

Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

Human Rights & Equality Grants Scheme 2020-21

Guidance Manual for Grant Applications



**Coimisiún na hÉireann um Chearta
an Duine agus Comhionannas**

Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

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1. The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

1.1 Purpose and Mandate

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (the Commission) is an independent statutory body, established on 1 November 2014 under the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014. The Commission is Ireland's National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) and National Equality Body (NEB).

Under the IHREC Act, the overall functions of the Commission are:

- a. To protect and promote human rights and equality;
- b. To encourage the development of a culture of respect for human rights, equality and intercultural understanding in the State;
- c. To promote understanding and awareness of the importance of human rights and equality in the State;
- d. To encourage good practice in intercultural relations, to promote tolerance and acceptance of diversity in the State and respect for the freedom and dignity of each person, and;
- e. To work towards the elimination of human rights abuses, discrimination and prohibited conduct.

Section 42 of the *Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014* sets out the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, which places a statutory obligation on public bodies to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and protect the human rights of those to whom they provide services and staff when carrying out their daily work. The Commission gives guidance to public bodies in developing policies and good practice based on human rights and equality standards.¹

1.2 IHREC Strategy Statement 2019-2021

The Commission published its second strategy statement in February 2019. The *Strategy Statement 2019-2021* sets out four strategic priorities:

- 1: Protect the rights of individual persons who face the greatest barriers to justice;
- 2: Influence legislation, policy and practice;
- 3: Engage with key organisations to address discrimination and human rights abuses; and
- 4: Raise the quality and broaden the extent of the dialogue on human rights and equality issues.

The Commission's *Strategy Statement 2019-2021* also set out four crosscutting priorities:

- Promoting access to justice;
- Socio-economic rights;
- Combatting racism and promoting intercultural understanding;
- Disability.

See **Annex A** for a full description of the Commission's Strategic Priorities.

¹ <https://www.ihrec.ie/our-work/public-sector-duty/>

2. Human Rights and Equality Grants Scheme 2020-21

2.1 Introduction and Overview

The *Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014* gives the Commission powers to provide grants to other bodies to carry out certain activities to promote human rights and equality in Ireland.

In its *Strategy Statement 2019-2021*, the Commission has prioritised promoting access to justice for people (rights-holders) who face the greatest barriers to accessing their rights. This means ensuring that the rights and equality of individuals and the means to vindicate them are widely understood. The aim of the 2020-21 Human Rights and Equality Grants Scheme is to support activities that empower people facing discrimination and human rights violations with the knowledge, skills and information necessary to vindicate their rights.

People facing the greatest barriers to justice include those protected under the nine grounds of the equality legislation: gender, civil status, family status, age, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion, and membership of the Traveller community, as well as people at risk of poverty and social exclusion.²

To promote access to rights and access to justice, the Commission wishes to support and empower rights-holders to understand and claim their rights and to support the development of their capacity to increase the accountability of individuals and institutions (duty-bearers) who are responsible for respecting and fulfilling rights and protecting against discrimination and breaches of human rights.

The Commission also prioritised in its *Strategy Statement 2019-2021* engagement with key organisations to address discrimination and human rights abuses and foster an enabling environment for human rights and equality development. It recognises that civil society including rights-holder and community groups, and trade unions who work directly with people experiencing discrimination and breaches of their human rights, are best placed to empower rights holders to claim their rights and advocate for change.

2.2 Theme: Access to Rights and Access to Justice

The Human Rights and Equality Grants Scheme 2020-21 will support civil society organisations, rights-holder and community-led groups, and trade unions to build the capacity of people who face the greatest barriers to justice and are at risk of discrimination or human rights abuses, to understand and more effectively claim their rights and organise themselves to advance their human rights and equality. This includes the capacity to analyse and articulate the discrimination they face through a human rights and equality lens, be empowered to participate in decisions that affect them, and hold the State to account.

² Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, *Implementing the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty*, Dublin, 2019, page 17.

This Scheme will support:

- Participatory education and training activities, and resources to build the capacity and expertise of rights holders to understand and claim their rights and/or act as multipliers to support other rights holders;
- Projects, seminars and roundtables that will empower rights-holders to come together to develop approaches to advocate for their rights collectively;
- Projects that support rights-holders to engage with public bodies to shape legislation, policy and practice from a human rights and equality perspective, particularly in relation to the implementation and monitoring of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty;
- Tools and campaigns, including print and digital, that give voice to rights holders' experience of discrimination and promote their human rights and equality;
- Participatory research and policy analysis that directly involves rights-holders in the process, including as peer researchers, to assess the barriers to people in the most vulnerable circumstances in accessing their rights and accessing justice. This could include, for example, data gathering, legal research, action based research, or analysing/monitoring the impact of policies and practices;
- Undertake rights-holder centred assessments of equality and human rights issues that can provide an evidence base to inform the implementation of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty and other policy and service delivery processes from a human rights and equality perspective;
- Undertake rights-holder centred monitoring of compliance by public bodies with the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.

