

ARTIST AND YOUTH WORK RESIDENCY GRANT SCHEME 2026

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

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Artist and Youth Work Full Residency Grant

Youth Arts Explorer Grant



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Introduction

NYCI's National Youth Arts Programme is delighted to launch the Artist and Youth Work Residency Grant Scheme for 2026. Applications are now invited to support innovative partnerships involving artists in residence in youth work settings and/or youth work groups in residence in arts settings commencing in May 2026.

The Artist and Youth Work Residency Grant Scheme is managed by the National Youth Council of Ireland on behalf of the Arts Council and the Department of Education and Youth.

Key Dates for 2026

Launch of 2026 Grant Scheme: Thursday, February 5th

Closing Date for Applications: Friday, March 20th at 12pm

Completion Date for all Youth Arts Residencies: Tuesday, December 1st 2026

Getting help with your application

If you have any questions about the Artist and Youth Work Residency Grant Scheme and its application process, please contact Rhona Dunnett, National Youth Arts Programme Manager at rhona@nyci.ie

Please note that NYCI is running two online **FAQ sessions** to answer any questions you may have about the scheme in 2026. You can register for these online events on the NYCI website by following the below weblinks:

Tuesday, February 17th 12pm – 1pm: <https://www.youth.ie/event/faq-event-artist-and-youth-work-residency-grant-scheme-feb-17/>

Tuesday, February 24th 2pm – 3pm: <https://www.youth.ie/event/faq-event-artist-and-youth-work-residency-grant-scheme-feb-24/>

The National Youth Arts Programme is also running free online training called '**Developing Funding Applications for Youth Arts Projects**' on March 4th from 10am to 1pm to support youth workers and artists to developing their skills and support access to the scheme. [Click here for further information and booking.](#)

1 About the Artist and Youth Work Residency Grant Scheme

1.1 Objectives & Priorities of the Scheme

The primary purpose of the Artist and Youth Work Residency Scheme is to promote innovative partnerships between youth work groups, artists and (where relevant) arts organisations. A residency may take the form of an artist in residence in a youth work setting and/or a youth work group in residence in an arts setting.

There are two strands to the Artist and Youth Work Residency Scheme: the Youth Arts Explorer Grant and the Artist and Youth Work Full Residency Grant. You should choose the strand that is most suitable for your organisation and the project the young people want to develop. An organisation may only apply for one strand in 2026.

A **residency** is a programme of regular artistic engagement over a fixed period of time, which involves meaningful collaboration between the young people, artist and youth worker.

Arts means any creative or interpretative expression (whether traditional or contemporary) in whatever form, and includes, in particular, visual arts, theatre, literature music, dance, opera, film, circus and architecture, and includes any medium when used for those purposes.

Youth Arts Explorer Grant (€1500)

This grant is for projects, services and organisations that are exploring the introduction of youth arts experiences to their youth work setting but are not yet sufficiently experienced/confident to develop or manage a larger scale residency project. The aim of the grant is to support an organisation to explore the introduction of arts practice to the youth service.

You may apply for up to €1,500.

Potential activities could include: testing an idea or concept, hosting introductory sessions, facilitating exploratory meetings between artist, young people and the youth service; or connecting the group to a local arts centre, cultural venue, etc. for a performance, workshop, or exhibition (with a view to facilitating further partnership).

Artist And Youth Work Full Residency Grant (€5000)

The Artist and Youth Work Full Residency Grant aims to promote innovative partnerships between youth work groups, artists and (where relevant) arts organisations; to support

the development of youth arts practice in youth work and support young people's access to quality youth arts experiences. A residency may take the form of an artist in residence in a youth work setting and/or a youth work group in residence in an arts setting.

You may apply for up to €5,000.

This grant is intended to support residency programmes that have been jointly developed by the partners involved (i.e., young people, youth worker/youth work organisation, artist and any other relevant partner organisation), that offer meaningful creative experiences where young people are at the heart of decision-making and that fully meet the criteria for the award.

