

Overview of Funding for Community Organisations

Colm Markey, MEP

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A Chara,

Having spent much of my adult life involved in community development and in local government, I understand the importance of support of funding for community projects. I know also that the wide array of schemes and terms can be off-putting for some and I believe that more groups could benefit even more if public representatives and civic organisations had a clearer picture of what funds are available.



I have included therefore a summary of the most relevant funding schemes and some advice for those wishing to make an application.

It is important to acknowledge that there are dozens of funding streams many of which change criteria annually, and that this guide is just a first starting point. It is an overview of some of the more important and more common schemes in operation in the past year. It does not claim to be comprehensive or to be legally binding advice. It is intended to point you in the right direction, but I would advise you that should you wish to pursue a funding application you should check the details carefully or seek further advice. You should also note that the detail of several the funding programmes has not yet been finalised, so this guide will be a working document and will be updated regularly.

If you require assistance in relation to securing funding for your community group or project, in preparing an application or in any other regard, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Le gach dea-ghuí,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Colm'.

Colm Markey

Overview

Funding for community organisations can provide a welcome boost to locally generated fundraising and support voluntary effort. It is not intended as substitute to voluntary effort rather to act as a catalyst or incentive for a project to proceed at local level.

Funding can be categorised into a number of different types;

- Capital – for equipment, buildings, construction works.
- Running costs – for current expenditure items.
- Staffing – to pay for staff to work for a community organisation
- Training – to deliver training courses.
- A&D – to fund research, studies, need analysis, business cases, market research, strategic or area plans.
- Programme costs – to funds activities and events.

Rate of aid can vary considerably dependant on the funder, the scheme and the criteria in a given year of funding call. Grant aid for community organisations tends to be higher in terms of percentage than equivalent for private enterprise.

Loan finance is in many cases required in particular for larger community projects. Aside from high street banks and credit unions there are a number of social finance providers currently operating providing loan finance to community organisations in particular social enterprises, these being Community Finance Ireland <https://communityfinanceireland.com/> and Clann Credo. <https://www.clanncredo.ie/>

Useful Contacts

The following contacts can be useful in securing current up to date information on funding calls in Ireland.

PPN's (Public Participation Networks) Operate in each county under the auspices of the Local Authority and provide the function of a community network in each council area. Membership is free to community organisations and it entitles groups to inclusion on mailing lists and regular updates of funding opportunities. Contact your local PPN office to register. <https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/b59ee9-community-network-groups/>.

Local Development Companies – These locally based organisations provide a range of funding programmes on behalf of government to local communities. You can contact <https://ildn.ie/directory/> to look up your Local Development Company.

The Funding-point Local Digest is a subscription service that provides local non-profit groups with detailed information aligned to their Local Authority on local, national and EU/ international funding. <https://www.thefundingpoint.com/>

Advice to Potential Applicants

Before deciding to make an application there are several factors to take into consideration:

- **Relevance:** do not try to follow the funding – rather you should look at the purpose of your organisation and its priorities and programmes and ask yourself whether any initiative that you take on will enhance your organisation or help to deliver on your objectives.
- **Time:** Consider also the amount of time and effort involved in drawing up a project proposal and a funding application and whether or not you have the skills and resources available to you. Likewise, take into account the level of admin required to run a project, which can be quite high / detailed.
- **Cost:** Find out also what matching funding will be required and decide whether that is available to you. Will it be too much of a drain on your resources?

I am not offering these cautions to deter you from embarking on a project, but if you pick the project that is right for you and that is deliverable, you are much more likely to succeed.

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Clár Funding Scheme

Categories: Capital funding, Equipment Funding for Schools and Community Groups

CLÁR 2021 includes a new Innovation Measure targeted at piloting new ideas which address challenges faced by communities in CLÁR areas.

Measures 1, 2 and 3(a) will be managed by Monaghan County Council, and Measure 3 (b) and the Innovation Measure will be managed directly by the Department of Rural and Community Development.

Measure 1: Support for Schools/Community Safety Measures

Measure 2: Outdoor Community Recreation Facilities

Measure 3(a): Community Wellbeing Measure - Community Gardens and Allotments

Measure 3(b) – Mobility & Cancer Care Transport

CLÁR Innovation Measure (New measure for 2021)

Description / Summary

The CLÁR programme (Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais) provides funding for small scale infrastructural projects in identified CLÁR areas that have suffered significant levels of population decline.

Purpose and Objectives

CLÁR (Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais) is a targeted investment programme for rural areas that aims to provide funding for small infrastructural projects in rural areas that have experienced significant levels of de-population. The funding works in conjunction with local/Agency and other Departmental funding programmes and on the basis of locally identified priorities.

