



Comhairle Cathrach
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council

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Report to the Finance Strategic Policy Committee 17th September 2020

Restart Grant and Restart Grant Plus 2020

Introduction

In May 2020, the Government announced details of a new €250m Restart Grant to give direct grant aid to micro and small businesses to help them with the costs associated with reopening and reemploying workers following COVID-19 closures.

The Grant was for businesses with a turnover of less than €5m and employing 50 people or less, which were impacted by at least a 25% reduction in turnover from 1st April to 30th June 2020. The grant was to help with the cost of re-opening or keeping a business operational and re-connecting with employees and customers and to help businesses get back up running so that they could return to viability and contribute to the national economic recovery.

The grants was equivalent to the rates bill of the business in 2019, with a minimum payment of €2,000 and a maximum payment of €10,000. There was a number of eligibility criteria in the scheme. The scheme opened for applications on 22nd May and was administrated by Local Authorities. The scheme was closed to application from 22nd July 2020 following the introduction of the Restart Grant Plus. The table below set out details in relation to the number of applications received by Dublin City Council up to the close of the scheme on 22nd July.

DATE:	04 September 2020	
LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Dublin City Council	
RESTART GRANT SCHEME STATISTICS		
	NUMBER	VALUE
APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BUT NOT APPROVED	0	€0
APPLICATIONS APPROVED BUT NOT PAID	5	€31,868
APPLICATIONS PAID	3853	€20,281,900
APPLICATIONS REJECTED	1638	N/A
GRAND TOTAL	5496	€20,313,768

Approach taken

Due to the potential volume of grant applications in DCC (20,000 rate accounts) it was decided that a grant system would need to be developed to process the grants within the timeframe of the scheme. An application form with basic verification in-built was designed and launched on 22nd May 2020. A backend technical solution was also developed which includes roles and responsibilities for processors, approvers and system administration. The system is capable of electronically taking in an application, checking it and assigning an approved or rejected status by the processor / approver. A file is then produced which is imported into our Financial Management System. It is checked to ensure bank details and revenue status regarding tax clearance are in order and then a file for payment of all approved grants is produced.

The Council received funds to the value of €27.6m on 15th June 2020 for the initial payment of the Restart grants. Following the closing of the Restart Grant scheme Dublin City Council had a balance of €7.3m on hand.

Appeals for Restart Grant

The closing date for the Restart Grant, which was launched on 22nd May was 31st August 2020. When the Government announced the Restart Grant Plus scheme they closed applications to the Restart Grant on 22nd July. As businesses who were entitled to the Restart Grant could also apply for the Restart Grant Plus, if they did not apply before the 22nd July they missed out on the initial grant and only received the Restart Grant Plus. The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment are now working with local authorities to agree an appeals process for those businesses who missed the 22nd July deadline for the initial Restart Grant. The City Council currently has 4 appeals to the value of €13,107 on hand.

Restart Grant Plus

The Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Leo Varadkar announced the opening of applications to the Restart Grant Plus Scheme on 10th August 2020. The scheme aims to give grants to businesses to help them reopen and adapt to what is a very different environment.

Businesses that received a grant under the first scheme are eligible to re-apply to receive additional funding under this scheme. The grant is based on the amount of the rates assessment for the premises for 2019 with a new minimum grant of €4,000 and a maximum grant of €25,000 up from €2,000 minimum and €10,000 maximum in the original scheme.

The scope of the scheme was expanded to include medium-sized firms and independent hotels with up to 250 employees, the previous maximum employee number was 50 employees. Like the previous scheme the business must be a commercial trading entity and operating from a premises that is commercially rateable. The business must have a turnover of less than €100k per band of employee to a maximum of €25m, previous scheme was €5m turnover only. Business must have suffered a 25%+ loss in turnover between 1st April and 30th June 2020 in line with the original scheme and commit to remain open or to open if closed and intend to retain employees on the TWSS. Rate-paying sports clubs and charity shops with a trading income can apply for the new grant. Businesses that did not apply / qualify for the initial Restart Grant have to complete an application form and a declaration form. Those businesses that qualified for the initial grant are only required to complete a declaration form. This has enabled the processing of top-up grant to previous eligible businesses to be accelerated. The table below set out

details of the number of grants processed by Dublin City Council as of 4th September 2020.

DATE:	04 September 2020	
LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Dublin City Council	
RESTART GRANT PLUS SCHEME STATISTICS		
	NUMBER	VALUE
APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BUT NOT APPROVED	23	€305,978
APPLICATIONS APPROVED BUT NOT PAID	883	€7,462,627
APPLICATIONS PAID	3896	€26,411,976
APPLICATIONS REJECTED	382	N/A
GRAND TOTAL	5184	€34,180,581

To date Dublin City Council has paid out €26.4m in Restart Grant Plus and has an additional €7.4m grants which are ready for payment. The Council received €26.3m in funding for Restart Grant Plus given a total of €53m received for the two schemes. The Council has paid out €46m to date to over 4,250 businesses. The closing date for the Restart Grant Plus scheme is September 30th 2020.

Antoinette Power
Head of Financial Accounting

8th September 2020