

**Department of Rural and Community Development**  
**Community Activities Fund**  
**under the**  
**Community Enhancement Programme**

## **Guidelines**

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

### **1. Introduction**

The **Community Activities Fund (CAF)** provides funding to support community groups across Ireland.

The **CAF** is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development (*the Department*) and administered by the Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) in each Local Authority area.

The Department provides funding to each Local Authority (LA) area and the LCDCs then administer this funding locally to ensure funding is targeted appropriately towards addressing disadvantage in the areas that need it most.

It is important to note that other agencies and departments also invest in disadvantaged areas<sup>1</sup>. The CAF will operate in a complementary manner to add value to other front-line schemes and programmes being operated in communities.

The **Community Activities Fund** will support groups, particularly in disadvantaged areas

- With their non-pay running costs such as utility bills (electricity costs, refuse charges, heating charges) or other non-pay operating costs for e.g. rental/lease costs, insurance bills.
- Groups will also be able to use the funding to carry out necessary repairs and improvements to their facilities with capital expenditure such as purchase equipment, building works etc.

This funding is about giving a helping hand to our communities, local groups and clubs.

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<sup>1</sup>For example, the Department of Education and Skills in DEIS schools and community liaison officers, HSE in community care services, DSP in Intreo and through the Local Employment Service etc. This Department of Rural and Community Development also operates the SICAP (Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme) to assist individuals and groups from disadvantaged communities.

The Department has recommended that LCDCs ring-fence some funding to provide small grants of €1,000 or less. Ring-fencing funding at this level will allow a larger volume of those with limited resources to receive some funding. The programme can also fund or partially fund larger scale projects to address disadvantage.

Applications can be made to the Clare LCDC by 25<sup>th</sup> February 2022

## **2. Who is eligible to apply?**

Any not-for-profit community or voluntary group can apply.

Commercial organisations and individuals are not eligible for funding.

## **3. What projects are eligible for funding?**

### **3a. What costs are eligible for funding?**

The following provides a non-exhaustive list of **projects** that could receive funding under the programme:

- Development/renovation of community centres
- Community amenities
- Development of youth clubs or facilities
- Development of sports/recreation facilities
- Improvements to town parks and common areas and spaces
- 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
- Maintenance of premises
- Utility Bills (electricity costs, refuse charges, heating charges)
- Operating costs (eg existing rental/lease costs, insurance bills)
- Website Maintenance
- Cleaning
- Audit & Accountancy fees

To ensure appropriate monitoring and governance, the Department is stating that only operating/running costs related to this period are eligible - 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

### Target groups

This funding is targeted towards supporting communities that are impacted by disadvantage as identified in the LECF.

### **3b. What is not eligible for funding?**

The following expenditure is not eligible for funding:

- Any project not in keeping with the ethos of the Programme
- Employment costs
- Legal fees
- Project management fees
- Purchase of lands or buildings
- Feasibility studies
- Private or commercial operations
- Costs which are being paid for by another funder or department

## **4. Requirements of the Programme**

The following conditions apply to all projects. Depending on the nature of your project (and the group applying), there may be further requirements that must be met. The LCDC/LA will discuss this with you, if your application is successful.

### **Tax Requirements**

- The applicant group/organisation must be registered for tax purposes.
- Any applicant group/organisation that is registered for tax purposes must be tax compliant. 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.

**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 value of some of these grants, it would not be cost-effective to require signage acknowledging the Department, Local Authority or LCDC. Other suitable acknowledgements will suffice e.g. on a group/organisation's website or social media platforms. Where signage is developed it should acknowledge the contribution of the Department.

**Match-funding**- this is not a requirement under this programme.

## 5. Selection Criteria

Applications will be evaluated by the LCDC to ensure eligibility and that they are targeted at addressing disadvantage as identified in its LECF. Projects must be in keeping with the ethos of the programme, which is to provide funding to communities across Ireland to enhance facilities in disadvantaged areas.

Projects may also be judged having regard to how they:

- Support local groups and clubs, which have continued to serve their community during Covid-19.
- 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; and/or,
- invest in technology which will be accessed by individuals and communities that are impacted by disadvantage .

Projects may also be judged having regard to additional criteria deemed appropriate by the LCDC which demonstrate the added value of the project or element of a project in suitably addressing the programme's aims in each Local Authority administrative area.

**The following scoring mechanism will be used to assess applications.**

<b>Qualification Criteria</b>		
Projects must pass both of the qualification criteria to proceed to the Award Criteria evaluation		
	<b>Description</b>	<b>Pass or Fail</b>
<b>1</b>	Is the proposed project consistent with the LECP?	
<b>2</b>	Does the proposed project meet the eligibility criteria of the scheme?	

