

## Application Guide

The BERP applications deadline is 5 pm Feb. 28th, 2022 with a deadline for receipts of Apr 20, 2022.

### 1. Program Purpose and Background

The BERP was created by the City of Brandon in response to a recommendation from the Brandon Chamber of Commerce. The program was designed to stimulate investment in operational areas that position eligible Brandon businesses to rebound and thrive as the economy begins to reopen. Funding applications from eligible businesses who plan to purchase eligible goods and services from local companies will be prioritized for approval, to optimize the program's ability to restart the local Brandon economy.

The program is not designed to cover day to day operating costs such as rent, property taxes, wages and personal protection equipment and supplies, as higher levels of government have implemented programs to support these types of COVID 19 Pandemic challenges.

The BERP is funded by the City of Brandon, with \$250,000 allocated to the program. The City's Economic Development Department will administer the program with support from the Brandon Chamber of Commerce Business Recovery Taskforce in vetting the applications. Volunteers involved in vetting BERP applications will be bound by a conflict of interest and confidentiality agreement.

### 2. Program Funding

Effective Aug. 16, 2021, until the allocated funds are depleted, eligible businesses may apply for a one time BERP grant. Approved grants will not exceed 90% of the eligible investment(s) to a maximum of \$2,500. Approved grants will not be paid until the business has made the investment described on the BERP application and supplies the City of Brandon's Economic Development Department with proof of the eligible investment(s) being made and paid for.

Grants will be paid **only** through Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT), with the required EFT application form supplied by the City of Brandon.

### 3. BERP Program Eligibility

#### Business Eligibility

Businesses must meet and agree to all the conditions set forth below in order to be eligible to apply for a BERP grant.

- a) Be legally operating within the City of Brandon (**physical office in Brandon**) on or before Jul 12, 2020 and still be operating at the time of the application. Not for profit organizations that are not primarily delivering service on behalf of a public entity are eligible to apply, **provided they have at least one paid employee** and meet all other business eligibility requirements.
- b) Not be any of the following: government organization, post-secondary institution, health authority, craft home based businesses, and independent consultants.

- c) Be able to demonstrate the business making application for a BERP grant has had their net income negatively impacted by the COVID 19 pandemic.
- d) Score at least one point in each of the four evaluation criteria categories outlined in section 4 **AND** obtain a minimum overall evaluation score of 7.
- e) Approved grants will receive 90% of the eligible investment refunded, to a maximum of \$2,500.
- f) Only one BERP application per legally established Brandon business is permitted.
- g) Agree to complete the grant application and provide applicable supporting documents.
- h) Agree to receive the approved BERP grant and all future City of Brandon payments by way of Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). This includes completing and returning the supplied City of Brandon EFT application form, if the business approved for a BERP grant is not already signed up for City of Brandon EFT.
- i) Agree to supply proof of the approved investment(s) being made and paid prior to the City of Brandon paying the approved BERP grant.
- j) Agree to provide supporting documentation as requested by the City of Brandon to aid in accurately vetting the application and proposed investment(s) for eligibility.
- k) Agree to have the business name, applicable investment category type (Professional Services, Marketing, Technology Improvements and Furniture & Equipment) and approved grant amount being shared publicly.

## **Investment Eligibility**

The BERP is designed to stimulate investment in operational areas that position the applicant business to rebound and thrive as the economy begins to reopen.

A single BERP application can include investments from one or more eligible investment categories.

Eligible investments made July 13, 2021 onward may be included in a BERP application. Applications can be made prior to the eligible investment being made **or** after the investment has already been completed. However, it is important to note that there is no guarantee of grant approval. Applications for BERP grants are being handled on a first come first service basis until the available funds are depleted, utilizing the evaluation metrics described in section 4. Therefore, if a business opts to make their investment(s) prior to receiving BERP grant approval they do so at their own risk.

Eligible Investments must be completed by April 30, 2022 with exceptions to this granted on a case by case basis. Deadline extensions can be requested through the City of Brandon's Economic Development Department.

Eligible investments **must** fall within one or more of the eligible investment categories listed below.