Example of Actions underlying the objectives that were supported by the 2021 Clar Fund include:

- Amber Safety Lights, Child Safety Lights, Speed Safety Lights, Pedestrian Crossings, Access footpaths, Bus Shelters, Car Parking Facilities, Public Lighting, COVID-19 Safety related projects (Measure 1)
- Outdoor Cinema Screen, Bandstand/Amphitheatre, Outdoor Drinking Water Fountain, Covered Seating & Picnic Benches, Associated Landscaping & Path Widening, Playgrounds/MUGAs (new or upgrades), Skateboard Parks, Exercise Class Space, Public Toilets & Bins, Car & Bike Parking (Measure 2)
- Groundworks, Footpaths, Raised Beds, Native pollinator plants, Sensory planting and equipment, Polytunnels, Sheds, Rainwater harvesting tanks, Fencing, Gates, Tools as appropriate, Benches, Picnic tables, Shelters and Outdoor pizza ovens/BBQ areas (Measure 3a)

Funding Period: Usually open annually, first quarter. Closing Date end of April. Advertised by Local Authorities.

For info: <https://monaghan.ie/communitydevelopment/2021/03/25/clar-funding-scheme-2021/>

Body you apply to: Local Authority

Funded By: Department of Rural and Community Development

Who can apply: Schools and Community organisations in CLAR Areas only.

% Grant Aid: 90% of the total cost of a project.

Min and Max Grant: Grant funding for projects will range from €5,000 to €50,000.

Community Enhancement Programme Grant Scheme

Categories: Capital projects that demonstrate added value. Projects or elements of projects of a capital nature may be funded. These include, for example, office equipment, project resources, research facilities, energy efficiency equipment, etc. for voluntary groups.

<COUNTY> Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) announces the launch of the Community Enhancement Programme for 2021. This funding is targeted towards enhancing community facilities for individuals and communities that are impacted by disadvantage as identified in the LECP. The 2021 Community Enhancement Programme (CEP) will provide small grants designed to assist in the re-opening of facilities such as community centres, men's and women's sheds, parish halls and youth centres.

Description / Summary

The Community Enhancement Programme (CEP) is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and will be administered through the LCDC and the Community Section of the local County Council.

Purpose and Objectives

The Community Enhancement Programme (CEP) provides funding to locally based community and voluntary groups in disadvantaged urban and rural areas across a Local Authority. The funding is to help groups and clubs get back on their feet and may be used to carry out necessary renovations and repairs or to purchase equipment such as tables and chairs, tools and signage, laptops and printers, lawnmowers, canopies, training equipment and so on.

Example of Actions underlying the objectives that were supported by the 2021 Community Heritage Grant Scheme include:

- Development/renovation of community centre's
- Once off maintenance of premises. This does not include regular routine maintenance
- Community amenities
- Development of youth clubs or facilities
- Development of sports/recreation facilities
- Improvements to town parks and common areas and spaces
- CCTV equipment
- Public realm improvements
- Streetscaping
- Development of play/recreation spaces
- Energy efficiency type projects
- Purchase of equipment
- Adaptations or equipment needed as a result of COVID-19

Funding Period: Usually open annually, Spring/Summer. Advertised by Department of Rural and Community Development and the Local Authorities

For info: <https://monaghan.ie/communitydevelopment/2021/05/27/community-enhancement-programme-grant-scheme-2021/>

Body you apply to: Local Authority

Funded By: Department of Rural and Community Development

Who can apply: Any not-for-profit community or voluntary group can apply

% Grant Aid: Varies – see funding call.

Min and Max Grant: Varies, 2 tranches, one less than €1,000 & one greater than €1,000

The Community Foundation for Ireland Grants

Categories: Irish philanthropic network providing various grants to Social Enterprises, CLGs and Charities

In 2020 alone CFI provided over €15 million in grants. At a time of national crisis they have adapted and responded forming new and unique partnerships, including a Covid-19 Emergency Fund, RTÉ Does Comic Relief as well as the Late Late Toy Show Appeal. Together they have given frontline organisations and lifeline services the resources for digital transformation so their vital work can continue through the Pandemic.

Description / Summary

The Community Foundation for Ireland was established in 2000 with the intention of helping to grow a philanthropic ethos within Ireland and building a perpetual fund to support charitable causes and communities in Ireland and overseas. The Community Foundation for Ireland and its partners believe in equality for all in thriving communities. We work with individuals, families, corporates and other trusts and foundations as well as Government to translate giving in the moment to giving that is strategic, sustainable and impactful.

Purpose and Objectives

They believe in an Ireland where everyone feels they belong. An Ireland where people are equal and communities thrive. An Ireland where everyone has a voice. CFI stand for a fair, caring and vibrant Ireland for now and the future.

