

## What is the Disability Participation and Awareness Fund 3.0?

Rethink Ireland is working with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) to manage the €3,500,000 Disability Participation and Awareness Fund 3.0. This is an eight-month fund that will support up to 18 innovative projects and organisations aimed at improving the lives of people with disabilities.

The fund is now open for applications from non-profit organisations that focus on helping people with disabilities, particularly those with autism, to fully and equally participate in all aspects of life. This includes social, cultural, artistic, and sports activities, as well as removing barriers, raising awareness, and using innovative solutions to meet the needs of the disability community.

The fund aims to support projects or organisations across Ireland by:

1. Improving opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in community life, including social, cultural, arts, and physical activities.
2. Raising awareness and understanding of disability issues in the community.
3. Supporting and empowering neurodiverse and autistic people at the community level.
4. Strengthening service providers in Ireland so they can expand their services and help more people with disabilities.
5. Increasing awareness of disability issues in the community.

The fund offers cash grants ranging from €50,000 to €200,000, along with non-financial support, for up to 18 projects to help them grow and increase their social impact.

This support includes:

1. Up to 18 awards of €50,000 to €200,000\* each.
2. Non-financial support, such as a place on Rethink Ireland's Accelerator Programme.
3. Customised business and capacity-building support, including help with strategic planning, maximising impact, communications, storytelling, and fundraising.
4. Access to Rethink Ireland's networks.

\*The Rethink Ireland Board will decide how much money to award, which may be less than the amount requested. The final amount depends on how many organisations are selected.

**You can apply to the Disability Participation and Awareness Fund 3.0 through the online [portal](#) from 30th September to 8th November 2024.**

Join us for our application clinics to learn more and ask any questions. These clinics will be held on:

- Thursday, 10th October 2024 at 1pm: Register [here](#).
- Wednesday, 23rd October 2024 at 1pm: Register [here](#).

**The deadline for applications is 1pm on Friday, 8th November.**

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## Frequently Asked Questions

### WHO CAN APPLY?

This fund is open to non-profit organisations, such as companies limited by guarantee, co-operatives, charities, and other voluntary organisations. To apply, organisations must meet both Rethink Ireland's general criteria and the specific criteria for the Disability Participation and Awareness Fund 3.0.

#### Rethink Ireland's criteria:

- The project must address a significant social issue.
- The project must be innovative in Ireland.
- The project must be based in Ireland and have its main impact in the Republic of Ireland.
- The project must have potential to expand or be replicated in Ireland (international expansion is optional but not required).
- The project must already be operating or at least have been tested in some way.
- Applicants must be from a non-profit organisation with a legal form, such as a company limited by guarantee, co-operative, or charity.

*Rethink Ireland defines a not-for-profit as any organisation whose constitution indicates it has public benefit purposes and is neither privately owned nor controlled by the State.*

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## The Disability Participation and Awareness Fund 3.0

Fund core criteria:

The fund is divided into four strands, and each strand supports projects working directly with people with disabilities. To apply, projects must meet both the general fund criteria and the specific criteria of the strand they are applying for.

- Projects must go beyond the usual activities of the applicant organisation and complement, not duplicate, existing services.
- Applications must align with at least one of the four strands of the fund.
- Projects will be evaluated based on how well they meet the goals of the fund, the strength of the proposal, and value for money.

### Strand 1: Supporting community, sports, and physical participation

This strand supports projects that encourage disabled people to participate in community life, including sports and outdoor activities. To be successful, projects must:

- Increase opportunities for community participation, sports, or outdoor recreation.
- Promote awareness of the lived experiences of disabled people.

### Strand 2: Supporting arts and cultural activities

This strand supports projects that help disabled people participate in arts and cultural activities. Projects must:

- Increase opportunities for participation in arts and cultural activities.
- Promote awareness of the lived experiences of disabled people.

### Strand 3: Supporting employment

This strand supports social enterprise initiatives that provide work experience or apprenticeships to disabled people. Projects must:

- Build awareness, understanding, and competence in disability at the local level.
- Support disability advocates and engage with Disabled Person's Organisations.
- Promote awareness of the lived experiences of disabled people.

### Strand 4: Supporting neurodiversity initiatives

This strand supports projects that help neurodiverse children and adults participate in their communities. Projects must:

- Offer innovative and meaningful services, products, or programmes that support and empower neurodiverse people.
- Promote awareness of the lived experiences of neurodiverse people.

## Additional Criteria

In addition to the core criteria, preference will be given to projects that:

- Focus on people with multiple impairments.
- Use innovative technology, including assistive technology.
- Are led by people with disabilities.
- Have a positive impact on Ireland's green transition (e.g., environmental sustainability).

## Accessibility

We have tried to make the application process as accessible as possible. If you need additional help or face difficulties completing the application, please contact us at [disabilityfund3@rethinkireland.ie](mailto:disabilityfund3@rethinkireland.ie).

## Help sessions

We are offering two online help sessions to provide further information and answer your questions. These sessions will take place on:

- **Thursday, 10th October 2024, from 1-2pm.** [Register here.](#)
- **Wednesday, 23rd October 2024, from 1-2pm.** [Register here.](#)

Please register using the provided links.

## Who cannot apply?

Projects that are not eligible to apply are:

- Projects seeking funds for scholarships, research, or capital items like buildings, vans, and equipment.
- Political projects or those aligned with a political party.
- Projects that benefit animals only.
- Projects based outside the Republic of Ireland.
- Organisations with ongoing funding from a previous Rethink Ireland programme (unless applying with a different project and project lead).

- Applicants under 18 years of age or from commercial companies.

Applicants who are not eligible to apply are:

- Applicants under 18 years of age
- Commercial companies, sole traders and individuals
- Any staff member from Rethink Ireland and their family members. Family members include siblings, parents, spouses or civil partners or children.
- Individuals
- Statutory or public bodies, companies limited by shares that are not registered charities
- Any consultant currently working with Rethink Ireland

## **If my organisation has received funding from Rethink Ireland before, can I still apply?**

Yes, you can still apply if your organisation has received funding from Rethink Ireland before. However, you must show that your organisation performed well in the previous programme and explain how the new funding would be a continuation of the original project, while also meeting the new fund's criteria.

## **If my organisation/project is currently receiving funding from Rethink Ireland, can I still apply?**

If your project is still receiving cash payments from a previous Rethink Ireland fund, you are not eligible to apply for the new programme. However, you may still apply if you are working on a different project with a different project lead.

## **Is this fund only for large national organisations?**

No, it is open to organisations of all sizes, as long as they are non-profit with a legal form (as described in the criteria).

## **Can I apply if my project is still in the idea stage?**

No, unfortunately, this fund requires proof that the project is already up and running or has been tested and shown some results.

## **Can organisations submit multiple applications?**

Yes, your organisation can submit more than one application for different projects. However, each application must apply to only one strand of the fund, with a different person leading each project. Due to the competitive nature of the fund, it is unlikely that more than one project from the same organisation will be funded. We recommend submitting one strong application rather than multiple ones.

## **If my organisation receives government or state funding (e.g. HSE, TUSLA), can we still apply?**

Yes, you can apply even if you receive funding from a government or state agency. However, if more than 50% of your board members are nominated by the government, your organisation is not eligible for funding.

## **Can organisations collaborate on an application?**

Yes, organisations can collaborate. However, one organisation must take the lead. If your application is successful, the lead organisation will be responsible for signing the contract and fulfilling all legal obligations related to the project. Please ensure your project meets the eligibility criteria before applying.

## **Any further questions?**

If you need more information, you can contact the fund team at [disabilityfund3@rethinkireland.ie](mailto:disabilityfund3@rethinkireland.ie).

## **What does the fund offer?**

- Cash grants ranging from €50,000 to €200,000 over eight months.
- A business support package.
- A place on our capacity-building accelerator programme.

## **What can the grant be spent on?**

The cash grant must be used for the awarded project and cannot be used for paying off debts or capital expenses like renovations or buying equipment. It can be used for staff and operational costs, but you must explain how this will support the project.

## **What non-financial support will successful applicants receive?**

Rethink Ireland provides non-financial support, often described as the ‘secret sauce’ that helps projects grow and become more sustainable. This support includes:

- The project lead, and possibly other staff members, will join the **Fund’s Accelerator Programme**. This is a series of interactive workshops covering topics like strategy development, measuring and improving impact, communication and storytelling, diversity and inclusion, and fundraising.
- Awardees will also receive personalised, one-on-one business and capacity-building support from expert consultants. This will focus on areas like impact management, strategic planning, and developing a theory of change. These supports will be tailored to meet the specific needs of each project.
- Awardees will also gain access to Rethink Ireland’s networks, allowing them to connect with other awardees, which can be very useful for long-term success.

## What is expected of Awardees?

The project lead is required to participate in the six-month Accelerator Programme. This includes attending around six workshops and working one-on-one with a business or strategy consultant. Project leads are expected to dedicate at least two days a week to working on the funded project and achieving agreed goals.

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## HOW DO WE APPLY?

You can apply online through the application portal, which will ask for details about:

- your project and organisation
- the problem your project tackles
- what makes your project different from others
- who it benefits
- how your project meets the fund conditions
- how you test or evaluate how well your project is doing
- referees
- other details

- It also asks you to send us financial documents (listed below) and a short video about your project (this is optional).

You also have the option to submit a 2-3 minute video about your project, explaining:

- Who you are
- Why you are applying?
- The problem your project solves
- How your solution is innovative

You can then upload your video to YouTube or Vimeo. You can insert the URL link in the application form.

## **Selection process**

The selection process includes several stages:

1. Applications open on 30th September 2024.
2. Internal and external reviews will be conducted in mid November and early December.
3. Interviews for shortlisted applicants will take place in mid January 2025.
4. Final decisions will be made by the Rethink Ireland Board in late February 2025.

## **Terms and Conditions**

By applying, you agree to the following:

- You are 18 or older.
- Your application contains truthful information.
- You meet the fund's eligibility criteria.
- Rethink Ireland may publish the names of successful applicants.
- If you break the terms and conditions, your award may be taken back.

If you have any more questions, feel free to contact us at [disabilityfund3@rethinkireland.ie](mailto:disabilityfund3@rethinkireland.ie).