The Community Foundation for Ireland

A Guide to The Community Foundation for Ireland
We believe in an Ireland where everyone feels they belong.
An Ireland where people are equal and communities thrive.
An Ireland where everyone has a voice.
Who we are

The Community Foundation for Ireland is one of the largest philanthropic organisations in Ireland. We were established in 2000 with the support of Government and the business sector. The Community Foundation for Ireland helps people make a difference by inspiring a spirit of giving and by investing in people and solutions to benefit every community. From an initial investment of €1m in 2000 and through the support of families, individuals, corporates and other trusts and foundations, we have invested many millions in our communities and grown a perpetual fund that will allow us to continue supporting social causes into the future.

We believe in an Ireland where everyone feels they belong. An Ireland where people are equal and communities thrive. An Ireland where everyone has a voice. We respond to Ireland’s complex needs by building deep relationships with non-profit organisations working at the coal face. We build platforms with local communities and collaborate with the public sector. We use our knowledge to help donors translate their giving aspirations into effective investment of their experience and resources.

We are about lots of causes, not just one. Through our donors we fund hundreds of innovative projects addressing the issues faced in education, children and youth, older people, homelessness and so much more. Our current position as one of the largest grant givers in Ireland has led to real progress on challenging issues including domestic violence, penal reform and progressing LGBT+ rights. With the generosity and solidarity of committed donors, we are not afraid of tackling challenging issues at their core.

“The Community Foundation for Ireland plays a valuable role in contributing to fundamental social change in communities across the country. The social issues on which they have focused their work engage with some of the most marginalised and excluded communities and groups in our society; including many who fall outside of the work of the more traditional philanthropic model. Those who have been empowered by The Community Foundation for Ireland include the homeless, victims of domestic abuse, citizens from ethnic minority groups, those who devote their time to caring for sick and elderly relatives and many other members of our society who, for a variety of reasons, so often feel condemned to half-lives, shawdowed by loneliness, fear or rejection.”

Michael D. Higgins
President and Patron of The Community Foundation for Ireland
A growing interest in giving strategically

No government can meet every social need or has the flexibility to adapt to every issue. There is more to be done and philanthropy has a crucial role to play. Whatever the future we face, The Community Foundation for Ireland will be here to support an equitable, thriving and caring society.

We advocate for and enable strategic giving which goes beyond the moment. Strategic giving translates a generous impulse into strategic investments and long-term relationships. It leads to transformative results.

In recent years, we have seen a growing interest in approaching charitable giving in a much more strategic way:

- Individuals, families, corporates and other charitable organisations are concerned to know if their charitable donations are making a permanent difference and not just having an immediate impact.

- Donors want advice on how to best invest available resources. They want a platform to give strategically, with minimum bureaucracy but to the highest standards of governance.

- Families are often thinking about how to engage other family members, including the next generation, in their giving.

- Those who have done well want to give back. They want to thank a community that helped them succeed and ensure that causes they care for are looked after. They want to create a legacy that supports the places they come from and causes they believe in including the arts, human rights, the environment and education. They may wish to create an impact that lasts beyond their own lifetime.

Whatever the reason, we provide convenient, cost-effective and impactful giving options that support each donor’s values, interests and intentions.
We fund hundreds of innovative projects addressing the issues faced in education, children and youth, older people, homelessness and so much more.
Why partner with us?

**Experience matters**
Since 2000, we have a proven track record in empowering donors who want to make a real difference in their communities by tackling social issues effectively. Starting with a single community foundation in Cleveland, Ohio in 1914, the community foundation movement has exploded during the past 100 years, with over 1,800 worldwide today.

**Knowledge matters**
We have dedicated and committed staff who have extensive experience of philanthropy and grant making in Ireland and overseas.

**Connections matter**
We connect donors with visionary non-profit organisations that can make the best use of their gift and we work with professional advisers to find the best charitable solutions for their clients.

**Relationships matter**
We have insights and working relationships with over 4000 non-profit organisations at a national, regional and local level throughout Ireland.

**Results matter**
We make giving efficient and rewarding, as well as cost effective for our donors.

**Governance matters**
We have a strong commitment to ensuring that The Community Foundation for Ireland attains impeccable standards of governance and transparency and follows best international practice.
Giving strategically through us

The Community Foundation for Ireland is a one stop shop for philanthropy supporting you to give strategically, as well as providing a hands on service. We provide flexible giving options, access to advice and expertise and we relieve you of the administrative burden of receiving funding requests and making donations. We ensure significant savings in cost and time compared with setting up a charitable foundation or trust.