See [Annexes B and C](#) for more information on Access to Rights and Access to Justice, and the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.

2.3 Funding Streams

The total funding available for the 2020-21 Human Rights and Equality Grants Scheme is €350,000.

Proposals will be accepted for:

- (a) general grants of up to €20,000 or**
- (b) small grants of up to €6,000**

Under this Scheme, eligible organisations can submit a maximum of one application.

The Commission does not specify the number of projects to be funded under this theme. However, the amount available is only enough to allow a modest number of grants at the maximum amount under each type. Amounts lower than requested in an application may be allocated to facilitate funding a greater number of projects.

2.4 Eligible Applicants

The Human Rights and Equality Grants Scheme is open to civil society organisations based in the Republic of Ireland. This includes community and voluntary organisations, non-governmental

organisations, rights holder-led and area-based community or communities of interest groups, and trade unions.

Applications from rights-holder and community-led groups are encouraged.

Applications involving a collaborative partnership between two or more organisations are welcome including with public bodies. Such applications must be made in the name of one lead civil society organisation acting as the applicant. The lead applicant will have full financial responsibility for the proposal and meeting all of the terms and conditions of any grant awarded.

An applicant organisation must have an up-to-date tax clearance certificate, have charitable status or be a registered company. The Commission requires audited accounts/financial statements and bank balance details from applicant organisations prior to awarding any grant under this Scheme.

3. Applying for a Grant

3.1 Introduction and Overview

Grant applications must be submitted on the application form provided.

Under this scheme, eligible organisations can submit a **maximum of one application**.

Applications can be submitted:

- **By email to grants@ihrec.ie**
(please use the subject line 'Human Rights & Equality Grant Scheme 2020-21')
- **By post to 'Human Rights and Equality Grant Scheme 2020-21'**
Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission,
16-22 Green Street,
Dublin 7, D07 CR20.

The closing date for receipt of applications is extended to Tuesday 19 May 2020, strictly at 4.00pm.

Applications, whether submitted by email or post, must be received by the closing time and date indicated above. Applications after this time and date will not be considered. Therefore, it is very important if the application is being submitted by email that it is sent in sufficient time that it arrives in the grant email account before 4.00pm. For postal applications, a postage stamp with the closing date is not sufficient.

3.2 Application Form

The application form is comprised of five parts: It is important that applicant organisations complete the application form taking into account the overall aim, funding theme and approaches supported by the grants scheme, so that applications meet the requirements of the grant and can be assessed adequately by the assessment panel.

Part A: Organisational Details

This part asks for basic information about the applicant organisation, the lead person for this grant application and – where applicable - any partner organisation/group of organisations.

Part B: Project Proposal

This part asks applicants for details of the project for which applicants are seeking funding. This covers the aims and objectives of the project, the key actions or activities involved, and the intended outcomes/results.

The information provided in this part is particularly relevant to the 'Quality of Proposal' section of the Marking Scheme. Therefore, it is important that applicants ensure that they provide clear and sufficient detail to allow the assessment panel to adequately consider and score the proposal.

Part C: Organisational and Implementation Capacity

This part asks for information on the work of the applicant organisation (and partner organisations where applicable), its capacity to implement the project that is being proposed, and how the project will be delivered and by whom.

The information provided in this part is particularly relevant to the 'Organisational and Implementation Capacity' section of the Marking Scheme. Therefore, it is important that applicants ensure that they provide clear and sufficient detail to allow the assessment panel to adequately consider and score the proposal.

Part D: Project Budget and Costings

This part asks for information on the funding being applied for, the total amount sought and a breakdown of the project costs. All costs should be quoted in Euro and should include VAT.

The information provided in this part is particularly relevant to the 'Costs' section of the Marking Scheme. Therefore it is important that applicants ensure that they provide clear and sufficient detail to allow the assessment panel to adequately consider and score the proposal.

Applicants are asked to breakdown their costs across a number of headings. Please note that not all of these headings will apply in each case. These headings are:

- **Contracted Services**

This may include, for example, fees for contractors engaged to undertake research (including peer researchers and their costs per hour/day) or to provide human rights and equality expertise, training, facilitation, project coordination, project administration.

