



EVENT & FESTIVAL GRANT GUIDELINES 2026

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Introduction

Each year Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council opens a grant funding scheme, known as the dlr Universal Grants Scheme, that provides funding to individuals, groups and organisations engaged in projects, events or initiatives at a neighbourhood or County level within our area. It has a particular emphasis on supporting locally driven and grass roots initiatives.

The grants scheme supports the Council's commitment in its Corporate Plan 2025-2029 to Driving Quality of Life for All and Creating an Environment for Economic Growth. The aim is to ensure that the financial resources available are used to the maximum benefit of the dlr community at large and support in achieving the Council's goals and objectives.

Funding Available

The funding available through the dlr Universal Grant Scheme is dependent on the budget adopted annually by the dlr Councillors and can vary year on year.

Demand for these grants is high and for that reason, even if an application meets the criteria, it does not always guarantee that a grant will be offered. The maximum level of funding is not guaranteed and dlr may offer a lesser amount than requested.

The number of applications supported, and the level of funding provided will be at Council's discretion and will reflect the available budget, the quality of the applications and the outcomes achievable.

Allocation of funding to an applicant for any purpose in any year must not be taken as a commitment by the Council for funding in a subsequent year. Dlr retains the right to either not support festivals/events that have previously received funding or to reduce the amount of support given to festivals that have previously received funding. Grant recipients' performance will be reviewed annually; continued funding is subject to satisfactory achievement against agreed targets within the application.

Event & Festival Grants:

To support a vibrant, inclusive, and culturally rich community by funding events & festivals that promote economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being within the dlr area. Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council has received a small amount of funding to support a number of regional festivals and participative events from Fáilte Ireland. Together Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council and Fáilte Ireland seek to support the tourism industry and work to sustain Ireland as a high-quality and competitive tourism destination.

There are three funding strands:

Cat 1: Small Events: The focus of a community event is the community itself. It could be a yearly or sporadic event. Usually taking place over one or two days, it is usually over one to two days and is run by volunteers. These occasions foster civic and community pride and are significant to the social fabric of the county and the locality. Examples of such events would include Community Fun Days, Street Performances and local cultural performances with previous or expected audience of less than 1,000 attendees.

- Funding available up to €3,000 or up to 40% of the total cost.
- Target: local grass roots initiatives.

Cat 2: Medium Events: Is staged for the local community and is also attractive to the wider county. These events generate community pride and add to the vibrancy of the county. While these events may often be aimed at local residents, they encourage visitors to the area. Examples of such events would include small festivals, sporting events and events run over multiple days with previous or expected audience of more than 1,000 attendees.

- Funding available up to €7,000 or up to 40% of the total cost.
- Target: events that attract a wider audience & have a moderate community impact

Cat 3 Large events/festivals: These events/festivals are usually held over a couple of days and attract a large regional and sometimes national audience. Large events are significant in scale and ambition and contribute strongly to the local economy. They have a good widespread media profile from local to national coverage. Examples of such events would include Major festivals, significant cultural/sporting events with previous or expected audience of more than 4,000 attendees.

- Funding available up to €20,000 or up to 40% of the total cost.
- Target: events with regional/national significance & sustainable, substantial community/economic benefit
- The festival/participative event must generate a minimum of 100 visitor or tourist bed nights in paid accommodation. In the absence of valid accommodation surveys or audience surveys, the tourism impact may be estimated by Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council.
- Must submit a plan for a three-year period for the event that includes good governance, financial projections, for further information see appendix.

Objectives & Priorities

The event grants objectives are:

All the above fall under the following strategic documents:

Dlrcoco corporate plan:

"Corporate Goal 4 A dynamic, competitive business environment will support enterprise and leverage our potential as an attractive tourist destination."

