

Backing International Small Restaurants FAQs

Program Overview

1. What is the deadline for restaurant owners/operators to apply?

The program launched at 10:00 a.m. Eastern Time ("ET") on May 31, 2023. The deadline for applications is 11:59 p.m. ET on **July 7, 2023** for London and Toronto applicants. [The deadline for applications for Sydney, Mexico City and Tokyo restaurant owners has been extended until July 21, 2023.](#)

2. What is the selection process?

Applicants apply using the form on the IDA Foundation website. The IDA Foundation and American Express will decide upon the finalists based upon the priority criteria weighting described below.

3. What is the awarded grant amount?

Grants are available for the following funding amounts in each city:

- London – 6 grants of 11,500 GBP
- Mexico City – 12 grants of \$7,500 USD
- Sydney – 6 grants of \$21,000 AUD
- Tokyo – 6 grants of 2M JPY
- Toronto – 6 grants of \$19,500 CAD

The selected restaurants will enter into a grant agreement with the IDA Foundation outlining the terms and conditions of the grant.

4. What are the eligibility criteria for evaluating applicants?

Grant Eligibility Criteria for Eligible Small Restaurants:

- Located within one of the five program cities (London, Mexico City, Sydney, Tokyo, Toronto)
- Be currently open for business
- Be a small/independently-owned restaurant/café/bar or pub with food offering and not part of a franchise with more than 5 locations
- Have an 2022-2023 annual revenue below the following definitions:
 - <1M GBP in London
 - <20M MXN in Mexico City
 - <2M AUD in Sydney
 - <1M CAD in Toronto

- <250M JPY in Tokyo

Restaurants that meet the above criteria will then be evaluated on the following. Preference will be given to restaurants that best demonstrate:

- Clear use of funds and its impact on the restaurant.
 - Grant funds must be able to be deployed quickly in a 4 month timeframe
- Contribution to neighborhood identity or community engagement
- Explanation of hardships that the restaurant has endured
- Owned and/or operated by underrepresented and/or economically vulnerable members of the community

Acceptance of American Express is not a requirement to be considered for the grant.

4. What is the program timeline?

- May 31: Program Announced and Applications Open
- July 7: Application period closes
- July: Outreach to Finalists Begins – Additional Documentation Request
- August: Notification to Selected Restaurants
- September: Restaurants Publicly Announced
- September - December: Grant Implementation
- January: Project Completion

5. What is the notification process for successful grant recipients?

Grant recipients will be contacted via email. Due to the volume of submissions, applicants who are not selected to receive a grant will not receive separate correspondence.

Applicants may be contacted to submit additional materials, including expanded narratives and detailed grant usage information.

6. How will the funds be disbursed?

Grant recipients will receive funding in two payments, (1) initial two-thirds advance payment will be made upon receipt of signed grant agreement, and (2) final one-third payment will be made on reimbursement following IDA Foundation's receipt of the final expense report and data reporting.

7. What reporting requirements are expected from the restaurant?

Grant recipients will work with the local partner and IDA Foundation to provide some baseline data at the time the initial grant payment is provided (e.g. data on revenues, employees, etc.). By no later than December 31, 2023, grant recipients will be required to share how the grant has helped their business and share data to show any changes that were enabled by the receipt of this grant.

8. Who is the International Downtown Association Foundation?

The IDA Foundation is the non-profit arm of the International Downtown Association, a Washington, D.C.-based organisation empowering place management leaders with knowledge, research, and public policies for creating prosperous city centres, commercial neighbourhoods and liveable urban places for all. Visit <https://downtown.org/> for more information.

Eligibility

1. Who can apply?

Any restaurant, pub, bar, café with food service within London, Mexico City, Sydney, Tokyo, Toronto, and which fits the eligibility criteria described above can apply. Prior recipients of the Backing International Small Restaurant grant in 2022 are not eligible for consideration.

2. Who can receive funds?

Funding will be awarded directly to the small restaurant owner.

3. Are there target populations for these grants?

Although not exclusive, this grant is focused on venues owned and/or operated by underrepresented and/or economically vulnerable members of the community. These can be defined differently in each city but broadly could include owners/operators experiencing hardship, women, people of colour, LGBTQIA+, indigenous populations, immigrants, etc.

4. Are there specific eligible uses of funds?

Use of the funds is fairly flexible as long as it meets a critical business need that supports the restaurant in recovery from the effects of the pandemic. Potential uses could include critical improvements needed to sustain their operations such as enhancing digital capabilities, building outdoor dining spaces, purchasing new equipment and making other physical improvements. Utility costs are a potential use but must not exceed 15% of the total grant award. The planned use of funds must be outlined in the application.

Rent, salaries, food supplies, or alcohol are not eligible grant fund uses.

5. If I am leasing space for my restaurant, is my restaurant still eligible?

Yes, restaurant groups who are building tenants are eligible to apply.