Example of Actions underlying the objectives that were supported by the SEAI Community Grant Scheme:

- RTE Toy Show appeal
- Covid-19 Response Fund
- Grants for Mergers
- Older Persons Fund
- Environment and Nature Fund
- The Women's Fund

Funding Period: Ongoing.

For info: <https://www.communityfoundation.ie/grants/grants-support-hub>

Body you apply to: Community Foundation for Ireland

Funded By: Community Foundation for Ireland

Who can apply: Their focus is on supporting grassroots community groups working in their local community, as well as national organisations working on various issues. They only support community and voluntary groups.

% Grant Aid: Depends on specific grant application

Min and Max Grant: varies, see recent call for applications for details.

Community Heritage Grant Scheme 2021 – Ireland

Categories: Capital Funding for improving Heritage Sites

The Heritage Council has allocated in the region of €1,000,000 to this scheme in 2021 to undertake capital works that will apply good heritage practice in managing and improving access to sites, collections, objects, etc.

Description / Summary

The Community Heritage Grant Scheme 2021 is administered by the Heritage Council Ireland to support capital projects that improve access and inclusion to heritage sites; that apply good heritage practice to the management of places, collections, or objects (including buildings). The scheme also supports the purchase of essential equipment.

Purpose and Objectives

This scheme is intended to enable communities and heritage non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to continue their work in the area of Heritage sites or to start new initiatives.

Example of Actions underlying the objectives that were supported by the 2021 Community Heritage Grant Scheme include:

- Access and Inclusion (e.g. Disability)
- Development of Digital Heritage Resources (e.g. Interactive maps, videos, virtual exhibitions)
- Community-led surveys and audits that will inform future management of sites. (Graveyard Surveys, Survey of monuments, places vulnerable to Climate Change etc.)
- Community-led conservation reports and plans
- Conservation works

Funding Period: Usually open annually, first quarter. Closing Date end of March. Advertised by the Heritage Council.

For info: <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/funding/funding-schemes>

Body you apply to: The Heritage Council

Funded By: The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Who can apply: Voluntary and community groups; heritage-related non-governmental organisations (NGOs); not-for-profit heritage organisations; Museum Standards Programme for Ireland (MSPI) participants; Adopt a Monument Programme participants.

% Grant Aid: 80% of the total cost of a project.

Min and Max Grant: Grant funding for projects up to €15,000. In exceptional circumstances, the upper limit of €15,000 may be exceeded where a compelling case can be made for a higher grant and these will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Community Services Programme (CSP)

Categories: Providing a co-funding contribution towards the cost of employing a manager and full-time equivalent (FTE) positions in community companies or co-operatives.

In 2021 additional funding of €3.2m for the Community Services Programme (CSP) 2021 Support Fund, in line with the extension of other Government wage support schemes up to end of June 2021 was granted. This brings the total amount allocated under the CSP Support Fund in 2020 and 2021, to €7.95 million.

Description / Summary

The Community Services Programme (CSP) supports community companies and co-operatives to deliver local social, economic and environmental services that tackle disadvantage by providing a co-funding contribution towards the cost of employing a manager and full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. CSP funded services are found in disadvantaged communities where public and private sector services are lacking, for example, due to geographical or social isolation, or because of demand deficits (i.e. where demand is not being met by existing services).

Purpose and Objectives

Some of the objectives of the programme include; Promote social enterprise as an approach to alleviating disadvantage and addressing local social, economic and environmental needs which are not being met through public or private funding or other resources; create sustainable jobs for those most distant from the labour market, in particular for those who are long term unemployed and from specific target groups; Promote sustainable social and economic development.

Example of Actions underlying the objectives that were supported by the Community Services Programme:

CSP funded community companies and co-operatives fall under one of the following categories within the programme. Those who:

- Operate community halls and facilities (CSP Strand 1)
- Provide services to local, regional and national geographical communities or communities of interest, especially to disadvantaged communities (CSP Strand 2)
- Operate social enterprises that provide employment for specific disadvantaged groups namely Travellers, people with disabilities, ex-prisoners and recovering drug mis-users (CSP Strand 3)

Funding Period: Typical for a period of 3 years – check with Pobal for call opening times.

For info: <https://www.pobal.ie/programmes/community-services-programme-csp/>

Body you apply to: Pobal

Funded By: Department of Rural and Community Development

Who can apply: Legally incorporated community organisations (companies limited by guarantee) and industrial and provident societies (co-operatives)

% Grant Aid: The co-funding contribution towards employing each Full-Time Equivalent position (“FTEs”) is €19,033 per annum.
Where the CSP contributes to the cost of employing a manager, this amounts to €32,000 co-funding per annum.

