



**Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí**  
Offaly County Council



## **Community Recognition Fund 2024**

### **Window 3**

# **Information for Applicants**

**Deadline to Apply is 4pm Friday 10th January 2025**



**Rialtas na hÉireann**  
Government of Ireland



**An Roinn Forbartha  
Tuaithe agus Pobail**  
Department of Rural and  
Community Development

**Ár dTodhchaf  
Tuaithe**  
Our Rural  
Future



## What is the Community Recognition Fund?

The Community Recognition Fund was first introduced in 2023 to recognise the huge efforts made by communities in welcoming and hosting significant numbers of arrivals from Ukraine and other countries. Through the 2023 allocation, funding of €636,206 was allocated for some 27 projects countywide. Based on the continued impacts on communities, the Department of Rural and Community Development allocated a further €1,055,308 to Offaly under the Community Recognition Fund 2024.

Of this fund, €702,000 was allocated to 11 projects under Window 1. The following towns were allocated funding for projects under Window 1: Tullamore (4), Birr (2), Banagher (3), Edenderry (1), Geashill (1).

Funding under Window 2 is being combined with **Window 3** in the amount of the remaining **€300,542** which will be allocated in January 2025. Priority will be given to projects which are in towns with significant numbers of new arrivals and to communities that have not yet received any support via the Window 1 allocation.

## Who can apply?

Community groups and organisations and the local authority itself in conjunction with or on behalf of the community.

## What areas can apply?

Funding is targeted at communities, villages, and towns where the highest levels of new arrivals are located or areas that have seen an increase in new arrivals. Under the Department's guidelines, only new arrivals currently residing in communities can be counted and not projected or planned arrivals.

**Under Window 3, proposals from the following areas will be prioritised:**

- Portarlington
- Clara
- Daingean

Applications from other areas **may** be considered if it can be demonstrated that there is a high level of new arrivals living in the area.

## How much can you apply for?

The minimum level of funding for an individual project is €50,000.

Smaller projects cannot be artificially combined to meet the minimum threshold of €50,000.

## What can be funded?

The types of projects eligible for funding are:

- Development, enhancement or refurbishment of community or cultural facilities including play areas, walkways, parks, community/sensory gardens, allotments, and recreational areas

- Development, enhancement or refurbishment of local clubs and sports facilities including facilities such as community swimming pools, changing rooms, toilets, digital aids such as score / information boards etc.
- Enhancement to school/parish facilities which are open to use by all of the community after school hours
- Purchase of equipment for local clubs, festivals, community events and organisations e.g. music, arts or sports equipment
- Transport infrastructure such as the purchase of community vehicles, bus shelters and attendant information boards; (any vehicle funded must be in good condition and not more than 5 years old)
- Projects that help address dereliction and/or wider local economic and community development objectives
- Purchase of land or vacant buildings in conjunction with the local authority to develop community facilities refurbishment of vacant or derelict buildings for community use where a clear need is identified.
- Purchase of land and associated works for the development of community facilities such as play areas/MUGAs or town parks/ community gardens, recreational areas etc. (purchases must only be administered by the local authority).

## What is not funded?

The following is not eligible for funding:

- Ongoing operational or running costs.
- Consultancy type fees e.g. solicitor fees, engineering fees
- Projects with no community benefit.
- Projects located in areas with no or low levels of new arrivals living in them.

## How do I apply?

Applications are made through our online portal at [submit.com](https://submit.com).

[Click here](#) to get started.

If your group or organisation does not have an account, then you will need to set one up. You can save a draft of the application and come back to it at another stage, but it must be submitted by the deadline of **4pm on Friday 10th January 2025**. We will not accept applications still in draft format after this date. All communication will be through this portal which will send you emails with updates.

## What do I need to include with the application?

1. A quotation for the project. If the project includes more than one element, include a quotation for each element of the project.
2. The X-Y coordinates of where the proposed project will be based. A Simple Guide How to find X Y Co-ordinates is included in the application process.
3. Proof of the group's ownership of the land or a lease agreement with the owner for at least 5 years from the date of final payment of grant aid or commissioning of the project, whichever is longer.
4. Grant of planning permission if required.

