The Community Recognition Fund was introduced in 2023 to recognise the huge efforts made by communities in welcoming and supporting people coming to Ireland. Through the 2023 Scheme, funding of €50 million was approved for some 900 projects in cities, towns and villages nationwide. Based on the continued impacts on communities throughout the country and the need to support these communities in welcoming new arrivals, a further €50 million is being provided under the Community Recognition Fund 2024.

Fingal County Council has been allocated €1,538,573 by the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) to deliver projects over 2024 and 2025, with funding allocated across 3 application windows as outlined in the table below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Application**  | **DRCD Approval Timeline** | **Fingal County Council Call Timeframe** |
| Application Window 1 | Up to 31st May 2024 | 8th April to 26th April 2024 |
| Application Window 2 | 1st August to 30th September 2024 | June/July 2024 |
| Application Window 3 | 1st January 2025 to 31st January 2025 | November/December 2024  |

**Funding**

Funding is targeted to invest in those communities, villages and towns where the highest level of new arrivals are located and where a clear need for investment is identified. Projects located in areas that do not have high levels of new arrivals will not be deemed eligible for funding.

Projects to be funded will be capital in nature and shall deliver medium-long term benefits for the communities in which they are located. Projects relating to ongoing operational/running costs are not eligible for funding. The delivery of the project must be completed over the course of 2024 and 2025. The Council is required to reserve a minimum of 20% and may reserve up to 50% of the allocation for expenditure in 2025 to respond to changing circumstances in communities.

**The minimum level of funding for an individual project is €50,000 with a maximum of €500,000 applying to any single project.** Smaller projects cannot be artificially combined to meet the minimum threshold of €50,000. The 2023 Community Recognition Fund provided funding for small scale investment in communities, however the focus of the 2024 Scheme is on capital projects of greater scale and impact.

Local authorities have scope to invest the funding based on local needs, as identified through a “bottom-up” approach based on community engagement.

The type of projects eligible for funding under the Community Recognition Fund 2024 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 club 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 and 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).

**Application Process (Funding Call 1)**

As the funding is to be allocated across 3 application windows as outlined above, the Council will be issuing public calls for project proposals. The allocation of funding will be a competitive process and project proposals will be evaluated by the Council for further engagement with the applicants to agree the project requirements which will then be submitted to the Department of Rural & Community Development for approval to proceed.

The Council will issue 3 separate calls for project proposals in accordance with the application windows outlined in the table above.

The Council is targeting the first call for funding to meeting the emerging needs of new community groups/clubs or existing clubs who have a need for a premises.

In this call the Council will seek to acquire land or a building to meet the need(s) of community groups/clubs. The Council is seeking expressions of interest from new community groups/clubs or existing clubs who have need for a premises. Community groups/clubs who wish to apply for funding under Call 1 must be:

* registered with the Fingal PPN
* have a minimum of 80% of their members living in the administrative area of Fingal
* be constituted for at least 12 months
* be located in areas which have welcomed high levels of new arrivals (as set out below)

The target areas eligible for funding under this call are based on numbers and areas hosting high levels of the beneficiaries of Temporary Protection or International Protection Applicants in the Fingal administrative area:

1. Swords
2. Howth
3. Castleknock
4. Blanchardstown
5. Skerries
6. Donabate
7. Balbriggan

**Applicants must be located in one of the seven areas listed above to be eligible for funding under this Call.**

**Applicants are advised that the minimum level of funding for an individual project is €50,000 with a maximum of €500,000 applying to any single project.**

**Applicants are advised that where a project proposal is for the acquisition of land/building that the Council is required to make the acquisition directly. Acquisitions will be subject to the availability of suitable land/buildings in the area and the market value of the land/buildings within the funding criteria set out above.**

**Applicants are advised that where an acquisition is made to meet a community group/club need that any refurbishment/redevelopment work required to the land/building will be subject to the availability of additional funding and subject to planning permission, if required.**

**Applications which meet the needs of a number of community groups/clubs will be prioritised i.e. where groups/clubs come together in a network of 3 or more different community groups who are willing to co-locate** and share responsibility for the operation/ maintenance of the building as co-tenants.

Interested community groups/clubs should carefully consider their requirements and the possible costs involved in terms of the future operation and maintenance of a facility by the group/club when submitting an expression of interest under this Call. The application form should be completed fully and include as much information as possible with detail provided on the community groups/clubs involved in the application.

**To apply for the Community Recognition Fund please click on link or QR code:**

***(Please note this link will not open until 9am Monday 8th April, Closing date 5pm Friday 26th April)***

<https://submit.link/2zr>



Please note that all submissions are subject to the Data Protection Act (as amended) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (as amended) and the Freedom of Information Act 2014 (as amended).

The Department of Rural and Community Development has published the full details of the scheme (including funding allocations) at [https://www.gov.ie/en/service/e626a-community-recognition-fund-2023/](https://eur04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.ie%2Fen%2Fservice%2Fe626a-community-recognition-fund-2023%2F&data=05%7C02%7CAoife.Sheridan%40fingal.ie%7C51f499115ad6495272c108dc532cf814%7C72dcfc23757145948154afe2c0bdea98%7C0%7C0%7C638476699803712530%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=wEkxOADHP%2FieRQxmfDwGZNiK2v1FDoDHZliLHqQ68xI%3D&reserved=0)

The Council will issue 2 further calls under CRF 2024, the details of which will be published in due course by the Council and for which community groups/clubs who were not eligible under Call 1 or who were unsuccessful in Call 1 may be able to apply for funding for projects. Please monitor the Council’s communications platforms for information on further funding calls under CRF 2024.

**Online Information Session**

The Council will hold an online information webinar on Call 1 of the Community Recognition Fund 2024 **on Wednesday 17th April @ 7pm** and answer any queries that groups may have on the Scheme.   Please click on link or QR code to join:

 [https://qrco.de/bewDM2](https://eur04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fqrco.de%2FbewDM2&data=05%7C02%7CToni.Hogan%40fingal.ie%7C4f2de866a6464b1c61b508dc53ba8e83%7C72dcfc23757145948154afe2c0bdea98%7C0%7C0%7C638477307931071911%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=NQ9lBD4SgL8jF652tZfLyt7JWos4z02jHWrG%2BNdgf9s%3D&reserved=0)