We have extensive experience in advising and guiding donors on how to give strategically and efficiently and whether a Donor Advised Fund is suited to your needs. We provide tailored philanthropic and grant making advice to ensure your donations are given to charities that make a real difference to the causes you care about. We report back to you on how your gift is used and provide opportunities to visit projects and to see your funding in action. We offer collaborative giving opportunities with The Community Foundation for Ireland and other donors.

Working with families

When you give strategically, it is not only a gift of money. It is a passing on of what you have achieved. It reflects your values, hopes and traditions. That’s why we offer a range of giving options to help you give confidently and effectively.

“So how did we guide our children into philanthropy? Actually, it is very easy because young people are naturally inclined to be kind, non-judgemental and generous. When they become adults, to keep the momentum going, we decided that we would like them to manage their own giving fund. Here was their chance to have an impact on the issues that were pulling on their heartstrings. From regular reminders to lists of relevant causes to choose from, to organising meetings, down to practically holding their hands throughout the whole process, The Community Foundation for Ireland has been so supportive. As an added bonus the fund has given my children a focus outside their busy working lives and an opportunity to bounce ideas off each other, thereby strengthening their closeness as siblings.”

Family Fund Holder at The Community Foundation for Ireland
Giving strategically through us (Continued)

Partnering with corporates
We have a strong record of working with corporate clients in managing and administering corporate funds, as well as delivering bespoke community grant programmes on their behalf. We provide a flexible and cost-effective vehicle to manage charitable funds as well as access to our expertise in grant making, governance and wide knowledge of community needs.

“I want to really thank The Community Foundation for Ireland for the level of partnership you’ve offered for the last few years. You’ve been innovative and creative and helped a lot of people in the local community and internationally.”

Patty Nation, Director of Global Corporate and Community Engagement, Xilinx

Partnering with other charitable organisations
We have a strong track record in collaborating with other charitable organisations, including Irish and international trusts and foundations. The Community Foundation for Ireland provides administrative support and grant making services to a number of trusts and foundations who do not have such resources in their own right. The Community Foundation for Ireland welcomes the opportunity to partner with other trusts and foundations where there is a shared strategic objective and where there is a chance to achieve synergies and to optimise the use of scarce philanthropic funds.

“The Atlantic Philanthropies invested in The Community Foundation for Ireland in its early days to help establish the community foundation model in Ireland. From small beginnings in 2000, it is impressive to see the continuous growth in the endowed funds of The Community Foundation for Ireland which now exceeds €45 million. The Community Foundation for Ireland is an important part of the emerging philanthropic infrastructure in Ireland.”

Mary Sutton, Country Director, The Atlantic Philanthropies

Partnering with professional advisers
We partner with professional advisers to help their clients get involved in philanthropy in an effective way. Giving back to the community through The Community Foundation for Ireland is easy. We provide a variety of giving options to suit your clients needs and goals and we take care of the administrative, management and governance on their behalf. We can also advise on strategic giving and connect them with charitable organisations making a difference in our community.

“Families and businesses and their professional advisers are increasingly aware that, for those who want to engage in strategic philanthropy, a Donor Advised Fund is a great alternative to establishing a charity or writing a cheque. Looking to the future, Donor Advised Funds will be recognised as an important tool that professional advisers can use to assist with the management of wealth. The services offered by The Community Foundation for Ireland allow families to engage in philanthropy with ease while ensuring the highest standard of governance.”

Nora Lillis, Partner, William Fry
A Donor Advised Fund is tailored to the donor’s needs and is a flexible and convenient way to engage in philanthropy.
With the generosity and solidarity of committed donors, we are not afraid of tackling challenging issues at their core.
How to give

Setting up a Donor Advised Fund

Community foundations are pioneers of Donor Advised Funds which provide many of the same benefits to a donor as a charitable foundation. A Donor Advised Fund is tailored to the donor’s needs and is a flexible and convenient way to engage in philanthropy. In handing over legal and administrative responsibility, the donor has the comfort of knowing that we take responsibility for governance, compliance and due diligence in relation to any donation they choose to make. The donor can choose to give anonymously if they so wish. A Donor Advised Fund is a pathway to planned, engaged and strategic giving.