Min and Max Grant: Varies, dependant on number of staff approved.

Dormant Accounts Fund

Categories: All costs directly associated with the delivery of a social enterprises project activities relevant to that year's call are eligible for consideration

On April 16 2021, as part of the Dormant Accounts Fund Action Plan for 2021, the Department of Social Protection invited applications from community and voluntary organisations who wished to support and improve the employment opportunities (incl. self-employment opportunities) for People with Disabilities. There are two key objectives of this funding:

To support People with Disabilities to: access employment; improve their career progression opportunities 'in work'; and improve their employment outcomes through education and training.

To support potential employers to provide employment for People with Disabilities.

Description / Summary

The Dormant Accounts Fund (DAF) was established by legislation and enables unclaimed funds from accounts in credit institutions in Ireland to be used to support,

- the personal and social development of persons who are economically or socially disadvantaged
- the educational development of persons who are educationally disadvantaged
- persons with a disability (within the meaning of the Equal Status Act 2000)

Purpose and Objectives

The overall aim of this funding is to increase the impact of social enterprises by enhancing their capacity to deliver goods/services and increase their traded income through the provision of tailored supports.

Example of Actions underlying the objectives that were supported by the 2021 Community Heritage Grant Scheme include:

- Assessment of the training and support needs of individual social enterprises.
- Practical skills workshops or courses in "Running a business".
- Workshops on sourcing funding, finance or investment.
- One to one business coaching and mentoring, tailored to meet the needs of the social enterprise.
- Workshops on meeting legislative and legal requirements and governance.
- Specialist advice for social enterprise i.e. tailored to specific types social enterprises.

Funding Period: Usually open annually, Spring/Summer. Advertised by Department of Rural and Community Development and Pobal

For info: <https://www.pobal.ie/programmes/dormant-accounts-fund-daf/>

Body you apply to: Pobal

Funded By: Department of Rural and Community Development

Who can apply: National, regional or local organisations or networks that support social enterprises and have a demonstrable track record in the delivery of training and mentoring to social enterprises.
Statutory bodies or institutions (including Higher Education Institutions) which have a demonstrable track record in providing direct supports and training to social enterprises.

% Grant Aid: Depends upon the concerning year's call

Min and Max Grant: Depends upon the concerning year's call

LEADER Programme

Categories: Capital Funding for Rural tourism, Enterprise development, Broadband, Basic services targeted at hard-to-reach communities, Rural youth, Protection and sustainable use of water resources, Local biodiversity, Renewable energy

Pobal supports the Department of Rural and Community Development in the administration of a number of elements of the LEADER Programme. Since its launch in 1991, LEADER has provided rural communities across the European Union with the resources to enable local partners to actively engage and direct the local development of their area, through community-led local development.

Description / Summary

The LEADER Programme is administered at a local level by 29 Local Action Groups (LAGs) who operate on administrative or county boundaries and are made up of local representatives from the community, public and private sector. Each LAG is responsible for selecting and awarding LEADER funding to projects within their geographical area. A project must be aligned with the priorities of the Local Development Strategy (LDS).

Purpose and Objectives

LEADER supports private enterprises and community groups who improve quality of life and economic activity in rural areas. Helping rural communities to actively engage and to direct the local development of their area, through community-led local development. This aid is provided to projects under the following themes: Economic development, enterprise development and job creation; Social inclusion; Rural environment

Example of Actions underlying the objectives that were supported by the LEADER Programme include:

- Search and Rescue Voluntary group
- Community Centre development
- Community Radio Project
- Outreach Programme
- Microbrewery development
- Heritage Festival
- Installation of Broadband equipment
- Restoration of Walled Garden
- Community Café and Shop

Funding Period: The last LEADER programme ran from 2014-2020 and a new one is unlikely to commence before 2023. In the interim a transitional LEADER Programme which came into effect on 1st April 2021 which is currently accepting applications.

For info: <https://www.pobal.ie/programmes/leader-programme-2014-2020/>

Body you apply to: Local Action Group & Implementing Partners

Funded By: Department of Rural and Community Development & European Union

Who can apply: Community, Social & Private Enterprise depending on type of project.

% Grant Aid: In general, private projects carry a maximum grant rate of 50% for capital projects and 75% for analysis and development, subject to the ceilings below. Corresponding community-based projects may receive up to 75% and 90% rates respectively. Training projects can receive up to 100% funding.

Min and Max Grant: Grant funding for projects will range from €5,000 to €500,000.

Outdoor Recreation Grant Scheme

Categories: Capital funding for repair or upgrade for trails and amenity development. The focus of the scheme is to support outdoor recreational infrastructure in countryside areas across Ireland.

