



# Kildare County Council

## Commercial Incentive Grant Scheme 2021

## Introduction

Kildare County Council at the November 2020 plenary meeting, approved an incentive scheme to encourage the use of vacant commercial premises in town and village centres in the County. An attractive, vibrant commercial area contributes positively to a location's retail and economic growth, boosting footfall and street activity, thereby encouraging a longer stay by shoppers and visitors, resulting in increased consumer spending in local businesses.

As a complement to the highly successful Shop Fronts Grants Scheme already available through Economic Development Unit, Kildare County Council has developed a mechanism to address the issue of vacant units in the village and town centres. The Commercial Incentive Grant Scheme has been designed and developed with the aim of reducing the number of vacant town centre units. This scheme provides an additional support to entrepreneurs wishing to start-up businesses in our town and village centres.

## Objectives of the Scheme

The scheme has a number of objectives including:

- To reduce the number of ground and first floor vacant properties in the town and village centres by encouraging new businesses to occupy commercial premises that were previously occupied and have since been vacant over 2 years (5 years in the case of new, and never occupied commercial premises);
- To encourage the provision of commercial ventures in the locality;
- To assist in job creation and ongoing employment;
- To reduce the negative visual impact of empty commercial properties;
- To increase the rates collection in order to maintain local services.

## Grant Details:

A grant will be payable to successful applicants over a period of up to 3 years, based on the commercial rates payable for the premises, subject to a maximum of grant of €7,500 based on rates of €10,000, as follows:

- **End of Year 1**  
Grant payable equivalent to 75% of rates paid for the relevant year, subject to a maximum of €7,500 (ie 75% \* €10,000)
- **End of Year 2**  
Grant payable equivalent to 50% of rates paid for the relevant year, subject to a maximum of €5,000 (ie 50% \* €10,000)
- **End of Year 3**  
Grant payable equivalent to 25% of rates paid for the relevant year, subject to a maximum of €2,500 (ie 25% \* €10,000)

The grant is in respect of commercial properties, in town and village centres, that were previously rateably occupied and which have been vacant for over two years, and is now rateably occupied by the claimant.

The grant applies to the extent that there is a net increase in occupation in the county, ie relocation from one property to another does not qualify. The rates payable on the property from time of occupation must be fully discharged before any grant is payable. Actual occupation of less than 1 year will not qualify for the scheme.

Applications for the grant must be submitted in the year for which the rates are liable.

## Commercial Incentive Grant Scheme Payment

The payment to the successful applicant under the Commercial Incentive Grant Scheme will be based on a rates/calendar year and must be for sequential years.

The applicant may choose to apply in the year they commence, or in the following year which would be the first full calendar year they are in business. (ie if the business commences in September, then the applicant is only liable for rates for September-December in the year of commencement. If these rates are paid in full, they can supply details with their application and choose to apply for the grant in the following calendar year in order to maximise the grant available. All rates due must be paid before the grant will be paid.)

## Eligibility:

- The scheme will be available to new businesses or those expanding into a new location;
- The scheme is applicable to the use of previously rateably occupied commercial properties, which have been vacant for a minimum of 24 months at date of occupation, and which met the Council's criteria to be treated as a vacant property for rates purposes for the period  
**Or**  
To the use of new premises which were developed in the Town or Village Centre, were never occupied, and met the Council's criteria to be treated as a vacant property for rates purposes for a period of five years or more;

- Three years is the maximum allowed for the grant regardless of the time the premises was vacant;
- Rates must be paid in full each year in order to qualify for the grant;
- In year 4 the full amount of rates due must be paid in that financial year;
- The grant applicant must be the rateable occupier of the property. There can be no outstanding rates or other charges due to the council, owing by the applicant in respect of any property.
- Actual occupation of less than 1 year will not qualify for the grant;
- The use of the property should comply with appropriate Planning guidance;
- The Applicant must be able to submit a copy of their Tax Clearance Certificate.

A list of non-qualifying activities is set out below:

Charity Shops	Betting Shops
Amusement arcades / premises with gaming machines	E-Cigarette Shops
Adult Shops	Cash for Gold / Cash for Clothes Shops
Nightclubs / Private Members Clubs	Banks
Moneylenders	Off-licences
Takeaways	Pop-up Shops
End of lines/Closing down / Euro or Discount Stores	
Multiples and/or franchises where the owner has > 3 units	Any premises where there is unauthorised development or which are subject to enforcement proceedings

In all cases, Kildare County Council reserves the right to refuse the application if there are concerns that the use is not consistent with the type of use usually seen in town and village centres. Kildare County Council's decision on applications is final.

## Applications

Applications will only be accepted electronically through the Council's On-line Application Portal.

The initial application must be accompanied by:

- Evidence of payment of contributions (if applicable) and rates.
- Copy of current Tax Clearance Certificate
- Evidence of ownership of premises (eg Land Registry Certificate/Auctioneers letter) or minimum 12 month lease agreement;
- Statement confirming the business is new and not just relocating;
- Evidence that the business is active