Dlr tourism Strategy:

"Objective 3.2: Create towns and villages that are more vibrant both during the day and at night"

Criteria for grant assessment:

- Any Event organisers that commit to expenditure before the Events application process, is at the applicant's own risk.
- The funding requested must not exceed 40% of the overall event expenditure.
- Any successful application organisation working with children must sign a safeguarding statement.
- An application can be for one grant only. If you are applying for more than one grant, separate applications must be submitted. If you are submitting multiple applications, you must number your applications in order of priority.
- Applicants requiring the use of public open space must comply with consents, permits and licenses. Success in your grant application does not confirm automatic rights to use Public Open Spaces and a separate application must be made to the Council.
- Applicants must fully declare any additional council, government or council-controlled organisation funding or grant.
- Applicant seeking funding over €10,000 must submit a valid Tax Clearance Certificate with their application.
- Incomplete applications submitted without any required documentation will be refused.
- That the event is not for profit.
- The Council is not responsible for any underestimated costs by applicants.
- Applications that attract new, rather than existing events will be given a higher priority for awards.
- The proposed event/ activity must take place within the DLR county.
- Funding requested must be for an event to be held in the year of the scheme. Funding will not be granted for events held in the previous or subsequent year.
- Applicants must demonstrate the financial capacity/matched funding to deliver the event/festival.
- Applicant should be a recognised Community Body, Arts Organisation, Business/Business Association or Sports Club with their own bank account. Personal accounts cannot be used for the receipt of grant funding.

- Please note, as Council Budgets for 2026 have yet to be confirmed, this may have an impact on the funding process.
- General operating or administrative expenses, including staff, officials, travel to solicit events, Capital costs such as building, renovating, and/or remodelling a facility and/or purchasing of permanent equipment.
- This grant cannot be used for prize money or prizes, to advance a profit venture or advance the activities of the organiser.
- Food, accommodation and subsistence for the festival delivery team are not eligible.
- Activities undertaken outside the dates as specified in the Letter of Offer are not eligible for grant funding.
- Recoverable VAT, In-kind contributions, fines, penalty payments, legal costs, audit fees, financial consultancy fees mor other fees are covered by grant funding.
- Please note that National and EU public procurement procedures must be followed where applicable. For further information refer to:
<http://www.etenders.gov.ie/generalprocguide.aspx>
- Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council acknowledges its statutory duty of confidentiality to the applicant in respect of all the information received in regard to the proposed festival/participative event and undertakes not to disclose such information without prior written consent from the applicant or as required by law.
- Applicants who canvass and/or seek to influence the grant award process may be disqualified.
- PRIVACY (GDPR) Data collected as part of the grant process is managed in line with our data protection policy <https://www.dlrcoco.ie/gdpr-foi/data-protection-and-dlr>.
- Late applications received after the deadline will not be accepted.
- Applicants should note that there are always more applications for funding than it is possible to support and this is a competitive scheme. The maximum level of funding in not guaranteed and the Council reserve the right not to support festivals and events that may have received funding in the past.
- The Council reserves the right to make minor changes to Guidelines and/or Application Form where this will either improve customer service or help to achieve key Corporate Objectives/Priorities.
- The decision of the County Council on the dlr Universal Grant Scheme is final.

Applications will be marked on but not limited to the following general criteria:

Category	Weighted Score
Community Impact and Benefits	
Inclusivity & accessibility	
Evidence of Planning & Viability	
Financial need & value for money	
Economic and Tourism impact	
Profile and Social media presence	
Environmental sustainability practices	
Legacy or longer-term community impact	

Please note, the assessment board may implement the following if deemed appropriate:

- re-allocate an application to a different category if it is deemed to be more suitable to that strand.
- Refer an application form to a different scheme within the Universal Grant Scheme

Viability

When assessing the grants the assessment board will be looking for evidence of the following:

- A budget must be submitted with your application. Please ensure you include evidence of income from alternative sources and an outline of all expenses including compliance and safety regulations, which apply to your event. It is a requirement you highlight the expenses this grant will cover.
- That the event organiser possesses the necessary expertise to complete the project, having sufficiently demonstrated the relevant experience in both financial administration and event management.
- that the suggested budget, marketing plan, EMP, and communications are workable, open, reasonable, and achievable.
- That there is a clear financial need for public investment into the event from the Universal Grants Programme, to deliver the requested event. Events showing significant financial surpluses or deficits are unlikely to be awarded funding
- The Funding request must not exceed 40% of the overall event income.

