

Breaking Barriers Fund 2025 -2028 Webtext

Fund Overview

Rethink Ireland is working with the State Street Foundation and the Department of Rural and Community Development to run a three-year fund to help projects in Ireland that promote fairness in education and work. The fund supports programs that improve access to jobs, help people stay in work, and create education opportunities.

The fund's goal is to back projects that help people from minority communities get jobs, internships and placements, or training and education. It focuses on:

1. **Fighting Discrimination:** Tackling unfair treatment in the job market based on race, ethnicity, and nationality.
2. **Increasing Access:** Helping people from minority groups find work and get access to higher education, apprenticeships, and other learning (i.e. through tailored employability programmes, skills development courses and other employment supports)
3. **Removing Barriers:** Making it easier for disadvantaged groups to find jobs, placements, or educational opportunities.
4. **Building Careers:** Supporting the career growth of people who are underrepresented in higher-level jobs.
5. **Supporting Systemic Change:** Helping leaders from minority communities to push for change in policies that make it easier to get decent jobs or education.

The fund provides support worth up to €204,000 per project for up to 5 projects through cash grants and support.

What the Fund Offers

- **Cash Grants:** Up to €189,000 for each of the 5 projects.
- **Support Program:** A place in Rethink Ireland's Accelerator Program with training and guidance on topics like planning, impact, and fundraising.
- **Network Access:** Opportunities to connect with Rethink Ireland's networks and other awardees.

You can apply to the Breaking Barriers Fund via the online portal ([link](#)) from 18th November 2024.

The deadline for applications is 1:00 pm on 10th January 2025.

When are the online help sessions if I have any questions I need answered?

Please join us for our online application clinics to find out more and answer any questions that you have. The application clinics will be held on:

- November 28th 2024, Thursday at 1 pm: [Register Here](#)
- December 05th 2024, Thursday at 1 pm: [Register Here](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

Who Can Apply?

The fund is open to not-for-profit organisations (e.g. a company limited by guarantee, a co-operative, trust, charity, and other voluntary organisations) that:

- Address a social or environmental issue.
- Are innovative in Ireland.
- Operate mainly in the Republic of Ireland.
- Aim to expand or be repeated elsewhere in Ireland.
- Are already operating or tested in some way.

Specific Criteria for Breaking Barriers Fund

Projects need to target at least one criteria including:

- Labour market discrimination.
- Increasing minority participation in work or education.
- Removing barriers to employment.
- Career development for underrepresented groups.
- Supporting leaders from disadvantaged communities.

Advantageous criteria - This is not a requirement

- Projects/Organisations that work holistically with; migrant groups including asylum seekers and refugees, minority ethnic communities facing intersecting disadvantages such as people with physical or intellectual disabilities, young people, older job seekers/return-to-work employees, women from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Projects which help Ireland reach four Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's); SDG 1: No Poverty, SDG 5: Gender Equality, SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities
- Projects that are led by a community.
- Projects that are led by minority groups.
- Projects that are led by two or more organisations working together.
- Organisations that have a positive effect on Ireland's Green Transition through their activities/interventions. This criteria applies if the organisation tackles issues related to the environment and green transition, such as carbon reduction, biodiversity, sustainable agriculture, pollution and/or the just transition.

What Projects Can't Apply?

Projects that are not eligible to apply are:

- Focus mainly on research.
- Need funding for buildings or equipment.
- Are politically aligned with or promote a political party.
- Only accept people of a certain faith.
- Focus on animal welfare.
- Operate outside of Ireland.
- Are led by anyone under 18 years old.

Which applicants cannot apply?

- 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 and organisations that are state bodies or agencies that are not registered charities

- Any consultant currently working with Rethink Ireland

What financial information do we need to submit with our application?

1. The documents you need to complete depend on whether you are applying in relation to a project within an organisation or you are applying as an organisation as a whole:
 - If applying for a project within a larger organisation, the project's management accounts and the organisation's most recent audited/full accounts are needed.
 - If applying for an organisation as a whole, the most recent audited/full accounts are needed.
2. **All applicants must outline how they intend to use the funds** from Rethink Ireland if successful **and** upload a proposed budget. A spreadsheet template is provided in the relevant section of the application form.

How do we upload our project budget (planned income and expenditure)?

In the relevant section of the application form you will be provided with a link to a budget template in excel. Please click on the link provided and DOWNLOAD this document to your computer. Then fill in your financial information and save the document with your project's name and then upload it in the relevant section of the application form.

Accessibility

We have tried to make the application process as accessible as possible, but we understand that there may still be some difficulties for applicants.

If you have access needs or are struggling with the application form, please contact breakingbarriers@rethinkireland.ie

What the Fund Pays For

- Cash grants up to (€63,000) each year across 3 years
- A business supports package
- A place on our capacity building Accelerator Programme
- Project performance management

You may only spend the grant on the project which won the award. Rethink Ireland will agree on the specific use of the grant with you.

You cannot use the grant:

- to pay off debts or buy land, buildings or large equipment items, or
- for subsistence or scholarship payments to beneficiaries.

If my organisation has previously been in receipt of an award from Rethink Ireland, can I still apply?

Yes. If you have previously been funded by Rethink Ireland, you can still apply. Previous awardees must be able to demonstrate they have performed well on a previous programme and capture in the application form how the new funding being applied for is a logical continuation from the original investment, fitting the new fund criteria in particular.

If my project is currently in receipt of an award from Rethink Ireland, can I still apply?

