

# GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR TRADING ONLINE VOUCHER APPLICATION

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# Overview

This document lays out the basic criteria that must be met by a business wanting to apply for the Trading Online Voucher. The requirements are straightforward and apply nationwide. As part of the Government response to Covid 19, changes have been made to this scheme that applies to all applications received between April 7th 2020 and September 30th 2020 and they are also outlined in this document.

This funding is available to small businesses and is provided by the Irish Government (Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment - <https://www.dccae.gov.ie>). The Trading Online Voucher is facilitated nationwide through Local Enterprise Offices. FCR Media have no affiliation with Local Enterprise Offices, DCCAE or the Scheme.

**The grant is a significant opportunity for Irish SMEs. There is up to €2,500 available through the Local Enterprise Offices with co-funding of 50% from the business.**

## TOV GRANT BASIC REQUIREMENTS

- Have a maximum of 10 employees.
- Be trading for at least 6 months.
- Be in an area covered by your Local Enterprise Office.
- Have a turnover of less than €2m per year.
- Have attended a Trade Online Voucher Seminar facilitated by their Local Enterprise Office (now being delivered online).

Note: Having benefited from the Trade Online Voucher Scheme in the past is no longer a barrier to applying again.



### Tip 1

#### **DON'T JUST ATTEND – LEARN!**

The requirement that you attend an information session can seem like a box that needs to be ticked before your application can be submitted. However, at FCR Media, we strongly encourage you to take a different approach to these sessions; they are usually delivered by engaging, knowledgeable speakers. While the content is naturally quite general when catering for a diverse group of businesses, there is undoubtedly something there for everyone to learn. Local Enterprise Offices have now facilitated these sessions to be conducted as webinars, so it is easier than ever to attend.

## Tip 2

### **ASK IF YOU CAN ATTEND A DIFFERENT LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE AREA TRADE ONLINE SEMINAR**

If you need help finding a TOV session in the upcoming events section, you can just email or call your local LEO office to find out if one is planned soon. If there isn't a session scheduled in a time frame that works for you, the event is already booked out, or the date doesn't suit, it is possible to ask your local LEO office if you can attend the Trade Online Seminar organised by another LEO area and use the attendance at this session to support your application. As the sessions in different areas are broadly similar, we have generally found the LEO offices to be flexible and practical in allowing this.

LEO office finder: <https://www.localenterprise.ie/Find-Your-Local-Enterprise-Office/>

## Tip 3

### **TAKE NOTES AND ASK QUESTIONS!**

When you attend the session, take notes and ask questions; the speakers are used to dealing with small businesses and can offer simple solutions to problems you may have or point you in the direction of further help. They have dealt with several businesses in your situation and are well-positioned to deliver great advice. Most online seminars will allow you to submit questions during the presentation that the presenter will address.

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## Tip 4

### **DON'T FORGET TO DO YOUR HOMEWORK!**

Turn in your application soon after the workshop, ideally within a couple of days. You still get a number of months for the work to be completed and the grant to be drawn down, but it is best to get the application in as soon as possible. Some LEO areas will have a mentor who will reach out to help you get the application in. Their advice can be beneficial, and you should take advantage of their assistance.

## Tip 5

### **THINK STRATEGY, NOT JUST WEBSITE**

When deciding what to invest in, consider your digital strategy, not just allowing your website to take online payments. The TOV Scheme recognises that a website is only as good as the traffic that can be generated to it, there is scope within the application to provide for delivery of traffic to your site, and this should form part of your thinking. The grant allows for the inclusion of investment in SEO and search advertising in your application. Advertising can be no more than 30% of the total spend and must be paid upfront.

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## Tip 6

### **CHOOSE SOMEONE WHO CAN DELIVER A FULL-SERVICE SOLUTION**

While it is possible to use multiple suppliers to deliver upon your application, the fewer conversations you need to have with different prospective suppliers, the easier it will be to get your digital goals delivered via this scheme.

Look for a supplier who can build eComm websites, help you manage the site, and help you deliver traffic to that site. It is also worth asking prospective suppliers if they can help you manage your local digital presence, as this can be a vital but often overlooked element to a complete digital solution.

## Tip 7

### **CHEAPEST ISN'T ALWAYS BEST**

If you do not have an existing web supplier who is clearly best placed to deliver on your digital strategy, then you will be required to get three quotes. While you need to supply these along with your application, you don't have to go with the cheapest if you feel that one particular supplier will better meet your needs. However, you will need to explain why you believe this to be the case.



## Tip 8

### **ASK YOUR SUPPLIER FOR HELP**

If your chosen supplier has experience in dealing with TOV applications, then they will be able to help you frame your investment plan in a way that makes the best commercial sense for your business. Ask your supplier questions about how your investment fits into your long-term digital strategy.



## Tip 9

### **YOU CAN NOW REAPPLY**

If you have availed of the Trade Online Voucher Scheme in the past, it is now possible to apply again. This means you can follow up on the initial steps you took to allow your business to trade online with the next stages in your online growth. Take stock of where you are and what more you would like to achieve to get your products or services in more places online so that you can grow this critical sales channel.

# Reach Out

# To FCR Media

FCR Media is Ireland's most prominent website provider and has helped a large amount of small businesses access their Trading Online Voucher. We have a dedicated eCommerce and financial support team who are always happy to use our experience to guide you in your TOV application. Don't hesitate to contact us on: 01 618 8000 or email [sellonline@fcrmedia.ie](mailto:sellonline@fcrmedia.ie). We can arrange a free one-to-one consultation to discuss the finer details of what's included in your web build, such as a .ie domain, hosting, HTTPS / SSL, and more.





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