



Comhairle Cathrach
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council

REPORT TO ARTS, CULTURE LEISURE AND
RECREATION SPC

17TH FEBRUARY 2020

Item No. 7

A Review of Arts Grants.

Arts Grants are a Reserved Function of the Elected Members of Dublin City Council i.e. the final say on the recommendations of the Assessment process is reviewed by a subcommittee of the SPC and brought to a full Council meeting for formal approval. €530,000 is distributed in Arts Grants Annually (no increase in 13 years.)

For 2020 /21 €276K is granted to **Revenue organisations** defined as established Arts Organisations such as The Project Arts Centre, Dublin Theatre Festival, Fringe Festival etc. These organisations have been regularly funded under these Grants for many years. The average grant is €13,143. To allow for new applicants in other categories this category has been restricted to current applicants for five years.

Project Grants in 2020 were granted €152K.

These are Grants for once off projects such as plays and exhibitions. This is a highly competitive process with 92 applications this year with 48 successful. Average Grant €3058

Neighbourhood and Voluntary: This is the socially inclusive, community participation and volunteer led category. There were 47 applications and 34 granted. Total of Neighbourhood €79,500 Voluntary €22,500. Average Grant: Neighbourhood €3058. Average grant Voluntary €2813

Frustration with the application process by some applicants, the small amounts granted because of the overall size of the fund, repeated proposals for minimum grants of 5-10K, the poor participation of organisations or individuals outside the professional Arts community has led to the questioning of the purpose of Arts Grants. On the positive side a Small Grant Scheme gives DCC recognition to Artists and Groups that greatly increase their chances of other funding and provides invaluable encouragement to smaller projects.

Further questions were raised by Elected Members this year e.g. if the contribution to Revenue Organisations from DCC Arts Grants is a small fraction of their turnover is this funding of real value to this cohort? Can relatively small amounts be of high value in other settings?

How can Elected Members let their constituents know about the process?

How can we help people understand how to apply?

Different approaches to these questions and others occur depending on your experience and exposure to the Arts and the value you place on them. As Elected Members decide on any alternative or increased distribution of Arts Grants they need to be informed across the broad spectrum of people who practice, participate and attend Arts events and programmes.

This leads to further questions; how much for example should DCC focus on supporting citywide professional arts provision as opposed to local provision? What is the difference between supporting professional Artists and people learning or participating in the Arts? How can we increase access for new and diverse audiences to the Arts? What values underpin the granting of money? Social inclusion? Excellence? Is there a relationship between these different kinds of support? Can DCC support a little bit of everything or should it target areas of deficit?

In order to address these questions The Arts Office proposes a comprehensive review of Arts Grants to coincide with a new Arts Plan by the end of 2020. This will involve public and professional consultation and research. Arthur Lappin (formerly of the Arts Council and Chair of Galway 2020) will assist the City Arts Officer in drawing up a brief for the Review. It will not be possible to significantly alter Arts Grants for 2020/2021 and any new scheme proposed by Review would launch in 2021/22

It is hoped that a Review of Arts Grants will lead to a significant increase of funding in a revitalised scheme.

**Ray Yeates,
City Arts Officer.
17th February 2020.**