

Arts Festival Award Scheme 2026



Comhairle Contae Chill Mhantáin
Wicklow County Council



Wicklow County
Arts Office



arts council
ealaíon
funding the arts

1 BACKGROUND

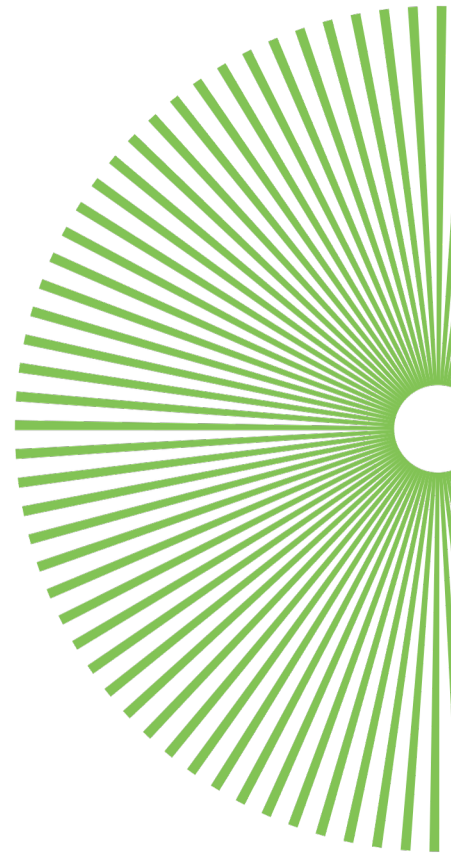
Wicklow County Arts Office established the Arts Festival Award Scheme as one of several funding streams designed to support artists, arts participation and art form development. These initiatives are integral to Wicklow County Council's broader efforts to encourage excellence in the arts and enhance community involvement in artistic endeavours across the county.

2 SCHEME PURPOSE

The primary objective of the Arts Festival Awards Scheme is to support the development and programming of Arts Festivals in County Wicklow. This award seeks to financially assist Festival development plans and/or programmes for the year 2026, covering:

- i. The production or commissioning of new work for the Festival
- ii. The engagement of professional artists or ensembles as part of the Festival programme
- iii. Implementation of specific measures targeting audience development and/or public engagement
- iv. The development of new strategies and / or approaches to the delivery of the Festival

It's essential to note that the maximum award available through this scheme is capped at €15,000.



3 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

To be considered for the Arts Festival Award Scheme, applications should exhibit the following:

Production/commissioning of new work & engagement of professional artists/ensembles:

↳ Demonstrate a clear and considered plan describing how the festival will be developed, managed, produced and presented

↳ Describe how professional artists/ensembles will be engaged

↳ Provide a well-defined project timeline, detailing the festival's delivery, promotion and evaluation (for project completion within the timeframe of the award)

Public engagement and audience development:

↳ Describe how the festival will reach new and existing audiences

Proven track record of delivery:

↳ Demonstrate a strong track record in programming, presenting, and producing successful arts festivals

Distinctive nature of artistic merit and evidence of ambition and innovation:

↳ Demonstrate the festival's artistic merit and distinctive qualities

↳ Display ambition and innovation in the proposal, to advance festival development beyond previous iterations

Feasibility of proposal (advance planning and finances):

↳ Provide a breakdown of project expenses within the budget including a breakdown of any additional sources of funding or income (including evidence of finances received, permissions and/or licenses already in place)

3.1 WHAT IS NOT ELIGIBLE

↳ Administration costs

↳ Non-Arts Festival Events

↳ For-profit or fundraising projects

↳ Competitive initiatives

↳ Alcohol / Entertainment / Hospitality / Food & Drink expenditure

↳ Festivals which take place outside County Wicklow

↳ Insurance costs where it is more than 10% of the awarded amount

↳ Capital improvements / capital asset purchases

↳ Festival projects or programmes where the majority of costs relate to equipment hire

↳ Projects that focus primarily on the community rather than artistic outcomes

Note: in the event that your application is ruled ineligible, it will not be assessed

4 ASSESSMENT PROCESS

A diverse pool of assessment panel members, comprising arts managers, arts practitioners, curators, producers, and individuals with relevant artistic and community expertise, along with local knowledge, will contribute to maintaining a well-rounded perspective and expertise during the application assessment process.

The Assessment Panel, once appointed, will have access to the submitted applications and will convene to evaluate them, shortlist, and recommend award recipients for 2026.

5 CONDITIONS

All awards are subject to the availability of funds. Awards may be withheld or divided at the discretion of Wicklow County Council

Applications and supporting documentation must be submitted online via the platform **Submittable**. No emailed or posted applications will be accepted

Applications must be complete and have all relevant supporting documentation. Incomplete and / or late applications will not be accepted

All applications must adhere to the guidelines set out in this document

Applicants **must** have obtained any permissions / licences needed to carry out a project in advance of submitting an application

Applicants must already have a Festival bank account and constitution or memorandum of association

Applications will be assessed by a panel of professional arts practitioners and will include representation from Wicklow County Council

Shortlisting is likely to apply

Applicants will be notified as soon as is practicable. It is anticipated that the overall process from submission of applications to notification of outcomes will take approx. 6 - 8 weeks

Successful applicants are required to submit a Report and an Income and Expenditure account for the Festival after the event has taken place. The report must also include audience numbers (virtual and in-person)

Successful applicants are required to provide evidence of Public Liability, Employers Liability and / or Professional Indemnity Insurance, as appropriate, upon signing the letter of offer

Wicklow County Council and the Arts Council must be credited in any publicity relating to the work which was supported under this scheme. A letter of offer will set out specific branding and crediting requirements

Where relevant, compliance with best practices and legislation in Child Protection as outlined by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality must be adhered to, in addition to Wicklow County Council's procedures regarding Garda vetting

It is expected that proposals should be realised in full within the timeframe specified in the application. Any alterations to the project timeframe must be submitted to the Arts Officer in advance.

Wicklow County Council reserves the right to review the Award Scheme at any time and as a result, may make any changes necessary without any prior notice to applicants

Please note that post-assessment, detailed feedback on applications submitted is not possible

6 DOCUMENTATION & EVALUATION

Projects supported under the Arts Festival Award Scheme 2026 must be documented throughout the lifetime of the project. The final report submitted must include the following:

- ↳ An evaluation report to include a reflection of the overall experience(s) throughout the project from the perspective of the participants, artist(s), coordinating organisation or community group
- ↳ A short written report detailing how the grant from Wicklow County Council was expended i.e. project details, cost, timeframe, match-funding, outcomes
- ↳ An Expenditure Report detailing a breakdown in costs incurred along with Proof of Expenditure i.e. paid invoices / receipts to the value of the grant amount awarded
- ↳ A visual record (images/video) of the main stages of the project, showing the project in action or the project outcomes. A minimum of 5 high-quality digital images are required. Wicklow County Council reserves the right to use these images for any publicity relating to this scheme
- ↳ Evidence of your recognition / accreditation of Wicklow County Council's financial contribution to the project e.g. local newspaper articles, advertisements, reports, promotion material, etc. If a permanent artwork is created, Wicklow County Arts Office should be credited alongside the permanent work

7 HOW TO APPLY

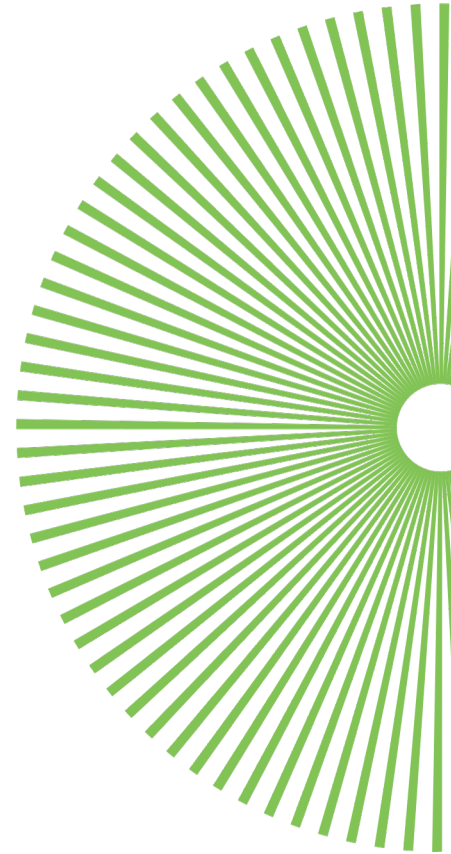
Read all documentation carefully.

Under the 'Apply Online' section on our website, click on the 'Apply Here' link, choose the 'Submit' button next to 'Arts Festival Award Scheme 2026' and complete the following:

- ↳ Enter all relevant details on the online application form (emailed/ faxed/posted applications will not be accepted)
- ↳ Upload a budget for 2026 plus an Income and Expenditure account for 2025. Please ensure the amount of grant funding you are seeking is included on the budget document (**note:** budget templates available on our website must be used)
- ↳ Upload supporting documentation which must include:
 - » Up-to-date CV (max 2 pages)
 - » 5 examples of work that represent demonstrate the Festivals track record. This can include images, reviews, letters of support, treatments, draft scores, and audio or video recordings (links to YouTube, Vimeo, Soundcloud, MP4, etc.) If individuals are captured in any image/video, a signed consent form is required for each individual

7.1 SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS MAY BE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING:

- ↳ Tax Clearance Confirmation
- ↳ Evidence of Public Liability, Employers Liability and / or Professional Indemnity Insurance as appropriate



For any questions or requests for application support, you can reach out to wao@wicklowcoco.ie until Friday, 30th January 2026

Please make your subject line 'Arts Festival Award Scheme 2026'

APPLICATION DEADLINE

Thursday 5th February 2026 at 4pm

Applications are accepted via the online platform **Submittable**

Questions may be directed to wao@wicklowcoco.ie



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