Introduction: The importance of grant making

The Community Foundation for Ireland believes in the power of philanthropy to deliver just and progressive social change, working to empower people who want to make a difference through a model of philanthropy that is based on trust, effectiveness and impact. A core purpose of The Community Foundation for Ireland is to work with donors to invest in and build strong, resilient and inclusive communities. Since its establishment in 2000 The Community Foundation for Ireland has distributed grants of almost €50 million to the community and voluntary sector.

Grant Making Objectives

Through its grant making The Community Foundation for Ireland aims to support organisations to implement programmes / projects that:

- Are informed by research, information and consultation relating to the needs of individuals, families, groups and communities to improve outcomes and impact positively
- Are responding to issues that are not currently funded through mainstream budget lines
- Are responding strategically to a priority issue
- Enhance the capacity of the voluntary and community sector to meet the needs of communities

This grant making is particularly important at this time when funding and support for the voluntary and community sector has been radically reduced.*

Principles for grant making

The Community Foundation for Ireland grant making is informed by the following principles:

- **Leadership:** Working strategically and characterised by a partnership approach, learning, risk-taking, mutual respect and a spirit of inquiry; plays a convening role.
- **Informed:** Informed by its grant making, evaluating and sharing results; establishing an effective and imaginative grants programmes
- **Committed** to social, economic and environmental justice based on a human rights approach.
- **Tolerance:** Reflecting diversity and promoting equality.
- **Building community capacity:** Understanding the changing nature of communities; building community assets; supporting the community and helping organizations to succeed; leverage of supports including additional resources.
- **Integrity:** Accountable for what we do and transparent in how we do it with fair, equitable, and accessible business practices; balancing our resources; responsible stewardship of The Community Foundation for Ireland’s assets focusing time, resources and energy on making a measurable difference.
Solidarity: Working to build an inclusive and equitable society.

Independence: To seek to reflect The Community Foundation for Ireland’s viewpoint independent of any vested interests.

*(Brian Harvey’s work)*

**Priorities for grant making**

The Community Foundation for Ireland reviews its grant making priorities on a regular basis and is informed by strategic analysis; consultation and dialogue with communities of interest and community and voluntary sector interests; research; and best practice approaches. Grant making is a key strand in The Community Foundation for Ireland’s three year strategy.

A variety of factors influence the choice of areas to support, including:
- The overall lens of addressing inequality and promoting greater diversity in Irish society based on a human rights approach;
- Areas where The Community Foundation for Ireland has a deep-seated commitment, including through its endowed funds e.g. the Older Persons’ Fund and The Women’s Fund;
- Emerging issues/ issues which have particular difficulty in securing funding;
- VitalSigns Report Card will inform The Community Foundation for Ireland on key issues for the public;
- Areas where The Community Foundation for Ireland investment has the potential to influence public policy/ spending and/or to leverage other private funding;
- Areas where The Community Foundation for Ireland’s previous grant making demonstrates an opportunity for The Community Foundation for Ireland to play a convening role in addressing an issue or for giving a larger strategic grant or where The Community Foundation for Ireland can support the wider community and voluntary sector.

**Focus of grants**

The Community Foundation for Ireland’s grants broadly support not for profit organisations working towards social change including the following groups and issues; Older People, Ethnic Minorities, LGBT+, Travellers, Mental Health, Youth, Early Years, Education, Environment, Families at Risk, Prisoners and Women’s issues. The grants will also include supports and capacity building for the Community and Voluntary sector. These are reviewed in line with the strategic plan.

**Type of grants**

There are several types of grants. Most commonly, grants are distributed through grants schemes which applicants can competitively apply for. These grants schemes have specific criteria and timeframes. Grant allocations are decided by the Grants Expert Panel and approved by The Community
Impact Grants whereby not-for-profit organisations are supported by The Community Foundation for Ireland through potential multi-annual grants with set goals and outcomes. Impact grants can originate through an approach by a not-for-profit organisation or by The Community Foundation for Ireland to a not-for-profit organisation. These grants are discussed and approved by two board members and the CEO.

Flexible grants; The Community Foundation for Ireland is often approached for grants and when these are in line with the grant making focus can be considered for support and possibly grant aided. Two board members and the CEO approve.

Focused themed funds whereby grants are directed at a specific purpose/cause/initiative. These grants are often judged by an expert panel and approved by two board members and the CEO.

Grants from donor advised funds (where the donor selects the recipient, subject to the beneficiary being within The Community Foundation for Ireland’s charitable purpose) this is authorised by the donor alone, subject to the grant’s team member and the bank authorisers being satisfied that it comes under the Charities Act.

Grants that are co-funded with donors or other organisations are another type of grant. This arises where The Community Foundation for Ireland is funding a particular area or organisation and a donor or other organisation partners with The Community Foundation for Ireland. The Community Foundation for Ireland’s part is approved by two board members and the CEO, the donor part by the donor. Occasionally The Community Foundation for Ireland partners with another Foundation and they make the grants approved by two board members and CEO.

Limitations / restrictions
The Community Foundation for Ireland does not generally fund the following: Animals, religious activities, political activities, overseas travel, individuals or profit making companies, sports (except community sports), any core or ongoing activities (this means generally an organisation’s core funding will not be supported by The Community Foundation for Ireland).

Grant making process

Grants Expert Panel
The Grants Expert Panel is compiled of leading experts from the Community and Voluntary sector, each with particular knowledge and expertise regarding the current needs of the Irish Community and Voluntary sector. The panel is an advisory committee to the grants team and the board of The Community Foundation for Ireland. At least one board member sits on the panel and it is their role to report to the board in relation to any relevant issues. The panel approves and oversees all open grant rounds.
The Chair of The Community Foundation for Ireland board, along with the board member who sits on the panel and one other member approves all non-grant round grants.

**Grants Team**
The Community Foundation for Ireland’s CEO, together with members of the Grants team assesses grant applications internally and shortlist applications based on their suitability and that they meet the basic criteria of each particular grants scheme.

**Eligibility and Due Diligence**
Grants are examined to ensure that they meet the ‘Charity’ standard under the Charity Acts. All grants are subject to due diligence. Depending on size of grant the level of due diligence varies.

**Evaluation and impact measurement**
The Community Foundation for Ireland will evaluate grants of a certain size to gather information on the impact of its grant making and to use that learning to improve the efficacy of its grant making.

**Donor Advised Funds**
Grants that are requested by donors will come under the Eligibility and Due Diligence clauses. Once due diligence is completed and there is a sufficient grant making balance in the donor’s fund, the grant will be paid within 4 working days. Any grants where the CEO or Board believe that the grant will not be used wisely will have the right to inform the donor and stop the grant.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** June 2019  
**LAST REVISED OR REVIEWED:** May 2019  
**SUBJECT TO REVIEW:** June 2022