Sustainability

- Economic – Tourism & Business: This is the ability to entertain visitors and grow visitor numbers in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown by extending the season (March to Sept) & dispersing visitors throughout the county

- Social & Cultural: Applicants must demonstrate how their event will strengthen local communities, through inclusion, education, foster community pride and the event experience that will bring people together enhancing social cohesion.
- Environmental: Applications must provide information on actions & their policies on the event's organisers commitment in taking steps to protect the environment and to achieve a sustainable, low-carbon, resource efficient event. These may include the following: reducing the use of printing, reducing car use & promoting active travel routes, the use of HVO, reducing the use of single use plastics.

Submission of Applications

All grant applications must be made online via dlrcoco.submit.com. Applicants should ensure that all relevant information is provided in their application. This includes giving a clear description of how they will use the grant, how it will benefit the locality and must include a clear and detailed budget with all sources of both income and expenditure.

Eligible & ineligible applications:

Eligible
Open to the public cultural and sporting events taking place in outdoor or indoor settings and environments. These are generally one off or annual occurrences. This includes but is not limited to;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Arts festivals ○ Book, Poetry and Literature festivals ○ Comedy festivals ○ Dance festivals ○ Design festivals ○ Drive in events ○ Fashion festivals ○ Film festivals ○ Food and Drink events and festivals ○ History and Heritage festivals ○ Lighting trails and illuminations ○ Maritime events ○ Mass participation sporting events ○ Music festivals, in all genres ○ National and International Sports Championships / Competitions ○ Nature and Wildlife festivals ○ Science festivals ○ Sports competitions or tournaments that are not part of regular fixtures, and which attract spectators ○ Visual arts festivals ○ Wellness festivals

Ineligible Events

- Civic Events, Ceremonial Functions, Coffee mornings
- Conferences, AGMs, incentive programmes, awards dinners or social corporate parties, away-days, team building, or consumer exhibitions
- Demonstrations / Marches / Parades of a political nature
- Local markets including car boot sales and regularly scheduled or pop-up craft fairs, food and drink/ farmers markets
- Online classes/online events
- Participative events with a principal focus on fundraising,
- Private, social or family events such as weddings, birthdays, functions
- Regular or recurring programming in year-round venues unless part of a wider festival. This includes productions in; theatres, cinemas, arts centres and galleries; seasonal promotions and activation in shopping centres; live music and DJ sets in venues, pubs and clubs; comedy gigs in venues, clubs and pubs
- scheduled sports fixtures and club championships
- School, college or university group events
- Events already provided for by the Council will not be considered for funding.
- Activities that duplicate activities that Fáilte Ireland is already undertaking
- Applications from applicants that have breached previous funding agreements with the council, including post event reporting criteria and where no commitment has been made to rectify this, will not be eligible.
- Employees and Councillors of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council are not eligible.
- Applicants who have an outstanding debt owing to the Council or any Council controlled organisation.
- Touring productions
- Purely commercial events with limited tourism appeal
- Agricultural shows and countryside fairs, Showgrounds and funfairs

Appendix – Governance & Financial Management

These guidelines aim to ensure that the grant recipients uphold high standard of governance & financial management, promoting transparency, accountability & sustainable impact

Leadership & Oversight:

- Establish an organising committee with clear roles & responsibilities
- Ensure the decision-making process are transparent & inclusive
- Maintain regular meetings with documented minutes

Compliance & Ethics:

- Adhere to all relevant laws and regulations and grant conditions
- Implement a code of conduct & conflict of interest policy

Strategic Planning:

- Develop & maintain a clear mission, vision and strategic objectives
- Align grant activities with organised goals
- Monitor & evaluate program outcomes regularly

Budget & Planning:

- Prepare a detailed & realistic budget aligned with grant objective
- Include provision for monitoring, evaluation and contingency planning

Financial Controls:

- Maintain accurate & up to date financial records
- Use appropriate accounting systems & internal controls
- Segregate duties to prevent fraud & errors

Reporting & Transparency:

- Submit timely reports as required under the grant process
- Provide supporting documentation for expenditure
- Make financial information accessible under grant process

Audit & Review:

- Conduct regular internal & external audits
- Address audit findings promptly & thoroughly
- Use audit results to improve financial practices

Risk Management:

- Identify & assess financial & operational risk
- Develop mitigation strategy & contingency plans
- Review risk management plan periodically

Event Grant Assessment Timeline

