



Government supports for COVID-19 impacted businesses

The COVID-19 crisis is presenting immediate and severe financial challenges for businesses.

Here are some practical steps you can take:

1. Talk to your bank. All the banks have announced that they will offer flexibility to their customers, and they may be able to provide payment holidays or emergency working capital facilities.
2. Take immediate steps to manage your cashflows. Look for scope to:
 - Lower variable costs
 - Delay discretionary spend
 - Extend your payables
 - Expedite your receivables
 - Explore supply chain financing options
3. Use available government supports for working capital.
 - The Credit Guarantee Scheme supports loans up to €1 million for periods of up to 7 years. Applications can be made to AIB, Bank of Ireland and Ulster Bank. Eligibility criteria apply.
 - Microenterprises, can access COVID-19 loans of up to €50,000 from MicroFinance Ireland. Loans are available at an interest rate of between 6.8% and 7.8%. Businesses can apply through their Local Enterprise Office or directly at microfinanceireland.ie. Eligibility criteria apply.
 - The €200m SBCI COVID-19 Working Capital Scheme for eligible businesses will be available within the next week. Maximum loan size will be €1.5 million (first €500,000 unsecured) and the maximum interest rate will be 4%. Applications can be made through the SBCI website at sbci.gov.ie. Eligibility criteria apply.
 - **A €200m Package for Enterprise Supports** including a Rescue and Restructuring Scheme is available through [Enterprise Ireland](https://enterpriseireland.ie) for vulnerable but viable firms that need to restructure or transform their business.
4. Get advice from your accountant or use the advisory support available from your local LEO.
5. Check if your insurance policy covers you for an interruption in your business, or a temporary business closure, caused by COVID-19



6. If you have concerns about your ability to pay your tax liabilities speak to the Revenue Commissioners, who have advised:

"On an on-going basis, Revenue engages with viable businesses experiencing temporary cash flow or trading difficulties that affect the timely payment of tax. Revenue works very successfully with businesses that engage early to resolve their tax payment difficulties. Revenue will engage with any viable business that experiences temporary cashflow difficulties, including difficulties arising from exceptional circumstances such as the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) outbreak." See www.revenue.ie.

Revenue has also posted [advice for businesses experiencing trading difficulties as a result of COVID-19](#). This includes information on tax returns, the application of late payment interest, debt enforcement, tax clearance and customs

7. Be aware of other government supports available. For example:

- Employees of businesses that need to reduce hours or days worked can avail of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection [Short-time Work Support](#).
- Government is asking those employers who have ceased trading if at all possible, to continue to pay workers during this period – at least at the jobseeker rate of €203 per week. The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection is setting up a refund scheme for employers to pay staff the €203 per week for each worker. This means that workers retain their link with employers and there is no need for them to submit a Jobseekers claim.
- For those workers who have been laid off without pay, there is no need to visit an Intreo Centre. The DEASP has introduced a new support payment for the self-employed who have lost business and to those who have lost employment as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the [COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment](#). This support pays a flat rate of €203 per week for a six-week period.
- The full range of Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, Local Enterprise Office and Údarás na Gaeltachta grant supports will be available to firms to help with strategies to innovate, diversify markets and supply chains and to improve competitiveness.
- The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection and the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation will provide a joint First Responder support service through the Intreo Offices and development agencies, Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland in each region to provide tailored supports for impacted firms, with objective of avoiding mass lay-offs and buying time for firms to work through the short-term disruptions.
- A Finance in Focus grant of €7,200 will be available to Enterprise Ireland and Údarás na Gaeltachta clients that want to access consultancy support to undertake immediate finance reviews.
- In addition to their current range of business supports to microenterprises, LEOs can also provide business continuity vouchers from €2,500 to assist in preparing any business continuity issues that arise in the current challenging environment.
- Enterprise Ireland has published a [COVID-19 Business Response Plan](#).

The above information was taken from the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation