



Increasing the Arts Grant Funding

The purpose of Arts Grants in DCC is to support.

1. Recognition and a developmental step to National funding for the applicant
2. The Career and vocational development.
3. To make small high quality Arts projects locally and citywide that provide the network and foundation for all larger projects and Festivals.
4. To give the Arts Grant applicant the freedom to develop the project they have chosen.

In the recent Review of Arts Grants conducted by Arthur Lappin for the SPC the lack of increase in Arts Grants for more than 15 years was noted by the Elected Members as well as lack of applications for Arts projects in certain Administrative Areas of the City notably the North West Area and North Central. The Interim Arts Plan also sets out DCC's role in supporting high quality participation in the Arts by communities, neighbourhoods and groups as a priority.

In addressing how to apply new resources to Arts Grants, Dublin City Council wants to address the reasons why certain communities are not connecting with professional Arts funding either from DCC or the Arts Council. There are many factors involved here and they have been studied extensively by the City Arts Office and by bodies such as The Arts Council and Creative Ireland. The Arts Office also having mapped out the North Central Area's Arts activities and infrastructure is working in a similar way in 2023 in the North West Area. If new resources are forthcoming in the 2024 budget then certain deficits must be addressed.

They can be summed up as follows.

1. In certain parts of the City there isn't a tradition of professional arts and there is a lack of infrastructure both in qualified people and appropriate buildings. There are notable exceptions such as Axis Ballymun, FI in Dublin 8 etc
2. Applying for Arts funding is seen as very difficult and bureaucratic by community groups.
3. Artists live throughout the City in all areas and all Areas have a desire to find arts funding but lack the Administrative support or structure locally.

In recent Arts projects in Artane and in Crumlin, Dublin City Council leveraged, through its own development, partnership with local people, and investment, significant further funding by the Arts Council and Creative Ireland. In the case of Creative Places Darndale, €50K per year from DCC leveraged €150K per year from the Arts Council and in the case of Creative Climate Crumlin, €100K from DCC was matched by Creative Ireland by €250K.

These programmes were notable as partnerships between the Arts Office and the Area Office involved and helped local organisations learn about the Arts and supported Artists, Participants and new audiences for the Arts.

Bearing these challenges in mind and in order to increase Arts Grants Funding in a targeted way, DCC Arts Office is now proposing that the Arts Grant fund increase by €250K (from €550K to €800K) in 2024 through the creation of a €50K Arts Fund in each of the five Administrative Area. This increase in funding will be a partnership between Area Offices and the Arts Office throughout the calendar year that allocates funding to Arts Projects, Arts Programmes, local Arts organisations and individual Artists living in the designated Administrative Area. This will be a developmental process that recognises talent and builds capacity to attract further resources. Grants from €2-€5K will be made by Local Cllrs on the agreed recommendations of the Area Manager, Community Development Officer and the City Arts Officer.

The focus will be on service impact as part of service provision showing how the Arts is central to human development and opportunity and available to all. Overcoming the deficit of non-participation in the Arts through targeted funding and joined up working is the innovation required.

To balance these proposals I believe the main fund normally allocated to the categories of Projects, Revenue, Neighbourhood and Bursaries should also be increased also by €250K in 2025 leading to a doubling of Arts Grants over the next two years.

This two pronged approach strengthening the Centre City and the suburbs is vital as a new foundational Arts initiative post Covid acknowledging the increased visibility and importance of the Arts in Dublin.

**Ray Yeates,
City Arts Officer
25th September 2023**