Projects on one of our funds that have cash grant payments remaining before the commencement of the new fund programme are not eligible to apply.

If my organisation is currently in receipt of an award from Rethink Ireland, can I still apply?

Organisations on one of our funds that have cash grant payments remaining before the commencement of the new fund programme are still eligible to apply with a different project and different project lead.

What non-financial supports will be provided to successful applicants?

Rethink Ireland's non-financial supports have been called our 'secret sauce' that help projects to really develop their capacity and sustainability, in addition to the benefit of the cash supports. Non-financial supports will include:

1. Each awardee's project lead and potentially other relevant staff will take part in the fund's **Accelerator Programme** The Accelerator Programme will consist of a series of interactive training workshops on topics such as strategy development, measuring and maximising your impact, communications and storytelling, diversity and inclusion and fundraising.

2. Awardees will also get some **bespoke 1:1 business and capacity building supports** from expert business/non-profit consultants in areas such as impact management, theory of change and strategy development. Supports will be designed in consultation with the successful projects.
3. Awardees will also get access to Rethink Ireland's networks and have the opportunity to develop networks and contacts with the other awardees of the fund which are often very valuable in the longer term.

What is expected of awardees?

The project lead will be expected to take part in the Accelerator Programme, which includes attending approximately 6 workshops and spending time working 1:1 with a business/strategy consultant. Project leads will be expected to spend a minimum of two days per week working on the awarded project and working towards agreed goals.

Who will decide who wins the awards?

The Board of Rethink Ireland makes the final decisions.

What is the selection process?

The selection process includes the following steps:

1. Applications will go through a rigorous selection process (for more information see below).
2. Interviews will take place online from 24th February 2025 - 03rd March 2025 (if you are invited to an interview you will be informed on 14th February 2025)
3. Successful interview applicants will be informed in late April 2025 (subject to change)
4. The cash grants will be delivered in two parts each fund year - one at the beginning and in the middle of the fund year, one at the end of the Accelerator Programme and are tied to agreed performance milestones.
5. The Accelerator Programme will run for approx six months per fund year, commencing from (July 2025)
6. The Accelerator Programme supports will be designed in consultation with the awardees and reflect organisational/project needs.

The fund will close in Q2 2028

How to Apply

- **Application Form:** The form asks for details about your project, its purpose, who it helps, and your finances.
- **Optional Video:** Share a 2-3 minute video explaining your project.
- **Financial Documents:** Include your most recent accounts and budget plans.

Application Timeline

- **Open for applications:** November 18th, 2024.
- **Deadline:** January 10th, 2025, at 1 pm.
- **Interviews:** February 24th to March 3rd, 2025.
- **Final Decisions:** Late April 2025

Can organisations make multiple applications?

Yes, organisations can make multiple applications. These applications must be for different projects.

If my organisation is funded by a government/state agency (HSE, TULSA and so on), are we eligible?

Yes, you can apply if you are in receipt of funding from a government or state agency. However, if your organisation is 100% funded through state sources, you cannot apply to the fund.

How do applicants find out where they are in the selection process?

We will contact all applicants by email to let them know whether or not they have been shortlisted and invited to interview. Interviews will be conducted via online video link.

Is this just for large-scale, national organisations?

No, it is not, and indeed we welcome applications from organisations of all sizes once it is a not-for-profit organisation with a legal form (see criteria above).

Can I apply for this funding even though I am still on the ideation stage?

Unfortunately no, this fund needs to see proof that the project is up and running or at least has been tested and shown results in some way.

Can our organisation make more than one application?

Yes, there is nothing stopping your organisation from making more than one application for separate projects. However, due to the competitive nature of this fund and its selection process, it is very unlikely that we will fund more than one project from any organisation. We encourage organisations to submit one strong application rather than multiple applications.

Is it possible for organisations to collaborate in an application (e.g. a community development organisation and an educational provider)?

They can and one organisation should take the lead. Please refer to the eligibility criteria to ensure that your project is eligible for funding.

Can salary and management/overhead costs be applied for?

Your application may include costs for operations/staff, however, you must be able to demonstrate how this is facilitating you to run the project that you are applying for.

Any further questions?

You can contact the fund team at resilientcork@rethinkireland.ie if you would like more information.

Terms and Conditions

By applying, you agree to the following terms and conditions:

Age

You are 18 years of age or older.

Honesty

You have given full and truthful information, both verbal and written, at all stages of the application and selection process.

Eligible to apply – and rights to apply

You are eligible to apply. This means that your organisation meets the criteria for Rethink Ireland.

You have the right to apply. This means that you hold the necessary rights to carry out the project.

Accept these terms and our Privacy Statement

By sending in your application, you accept these terms and conditions and our Privacy Statement. If you do not comply with these terms and conditions and our Privacy Statement, you may be disqualified and may have to return any award granted.

Rethink Ireland will hold the personal details which you submitted with your application form. We will only share this information with the third parties administering the application and selection process unless we agree otherwise with you. Please see our Privacy Statement for full details.

Take part in publicity

The awardees must take part in publicity about the grant. Rethink Ireland reserves the right to publish the names of organisations that are successful in their applications.

If an award is declined or taken back

If you decline an award or if the award is taken back because you did not comply with the terms and conditions, the Board of Rethink Ireland may select an alternative awardee.

Rethink Ireland's rights

Rethink Ireland reserves the right to disqualify any entrant, to change the terms and conditions without notice, or to cancel the application process at any stage.