GOVERNMENT GRANT FUNDING FOR BREXIT COSTS

Grants for businesses completing customs declarations

£16m in new government funding is now available to help businesses train staff in making customs declarations, and to help businesses who support others who trade goods to invest in IT. This will ensure that trade with the EU continues as smoothly as possible after Brexit on 31st October.

Customs agents currently help businesses who trade outside the EU. This funding will help increase the capacity of the sector as businesses trading with the EU consider whether to get an expert to complete customs documentation for them after Brexit.

More than 3,000 agents have already been trained as part of an £8 million investment earlier this year, which has also been used to develop new online learning products for customs staff such as an electronic learning package and a new UK Customs Academy, launched on 12 August. This second wave of government grants will go further, with the additional £16 million to be invested to help ensure businesses have all the support they need to get ready for Brexit.

Businesses based in, or with a branch in, the UK can apply for funding ahead of the UK leaving the EU. Grants can be used to support:

 • training costs for businesses who complete customs declarations, or who intend to in the future

• funding for IT improvement, which is available to small and medium sized employers who are currently involved in trade as an intermediary

There are two grants to help businesses to complete customs declarations, in preparation for the UK leaving the UK: -

1. funding for training that helps businesses complete customs declarations and processes

2. IT improvements to help businesses complete customs declarations more efficiently.

Qualifying for the grants

A business must; -

- be established in, or have a branch in the UK when the grant is paid to you

- not have previously failed to meet its tax obligations – we'll check our records to decide if we can offer your business a grant

You can apply for just one of the grants, or both.

Training grant

To apply for the training grant, your business must either: -

- complete customs declarations for yourself or someone else (or intend to in the future)

- import from, or export to the EU and complete customs declarations (or intend to complete customs declarations in the future)

IT improvements grant

To apply for the IT improvements grant, your business must: -

- currently complete customs declarations for importers and exporters

- have 250 employees or fewer

- have an annual turnover of less than €50 million

What the grants must be used for

Training: -

The training must give you or your employees the skills to: -

- complete customs declarations

- carry out customs processes – this can include relevant training in safety and security

- help other businesses with import and export processes

The training does not have to lead to a formal qualification.

If you want to arrange the training internally, you can use the funding for the cost of delivering the training, like related stationery, room hire and catering.

If the training will be delivered by an in-house trainer, you can also use the funding to cover the (reasonable) day rate of the trainer.

You cannot use the funding: -

- towards the existing costs of current training

- for other unrelated training

IT improvements

You must use the funding to buy software that will help your business to complete customs declarations more efficiently.

It must be a ready-made solution - you cannot use the funding to commission bespoke software.

You can also use the funding to: -

- buy hardware that's needed for the software to run

- install and configure the software and hardware

- buy the first-year licence

- train employees to use the software

You cannot use the funding for unrelated networking costs.

How much are the grants for?

Training grant

The grant will give you up to 100% of the cost of training for your employees, up to a limit of £2,250 for each course.

It will also cover the cost of training you run internally, up to a limit of £250 for each employee on the course.

IT improvements

The grant will give you up to €200,000 (the maximum amount of state aid available).

What information is needed to apply?

When you apply, you'll be asked for your business's:

- registered name and number

- contact details

- VAT number (if this applies)

- Unique Taxpayer Reference (UTR)

- most recent utility bill

Depending on which grant you're applying for, you'll also need to provide some information about what you'll use the funding for.

Training grant

You'll be asked for:

- a quote for the cost of the training

- the CV of the trainer if the training will be delivered internally

IT improvements grant

You'll be asked for:

details of the software you intend to buy

quotes for the cost of:

buying and installing the software

buying and installing related hardware

training employees to use the software

How to apply

PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) is administering the grants for HMRC.

Apply online through PwC.

After you've applied

If your application is successful, you'll receive a grant offer letter.

You'll need to submit proof of how much you've spent on IT improvements or training within 2 months of getting the grant offer letter.

You'll then get the grant within 30 days. It'll be paid by Bacs to a UK bank account in the name of the person who applied.