Please note that core or contracted employee costs are not covered under contracted services.

- **Event Costs**

This may include, for example, venue hire, meeting rooms, refreshments.

- **Travel and Subsistence**

This may include, for example, speakers' travel and subsistence or reasonable support for participants to engage in a project or attend an event, if it is deemed necessary.

- **Promotion Costs**

This may include, for example, event/project publicity and advertising, printing and design, ICT costs towards online supports and social media.

- **Purchase of Materials**

This may include, for example, training materials, photocopying or stationery.

- **Other Costs**

Other costs arising should be clearly specified and must be eligible.

- **Administration**

A flat fee of 10% is allowable for eligible organisations awarded grants.

Ineligible Costs

The following activities and costs are ineligible and will not be considered for funding:

- Organisation core costs, including overheads
- Core or contracted employee costs;
- Costs not related to the project outlined in the application;
- Retrospective costs – activity that has already been undertaken prior to the date of application approval;
- Funding of post-graduate theses;
- The purchase of IT or other office equipment or general office supplies;
- Fundraising activities;
- Elements already funded from other sources;
- Projects or activities that give rise to commercial activity or profits.

Part E: Mandatory Declarations

In this part, applicants are required to confirm their understanding and acceptance of the Freedom of Information provisions that will apply in respect of applications under this Grant Scheme.

Applicants are also required to confirm that they understand and accept a Disclaimer to the effect that the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission shall not be liable to the applicant or to any other party in respect of any loss, damage or costs arising directly or indirectly from: (a) the application or the subject matter of the application; (b) the rejection for any reason of the application.

Applicants who have a potential conflict of interest will be asked to declare it, in the interests of transparency.

4. Assessment and Marking

4.1 Evaluation of Applications

All applications will be screened to check eligibility. In order to be eligible applications must:

- Be submitted on time;
- Be completed in full;
- Be submitted by an eligible applicant.

All eligible applications received will be assessed by a panel convened for that purpose. The assessment panel for the 'Human Rights & Equality Grant Scheme 2020-21' will comprise of relevant staff of the Commission and independent external expertise.

4.2 Assessment Criteria and Marking

Eligible applications will be assessed according to the following criteria and marking scheme:

- Quality and relevance of the proposal to empower rights holders to advance their access to rights and access to justice from a human rights and equality perspective (50 marks);
- Organisational and Implementation Capacity (30 marks);
- Costs (20 marks).

Further details of this marking scheme are set out in [Annex D](#) below.

4.3 Notice of Outcome

All applicants, successful and unsuccessful, will be informed by letter or email of the outcome of the assessment process.

4.4 Conditions of Offer

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a Grant Agreement, which will include but is not limited to:

- Confirmation of receipt of a valid and in date tax clearance certificate;
- Start date and completion date for the project;
- A statement of activities and actions to be delivered;
- Funding amount and funding draw down arrangements;
- Project review, reporting and financial requirements;
- Vouched expenditure requirements, including invoices and proof of payment;
- Specific requirements of applicants in relation to publicity, use of logos etc.;
- A signed declaration to confirm that the organisation is not receiving funding from other public funds for this project;

- Activities funded under the grant scheme must be completed within twelve months of signing a grant agreement.

All financial documentation requested in the letter of offer to grant recipients **must be returned no later than three weeks** after receipt of the agreement from the Commission. Once the documents have been reviewed and the awarding of the grant approved, the Grant recipient will be asked to return a signed grant agreement and an invoice for the first grant payment.

4.5 Payment of Grant

Arrangements for drawdown of grants is on the basis of vouched expenditure. This means the Grant Recipient must state formally that all expenditure is receipted and accounted for. Full financial requirements will be specified in the Grant Agreement. Funding will be paid in a minimum of two instalments. Final payments in each case will only be made upon completion of the project, and receipt of the project and financial reports where all costs being claimed are vouched for.

4.6 Monitoring and Interim Reporting

Grant recipients are required to submit a short bi-monthly financial and performance report, setting out any expenditure, accompanied by vouched receipts and any progress made in the implementation of the project. These reports should be accompanied by a letter of assurance signed at management level in the organisation.

4.7 Final Project and Financial Report

The Final Project Report will set out a brief description of the project, and will include the following:

- A summary of actions and activities undertaken;
- Project results, achievements or outcomes;
- An assessment of how the project objectives have been met.

The Final Financial Report will set out the total expenditure for the project and be accompanied by any outstanding vouched receipts and paid invoices.