5. Where there is doubt as to whether planning permission is required or not a section 5 exempted development certificate should be included indicating that the development is exempt from planning permission.

## **We applied previously so can we apply again?**

Any community group or organisation in an area with high levels of new arrivals living there can apply.

Groups that have not previously been funded may be prioritised over groups that have been allocated funding previously.

If you were previously unsuccessful with your application and wish to apply again you must make a new application with the required documentation.

## **What is the deadline to apply?**

The deadline to apply through submit.com and to upload any required documentation is strictly **4pm on Friday 10th January 2025.**

## **How will the application be assessed?**

Inevitably we will receive more applications than we can fund, therefore we will have to score the applications. We will be looking at the following:

- ✓ Number of 'new arrivals' living in your town/village
- ✓ Previous funding provided under Community Recognition Fund 2023 and Window 1 of Community Recognition Fund 2024
- ✓ Priorities/rationale for project
- ✓ Value for Money
- ✓ Community Need and Benefit
- ✓ Realistic Timelines and Realistic Costs
- ✓ Capacity of group to successfully deliver project
- ✓ Planning and Consent issues
- ✓ Views of the local MD office staff
- ✓ Public accessibility to the facility/service to be provided
- ✓ Availability of other funding streams – LEADER/Climate Action
- ✓ Other Considerations

## **When will I find out if we have been successful?**

The applications will be assessed by an evaluation committee and shortlisted. These shortlisted applications will be submitted to the Department of Rural and Community Development at the end of January 2025 for their approval. We anticipate that the Department will notify us of the successful applications in March / April 2025 and we will contact you then.

## **What happens if my project is successful?**

1. The group will be required to accept the provisional offer of the grant and sign a funding agreement.
2. You will then need to carry out the procurement process i.e. seeking quotes in writing from at least 5 suppliers.

3. Once the procurement details have been uploaded and reviewed by us you will be approved to proceed with the works if we are satisfied that all is in order.
4. No works should take place until this formal approval is given.
5. Once you have carried out the works you will be invited to drawdown the grant and upload the following:
  - a) Invoices & receipts for all expenditure
  - b) Evidence of payment via bank statement showing expenditure
  - c) Photographs (before / after) of completed works
  - d) A completed case study (by Offaly County Council) detailing the work carried out and the benefit to the community
  - e) You must display a permanent Acknowledgement of Funding Sign to be erected at an appropriate location at the project site
  - f) A site visit will be arranged to inspect the works and this sign
  - g) The grant may be drawn down in stages, however all of the grant must be drawn down by 30/06/2026.

### **Can we get paid the grant in advance of the works taking place?**

No, the expenditure must be incurred first by the group or organisation to draw down the grant. Some groups may be able to apply for a bridging loan from a financial institution to help with cashflow. You may be able to drawdown the grant in stages rather than waiting for all the expenditure to happen.

### **Contact Details for Help**

If you need to contact us for help or advice, please:

Email: [community@offalycoco.ie](mailto:community@offalycoco.ie), or

Phone: 05793 57401

---

## **Terms and Conditions**

The grant is offered subject to the following conditions:

**Grant drawdown will be paid as per the scheme outline with the following documentary support required:**

1. The application form.
2. Procurement documentation, including:
  - a. requests for tenders or quotations,
  - b. tenders or quotations received,
  - c. tender report detailing how the tenders or quotations were assessed and the rationale for selecting the successful tender, and
  - d. where goods, services, or works are procured through existing frameworks, details of the framework(s) used.
3. Original or certified copies of invoices and receipts detailing the works carried out, or goods or services provided.

4. Proof of payment including bank statements.
5. Evidence of ownership documentation and lease agreements.
6. Photos (before / after) to demonstrate the project has been completed and may also be used for promotion purposes by the Department. Photos should also show that required signage has been erected to reference funding provided by the Department of Rural and Community Development.
7. Successful groups will acknowledge the support of Offaly County Council, and the Department of Rural and Community Development as outlined in point 5 (e) above.