The 2021 scheme will, in particular, support recreational infrastructure that not only provides an outlet for the communities in which they are situated but that also delivers added value from a tourism perspective, positioning rural areas to respond to the post-COVID-19 economic environment.

Description / Summary

The Scheme is administered by the Department of Rural and Community Development and supported by Fáilte Ireland. To date, ORIS has allocated funding of almost €68 million for 973 projects around the country. The scheme invests in the physical infrastructure that underpins sporting and recreational activities based on the use of the resources of the countryside; these contribute to healthy active lifestyles while building on the economic and tourism potential of the area, and so are to the benefit of both local communities and tourist visitors alike.

Purpose and Objectives

The Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) contributes to the strategic objective of strengthened rural economies and communities as set out in the Project Ireland 2040 strategy. The objective of the Scheme is to provide funding for the development of new outdoor recreational infrastructure and for the necessary repair, enhancement or promotion of existing outdoor recreation infrastructure in countryside areas across Ireland. It specifically supports the growing outdoor activity tourism sector as prioritised in “Our Rural Future”, Ireland’s Rural Development Policy 2021-2025.

Example of Actions underlying the objectives that were supported by the 2021 Outdoor Recreation Grant Scheme include:

- The upkeep, repair and development of trails, walkways, cycleways, greenways, blueways recreational facilities at bogs, rivers, lakes and beaches, natural play areas that form part of a larger outdoor recreation project and the promotion and marketing of such infrastructure.
- Extensions/upgrades to already established trails, walkways, cycleways, greenways, blueways or other recreational facilities at bogs, rivers, lakes or beaches.
- Projects can also include works for the enhancement, repair or promotion of such infrastructure, or for improved access to recreational infrastructure or the development of new trails, walkways, cycleways, local greenways, blueways or other recreational facilities. Improvements to town parks and common areas and spaces the development of new larger-scale recreational infrastructure, or resources to complete larger scale/longer term developments, as well as significant repair and maintenance on already established trails, walkways, cycleways, greenways, blueways or recreational amenities at bogs, rivers, lakes and beaches.

Funding Period: Usually open annually, First 2 quarters. Deadline May for Expression of Interest. Advertised by Department of Rural and Community Development and the Local Authorities

For info: <https://monaghan.ie/communitydevelopment/2021/04/27/2021-outdoor-recreation-infrastructure-scheme/>

Body you apply to: Department of Rural and Community Development

Funded By: Department of Rural and Community Development

Who can apply: Local Authorities and Local Development Companies, in partnership with local community organisations.

% Grant Aid: 90% of the total cost of a project.

Min and Max Grant: Depending on which of 4 measures. Up to €20,000 in Measure 1 to up to €500,000 in measure 3

Rural Regeneration and Development Fund

Categories: Mainly Capital Funding to support job creation in rural areas, address de-population of rural communities and support improvements in our towns and villages with a population of less than 10,000, and outlying areas.

Initial funding of €315 million has been allocated to the fund on a phased basis over the period 2019 to 2022.

Description / Summary

The Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) is a commitment of €1 billion by government to be invested in rural Ireland over the period 2019 to 2027.

Purpose and Objectives

The fund is supporting coordinated and integrated projects between government departments, State agencies, local authorities, other public bodies, communities and, where appropriate, philanthropic funders and/or the private sector, which will have an impact on sustainable economic and social development in rural areas. Funding is being awarded through a competitive bid process. The new Fund provides an unprecedented opportunity to support the revitalisation of rural Ireland, to make a significant and sustainable impact on rural communities, and to address de-population in small rural towns, villages and rural areas.

Example of Actions underlying the objectives that were supported by the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund:

- The Fund will support ambitious and strategic projects which contribute to sustainable rural regeneration and development. It will support investments of scale which would not otherwise be delivered without the additionality provided by the Fund, and projects that are outside the scope of existing schemes.
- The first call for proposals under the Fund is being launched in July 2018 and submissions are invited under two categories;
- Category 1: "Ready-to-Go" proposals, or initial phases of projects which can be commenced in 2019, which have the necessary consents (e.g. planning) in place, are at an advanced stage of design, are in a position to satisfy value-for-money requirements in accordance with the Public Spending Code, and are procurement-ready.
- Category 2: Proposals that have clear potential and quantifiable objectives but require further development to enable them to be potentially submitted as Category 1 proposals in subsequent funding calls.

Funding Period: Usually opens annually, with calls under either Category 1 or 2. Advertised by Local Authorities and Department of Rural and Community Development.

For info: <https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/c77144-rural-regeneration-and-development-fund/>

Body you apply to: Department of Rural and Community Development

Funded By: Department of Rural and Community Development

Who can apply: Local Authorities/Public bodies and Local Development Companies in partnership with private and social enterprises/community groups/

% Grant Aid: 75% of the total cost of a project.

