



Arts Grants Review Interim Report.

A review of the Arts Grants Programme of Dublin City Council is now ongoing and it is seeking to address fundamental issues raised by Elected Members, Arts Office Staff and recipients/potential recipients of these Grants.

The draft review by Arthur Lappin highlights the following challenges.

1. No increase in Arts Grants funding in ten years equalling a deduction in economic value of 20%.
2. That the Arts Grants function is not sufficiently part of the developmental programme of the Arts Office and that there is no evaluation or monitoring post grant awarded.
3. Revenue Grants now closed to new applicants could be seen as stifling opportunity.
4. That a high percentage of Arts Grant is given to citywide projects and organisations (70%) and a low percentage to neighbourhood or community projects (30%).
5. Small Grants of €2K for Project awards should be avoided as they unnecessarily increase administration for a limited impact. Minimum Project Grants of €5K recommended
6. That it is difficult to understand the purpose of Arts Grants or the priorities and values they represent.

The draft review also affirms.

1. High degree of expertise and transparency in assessment process
2. Arts Grants give an important imprimatur to successful applicants making other funding easier to source.
3. Strong developmental work by Arts Officers provides new opportunities for Arts Grants.
4. Partnerships between Area Offices and Arts Office, Libraries and Dublin City Council Culture Company would benefit Arts Grants.

The purpose of the Arts Grants Review is: To Comprehensively reorganise the Arts Grants process to reflect the current context, values and priorities of Dublin City Council leading to a successful case for increasing the Arts Grants budget (subject to Budget process).

It is the purpose of this report to 'seed' changes in the Arts Grants in 2021 that open the way for the conclusion of the review and the case for an increased budget for Arts Grants in 2021 and beyond. It is also important to adapt the Grants to the Covid19 restrictions on social gatherings.

Just as in Sports there is professional sport and amateur sport, in the Arts there is professional Arts and Participative Arts. Add to this understanding Dublin City Council's commitment to High Standards, Diversity, Social Inclusion and Community Development then a beginning

can be made in finding a new direction for Arts Grants. Dublin City Council wants to support Arts Practice and Artists Practitioners but equally wants to stimulate participation learning and enjoyment of Arts Programmes and events for the human and community development outcomes that this brings.

As a Local Authority in Capital City, the Local, Municipal, National and International have to be balanced in all of the activities the Arts Office take up. Recent contributions by Elected Members showed their lack of engagement with Arts Grants primarily because of the low profile of this Grants scheme at local level. Area Offices have not been supported by the Arts Office in identifying artists that live and work in their area and highlighting local Artists and their projects at Area Committees. Including Community Officers in Neighbourhood Grants Assessment and development will try to address this.

The Purpose of the Arts Grants Programme of DCC in 2021 is therefore:

To support Arts Practice, Arts Participation, and Audience Development in the DCC Administrative Area in a changing and challenging environment.

In 2021 the funding will be targeted on developmental projects, training and vocational support for Artists, Audiences and Participants and on community development outcomes through quality Arts actions or process. In the Revenue Section support for the infrastructure and ecosystem of the Arts will continue.

The following changes to Arts Grants are therefore proposed for the 2021 applications.

1. That new entrants may apply to the Revenue Section of the Arts Grants. These Grants normally repeated each year range from 10K to 30K with an average of 12K. A Grant of 10k is guaranteed to each successful applicant but any increase on 10K will be a response to the criteria of excellence, diversity, social inclusion and equality of opportunity. This scheme will be capped at 300K of the €550K available. Applicants in this section may apply to other sections but if successful in Revenue be offered a Revenue Grant only.
2. Project Grants normally €2-5K average 3K will be set at a minimum of 5K. Bursaries will also become part of this grant scheme to emphasise the developmental agenda of DCC and to respond to the Covid 19 restrictions where Artists and Arts Groups must build new capacities. The Arts Office Bursaries (separate scheme) normally awarded for 30K will be added to this fund and the amount available capped this year at 150K. €75K will be given as 15 Grants for Projects @ €5K and 15 Bursaries will be awarded @ €5K. The Bursary Awards will support education training and capacity building for Artists. The criteria for Projects will focus on the development of the Artists or Group applying. Applicants for Projects will have to show how their project is a developmental opportunity in their practice, for participants or for audiences.
3. Neighbourhood Voluntary Normally 2-5K Average 3K. These Grants will be assessed this year by Area Offices and the Arts Office emphasising the local engagement of each application. This fund is €100K and is poor at attracting applications but the applications received are of high standard. A campaign of encouraging and mentoring applications will be undertaken in pilot form this year but expanding each year. To further encourage engagement by local communities in the Arts Grants programme €40K of the €100k available will be allocated outside of the formal application process. Instead Arts Officers and Community Development Officers will approach groups and

individuals to help them develop their arts capacity and to introduce them to Artists and Arts Organisations that can support them.

Following the ACAG Meeting and contributions on August 31st, consultation online with the Arts Community and potential applicants will take place in early September before this Report (as amended) will be before the SPC for approval.

**Ray Yeates,
City Arts Officer,
21st September 2020**