For Both Strands: Young people should be **aged 10-24** and should be engaged with a youth work group /setting that will continue to provide relevant opportunities for its members after the residency. **A minimum of 10 young people** should be involved in the residency. The youth work group identified for the residency should **already be established** so the residency can be co-created with the young people.

For Both Strands: Proposed residency projects must be delivered within the timeframe of **May 1st – December 1st 2026**. The residency may last from six weeks (minimum) to six months (maximum), but intensive programmes which include a higher frequency of activities in a shorter amount of time will be considered. Projects which last nearer the minimum duration may be better suited to the Youth Arts Explorer Grant. The Artist and Youth Work Full Residency Grant may demand a greater frequency of contact between the artist and the group, delivered over a longer period of time.

For both strands, priority will be given to applications that:

- Support youth arts residencies that are young-person centred: placing young people's voice at the heart of decision-making; responding to the needs and interests of the participating young people; promoting a collaborative approach between young people, artists and youth workers.
- Widen access to youth arts experiences for young people, particularly young people from marginalised backgrounds who face barriers to participation in the arts.
- Promote best practice in youth arts: supporting young people's development through a youth arts process; creating meaningful engagement that will develop the arts practice and experience of young people; prioritising inclusive approaches.
- Build the capacity of the organisations and individuals involved to work in partnership on youth arts projects.

- Support residencies in settings where young people will have continued opportunities to engage with youth arts or youth work following the residency.
- Support a diverse range of residencies – involving a range of art forms, youth work groups, and geographic regions.

1.2 Who can apply?

The Artist and Youth Work residency Grant Scheme is open to:

- A youth work organisation (*applicant organisation*) working with an artist or artists
- A youth work organisation (*applicant organisation*) working with an arts organisation (*partner organisation*)
- A consortium of youth work organisations working with an artist/artists (*applicant organisation applies and other youth work organisations are listed as partner organisations*)
- An arts organisation (*applicant organisation*) working with a local youth work organisation (*partner organisation*) to provide a meaningful artistic experience for young people..

What is a youth work organisation?

For the purpose of this scheme, a **youth work organisation** may include a national youth work organisation, a regional or locally based youth work project or youth work group/club which is supported by paid or voluntary youth workers. The youth work organisation may be independent or may be affiliated to a larger youth work organisation.

To determine whether an applicant organisation is a youth work organisation for the purpose of this scheme, the panel are asked to consider the following:

- Does it meet the definition of a youth work organisation described above?
- Is the organisation in receipt of key youth work funding such as the Youth Service Grant Scheme, UBU Your Space Your Place, the Local Youth Club Grant Scheme etc. or does it participate in the National Quality Standards Framework for Youth Work or National Quality Standards for Volunteer-Led Youth Clubs?
- Is it a youth arts organisation that is affiliated to a national youth work organisation, or in receipt of key youth work funding as outlined above or that participates in quality standards for youth work as outlined above?
- Are professional or voluntary youth workers involved in the organisation?
- Is the organisation delivering youth work through youth arts practice on a not-for-profit basis or delivering youth work with groups of marginalised young people / under-served communities / other young people facing barriers to participation in youth work or youth arts?

Youth work is an educational and developmental process, based on young people's active and voluntary participation and commitment. It is based on principles of equality and inclusiveness and has a particular focus on young people aged 10 to 25.

A **youth worker** may be a paid or voluntary person who is engaged in a youth work organisation to deliver programmes of youth work.

What is an artist?

An **artist** is an individual professional artist, curator or practitioner who works in a creative capacity in any artform where the individual's primary focus is a high-quality artistic engagement or experience.

A professional artist is an artist who:

- is recognised as a professional by their peers (artists working in the same artistic tradition);
- has specialised training in the artistic field (not necessarily in academic institutions);
- shows significant commitment to their art practice;
- has a history of professional public presentation, publication, or being engaged with a practice in a public context;
- may be at an emerging or established stage in their career.

What is an arts organisation?

An **arts organisation** may include a performing or multi-disciplinary arts venue or gallery; an arts organisation where works of art are developed or produced; or a festival that brings together a number of organisations/physical locations under one banner.