- ⇒ **Professional services** (web design, business consulting, accounting, legal advice, strategic planning)
- ⇒ **Marketing** (website funneling, social media ads, photography, videography services)
- ⇒ **Technology Improvements** (mobile app development, software enhancements)
- ⇒ **Furniture & Equipment** (ie. patio furniture / patio walls)

## 4. BERP Application Evaluation Criteria

BERP grant applications will be evaluated in a two phased approach. Upon receipt of a complete application the application will be evaluated based on mandatory eligibility criteria pertaining to business eligibility and investment eligibility referred to as phase 1. Only applications determined to meet both business and investment eligibility in phase one will proceed to phase two. During phase two an application will be evaluated from the lens of grant approval, using the evaluation criteria listed below.

- a) Financial need (degree of decrease in net income due to the COVID 19 pandemic). *Maximum 3 points available.*
- b) Likelihood that the proposed investment(s) will achieve the program goals of assisting businesses to rebound and/or grow as well as positively contribute to restarting the local economy. *Maximum 3 points available.*
- c) Level of private sector financial contributions (how much private investment will be leveraged by approving the requested BERP grant). *Maximum 3 points available.*
- d) Financial investment being spent in the Brandon economy (what percentage of the eligible BERP investments will be spent locally. Local is defined as businesses who have a legally established physical location within the City of Brandon boundaries). *Maximum 5 points available.*

## 5. Proof of Investments being completed

Prior to paying the conditionally approved BERP grant the following proof of investment must be provided to the City of Brandon's Economic Development Department via the means listed at the end of the Brandon Economic Restart Program Guide.

- Detailed invoice confirming which goods and/or services were purchased
- Confirmation from the vendor(s) that the invoice(s) have been paid in full

## 6. General Terms of the Grant

A BERP grant approval is considered "conditional approval" until such time as the approved applicant has completed and paid for the eligible investments as described in their funding application and has provided proof of same to the City of Brandon's Economic Development Office and the Economic Development Office has confirmed the investments were made as conditionally approved.

The decision of the Economic Development Office in partnership with the Brandon Chamber of Commerce application vetting committee is final with no opportunity for applicants to appeal the decision.

The BERP grant will be paid via Electronic Funds Transfer once **all** the eligible investments described in the application have been completed and paid for by the approved applicant, and proof of same has been supplied to and verified by the City of Brandon's Economic Development Office.

All businesses that receive a BERP grant will have their business name, applicable investment category and grant amount publicly reported.

For eligible applications, grant amounts will be determined based upon, program guidelines, the applicant's grant request, evaluation criteria set forth in section 4 of this document and available

program funding. Submitting a complete BERP application is not a guarantee of receiving a BERP grant.

When the available BERP funds have been conditionally approved in their entirety, the City of Brandon will close the program to further applications. Any received but not yet processed BERP applications will be returned to the applicants with a note explaining the available program funds have been depleted.

## 7. Typical BERP Process

- ✓ Brandon business identifies the investment they wish to make to position their business to rebound / grow and prepares a budget for the desired investment.
- ✓ Business reviews BERP program details to confirm business and investment eligibility
- ✓ Eligible business completes the application including providing any required supporting documents
- ✓ Eligible business submits the application to Economic Development Brandon (EDB) electronically or in printed format
- ✓ EDB affixes a date and time stamp to the received application
- ✓ EDB vets the received application in the order in which they were received for completeness and business and investment eligibility
- ✓ Eligible applications are vetted to determine grant approval. Only applications that meet BERP business and investment eligibility requirements will proceed to the next phase of being evaluated for grant approval using the evaluation criteria set forth in section 4.
- ✓ The applicant will be notified of the decision regarding their funding application. If the funding request is not approved the process ceases with no opportunity for the applicant to appeal the funding application decision.
- ✓ If a grant is approved, EDB will provide the business with a City of Brandon EFT application form that will need to be completed prior to payment issue if the business is not already signed up for City of Brandon EFT.
- ✓ Grants will be paid out as conditionally approved, via Electronic Funds transfer once the approved investments have been made, paid for and proof of same has been provided to and verified by EDB.

For more information on the Brandon Economic Restart Program or to submit a completed BERP application form, please contact the Economic Development Office

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