Min and Max Grant: Category 1: Minimum amount €500,000. No upper limit.
Category 2: No minimum or maximum

Rural Social Scheme

Categories: Supplementary income for low-income farmers and fishermen

To qualify for the scheme, the applicant must be getting a social welfare payment. In return, people participating in the scheme provide services that benefit rural communities, each working 19.5 hours per week. These hours are based on a farmer or fisher-friendly schedule. This ensures that participation on the scheme does not affect farming or fishing activities. If one gets a place on the scheme they are offered a contract from their start date up to the following 31 March. They may be considered for a further term following the initial contract, if you continue to meet all the criteria for the scheme.

Description / Summary

The Rural Social Scheme provides a supplementary income for low-income farmers and fishermen or women who are unable to earn an adequate living. The Department of Social Protection (DSP) has overall responsibility for policy in relation to the Rural Social Scheme, including eligibility criteria. The Department monitors the implementation of the RSS and supports the various bodies that manage the RSS locally. The Department may also inspect any Scheme and visit projects. At a local level, the Scheme is managed by implementing bodies such as local development companies and in the Gaeltacht areas, by Údarás na Gaeltachta.

Purpose and Objectives

The Rural Social Scheme (RSS) is an income support initiative which provides part-time employment opportunities in community and voluntary organisations for farmers or fishers who are in receipt of certain social welfare payments and who are underemployed in their primary occupation. It is a supplementary income support scheme designed specifically for those participants whose income falls below a certain level.

Example of Actions underlying the objectives that were supported by the Rural Social Scheme:

- Maintaining and enhancing various walking routes (that is, waymarked ways, agreed walks) and bog roads
- Energy conservation work for older people and those at risk of poverty
- Village and countryside enhancement projects
- Social care and care of older people
- Community care for pre-school and after-school groups
- Environmental maintenance work - maintenance and caretaking of community and sporting facilities
- Projects relating to not-for-profit cultural and heritage centres
- Community administration or clerical work
- Any other appropriate community-based project

Funding Period: From start date to the following 31st Mar. May be considered for extension
For info: <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/059da9-rural-social-scheme/>

Body you apply to: Local RSS implementing body / Local Development Company – assigns workers on the scheme in local communities.

Funded By: Department of Social Protection
Who can apply: Farmers and Fishermen
% Grant Aid: 100% of staff costs paid.
Min and Max Grant: N/A

Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland Community Grants Scheme

Categories: Capital funding, partnerships, and technical support for energy efficient community projects

In 2020 SEAI supported 25 projects under the Communities Energy Grant Scheme with total Government funding of €18.7 million offered. This supported the energy efficiency upgrades in 656 homes delivered to a B2 standard and 240 non domestic projects delivered. Projects worth €43M were supported through CEG 2020. Cumulatively the programme has now supported upgrades in 18,856 homes and 2,810 non-domestic buildings.

Description / Summary

Better Energy Communities is the current national retrofit initiative with grant support of up to €28 million for 2021. SEAI support new approaches to achieving energy efficiency in Irish communities. Upgrades can take place across building types to reduce energy use and costs throughout the community.

Purpose and Objectives

SEAI aim to deliver energy savings to homeowners, communities, and private sector organisations. All projects should be community oriented with a cross-sectoral approach, and must show that they can sustainably finance the proposed project. Successful Community projects must demonstrate some or all of the following characteristics; Community benefits; Multiple elements, not a single focus; Mix of sustainable solutions; Innovation and project ambition; Justified energy savings; An ability to deliver the project

Example of Actions underlying the objectives that were supported by the SEAI Community Grant Scheme:

- Building Fabric Upgrades
- Technology and System upgrades
- Integration of Control Systems
- Integration of renewable energy sources
- Domestic Combined Fabric Upgrade
- Single Building Demonstration projects will be considered under the Communities Grant.
- Partnership is essential for a successful application. You should seek partnership from organisations that fall into the eligible categories. These partnerships can be assisted by SEAI if required. SEAI also advise contacting a Project Coordinator as soon as possible to discuss the projects.

Funding Period: The programme is run annually through a competitive process. Once applications are closed, SEAI then review what projects will be supported under the scheme.