Applicant and Partner Organisations

The applicant organisation is the organisation that submits the application, that will receive any grant offered and that will be required to accept the terms and conditions of that grant. Any grant offered will only be paid into a bank account held in the name of that organisation. Please note that if your organisation's application is successful, it will need a tax reference number (TRN) to draw down funding. Please contact rhona@nyci.ie if you need advice on this.

An applicant organisation may choose to work with a **partner arts organisation** rather than work with an individual artist or they may choose to work with a **partner youth work organisation** and a selected artist. If an arts organisation submits an application, then they must work with a **partner youth work organisation** to be eligible for the scheme.

Please note that a partner organisation is not necessary to apply for this scheme. The majority of applications are submitted by a youth work organisation with an individual artist. These different scenarios are allowed to give flexibility for planning and to acknowledge the diversity in local provision.

Who cannot apply?

- Organisations that do not meet the above description.
- Individuals or informal groups of young people (Applications can be submitted by organisations only)
- Primary and post-primary schools and third-level institutions
- Youthreach and School Completion Programmes.
- Commercially-driven schools, institutions or companies
- Organisations resident outside the Republic of Ireland or working only with young people outside the Republic of Ireland.

1.3 What may you apply for?

- The maximum award available under the Youth Arts Explorer Grants is €1,500.
- The maximum award available under the Artist and Youth Work Full Residency Grant is €5,000.

You are required to complete a detailed budget for both grants in the [Income and Expenditure Form](#), providing information such as the amount of funding requested, other sources of income and itemised expenditure.

Your **proposed expenditure** should include all the costs that you incur relating to your proposal, including items such as:

- Artist Fees: fees for facilitation, planning, preparation, evaluation, mileage etc as agreed with the named artist.
- Materials
- Venue rental
- Travel costs
- Access costs: to support the inclusion of young people experiencing barriers to participation
- Costs related to a final sharing of work, evaluation, documentation, administration etc.

Your **proposed income** should include all the costs that you expect to receive from other funders, sponsorship or in-kind support (staff time from an applicant organisation or partner organisation, venue costs, administration costs etc.). If you expect to receive in-kind

support, you need to put a financial value on it so that the contribution it makes to the real value of your proposal is clear. You should think of in-kind support both as expenditure and as income: whatever amount you declare on the expenditure side should also be declared on the income side.

Please note:

- NYCI is committed to the fair and equitable remuneration of artists. When developing budgets, artists should be consulted to ensure a fair payment for facilitation and planning time is agreed. The Arts Council Policy [Paying the Artist](#) is available to support you.
- If you apply for the Artist and Youth Work Full Residency Grant but the selection committee determines that the proposal is better suited to the Youth Arts Explorer Grant, the proposal may be considered in the first instance for support within the Youth Arts Explorer Grant strand.
- Applicant organisations that expect to receive additional grant income from other sources to support the residency project, should clearly outline which elements of the project would be funded by the Artist and Youth Work Residency Grant Scheme and which elements would be funded by the other grant. Costs for the same residency activity cannot be funded twice by different grants.

Activities and costs that you may not apply for include the following:

- Major capital or equipment purchases
- Ongoing core costs: this scheme funds a residency project for an external artist /arts organisation to work with a youth work organisation or for an arts organisation to offer a residency to a youth work group. You should include all the costs that you incur relating to your proposal in your budget, but as a rule, the scheme does not cover the ongoing facilitation costs of regular, internal youth arts practitioners/artists or the core costs of running an organisation.
- Course fees or expenses to support full-time training programmes for individuals
- Activities or costs that do not fit the purpose of the award
- Activities that have already taken place or which will have commenced before a decision on your application will be made. You should plan for your activities to begin no sooner than May 1st 2026.
- Activities for charity-fundraising purposes, for participation in a competition, or for primarily profit-making purposes
- Activities taking place in a formal education context (i.e. school or college)

1.4 What Supporting Material Must You Submit With Your Application?

Applicants for both grant strands will be required to upload the following support documents with their online application:

