

**Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government
Communities Facilities Scheme Capital Scheme
2017**

Guidelines

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES CAREFULLY BEFORE COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM.

1. Introduction

On 10th March 2017 the Minister of State for Communities and the National Drugs Strategy Catherine Byrne TD, announced a new €2m Capital grants scheme for disadvantaged urban and rural areas. The scheme will run initially from July 2017-December 2017 and is focused on providing small-scale capital grants to help grass roots community projects get underway or take the next step towards completion.

The Scheme is being administered by the Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) along with the Full Council under the remit of the Local Authorities (LAs) on behalf of the Department. The LCDCs will be responsible for targeting and allocating funding as they are ideally placed to identify the applications which most suitably address the Scheme's target groups and issues in each LA administrative area.

Applications are now being invited for funding under this Scheme.

2. Aims of the Scheme

The aim of the Scheme is to enhance communities, address disadvantage and improve social cohesion at a local level by providing access to small-scale capital grants.

It will operate in a complementary manner with other schemes or programmes being operated in communities, including in particular, the SICAP (Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme), a recast RAPID (Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development) and CLÁR (Ceantair Laga Árd Riachtanais) Programmes, adding value to those and other front-line schemes.

It will also seek to address some of the difficulties local community groups face in terms of accessing very often small scale levels of funding to match their own fundraising efforts, in order to get community projects off the ground.

3a. Who is eligible to apply?

The following will be considered eligible for the scheme:

- Locally based community and voluntary groups
- Projects with a clearly defined community and social cohesion focus;
- Not-for-profit organisations;
- Eligible facilities will include community centres, youth clubs, sports/recreation facilities, other not-for-profit organisations facilities.

3b. Who is not eligible to apply?

- Commercial organisations, individuals and for-profit organisations are not eligible for funding under this scheme.

4. Available Funding

- The Scheme will offer grants up to a maximum of €1,000 per project.
- In certain cases, the Local Community Development Committee will use its discretion to exceed the maximum limit where it believes the project requires the additional funding to be delivered successfully.
- Applicant groups shall self-certify that they do not have the funding to undertake the work, without the grant aid, or alternatively that with the grant they will now undertake a larger project which they otherwise would not be able to afford.
- If the funding application is for one element of a project, applicants will be required to provide documentary evidence of the availability of the balance of funding for that particular element of that project.
- There is no limit on the number of applications for different projects from any organisation however applicants should be aware that an equity/fairness approach will be taken by the LCDC to ensure an even distribution of funding.

5a. What will be funded

Projects or elements of projects of a capital nature may be funded, for example, office equipment, project resources, research facilities, energy efficiency equipment, etc. for voluntary groups. Match-funding from other sources is not a requirement for application approval.

In cases where both current and capital works are carried out together, only the capital element can be funded through this Scheme.

The Scheme will include capital funding for projects falling under the following areas, note this list is not exhaustive:

- Development/renovation of community centres
- Community amenities
- Youth clubs
- Sports/recreation facilities
- Improvements to town parks and common areas and spaces
- Creative Ireland Programme 2017-2022 projects

Target groups and thematic areas

In line with the ethos of the Scheme, applications for funding for projects targeting the following (non-exhaustive) list of groups or issues will receive priority:

- Youth
- Older people
- Immigrants
- Refugees
- Travellers
- Ex-prisoners and families of prisoners/ex-prisoners
- Projects promoting cultural activity
- Projects promoting equality
- Community development projects
- Projects promoting integration
- Projects which qualify under the Creative Ireland Programme 2017-2022 pillars

5b. What will not be funded

The following expenditure is not eligible for funding:

- Any project not in keeping with the ethos of the Scheme or which does not address at least one of the target groups and thematic areas
- Any current funding projects or elements of projects
- Employment costs
- Routine maintenance, minor repairs or other ongoing costs
- Legal fees
- Project management fees
- Purchase of lands or buildings
- Feasibility studies
- Private or commercial operations

6. Requirements of the Scheme

The following conditions apply to all projects:

- **Tax Requirements**
 - In line with revised tax clearance procedures, which came into effect in January 2016, the Tax Clearance Access Number and Tax Reference number must be submitted for verification purposes.
 - VAT will only be paid where it is included in the application amount. No further requests for VAT payments or repayments will be accepted.
- **Statutory Consents** - Applicants must ensure that all necessary statutory permissions or consents have been obtained before any works commence. This includes but is not confined to planning permission.
- **Insurance** - Written evidence of a valid insurance policy may be requested by the LCDC, where relevant, during the applications review process.
- **Acknowledgment of funding** - Due to the amounts of grants involved, it would not be cost-effective to require signage acknowledging the Department, Local Authority or LCDC however other suitable acknowledgements will suffice e.g. on a group/organisation's website or social media platforms.

