

Nova Scotia Department of Economic Development

Small Business Wildfire Relief Program

June 27, 2023

Q&As:

What is the Small Business Wildfire Relief Program?

The Small Business Wildfire Relief Program is a one-time, non-repayable grant for small businesses who needed to evacuate or close their businesses unexpectedly due to the wildfires in Halifax Regional Municipality and Shelburne County. The grant is intended to address some of the immediate financial pressures small businesses faced.

On June 20, the program was expanded to include more small businesses to include those outside the mandatory evacuation zones that were closed for at least five days because of the fires. This expansion was in response to feedback we received from impacted businesses in the area.

How can I apply?

You can apply online at [Small Business Wildfire Relief Program - Government of Nova Scotia](#)

It should take 2 to 4 weeks to get your cheque. It can take longer if more information is required or needs to be verified in order to process your application.

What is the definition of a small business that is approved for support under the Small Business Wildfire Relief Program?

Small businesses can apply for financial assistance if they meet all the following criteria:

- Business needed to evacuate or close for at least 5 days because of the recent fires in Halifax Regional Municipality and Shelburne County
- business is registered with Nova Scotia Registry of Joint Stock Companies (as a sole proprietorship, partnership, company or non-profit) and has a Business Number from Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)
- business paid the corporate tax rate for small business on income taxes in its most recently completed tax year, if the business is incorporated
- yearly gross revenue is not more than \$5,000,000
- franchise is locally owned or operated in Atlantic Canada (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island or Newfoundland and Labrador), if the business is a franchise
- is an eligible business type (see below).

What type of business is eligible?

Eligible businesses include:

- accommodations
- charities
- construction
- fitness, recreational and leisure facilities
- independent gas retailers
- independent retailers
- licensed fish processors
- live performing arts venues

- manufacturing
- personal services
- private daycares
- repair services
- restaurants and licensed drinking establishments
- some self-regulated and unregulated health professionals
- wholesale operators

Does my business need to be registered with the Nova Scotia Registry of Joint Stock Companies (RJSC) in order to apply for the Small Business Wildfire Relief Program?

A requirement of this program is that applicants must be registered to do business in Nova Scotia.

Please refer to the Nova Scotia Registry of Joint Stock Companies for information on registering your business: <https://beta.novascotia.ca/programs-and-services/registry-joint-stock-companies>

- If you believe you are not required to register with the Registry of Joint Stock Companies (for example, if your business was formed in New Brunswick or you are operating a business using only your personal name), please provide your CRA Business Number and your business's approximate gross revenue for the 2022 taxation year, or the most recent tax year filed.
- If your business is required to register and is not registered, please refer to the link above for information on registering your business. Once you have registered, send a copy of your registration to SBWRP@novascotia.ca along with your 8-digit application ID number for your application to be reassessed.
- If your registration is revoked, please refer to the above link for information on how to reinstate. Once your registration is active, send a copy of your registration certificate to SBWRP@novascotia.ca along with your 8-digit application ID number for your application to be reassessed.
- If you do not have a CRA (HST) Business Number, you must confirm why you are not required to register for an HST account. Information on CRA Business Numbers and the types of program accounts that require can be found at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/businesses/topics/gst-hst-businesses/when-register-charge.html>
Send your CRA (HST) Business number, or the reason why your business is exempt, to SBWRP@novascotia.ca, along with your 8-digit application ID number for your application to be reassessed.

I have a registered business that operates at a number of locations. Is the grant available for each of my business locations?

The Small Business Wildfire Relief Program is available for each registered business, not number of locations.

How long will it take to receive my grant?

It should take 2 to 4 weeks to get your cheque. It can take longer if more information is required or needs to be verified in order to process your application.

I have more questions about the program and/or my application. Who can I speak with?

The Small Business Wildfire Relief Program can help you with the application process and answer questions about the program. Contact sbwrp@novascotia.ca for assistance.

Is there a support program available for individuals?

The Emergency Relief Grant for Individuals is intended to support employed and self-employed Nova Scotians who are not receiving Employment Insurance (EI) and those who had or are in an EI waiting period. The amount of the short-term emergency grant, either \$275 or \$550 per week, depends on the extent of the impact faced. To be eligible, workers must not have been able to attend work, resulting in an interruption in income. People who are self-employed and unable to operate their business, permanently or temporarily, because of the wildfires may also qualify.

Information on how to access the grant and eligibility is at: <https://novascotia.ca/programs/emergency-relief-grant-individuals>. You can contact an Employment Nova Scotia office at 1-877-223-0888 with any questions.

Will there be more supports available?

There is no doubt the wildfires had significant impact on small businesses. We understand there are many others who have been impacted by these wildfires. This is a first step. We've been working with the business communities in the affected areas to better understand the ongoing impacts to their operations and to identify further needs for support.