

Heart of the Community Fund 2026 | FAQs

Round 1: Education & Innovation

At The Ireland Funds, we are committed to empowering non-profit organisations that make a meaningful impact in their communities. In 2026, we will once again have **two distinct rounds** tailored to support organisations working in **Education and Innovation** followed by those working in the **Arts and Culture sector**. This approach allows us to better address the needs of each sector and maximise the positive outcomes of our funding.

The **first round** will support organisations in **Education and Innovation** and opens [Thursday 19th of February](#). The **second grant round** will support organisations in the **Arts and Culture sector** and will open in **September 2026**. Details of the second round will be announced later this year.

- **What is the application period?**

The Heart of the Community Fund 2026 will accept applications from organisations working in Education and Innovation online from [Thursday 19th of February until Thursday 20th of March](#). Late applications will not be accepted.

- **What awards are offered by the Heart of the Community Fund in 2026?**

The Heart of the Community Fund 2026 will provide grants between £/€5,000- £/€25,000 to non-profit organisations with an annual turnover of less than £/€5,000,000.

The Ireland Funds Grants Team will assess your application and determine the most suitable amount to award your organisation within the range available.

At least \$500,000 will be distributed through this grant round.

- **How do I apply?**

Apply online through our portal [here](#) from Thursday 19th of February until Thursday 20th of March.

- **Do you accept applications from unincorporated groups/associations?**

No, Heart of the Community Fund is not open to unincorporated associations or community groups that do not have any legal structure.

For ROI: Organisations must be a registered charity unless considered an excluded body by the Charities Regulator. Examples of excluded bodies include social enterprise and amateur sports bodies. For further details please visit the [Charities Regulator website](#).

For NI: Organisations must be a CIC, or a registered charity or have applied to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. For further details, please visit [The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland](#).

For schools: In lieu of a registered charity number we will accept a Roll ID Number for the Republic of Ireland and an Institution Reference Number in Northern Ireland as proof of registration with their governing body, Department of Education.

- **Can an organisation apply if we are relatively new and don't have a full set of accounts?**

For a new organisation we can use your bank statement in lieu of a financial statement but, in that case, you would need to submit an unredacted bank statement. We would also ask that you submit a cashflow prediction for the year ahead, tracking income and expenditure.

- **Can we apply as a regional/affiliate partner/semi-independent unit of a larger organisation?**

We will only accept one application per organisation. If you are a regional/affiliate partner/semi-independent unit of a larger organisation, it is the responsibility of the organisation to ensure that only one application is submitted.

You will need to send management accounts for your unit to assist with our assessment. Please note, a maximum of one smaller unit will be approved per large organisation.

- **Do you require supporting documents to be submitted?**

Yes. We require a governing document for your organisation, most recent financial statements, and bank statement header.

- **What do you require for due diligence reviews on organisations?**

Due diligence is critical for The Ireland Funds. To be eligible, organisations must be a registered charity unless exempted and;

1. Must have:

- a. Governing Document (i.e. Memorandum & Articles of Association; Trust Deed; Constitution).
- b. Financial Statements (Audited or Unaudited Accounts are equally accepted).

2. Must have a governing document that contains the following clauses:

a. Income and Property:

- i. Outlining the allocation of any income to the sole purpose of pursuing the organisation's purpose and objects.
- ii. Ensuring that any Directors will not be remunerated by salary or fees.

b. Winding Up/Dissolution:

- i. Providing security for income/funds should the organization cease operations. Funds are guaranteed to be transferred to an organisation with a similar charitable purpose.

c. Limited Liability:

- i. Formal recognition that the company is limited by guarantee, as opposed to shares, and establishes that dividends etc. will not be afforded due to the organisation's status as a CLG.

- **What activities are not funded by the Heart of the Community Fund 2026?**

- The Heart of the Community Fund 2026 does not fund the following:

- Individuals, bursaries, or scholarships
- Medical expenses
- Animal welfare activities
- Commemorative structures
- Advancement of religion/faith or religious beliefs
- Political activities and promotion of individual political candidates

- **Does my application have to be submitted electronically?**

Yes all applications must be submitted electronically through our online grants portal which can be found here: irelandfunds.org/grants/

We do not accept applications via post or email.

- **Will I receive confirmation that my application has been received?**

Yes you will receive an email confirming The Ireland Funds has received your submitted application.

- **My application was rejected. Can I reapply and when can I reapply?**

Organisations can only submit one application per grant round. You can apply for future grant rounds as long as your organisation fits the criteria.

- **How soon will I know if I am successful?**

We aim to notify all applicants of the outcome by the end of May, but the exact date will depend on the volume of applications received.

Please ensure you have marked grantsinfo@irelandfunds.org as a 'safe sender' to ensure you receive the notification email into your inbox.

- **How is the grant paid?**

Grants are paid through Electronic Funds Transfer.

- **How long do we have to spend the money?**

You must spend your grant within the timeframe stated in the Grant Acceptance Contract which will be 12 months from date of notification. However, the Impact Report for Heart of the Community Fund 2026 is due nine months from the date of notification so the majority of the funds should be spent by this deadline to ensure accurate reporting.