7. Selection Criteria

- Applications will be checked initially by the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) to ensure eligibility under the ethos of the Scheme and complementary with the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) for the area.
- The LCDC will make a recommendation and submit the application to the Full Council of Offaly County Council.
- The Full Council of Offaly County Council will review the application taking into consideration the LCDC recommendation and make a final decision to approve or deny the application.

Eligible applications must meet the following criteria:

- Projects must be in keeping with the ethos of the Scheme
- Projects must be complementary to the LECP

Having met the required criteria above, projects may also be judged having regard to how they;

- increase participant/ /visitor/ audience numbers and improve and extend access to facilities within the catchment area;
- invest to increase or extend the use of the facility for example to voluntary and community groups;
- reduce the annual running cost of a facility;
- have a positive impact on the environment, for example a reduction in energy consumption;
- demonstrate collaboration with the local authority or other relevant bodies in the catchment area;
- support the creation of a sense of place within the community including through the enhancement of the built environment;
- address health and safety issues;
- invest in technology which will be accessed by the targeted groups.

8. Corporate Governance

8a Monitoring:

Grantees will be required to comply with the highest standard of transparency and accountability as documented in Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Circular 13/2014 - Management of and Accountability for Grants from Exchequer Funds <http://circulars.gov.ie/pdf/circular/per/2014/13.pdf>

8b The Code of Governance for Community and Voluntary organisations

The Department is encouraging funded bodies to adopt the Governance Code, a Code of Practice for Good Governance of Community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations, which will assist in achieving excellence in all areas of your work. The Governance Code asks organisations to agree to operate to key principles in order to run their organisation more effectively in areas such as leadership, transparency and accountability and behaving with integrity. Further information on the Code is available at www.governancecode.ie

9. Approval Procedures

All applications for funding under this scheme received by each LCDC will be reviewed and assessed to ensure complementary with the relevant Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP).

The application along with the LCDC recommendation will be then be submitted to the Full Council of Offaly County Council who will make the final decision on project approval taking into consideration the LCDC's recommendation.

In deciding the final allocations of funding to projects, the LCDC will take account of a number of factors including geographical balance and the desirability to fund a variety of different projects.

Following the decision of the Full Council, each approved project, subject to the completion of legal formalities and other requirements, will receive an offer in principle of grant-aid. This will be subject to compliance with the relevant conditions and subject to the satisfactory acceptance by the applicant of this offer.

There is no requirement for the group/organisation to request payment, the LCDC will confirm that all the details on the application form are unchanged and make payment directly.

The Minister reserves the right to reassign the funds offered to another approved project if all requirements are not met within a defined period.

The Department and/or the Local Authority reserve the right to carry out an audit of expenditure or conduct inspections from time to time.

Please Note:

Requests for assistance usually exceed the funds available and it is important therefore that the process of evaluation is rigorous. The purpose of this process is to ensure that the best projects, taking all factors into account, emerge and receive support. It is Departmental policy to ensure that every application is treated fairly and impartially.

Offers of funding may be for a lesser amount than that sought by the applicant. Applicants should be aware that the Scheme may be oversubscribed. Therefore, in such circumstances, all applications fulfilling the conditions may not be successful or may be for a lesser amount.

The LCDC and/or the Full Council, in evaluating proposals received may seek advice and consult with other agencies, and may disclose information on projects under consideration to those experts and agencies.

10. General

The information provided in this document is intended to give applicants an understanding of the process by which applications for funding are assessed and approved and does not purport to be a legal interpretation.

Freedom of Information Act 2014

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2014, details contained in applications and supporting documents may, on request, be released to third parties. If there is information contained in your application which is sensitive or confidential in nature, please identify it and provide an explanation as to why it should not be disclosed. If a request to release sensitive information under the legislation is received, you will be consulted before a decision is made whether or not to release the information. However, in the absence of the identification of particular information as sensitive, it could be disclosed without any consultation with you.

Site Visits

The Department, Local Authority or LCDC may carry out unannounced site visits to verify compliance with Scheme terms and conditions.

Further information may be requested

The LCDC reserves the right to request further information from you in order to assess your application if so required.

11. How to apply

Application Form

The application form is detailed and is designed to ensure that the LCDC and Full Council have the necessary information to evaluate each proposal accurately and fairly. **Please ensure that you complete the correct application form in full and that any documentation in support of your application is submitted with your application.**

Only projects that meet the criteria outlined above will be considered eligible for the purpose of securing recommendation for grant funding.

N.B. INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS OR LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.

Submission of false or misleading information to the Department at any stage is treated very seriously. Any organisation that does not comply with the terms and conditions of the Scheme may be subject to inspection, have their grant withdrawn, be required to repay all or part of a grant and/or be barred from making applications for a period of time. All serious breaches of the terms and conditions of the Scheme will be notified to An Garda Síochána.

Applications should be forwarded to:

Offaly LCDC, Local & Community Development Section, Offaly County Council, Charleville Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.

For any queries please email: community@offalycoco.ie or telephone 05793 57401