**Detailed Terms & Conditions:**

1. Organisations should have appropriate governance in place to oversee funds, manage procurement procedures and record all required documentation throughout the project
2. The recipient shall adhere to relevant EU and national public procurement requirements.
3. Any change in the purpose of the grant aid, change in key elements or re-allocation across key elements must be requested in writing and no changes should be made until the local authority requests and confirms permission of the Department for same
4. The project, and all approved elements of the project, must be completed and all grant aid claims submitted to the Department no later than 18th October 2026 unless otherwise agreed by the Department.
5. The Department may de-commit grant aid if the project, or approved elements of the project, are not completed by 18th October 2026.
6. The Department may de-commit funding prior to 18th October 2026 if it considers the project cannot realistically be completed by this date.
7. The grant aided project must operate as approved for a minimum of five years following the date of final payment of grant aid by the Department or the final commissioning of the project, whichever is the longer.
8. The recipient undertakes to protect the State's investment and will not use it as security for any other activity without the consent of the Department.
9. The recipient shall ensure that all assets funded in whole or in part by the Community Recognition Fund 2024 shall be maintained in good order, repair and condition.
10. The recipient shall not dispose of grant aided assets within a period of six years from date of final payment of grant aid without prior approval of the Department.
11. Assets purchased by the Community Recognition Fund 2024 shall not be hired out, pledged, mortgaged or charged for financial gain without prior approval of the Department
12. The recipient will facilitate a site visit to produce a report and signed declaration confirming project elements approved by the Department have been completed
13. PROJECT IRELAND 2040 / OUR RURAL FUTURE BRANDING - Recipients will acknowledge the support of the Department of Rural and Community Development, Our Rural Future and Project Ireland 2040 and any other applicable sources of funding in all public announcements (including online), advertising and signage, as appropriate, relating to the project.
14. The Department must be notified at least one month in advance of any opening of a funded facility/amenity.
15. The Minister and the local authority shall not be liable for any accidents, illnesses or claims arising out of any work grant aided by the Department.
16. The recipient shall retain and shall maintain all insurances adequate and necessary to operate and deliver the project.

17. If the project involves works on buildings or lands that are not owned by the recipient, a minimum five-year lease must be in place from the date of final payment of grant aid or commissioning of the project, whichever is longer.
18. If the project involves building, renovation or construction works, the recipient must meet all statutory requirements, including Health & Safety and ensure all necessary planning requirements, permissions and consents are in place prior to commencing those works.
19. The recipient must ensure all relevant assurances are established in respect of tax compliance of contractors and suppliers and evidence of compliance must be provided at claim stage, as set out in Circular 44/2006 “Tax Clearance Procedures Grants, Subsidies and Similar Type Payments” and “When is a Tax Clearance Certificate required?” (revenue.ie)
20. Only non-recoverable VAT, that is where a recipient is not registered for VAT, is eligible for funding, and written confirmation must be obtained from the Revenue Commissioners and dated no more than three months prior to any expenditure claim.
21. The information supplied by the applicant group /organisation must be accurate and complete.
22. Misinformation may lead to disqualification and/or the repayment of any grant made.
23. All information provided in respect of the application for a grant will be held electronically. The Department reserves the right to publish a list of all grants awarded on its website.
24. The Freedom of Information Act applies to all records held by the Department and Local Authorities.
25. The application must be signed by the Chairperson, Secretary or Treasurer of the organisation making the submission.
26. It is the responsibility of each organisation to ensure that it has proper procedures and policies in place, including appropriate insurance, where relevant.
27. Evidence of expenditure, receipts /invoices must be retained and provided to the local authority or their representative if requested.
28. Breaches of the terms and conditions of the grants scheme may result in sanctions including disbarment from future grant applications.
29. Please ensure the application form is completed in full. Incomplete applications will be returned for further information and will slow down the funding process.
30. To process your application, it may be necessary for Offaly County Council to collect personal data from you. Such information will be processed in line with the Local Authority’s privacy statement which is available to view on Privacy Statement - Offaly County Council
- 31. The recipient and Department agree that they are subject to the data protection and privacy laws of Ireland and the EU, in particular the Data Protection Act 2018 and Regulation (EU) 2016/679, known as the EU General Data Protection Regulation (“GDPR”).**

**Eligibility:** This application process is for organisations interested in applying directly for funding under the Community Recognition Fund 2024 – Window 3.