



HARNESSING CHILDHOOD POTENTIAL THROUGH COMMUNITY-BASED COLLABORATIONS

WHAT IS THE 'CHILDREN'S PROMISE' GRANTS PROGRAMME 2025

The 'Children's Promise' Grants Programme is an initiative within Katharine Howard Foundation (KHF), an independent foundation focused on improving the lives of young children and their families living in disadvantaged circumstances. The programme is a collaboration with [Community Foundation Ireland](#) and the [Sunflower Charitable Trust](#)¹.

AIM OF THE GRANTS PROGRAMME

The 'Children's Promise' Grants Programme aims to support community-based organisations working with young children² and their families, who may not reach their potential due to the corrosive impact of poverty.

This is necessary because despite Ireland being a prosperous, developed country, an estimated 250,000 children are living in enforced deprivation³. All children are born with the potential to thrive, and the 'Children's Promise' Grants Programme aims to support community-based organisations working to protect that potential and to support the wellbeing of their families.

The 'Children's Promise' Grants Programme is a promise from KHF to provide financial and other supports to selected organisations, to support and develop the potential of the children engaged with the organisations. The 'Children's Promise' Grants Programme aims to build on the powerful work taking place at community-level to address child poverty with a grants programme of €1,000,000 in financial and non-financial supports over the duration of the programme 2023-27.

CRITERIA

Eligible organisations will

- Be a child or family-focused, community-based organisation working at local level.
- Be a registered charity or a company limited by guarantee (CLG)⁴ – or apply in collaboration with a 'Lead partner' that is a registered charity or a CLG.
- Have an annual income of less than €2,000,000.
- Have up to date and sufficient governing documents, annual accounts and child safeguarding policies.

Eligible projects/programmes will

- Support young children ages 0-5 and may include children up to 12 years of age, their parents (or guardians) and be from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Address essential needs, creativity and play, education, or improved health and wellbeing for young children and their parents.
- Be a new project or a promising current project that requires additional funding.
- Use the funding for project costs such as staffing, planning, events, courses or for a piece of strategic work such as a review, evaluation or development of a strategic plan.

¹ www.communityfoundation.ie and <https://sunflowercf.ie/>

² Young children is defined here as in the 0-5 age range. However, organisations may support children of primary school age, in addition to those in the 0-5 age range.

³ [Survey on income and living conditions \(SILC\) 2023](#). Accessed on 23 January 2025.

⁴ DEIS primary schools may apply in partnership with a service that focuses on early years services (0-5 years).

ABOUT KATHARINE HOWARD FOUNDATION

Katharine Howard Foundation has supported organisations focused on addressing child poverty since 1979, mainly through investment in community-based programmes focused on 'prevention and early intervention' initiatives, early years childcare and education, or parenting support programmes.

It has also supported research into areas where there may be service 'gaps' or 'needs', in recognition of the fact that it can be difficult to secure funding to generate and capture evidence on local or regional needs.

Katharine Howard Foundation has a strong ethos of working in collaboration with other funders and statutory bodies and with community-based programmes. Our aim is to encourage the best outcomes for programmes, reduce duplication and ensure there is collective, shared learning and understanding.

PRIORITY AREAS FOR THE 'CHILDREN'S PROMISE' GRANTS PROGRAMME

This grants programme focuses on 'promising projects and practices' within community-based organisations, which aim to prevent or intervene at an early stage in addressing the potential impact of poverty on young children and their families. It encourages applications from small, collaborative projects that focus on gaps in provision and innovative approaches to addressing these gaps.

Applications are particularly welcome from rural and urban organisations supporting marginalised groups such as Lone Parent families, Traveller families, families of prisoners, families of people suffering with addictions, Migrants and Asylum Seekers, displaced and homeless families, and families who have been affected by domestic and gender-based violence or other issues.