	<b>Category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Marks Available</b>	<b>Marks Awarded</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Location and scale of need</b>	Description of the area or community of interest and the scale of need addressed.	20	
<b>2</b>	<b>Capacity to deliver, leveraging resources, collaboration and additionality.</b>	Skills available to the group, precise costing of the project and funds or benefit in kind to meet these costs. Evidence of collaboration and ability to leverage resources. Additionality: Funding provided is a key enabler to facilitate the project objectives being achieved.	30	
<b>3</b>	<b>Impact of the Project</b>	<i>Outputs:</i> Number of direct and indirect beneficiaries & benefits and how they will be measured. <i>Outcomes:</i> Qualitative benefits and how they will be established.	30	
<b>4</b>	<b>Sustainability</b>	<i>Environmental sustainability &amp; climate action:</i> Evidence of <i>appropriate</i> environmental practice. <i>Longevity:</i> Measure to ensure long-term success/benefit of the project. <i>Universal Design:</i> Evidence of Universal Design practices being adopted where appropriate.	20	
	<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	

**Comments: Can the project proceed with reduced funding allocation?**

Yes ☐ No ☐

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**Notes:**

	<b>Category</b>	<b>Guidance Notes</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Location and scale of need</b>	<p>Is the project located in a deprived area or an area without similar services / initiatives?</p> <p>Is there sufficient population to maintain the service / initiative?</p> <p>Is there an additional need as a result of COVID-19 and the reopening of facilities?</p>
<b>2</b>	<b>Capacity to deliver, leveraging resources, collaboration and additionality.</b>	<p>Marks will be awarded based on the capacity of the project promoter, quality of the budgetary proposal, assessment of the development work proposed, size and scope of project and evidence of the successful delivery of past projects. Collaboration with other groups in the community and the ability to leverage further resources will be taken into consideration.</p> <p>Marks will be awarded based on the likelihood of the project proceeding in the absence of this funding, the availability of other funding sources which the project could avail of, the extent to which investment is potentially already provided for under the remit of any Department or agency and the extent to which the project has unlocked funding from other partners.</p>
<b>3</b>	<b>Impact of the Project</b>	<p>Marks will be awarded based on the level of the economic or social targets it will seek to deliver and the relevance of outcomes as defined by the LECP actions.</p> <p>Does the project address issues associated with re-opening of facilities? i.e. provision of safe meeting and activity spaces for the community.</p> <p>Projects should aim to provide safe meeting /socialising spaces for priority groups affected by the pandemic i.e. Older people and youth</p>
<b>4</b>	<b>Sustainability</b>	<p>Marks will be awarded based on the impact of the project in terms of;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Environmental sustainability &amp; climate action e.g. energy efficiencies, biodiversity and waste prevention in line with the strategic actions of the Local Economic and Community Plan. i.e. Under Themes; Quality of Life Health &amp; Well Being and Climate Change and Energy.</li> <li>(ii) Future Proofing of the project will be considered based on the long-term impact of the project and the steps taken to ensure longevity.</li> <li>(iii) Universal Design: Projects, where appropriate will evidence that the end project demonstrates social inclusion and a Universal Design approach by providing mainstream products and services that are easy to access, understand and use. Projects should aim to increase their range of users by; identifying diverse user needs, characteristics, capabilities, and preferences, by directly or indirectly involving users, and by using knowledge about accessibility in its procedures and processes.</li> </ul>

## **6. Corporate Governance**

### **6a. 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>

The overall principle is that there should be transparency and accountability in the management of public funds, in line with economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The circular outlines, for example, that grant recipients should not dispose of publically funded assets without prior approval.

### **6b. 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](http://www.governancecode.ie)

## **7. Approval Procedures**

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

In deciding the final allocations of funding to projects, the LCDC may take account of a number of factors including geographical balance and the desirability to fund a variety of different projects and the relative disadvantage of the area where the facility is located (or will serve)<sup>2</sup>.

Following the decision 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 that offer.

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<sup>2</sup>This may include cross-referencing the location of the facility/group (or the area it serves) with the Pobal Hasse deprivation index which is available on [www.pobal.ie](http://www.pobal.ie).

The right is reserved to reassign the funds offered to another approved project if all requirements are not met within a reasonable 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 Programme 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 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.

## **8. 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 Programme 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.



### Usage of information

The information provided on the form will be utilised for the purposes of evaluating and administering the grant process, and to facilities audits and any site visits. When evaluating the applications received the LCDC may seek advice and consult with other agencies, and may disclose information on projects under consideration to those experts and agencies.

### Other

- Under the programme it is intended that 30% of the funding that is allocated to each Local Authority area will be ring-fenced for grants of €1,000 or less.
- For grants towards running costs and or upgrade of facilities, applicant groups shall self-certify that they do not have the funding to undertake the costs, 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.
- The Programme is 100% exchequer funded. Applicants are free to leverage other funding/match funding for projects although that is not a requirement of this new programme.
- It is the responsibility of the grant applicant to ensure that using this Programme to co-fund a project does not contradict the rules of the other scheme/programme. Please ensure you consult with the administrators or body responsible for any other funding scheme or programme in this regard.
- VAT will only be paid where it is included in the application amount. No further requests for VAT payments or repayments will be accepted.

## 9. How to Apply

### Application Form

The application form is detailed and is designed to ensure that it has the necessary information to evaluate each proposal accurately and fairly. **Please ensure that you complete this 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.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS OR LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.**

Submission of false or misleading information at any stage is treated very seriously. Any organisation that does not comply with the terms and conditions of the Programme 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 Programme will be notified to An Garda Síochána.

**Applications should be submitted online.**

**<https://www.clarecoco.ie/services/community/grants/communityenhancement/>**

**For any queries please email: [cep@clarecoco.ie](mailto:cep@clarecoco.ie) or Tel: 065- 6846498**