- **Income and Expenditure Form.** Please download the [Income and Expenditure Form](#), complete it and upload it with your online application.
- **Project Planning Form.** Please download the [Project Planning Form](#) complete it and upload it with your online application.
- **Your Child Safeguarding Statement:** Please see information on [Child Safeguarding Statements](#) on Tusla's website if you need support with this.
- **Letter of Support from Partner Organisation (if relevant to your proposal).** If the Applicant Organisation is working with a Partner Organisation to deliver the proposed residency, then the Partner Organisation should contribute a letter to confirm its role in developing the proposal to date and the manner in which they will support the implementation of the residency should funding be awarded.
- **CV of Proposed Artist(s).** If you plan to work with more than one artist, please submit a CV for each artist.
- **Max of 2 pages of support material** showcasing the work of the artist, the application or partner organisation or the group of young people (OPTIONAL)
- **1 Weblink for online support material** that showcases the work of the artist, the application or partner organisation or the group of young people (OPTIONAL)

1.5 Eligibility

Your application will be deemed ineligible if:

- You miss the application deadline.
- You do not submit an online application form or complete all sections of the form that are relevant to your proposed residency project or fail to provide all the mandatory supporting materials set out in section 1.4. Please note that it is a requirement to name the artist(s) the applicant organisation plans to engage on the project.
- Your organisation is not eligible as set out in section 1.2 or you are applying for activities which are not eligible as set out in section 1.3.

2 How to Make your Application

Applicant organisations must complete and submit the official online application form. Please note each grant has its own online application form which can be accessed using the weblinks below:

- [Youth Arts Explorer Grant Application Form](#)
- [Artist and Youth Work Full Residency Grant Scheme Application Form](#)

The application form must be submitted through the NYCI website along with the required supporting material detailed in 1.4.

Staff/volunteers in applicant organisations should develop their grant application in collaboration with the specific young people identified for the residency project, the artist/artists they plan to work with and staff from a partner organisation (where relevant to your residency project).

Please note that the online application form includes a 'save as you go' function to aid the writing process. A Word template version of each application form is also available to support organisations to develop their application prior to pasting the text onto their online application form when they are ready to submit (please see above links for online grant application pages).

The deadline for receipt of application forms is 12pm on Friday, March 20th, 2026.

Applications will **not** be accepted after the deadline. No extensions can be provided.

3 Processing & Assessment of Applications

3.1 The Assessment Process

All applications received are processed by NYCI as follows:

- 1 After you submit your application, you will be sent an email from staff during office hours to confirm that we have received your application and with a copy of your application attached.
- 2 Your application is checked for eligibility. Please see section 1.5 Eligibility above.
- 3 An assessment panel reviews all eligible applications and support materials, then scores and makes decisions.
- 4 Decisions are communicated in writing to applicants. This year, applicants will be emailed the outcomes of their application by Monday, April 20th, 2026.

Please note that due to the competitive nature of the scheme, eligibility and compliance with application procedures alone do not guarantee receipt of an award.

3.3 Criteria for the Assessment of Applications

All applications are assessed against the following criteria:

- 1 Meeting the objectives & priorities of the grant scheme
- 2 Quality of youth work and youth arts practice
- 3 Feasibility

Each of these criteria are described in turn as:

1 Meeting the Objectives & Priorities of the Grant Scheme

Applications are assessed on how well they meet the objectives and priorities of the grant scheme– see Section 1.1 for details of these. When assessing whether an application widens young people’s access to youth arts experiences, previous receipt of an Artist in Youth Work Residency Grant will be considered. When assessing whether a diverse range of residencies is being supported within the scheme, the range and type of applicant and partner organisations, art forms and geographic regions will be considered.

2 Quality of youth work and youth arts practice

The assessment of youth work and youth arts practice includes:

- Safeguarding arrangements for children and young people
- Evidence that the project is young person-centred with clear opportunities for young people to influence the design of the programme, and to evaluate its success.
- Clear aims and objectives, including artistic aims
- Clarity that the activities support the personal, artistic and social development of young people
- Clear plans regarding how the residency will be monitored and evaluated and how the learning will be sustained
- An inclusive and responsive practice that ensures that young people from diverse identities and life circumstances can fully participate and will feel included
- Skilled leaders: The artist or arts organisation must bring the skills and experience to lead a high-quality engagement with the arts, and youth workers must have the skills and experience to develop and lead youth work projects.