The Commission also requests a copy of any published material from the project.

4.8 Use of IHREC Logo

A specific logo that acknowledges that the project was funded by the IHREC is available and must appear on all publications, presentations and publicity about the project. The logo and detailed guidelines of how and where to use it are available on the Commission's website www.ihrec.ie

4.9 Review by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission reserves the right to conduct a review of the impact of its grants programme. Successful applicants will be asked to confirm that they will cooperate with such a review should it be undertaken.

5. IHREC Grant Application Support

Should you have any questions or queries about any aspect of the Grants Scheme, please contact the Grants Team who will be very happy to help you at grants@ihrec.ie with the subject line 'Human Rights & Equality Grant Scheme 2020-21'.

Please note that once a grant application has been submitted, the Commission will not enter into individual or written correspondence and will not be in a position to review any eligibility issues with applicants.

Annex A: IHREC Strategy Statement 2019-2021

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: Protect the rights of individual persons who face the greatest barriers to justice

Objectives

- Ensure through public information campaigns and digital engagement that the rights and equality of individuals and the means to vindicate them are widely understood.
- Provide people facing discrimination and human rights violations with the knowledge, skills and information necessary to vindicate their rights.
- Assist individuals in situations of particular concern to vindicate their rights through our enforcement powers.

Outcomes

- Increased public awareness of rights and equality and an understanding of the means by which to vindicate them.
- Increased engagement with the staff of the Commission from people facing the greatest barriers to justice through Your Rights and other points of access.
- Effective strategic litigation, including through the use of our *amicus curiae* function before the Superior Courts.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: Influence legislation, policy and practice

Objectives

- Hold government, public bodies, agencies and businesses to account.
- Continue to develop evidence-based decision-making through an active and ongoing research programme.
- Use our enforcement powers including conducting an inquiry as most appropriate and proportionate, and move to enforcement of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.

Outcomes

- Greater impact for our interventions across all functions.
- Increased awareness and enhanced implementation of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.
- Effective compliance with the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty through enforcement.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: Engage with key organisations to address discrimination and human rights abuses

Objectives

- Increase community engagement in the work of the Commission.
- Strengthen relationships with civil society and foster an enabling environment for human rights development, including through formal advisory committee structures.
- Engage with any organisation relevant to advancing our mandate and strategic priorities.

Outcomes

- Civil society, other stakeholders and individuals regard the Commission as open, responsive and respectful.
- The Commission extends the knowledge of our work nationally and enhances the use of our legal assistance powers by members of the public.
- The Commission remains informed and anticipates emerging human rights and equality issues.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: Raise the quality and broaden the extent of the dialogue on human rights and equality issues

Objectives

- Facilitate a strong and shared culture of respect for human rights, equality and intercultural understanding including through education, particularly of young people.
- Promote an understanding of human rights as inter-related and interdependent, with a particular emphasis on socio-economic rights.
- Anticipate, identify and highlight issues so as to enable the Commission to respond appropriately to human rights and equality issues in the State.

Outcomes

- Measures of public sentiment demonstrate improvements in understanding of the value of diversity and respect for human rights and equality.
- Positive impact on the perceptions of all people with regards to rights, equality and intercultural understanding.
- Impact positively on the extent and content of public debate to ensure that human rights are respected across all media platforms.

SECTION 25(2) USE OF RESOURCES

In meeting the requirement of section 25(2) regarding the use of resources, the Commission has resolved to use a significant portion of its budget on pro-actively advancing four aspects of its work.

Promoting access to justice

Whatever our thematic choices, we are committed to supporting people who face the greatest barriers to justice as part of the human rights and equality protection for all.

Socio-economic rights

We believe that the adoption and application of economic, social and cultural rights play a fundamental role in the creation of a more just, inclusive and sustainable society. We commit to advancing socio-economic rights and the social protection of all families and individuals. Among the thematic areas of socio-economic rights, we will prioritise: Housing; Health and Decent Work³

³ International Labour Organisation definition of Decent Work - 2019 "Involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men."

Combatting racism and promoting intercultural understanding

Countering racism and hate speech is imperative to the building of acceptance of diversity and respect for the dignity of all persons. We commit to playing a leadership role in combatting racism and promoting intercultural understanding.

Disability

Following the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability, we commit to establishing a Disability Advisory Committee to enhance our role as the independent Monitor of the rights of people with disabilities in the State.