How does a Donor Advised Fund Work? 7 easy steps

1. A donor makes an irrevocable gift to The Community Foundation for Ireland (in cash or shares). The type of fund chosen will be determined by the size of the donation, the donor’s philanthropic interests and their selected timescale. Some of the options are:

   - **A Flow through Fund** (current) through which the funds are held by The Community Foundation for Ireland and allocated in grants according to the donor’s wishes.
   - **A Endowed Fund** (perpetual, long term) through which the capital is invested in The Community Foundation for Ireland’s pooled endowed funds and an agreed return is available for grant making each year.
   - **A Term Fund** (medium term) where both the amount donated by the donor and the investment income earned is fully spent down over an agreed period of years (circa 7-10 years).

2. A Donor Advised Fund is set up in the donor’s chosen name. Management fees are agreed up front and there are no hidden charges;

3. Any eligible income tax relief on that donation will be claimed and allocated by The Community Foundation for Ireland to the Donor Advised Fund (to be allocated to the chosen charitable cause);

4. The donor identifies the cause(s) which they would like to support and we assist in identifying relevant non-profit organisations and projects to support, ensuring that the donation goes to the project where it can make most impact;

5. The Community Foundation for Ireland handles all administration and issues grants in the name of the fund or anonymously (as the donor chooses);

6. The donor receives agreed feedback and outcome reports so that they know how the donation has been used and are also kept informed of relevant developments in their field of interest to help inform their philanthropy in the future;

7. The donor can choose to increase or reduce their level of grant-making periodically based on time and financial demands.
Examples of how grant making works

The Beachaire Fund

The Beachaire Fund was set up by a professional woman who wanted to take a more structured approach to giving. Often when donors decide to work with The Community Foundation for Ireland it is because they have given in an ad hoc way in the past and are looking to change their approach from charitable giving to strategic giving. The Beachaire Fund is a good example of how a donor is using her fund to address educational disadvantage through supporting programmes that look at STEM, numeracy and literacy initiatives, and early childhood education. Such programmes include a grant to Early Learning Initiative to support their work in the Docklands and a grant to Suas Educational Development to provide targeted support to children in DEIS schools who are struggling with reading and maths.

The Farmleigh Fund

The Farmleigh Fund, was set up as a spend-down term-fund when the family received a windfall gain after the sale of shares. The objective of the fund is to make a sustainable improvement in people’s lives in Ireland. The fund is committed to doing this through providing funding to projects and organisations that seek to address the root cause of issues that negatively affect society. This is a family fund with a particular interest in supporting advocacy and progressive change in public policy and legislation. For example, one area where the fund has invested in change is their funding to the Children’s Rights Alliance so that they can continue to produce their Annual Report Card which tracks policy delivery for children and young people in Ireland. Similarly, the fund has supported the work of the Irish Penal Reform Trust to examine human rights conditions of prisoners in Ireland.

The Síol Fund

The Síol fund was set up as a flow-through Donor Advised Fund by an entrepreneur who wanted to give back to his home town through supporting the local community, as well as some other philanthropic projects. The fund provides grants to projects that are aimed at regenerating the local area. To help identify particular areas to support where the most impact could be achieved, The Community Foundation for Ireland performed a scoping study on behalf of the Síol Fund that mapped out the donor’s home town and highlighted organisations and projects that were actively tackling local issues, and in need of financial support, to reach more members of the community. By conducting this type of study before any grants were made the donor received a detailed overview of where the problems were, who was working in the area and how their funds could create tangible change.
Often when donors decide to work with The Community Foundation for Ireland it is because they have given in an ad hoc way in the past and are looking to change their approach from charitable giving to strategic giving.
Even where the specific issues of the day may change, these social areas will always benefit from **strategic investment and support.**
Pooling your resources with other like-minded donors

We have identified a number of areas where we know philanthropic funding can make a particular impact and where funding will be needed over the longer term. Even where the specific issues of the day may change, these social areas will always benefit from strategic investment and support.

The Community Foundation for Ireland has invested its own resources in these areas and welcomes the support of other donors to build stronger funds to support these challenges. It may be difficult to make a significant difference on your own. By joining with other donors, under our umbrella, you could help make a real impact.

We have five thematic funds that you can choose to support:

**Environment Fund**
As climate change radically accelerates, we must strive to protect Ireland’s wonderful natural assets. Unlike many other countries, there are few, if any, independent charitable funds or foundations in Ireland supporting environmental projects, groups or initiatives. We have started this fund with the intention of building up a long-term endowment fund to support our precious environment.