3 Feasibility

The assessment of feasibility considers the extent to which the applicant demonstrates capacity to deliver the proposed activity, including:

- A clear budget for the project, including eligible expenditure and income in cash or in kind
- Appropriate provision for artists' fees
- The demonstrated support of the applicant organisation and key partners
- Availability of the appropriate facilities and equipment
- Administrative support for the project

3.4 Assessment Panel

To allow for a diversity of expert views from youth work and youth arts, an independent assessment panel is formed to assess applications and is typically comprised of:

- A Youth Officer from an Education Training Board
- An Arts Officer / Assistant Arts Officer from a Local Authority Arts Office
- A Youth Arts Practitioner
- A Young Person with an experience of youth arts

The NYCI Youth Arts Programme chairs this panel. In order to ensure fairness and equity in decision-making, a panel member must declare an interest where they have a close personal or professional link with the applicant or are linked in any way with the application. Where an interest is declared, the panellist will not participate in discussions or marking for that particular application and the chair will vote in lieu of the panellist.

3.5 Outcome of Applications

- Successful applicants will be notified via email by 20th of April 2026.
- Residencies may begin from Friday, May 1st, 2026.
- Successful and unsuccessful applicants may request feedback on their application and the assessment process.

4. Terms and Conditions for Grant Recipients

4.1 Online Planning Sessions

Successful applicants for both grants will be required to attend an online planning session on **Wednesday, April 29th, 2026**.

- Youth Arts Explorer Grant Recipients: 11.00am – 1.00pm, Wednesday, April 29th
- Full Residency Grant Recipients: 2.00pm – 4.00pm, Wednesday, April 29th

4.2 Documentation & Evaluation

NYCI requires successful applicants to document and evaluate their residency projects. As part of the reporting process, successful applicants are asked to complete **2 online surveys** provided by NYCI at different stages of the process to document their project and evaluate outcomes for young people, youth workers and artists. Grant recipients complete a final income/expenditure report for the project within the last survey.

Recipients of the Residency Grants are also encouraged to document their residency in other ways, using photography, writing, audio recordings or film to help capture the process.

4.3 Communications & Final Meeting with NYCI

Grant recipients are asked to notify NYCI of any significant changes or issues in the project, and/or upon reasonable notice in response to a specific request from NYCI.

NYCI asks recipients of Artist and Youth Work Residency Grants to attend a 20-minute online meeting with staff on either December 2nd or 3rd 2026 to share the story of how their youth arts project progressed and how young people were engaged with the work.

4.4 Grant Drawdown

Grant recipients are asked to Invoice NYCI for their funding drawdown in a timely manner and include their organisation's tax reference number on their invoice.

- Recipients of the Youth Arts Explorer Grant invoice for €1500 at the start of the project
- Recipients of the Artist and Youth Work Full Residency Grant invoice for €3500 at the start of the project and €1500 upon completion of the project and final survey.

Grant recipients are asked to complete the project and associated funding drawdowns by **Tuesday, 1st December 2026**.

Grant recipients may be asked to return their grant or remaining funds to NYCI if their project can't happen or can't be completed.

4.5 Other

- NYCI asks grant recipients to undertake the project in compliance with their organisation's Child Safeguarding Statement and Safeguarding Policy and in compliance with Children First and relevant legislation.
- NYCI asks grant recipients to undertake the project with regard to best practice in youth arts as outlined in NYCI's Online Planning Session on April 29th.
- NYCI asks grant recipients for consent to share aspects of the residency project (which might include photographs, videos, written material, testimonies etc. that is shared with staff) to promote examples of best practice in youth arts and promote the Artist and Youth Work Residency Grant Scheme.

- NYCI asks grant recipients to include the logos of NYCI, the Arts Council and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth on all promotional material relating to the project and name the funders in any media coverage of the project.



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