For info: <https://www.seai.ie/grants/community-grants/>

Body you apply to: SEAI and a Project Co-ordinator

Funded By: SEAI

Who can apply: Business owners, local community service operators, homeowners or retail owners, through a Project Co-ordinator

% Grant Aid: Fuel Poor Residential Private up to 80%, Non-fuel poor up to 35%
Not-for-profit/community, 30% Up to 50%
Private and public sector Non residential Up to 30%

Min and Max Grant: Maximum of €2,000,000. Recommend minimum of €100,000

Sports Capital and Equipment Programme

Categories: Capital funding for developing Sports infrastructure to sports clubs and communities

€40 million is being made available in 2021 under a new round of the Sports Capital and Equipment Programme. The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasised how important sport is to society. As well as the pleasure and excitement generated by watching our sporting heroes, actively engaging in sport is critical for physical and mental wellbeing. To allow as many people participate as possible, it is essential to have appropriate sports facilities and equipment available.

Description / Summary

The Sports Capital Programme is the primary vehicle for Government support for the development of sports and physical recreation facilities and the purchase of non-personal sports equipment throughout the country

Purpose and Objectives

To assist voluntary and community organisations, national governing bodies (NGBs) of sport, local authorities and Education and Training Boards and schools to develop high quality, accessible, safe, well-designed, sustainable facilities in appropriate locations and to provide appropriate equipment to help maximise participation in sport and physical recreation. To prioritise the needs of disadvantaged areas and groups (such as people with disabilities) in the provision of sports facilities encourage the sharing of sports facilities by clubs, community organisations and national governing bodies of sport

Example of Actions underlying the objectives that were supported by the Sports Capital and Equipment Programme:

- Natural grass sports pitches, tracks and courts (including pitch drainage)
- Artificial sports pitches, tracks, courts and multi-use games areas
- LED Floodlighting
- Fitness studios
- Security fencing, CCTV systems and pitch side fencing (where these are deemed essential)
- Ball stop netting and goal posts
- Hurling walls / handball alleys
- Walking/jogging tracks
- Building or refurbishment of dressing rooms, showers and toilets
- Exercise equipment
- Weights
- Boats and trailers
- Portable goals and dugouts

Funding Period: Annually from December to January.

For info: <https://www.sportscapitalprogramme.ie/>

Body you apply to: Sports Capital Programme

Funded By: Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

Who can apply: Voluntary, not-for profit sports clubs, community groups, National Governing Bodies (NGB's) of sport and local authorities. Third level colleges, Education and Training Boards (ETBs) and schools may only apply for funding jointly with sports clubs or organisations

% Grant Aid: Up to 95% of the total cost of a project.

Min and Max Grant: The maximum grant available for a local club/organisation projects is €150,000.

The Ireland Funds Grants

Categories: Global philanthropic network providing various grants to Social Enterprises, CLGs and Charities

2021 The Ireland Funds | Heart of the Community Fund

In 2021 The Ireland Funds is announced the launch of the Heart of the Community Fund. This will provide critical and timely funding to a wide range of not-for-profit organizations across the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Description / Summary

The Ireland Funds are a global fundraising network for people of Irish ancestry and friends of Ireland, dedicated to raising funds to support programs of peace and reconciliation, arts and culture, education and community development throughout the island of Ireland. The Funds exist in 12 countries around the world, the largest member of the network being The American Ireland Fund,[1] and, after Atlantic Philanthropies, may be the second largest non-governmental donor to Irish causes. The global chairman of The Ireland Funds is Tony O'Reilly. They have raised over \$550 million for worthy causes in Ireland and around the world.

Purpose and Objectives

The Ireland Funds' Mission mission is to harness the power of a global philanthropic network of friends of Ireland to promote and support peace, culture, education and community development across the island of Ireland and among Irish communities around the world.

Example of Actions underlying the objectives that were supported by the Ireland Funds include:

- The Ireland Funds COVID-19 Response Fund
- Community Development (e.g. positive mental and physical health; community integration; development of entrepreneurial skills)
- Arts & Culture (promote cultural awareness and understanding; preserve uniquely Irish art forms and artefacts; increase public access to a variety of art forms and collections.)
- Education (widen access to and participation in third-level education for under-represented groups; provide access to integrated education in Northern Ireland)
- Peace & Reconciliation (addresses sectarianism and violence in Northern Ireland by supporting initiatives that address the lack of understanding and respect for varying cultural and religious values)

Funding Period: Varies. Advertised by The Ireland Funds.

For info: <https://irelandfunds.org/grants/>

Body you apply to: The Ireland Funds

Funded By: The Ireland Funds

Who can apply: Any not-for-profit community or voluntary group can apply

% Grant Aid: Not Specified

Min and Max Grant: Not Specified.

Town and Village Renewal Scheme

Categories: Capital funding, Equipment Funding.

The latest, 2021, scheme was targeted at two categories of Towns/Villages as follows:

Category 1: Towns and villages with a population of up to 5,000 people.

Category 2: Towns with a population of 5,001 to 10,000 people.

