

FAQs for Rhode Island Rebounds Ventilation Program

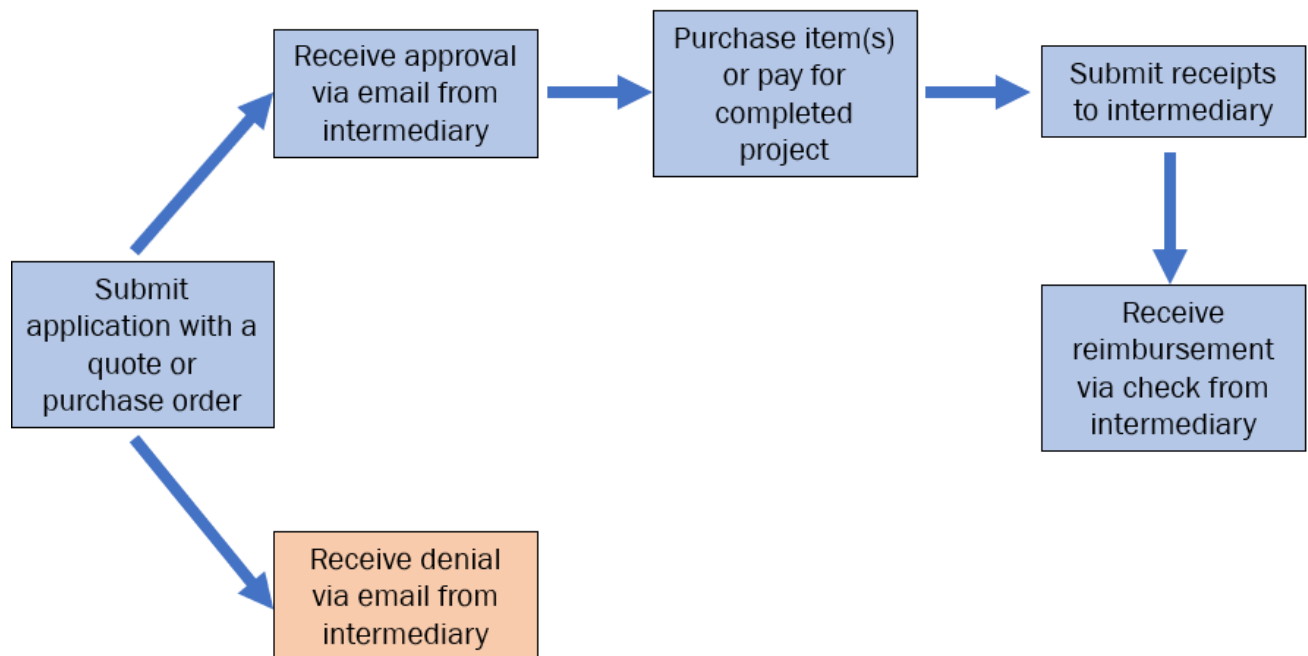
1. How do I know if my business is eligible?

Small businesses must meet the following requirements to be eligible for the RI Rebounds Ventilation Program:

- have less than \$1 million in annual gross revenues
- not be disbarred in the federal System of Account Management (SAM)
- not be permanently closed
- have been open and operating prior to October 1, 2021
- not be a nationally or regionally owned franchise
- be a Rhode Island business or nonprofit
- demonstrate a negative impact from the COVID-19 health pandemic by demonstrating at least one of the following:
 - a. it was forced to close or curtail its operations due to the pandemic or a government order pertaining to the pandemic;
 - b. it experienced a supply chain delay or disruption that negatively impacted its operations;
 - c. it experienced increased costs as a result of the pandemic;
 - d. it was forced to lay off workers as a result of the pandemic;
 - e. or was impacted by the pandemic in some other way.

2. How does the RI Rebounds Ventilation Program work?

The RI Rebounds Ventilation Program is a reimbursement program to support small businesses that were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Funds will be used to assist in making purchases and completing projects that improve indoor air quality of impacted small businesses. Please refer to the diagram below:



3. How much can my small business receive in reimbursement from this grant program?

Each eligible small business may receive a maximum of \$10,000 in reimbursement from the RI Rebounds Ventilation Program. However, any small business that has also received a Take It Outside award may not exceed \$10,000 in awards between both the Ventilation and Take It Outside programs. Additionally, eligible small businesses may only receive \$20,000 across the following four RI Rebounds programs combined (Small Business Direct Grant, Take It Outside/Ventilation, and Technical Assistance). See figure one below.

