Can demonstrate that they have invested time and resources into the business, even at a very early stage
- Have tried but been unsuccessful in securing funding elsewhere

What can the Fund help with?

Here are some examples of what the grant can be used for:

- Training
- Product development
- Equipment that will help a business increase production and/or diversify revenue
- Materials/stock for a new product line
- Prototypes
- One-off costs such as a building a website or booking system

What can the Fund not help with?

- Salaries, rent, or utility bills
- Stock for an existing product line
- Paying debts/retrospective payments
- App/software development costs
- Ongoing software subscriptions
- Applications solely for business ideas
- New computers, phones, or tablets
- Driving lessons

SWEF is unable to support businesses in the following areas: invasive beauty treatments (such as botox, aesthetics, semi permanent makeup, facial tattoos, dermal fillers), property development, tobacco/vaping, political or religious agendas, gambling, illegal or unregulated activity, and finance or trading.

The fund may be able to support requests for refurbished IT hardware, provided the applicant can make a contribution. The application will need to explain how this technology will transform your business, and evidence the cost of the item.

How do I apply?

Before applying

Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis and will close once funds are fully allocated. Decisions are typically made within eight weeks of submission.

Please ensure your business meets the eligibility criteria before applying. Business ideas alone will not be considered, as you must show some progress even at an early stage, such as market research, early product development, or securing a client.

It's also important to assess the need for your business and its viability - is there a demand for your product or service? Do you understand the costs involved?

Application form and review

Complete the online application form [here](#). You can save your application and return to it later using the link in your registration email. Please ensure you fully answer all questions on the application form – incomplete applications will not progress to the next stage.

Once you submit your application, Norfolk Community Foundation will first check that you meet the eligibility criteria. During this process, we may contact you for additional information and will also request a reference from your independent referrer. Your application will then be reviewed by SWEF Enterprise.

Meeting

You may then be invited to a 30-minute online meeting with a SWEF team member to discuss your business and how the grant would help.

SWEF can offer support to help you feel comfortable in the meeting, such as sharing questions in advance or allowing you to turn your camera off.

Decisions and grant awards

You will receive a grant decision within six weeks after the meeting has taken place.

Unsuccessful applicants may receive feedback on improving their business case.

Successful applicants must accept the grant's terms and conditions before receiving funding. Payments are made around one month after acceptance, directly to a business bank account that matches the business name on your application.

Keeping in touch

SWEF will check in with you at six and twelve months after receiving your grant. You will be asked to provide feedback on how the grant helped your business, including details of how the funds were used and what you have achieved.

Please note that grants must be spent within one month of the award.

Grantees will also have the opportunity to take part in a business forum with other grant recipients. The forum offers a space to share ideas and experiences, exchange business insights, and build connections with like-minded entrepreneurs.

We look forward to receiving your application!

Still not sure, and want to discuss your application beforehand? Get in touch on 01603 623958 or contact grants@norfolkfoundation.com

Find out more or get in touch



www.norfolkfoundation.com



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Registered Charity Number 1110817 | Company Registration Number 05234236