Note

(Larger towns with a population of up to 15,000 people may be eligible where the application is of a high quality and outlines a strong need for the investment, good value for money and positive outcomes that will have a substantial impact on the town.)

The primary focus of the scheme will be on villages and towns with a population of up to 5,000 (Category 1). These towns/villages will receive at least 60% of funding available.

Description / Summary

The Town and Village Renewal Scheme was introduced in 2016 and is one of a number of measures designed to rejuvenate rural towns and villages throughout Ireland. The Town and Village Renewal Scheme is designed to breathe new life into rural communities - making them more attractive places to live, work, socialise and raise a family.

Purpose and Objectives

The Town and Village Renewal Scheme supports small to medium capital projects which enhance the environment of town or village centres. The 2021 Scheme placed particular emphasis on projects supporting remote working and enhancing town centre living as outlined in "Our Rural Future – Ireland's Rural Development Policy 2021-2025."

Example of Actions underlying the objectives that were supported by the 2021 Town and Village Renewal Scheme include:

- Tackling dereliction in town centres
- Turning vacant properties into remote working and community spaces
- Supporting Local Authorities to run innovative marketing campaigns targeted at attracting remote workers to their county
- Investing in green spaces, parks and recreational amenities
- Upgrading and improving shop fronts & streetscapes on Main Streets
- Projects that support and enhance the night time economy and add vibrancy to town centres

Funding Period: Usually open annually, Spring/Summer. Advertised by Local Authorities.

For info: <https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/01125e-town-and-village-renewal-scheme/>

Body you apply to: Local Authority

Funded By: Department of Rural and Community Development

Who can apply: Community organisations in partnership with Local Authority.

% Grant Aid: 90% of the total cost of a project.

Min and Max Grant: Grant funding for projects will range from €20,000 to €500,000.

Tús

Categories: Community Work Placement Scheme

All the work carried out by participants in the Tús scheme will be community-based. To be eligible to participate in the Tús scheme one must: Have been continuously unemployed for at least 12 months and "signing on" on a full-time basis; and have been receiving a jobseeker's payment (Jobseeker's Benefit or Jobseeker's Allowance) from the Department of Social Protection for at least 12 months; and be currently receiving Jobseeker's Allowance (JA).

Description / Summary

The Tús initiative is a community work placement scheme providing short-term working opportunities for unemployed people. The Tús initiative is managed by local development companies and Údarás na Gaeltachta for the Department of Social Protection (DSP), which has overall responsibility for the scheme.

Purpose and Objectives

The work opportunities are to benefit the community and are provided by community and voluntary organisations in both urban and rural areas. Unemployed people who are eligible to participate in the scheme are selected and contacted by the DSP.

Example of Actions underlying the objectives that were supported by Tus:

- Participants work 19 ½ hours a week and the placement lasts 12 months.
- Work is carried in a broad range of community settings.
- Since 25 March 2019 the minimum weekly payment for participants (based on 19.5 hours worked) is €225.50.
- The work placements are proposed and provided by community and voluntary organisations.
- The organisations must provide good quality work opportunities that are of benefit to the community.

Funding Period: For 12 months per participant (Participants cannot engage in Tus again for a further 3 years).

For info:

https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/employment/unemployment_and_redundancy/employment_support_schemes/tus.html

Body you apply to: Department of Social Protection

Funded By: Department of Social Protection

Who can apply: Community and Voluntary Organisations

% Grant Aid: N/A

Min and Max Grant: N/A

Commonly used terms

Term	Explanation
Match finance	Applicants financial contribution to the project
Bridging finance	Finance required covering grant amount until it is drawn down.
Leverage	Capacity to lever funding
Co-finance	Funding provided from more than one source.

Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Term
CDP	Community Development Project
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DED	District Electoral division
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
DSP	Department of Social Protection
EA	Electoral Area
ED	Electoral District
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
FET	Further Education and Training
FRC	Family Resource Centre
LCDC	Local Community Development Committee
LDC	Local Development Company
LEADER	EU LEADER Programme – <i>'Links between actions in support of the rural economy'</i> . Liaison Entre Actions pour le Development d'IEconomie Rurale
LECP	Local Enterprise and Community Plan
LEO	Local Enterprise Office
LES	Local Employment Service
LLL	Life Long Learning
NALA	National Adult Literacy Agency
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PAP	Personal Action Plan
PPN	Public Participation Network
PPSN	Personal Public Service Number
RES	Regional Employment Service
RSS	Rural Social Scheme – work placement initiative
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
SAP	Small Area of Population
SICAP	Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme
SME	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise
SOLAS	Seirbhísí Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna (Further Education and Training Authority)
SPC	Strategic Policy Committee
TUS	Work placement initiative.
LDC	Local Development company
ETB	Education and Training Board