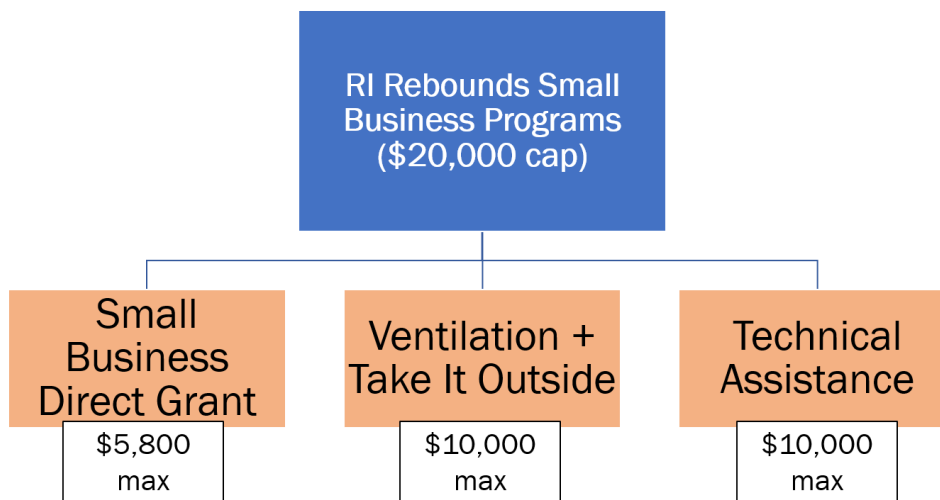


Figure 1: RI Rebounds Small Business funding caps

- a. If I have already received a RI Rebounds Small Business Direct Grant, am I eligible?
 - Yes
- b. If I have received a RI Rebounds Take It Outside award, am I still eligible?
 - Yes, as long as you have not received the maximum \$10,000 allowed through the program. You are only allowed a total award of \$10,000 between both Take it Outside and Ventilation.
- c. If I get a Ventilation award, does that make my business ineligible for any other awards?
 - Not necessarily. However, there is a cap for small businesses across all the RI Rebounds programs (Small Business Direct Grant, Ventilation, Take it Outside, and Technical Assistance). No business may receive more than \$20,000 between these programs.
 - Additionally, each eligible small business may only receive a total of \$10,000 from Ventilation and Take It Outside combined. For example, if you received \$5,000 from the RI Rebounds Take It Outside program you are eligible to receive up to \$5,000 in reimbursement from the RI Rebounds Ventilation Program.

4. What is an intermediary?

Intermediaries assist small businesses accessing the Ventilation program. They will review applications, request funding from Rhode Island Commerce, and disburse reimbursements to eligible small businesses.

5. How do I select my intermediary?

When you apply to the RI Rebounds Ventilation Support Program you will be prompted to select an intermediary to work with. Please select “Pick For Me” from the list if you are unsure which intermediary you would like to partner with. RI Commerce will assign eligible applicants who select “Pick For Me” to one of the intermediaries based upon capacity.

6. Can I work with more than 1 intermediary?

No. A small business can only partner with one intermediary for the program.

7. Does it matter which intermediary I work through?

All intermediaries will provide reimbursement services to businesses. Businesses may work with any approved intermediary and receive the same reimbursement levels.

8. Who can I contact for questions?

Questions or clarifications concerning this program should be directed by e-mail to RISmallBiz@commerceri.com and should include “Ventilation Support Program Question” in the subject line.

9. Are there industry restrictions on this grant?

No. Small businesses in any industry are eligible to apply as long as they meet the eligibility criteria listed in question one.

10. How will the intermediary verify gross revenues of the business applicants?

Small businesses will be required to sign attestations that their gross revenues did not exceed \$1,000,000 in 2020, 2021, or 2022.

11. Does a small business need to own the building where the ventilation upgrades are being done?

No. Small business owners do not need to own the building where ventilation upgrades are being undertaken. However, if the applicant does not own the building, they will need to attest that they have permission from the building’s owner for the approved project.

12. Can the funding be applied to cover part of the cost of a larger HVAC upgrade project?

Yes. It is anticipated that many HVAC projects, as an example, will cost more than the \$10,000 limit of this grant. In those cases, grant funds will only cover up to \$10,000 of the cost and the small business is responsible for the remainder.

13. Is there a deadline for purchased items in order to receive reimbursement?

Yes. Items must be purchased, work must be completed, and reimbursement must be disbursed on or before September 30, 2023. Reimbursement requests must be submitted on or before September 8, 2023.

14. How can I check to see how much my small business received from the grant programs listed in question 2?

The most up to date list of businesses and organizations who received COVID-19 assistance from the

State of Rhode Island can be found here: <http://www.transparency.ri.gov/covid-19/payees.php> . This portal covers information on all relevant grant programs, with the exception of the RI Rebounds Take It Outside program. To see how much your small business received from the RI Rebounds Take It Outside program, you can reach out to the intermediary you worked with for that program.

15. Can funding be used for replacement windows?

No. Funding cannot be used to replace existing windows or to upgrade existing windows. However, funding can be used to add a new window or windows to improve indoor air quality. Replacing a window with a larger window or replacing a window that previously could not open with windows that can open are both eligible expenses.

16. Does the work need to be performed by a registered contractor?

Yes. Any project requesting funds for labor or installation must be completed by a Rhode Island registered contractor and follow local and state regulations (including permits and zoning).

17. What documents do I need to provide for ventilation upgrades? Can I apply with just an outline of my needs and the potential cost?

Applications must include a quote or purchase order (in some cases a screenshot of an online order can be used in the place of a purchase order).

18. What documents do I need to provide once the work is completed and I am seeking a reimbursement?

You are required to submit a receipt or paid invoice prior to receiving a reimbursement for the eligible expenses.

19. Where can I find a list of eligible expenses?

Eligible expenses include:

- Installing a higher-grade filter within an existing air handling unit
- Central HVAC installation, repair, or balancing
- HVAC UVGI system installation
- Adding a portable fan filter unit (PFFU)
- Adding an indoor air purifier
- Adding a window or windows to a small business
- Adding a ceiling fan, exhaust fan, or box fan to help distribute air
- Receipt of an indoor airflow and quality assessment

20. If eligible work has been completed in the last 18 -24 months can a business request funds?

Purchases or projects made after March 3, 2021 are eligible for reimbursement through the Ventilation program. However, prioritization in this program is given for projects/purchases undertaken after the Ventilation program start date (March 16, 2023).

21. Are kitchen ventilation systems eligible?

Yes. Kitchen ventilation systems qualify under the 'exhaust fan' category.

22. How is SAM.gov being handled for this grant program?

Small business recipients are not required to have an active registration with SAM.gov. However, intermediaries will ensure that the small business has not been disbarred from the federal System of Account Management (SAM).