**Infant Health and Wellbeing Fund**
Within the past decade, there has been a significant reassessment of the importance of early childhood education and development in Ireland. Through the support of a number of other trusts and foundations, we have established a long-term endowment fund to support early childhood development, including education and support for parenting.

**LGBT+ Fund**
We are proud to have supported LGBT+ rights since we were founded. So much has been achieved but prejudice still remains, especially against the transgender community. A long-term endowed fund will ensure that the LGBT+ community get support in the future.

**Older Persons’ Fund**
This long-term philanthropic fund which was established in association with The Atlantic Philanthropies, promotes the civic engagement of older people, as a means of working towards making a difference in their communities. Its twin priorities are to empower older people to speak up for what they want and need, and to champion older people’s participation as active citizens in their communities.

**Women’s Fund**
The Women’s Fund for Ireland is a long-term philanthropic fund to support women and girls in Ireland. Current priorities of the Fund are the prevention of violence against women and the empowerment of women to take leadership roles in communities. When you support the Women’s Fund, you are joining a community of everyday philanthropists committed to improving the lives of women and girls in Ireland, both now and into the future.
Leaving a legacy

Social change is rarely achieved overnight. While some societal issues can be solved quickly and with a once-off injection of funds, most need persistent attention and sustained support over years. The Community Foundation for Ireland is here for the long-term. Through our innovative grant making we help address society’s problems and respond to opportunities. We seek to build stronger communities — today and for the decades to come. By connecting visionary donors with causes that truly matter, we can bring positive changes in communities throughout Ireland and overseas.

Giving a legacy to The Community Foundation for Ireland is easy and you can set up everything now to ensure your wishes will be met. You may like to simply leave a gift to The Community Foundation for Ireland to address future needs, whatever they may be or you may like to support your county or a cause or theme that is close to your heart. Thematic funds that you might like to choose from are outlined on page 15.

“Great governance and knowing that an organisation will be in place for the long term are increasingly important issues when deciding what charity to support in your will. I am the legal counsel/adviser for The Community Foundation for Ireland. As a result, I know the organisation well and have seen over the years how it makes exceptional use of all funding received. The Community Foundation for Ireland is a very real philanthropic option for people who have a definite idea about what they would like to achieve through their will. They can help implement their charitable wishes. Equally, for those who want to do something charitable, but aren’t sure what, The Community Foundation for Ireland can offer a number of interesting options to ensure that, no matter what, monies will be well used to address the key future issues in society — whatever they may be.”

Susan O’Connell, Country Director, Founder, and Partner, O’Connell Brennan Solicitors
By connecting visionary donors with causes that truly matter, we can bring positive changes.
Start the conversation

Tina Roche
Chief Executive
Call: 01 874 7354
Email: troche@foundation.ie

Tina founded The Community Foundation for Ireland in 2000 along with sister organisation Business in the Community Ireland. Tina has an MBA from IMI/Fordham and has many years business experience having worked in various roles as Financial Controller, Company Secretary and Head of Development. Her main interests are in philanthropy, human rights, education, community activism, corporate social responsibility and sustainability. Tina has been recognised for her work ranging from winning Tatler’s Public Life Award, shortlisted for the Women Mean Business awards to being named in the Top 100 Thought Leaders in Trustworthy Business Behaviour by Trust Across America™.

Jackie Harrison
Head of Development
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Prior to joining us in 2010, Jackie was Chief Executive of Philanthropy Ireland and previously held a number of senior roles in the Irish Business and Employers Confederation. A former Director of Inter Trade Ireland, the Digital Hub and Young Social Innovators, in 2001 she was nominated as Chevalier in the French Ordre National de Mérite. In 2014, she was awarded an M. Litt by Trinity College for her research in relation to female philanthropists and also written several reports including “A Guide to Family and Personal Giving” and “How Entrepreneurs View Philanthropy in Ireland”. Her passions are philanthropy, donor care and growing the resources of the Foundation to enable it to meet its mission.

Niall O’Sullivan
Fund Development Adviser
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Niall has been in the fundraising and philanthropy space for almost 20 years. In that time he has worked for Oxfam, consultancies and Trinity College. He previously worked with us from 2006 to 2012 and returned to The Community Foundation for Ireland in 2016. He is passionate about the potential to grow philanthropy in Ireland – especially among families and individuals. The O’Sullivan family has a small fund with us which mostly supports environmental issues.
Through our innovative grant making we help address society’s problems and respond to opportunities. We seek to **build** stronger communities – today and for the decades to come.