While there is no one 'magic bullet' to address the impact of poverty on children and families, we know that a number of factors can mitigate and positively support families and therefore children. We know that interventions that:

- **Support parents from the earliest stage possible**, preferably during pregnancy, can have greater impacts.
- **Support and enhance parent child relationships and responsive parenting**, through relational working, are essential in promoting better outcomes for children.
- **Help ameliorate the impact of stress experienced by families** through a range of either concrete and practical supports or more emotional and psychological supports lay the foundations for positive child outcomes.

Promising projects or practices that draw from the above principles and are supported by evidence can make a difference to the lives of children and their families. Many such projects and practices have been developed at the community level and are led by community and voluntary organisations, often with limited funding or resources.



CATEGORIES

The 'Children's Promise' Grants Programme will support organisations in the following categories:

- A. Early years / young children** projects, within community-based settings. These projects may also include children of primary school age.
- B. Parental support** programmes.
- C. Research** into promising programmes or gaps in provision that may help to build policy support in those areas.
- D. Capacity building** within your organisation (focused on young children aged 0-5), which may focus on creating an enabling environment for policy change, strengthening leadership capacity, strengthening your evidence-base or improving your standards of practice.

SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS ARE LIKELY TO INCLUDE:

- **A focus** on young children living in socio-economically disadvantaged areas.
- **An evidence-informed approach**, which shows the need for the project.
- **Integration** with other voluntary or statutory services in the community in both planning and delivery (E.g. CYPSCs / CFSN / Healthy Communities / LCDC).
- **Consultation with parents in identifying needs** and participation of parents in project planning, delivery and review.
- **Strategic benefit** of project to parents, organisation and wider community.
- **Sustainability** of the work – how will the benefits of this project be maintained in the organisation?
- **Success criteria** and a strategy for monitoring success and managing risk.

FUNDING LEVELS

The 'Children's Promise' Grants Programme offers grants of up to €45,000 (€15,000 per annum over a three-year period) to small, not-for-profit organisations with an annual turnover of less than €2,000,000. Each of the years 2023-2025, approximately six projects will be selected for multi-year support and eight projects will be offered once-off support (up to €15,000).

The following categories of grants will be offered:

- Up to €15,000 (once-off support in one year, with the option of additional non-financial supports).
- Between €10,000 and €15,000 per annum (maximum of 3-year support and additional non-financial supports).

Organisations may apply for either a one-year grant of up to a maximum of €15,000 or a multi-year grant of up to €15,000 per annum up to a maximum of three years. Organisations that apply for a one-year grant this year, may apply for another one-year grant or a multi-year grant next year. Organisations already in receipt of multi-annual funding from the 2023/2024 grants programmes may not apply in 2025. The grants programme will open for applications in the Spring 2025. These categories of support are further explained below.

CATEGORIES OF FUNDING SUPPORT

ONCE-OFF SUPPORT (UP TO €15,000)	3-YEAR SUPPORT (€10,000 TO €15,000 EACH YEAR FOR A 3-YEAR PERIOD)
<p>This funding is targeted at a strategic piece of work within your organisation, such as a report, review, evaluation, strategic planning, to create a stronger evidence-base from your work, to give you a better chance of securing continued or new support from other sources.</p>	<p>This support is an opportunity to sustain and further develop an existing programme you have, which requires expanded resources, or to develop a new programme to address a gap that you have identified. We are conscious that developing a new programme with a 3-year funding horizon can present sustainability challenges and we would like you to give this some thought in completing your application. We will also partner with you, as a selected organisation, to identify and try to address your sustainability challenges.</p>

NON-FINANCIAL SUPPORTS

Katharine Howard Foundation believes in partnering with organisations, in addition to providing funding. We know that many programmes are run on tight resources, with committed staff and we want to help you to build your capabilities as an organisation and to aim for 'realistic' change. We know this won't always be linear and there will be challenges along the way. Therefore, both the one-year and multi-year programmes that are selected for the 'Children's Promise' Grants Programme will be offered non-financial supports, such as participation in a 'Community of Practice' with other grantees, strategic planning, help with building an evidence base and sustainability advice.

COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

The 'Children's Promise' Grants Programme will support organisations who apply on their own and those who apply with other organisations. If you are applying as a collaborative project, one organisation should be the 'lead' project and undertake to complete the online application. The 'lead' organisation must be able to provide a registered charity number. DEIS primary schools may apply if they are collaborating with an early years' service (0-5) in their community.

You are encouraged to make clear how you collaborate with other statutory or voluntary organisations in your area and how the project will strengthen these connections. Documentation regarding annual accounts, governance arrangements and child safeguarding policies should be uploaded for each organisation. Collaborative projects will not exceed the maximum budget of €15,000 per annum in total.

OTHER FUNDERS

We want to hear about your other funders. This is because we know it can be difficult to be sustainable with funding from one source alone. It also means we may be able to help you to continue or to grow your funding relationships while we are working with you. If your project combines our funding with other funding, that is okay for us.

APPLICATION PERIOD

The 'Children's Promise' Grants Programme 2025 will accept applications online from the **18th of February 2025** and close on **Thursday the 20th of March 2025 at 1pm.**

All applications must be submitted through the online portal Submit, available to access on our website (www.khf.ie), along with guidance on how to use the portal. Anyone interested in applying may sign up for a **Zoom information session on the 25th of February at 1pm.** This 45-minute session will explain the application process, give you information on how to use the application portal and answer your questions and you can sign up to attend via a link on the website. Applications may be completed on a computer, laptop, tablet or mobile phone. Enquiries will be dealt with **through email only to info@khf.ie.**

MULTI-ANNUAL GRANTS

The application for multi-annual funding will take approximately 1.5 hours to complete and will also require you to submit information on your budget, accounts, intended impact and examples of your work. Organisations may submit only one application to the fund. Further clarifying information may be sought during the review process. Projects should be in place by September 2025 (if new projects). Applications must be submitted **by 1pm on Thursday 20th of March 2025.**

ONE-YEAR GRANTS

One-year grants for a strategic piece of work must be submitted to the online portal by **1pm on Thursday 20th of March 2025.** These applications will be reviewed alongside the multi-year applications.

All completed applications will be assessed by a panel and all organisations will be notified of the outcome in early June 2025, communicated via Submit. We expect to mark the awarding of the programme support with a celebratory event for all awardee organisations in September 2025.

INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The following categories are outside of the remit of the grants programme:

- Individuals, bursaries or scholarships.
- Minor works.
- Therapies - to address a waiting list.
- Medical expenses.
- Capital projects.
- Animal welfare activities.
- Commemorative structures.

BUDGET AND STAFFING

We understand that many projects require some staff input and this may be included in your budget. This might be some additional help to prepare and deliver the project. However, we would prefer not to fund core staff costs, as this may be a risk to organisational sustainability, due to the short timeframe for the grants programme. **Staff costs will ideally not comprise more than 65% of your overall budget.**

PRACTICAL APPLICATION ADVICE

- Take the time to sign-up for a Zoom information session on our website (www.khf.ie) and think about the questions you might like to ask.
- Download the application questions from our website (www.khf.ie) to help you in drafting your responses offline, before you begin your online application.
- If you have completed funding applications before, begin with what you know has worked before and build from there.
- Selected organisations will report on their projects, so please aim to outline an initiative that is realistic and achievable.
- Check your budgets and ensure they are realistic.
- Stay within the word count and consider inviting a 'critical friend' or colleague to review your draft.
- Submit all required documents.
- Keep a record of the email and password you used to complete your online application. (Note that only the email contact provided in Submit will be used for all communications regarding your application.)
- Review all the information before you submit and ensure you do not miss the deadline.
- Good luck!



WHY APPLY

The KHF 'Children's Promise' grants programme will provide financial support and a network of supports for grantees. KHF aims to partner with grantee organisations so that we can work towards our shared vision of making Ireland a place in which all children can thrive, regardless of socio-economic background. We also expect it will provide valuable opportunities to work collaboratively with other funders and statutory organisations. Most importantly, we hope it will have tangible impact on the lives of vulnerable young children and their families and make your organisations and communities even stronger.



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