Annex: B Access to Rights and Access to Justice

The Human Rights and Equality Grants Scheme 2020/21 promotes access to rights for people facing the greatest barriers to justice. This Grants Scheme Guidance is informed by the human rights based approach and the framework formulated by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, guided by international human rights standards and operationally geared to promoting and protecting human rights and equality.⁴ This approach is about empowering people (rights-holders) who face the greatest barriers to realising their rights, to know and claim their rights and increase the ability and accountability of individuals and institutions (duty-bearers) who are responsible for respecting and fulfilling rights and protecting against discrimination and violations of human rights.

This means giving people greater opportunities to participate in shaping the decisions that impact on their human rights and the achievement of equality. It also means increasing the ability of those with responsibility for fulfilling rights to recognise and know how to respect those rights, and make sure they can be held to account. It is about ensuring that both the standards and the principles of human rights are integrated into policy-making as well as the day-to-day running of organisations.

⁴ <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/PovertyStrategiesen.pdf> downloaded 17 February 2020

Annex C: Public Sector Human Rights and Equality Duty

Since 2014, the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty is part of the legislative framework governing human rights and equality in Ireland.

A Statutory Obligation Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 imposes a statutory obligation on public bodies in performing their functions to have regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination;
- promote equality of opportunity and treatment for staff and persons to whom it provides services; and,
- protect the human rights of staff and services users.

This Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty places equality and human rights at the heart of how a public body fulfils its purpose and delivers on its strategic plan.

The 2014 Act requires a public body, having regard to its functions, purpose, size and resources available to it, to:

1. **Assess** - set out in its strategic plan an assessment of the human rights and equality issues, it believes to be relevant to the functions and purpose of the body;
2. **Address** - set out in its strategic plan the policies, plans and actions in place or proposed to be put in place to address those issues;
3. **Report** - report on developments and achievements in its annual report.

The obligation to integrate the Duty in a public body's strategic plan and annual report means that assessing and addressing equality and human rights issues is an ongoing process that should be reviewed and developed in accordance with strategic planning cycles.

The role of the Commission: guidance and enforcement

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission can give guidance to and encourage public bodies in developing policies and good practice in relation to human rights and equality. Where the Commission considers that there is evidence of a failure by a public body to perform its functions in line with the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty it may invite a public body to carry out a review, or prepare and implement an action plan related to the performance of its functions, or both. The focus of the review or action plan may be on equality of opportunity and human rights in general terms, or on a particular aspect of human rights or discrimination in the body, or both.

What is a public body?

The definition of a public body for the purposes of the Duty includes:

- A Department of State
- A local authority
- The Health Service Executive
- A university or institute of technology

- An education and training board
- Any other person, body or organisation established under statute, or under any scheme administered by a Government Minister, excluding the Defence Forces
- A company wholly or partly financed by or on behalf of a Government Minister, in pursuance of powers conferred by or under another enactment
- A company where the majority of shares are held by or on behalf of a Government Minister In addition, any other person, body, organisation or group financed wholly or partly out of moneys provided by the Oireachtas, may, in the public interest, be prescribed as a public body by the Minister for Justice and Equality, following consultation with the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

Further information on these projects and implementing the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty can be found on the Commission's website, ihrec.ie.

Annex D: Marking Scheme

Criteria	Description	Max mark available
Quality and Relevance of the Proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality and relevance of the proposal to empower rights-holders to advance their access to rights and access to justice from a human rights and equality perspective. Is there a clear rationale about why the specific issues and/or target group(s) outlined in the proposal were selected? Is the proposal informed by a methodology or relevant sources such as data, research and official documents? <p>Clear approach, clear actions or activities, and potential outcomes anticipated as a result of the proposed project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are actions or activities realistic? Is there clarity in terms of what the proposal hopes to achieve (outcomes) in relation to advancing access to rights and access to justice Does the proposal aim to identify or address gaps in access to rights and access to justice 	50
Organisational and implementation capacity	<p>The feasibility and credibility of the proposal plan:</p> <p>Are the actions or activities realistic and achievable in terms of realising expected outcomes and in terms of implementation within the timeframe?</p> <p>Capacity to complete the project to a high standard within the timescale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there evidence of a good track record and tangible results from previous projects, including lessons learned? Experience of managing projects. Does the application make clear the organisation's capacity to implement the proposal? 	30
Costs	Costings and value for money:	20

- Does the proposal clearly set out how the budget will be allocated?
- Are the costings realistic?
- Does the budget consider value for money? i.e.
 - Clarify rationale for specific areas of budget allocation as appropriate and explain how this budget allocation is expected to contribute to realising outcomes;
 - Identify any areas where value for money informed the approach to implementation of the proposal.

Total marks available

100



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