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Breakthrough: Basic Income Scheme in Ireland Goes Permanent in 2026

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In 2026, Ireland's basic income pilot for artists will become a permanent programme, offering €325 per week to 2,000 creative professionals. This signals a robust commitment by the government to cultural sustainability.

The basic income support scheme for artists in Ireland is set to become permanent in 2026, as announced in Budget 2026.

Launched as a pilot in 2022, the scheme provides participating artists and creative arts workers with a weekly payment of €325.

In September 2026, the permanent scheme will open to 2,000 new applicants, with eligibility criteria broadened to encompass more artistic disciplines.

If additional funding becomes available, there is potential for expansion to 2,200 participants, and the government plans to grow the scheme incrementally over time.

The programme is designed to support artists' livelihoods and well-being, enabling them to concentrate on their creative work without worrying about commercial viability.

It operates independently of social welfare and is not means-tested. An independent evaluation found that recipients experienced reduced financial stress, spent more time on creative work and enjoyed improved well-being.

The scheme was initially introduced to help the arts sector recover from the impact of the pandemic.

The initiative has received strong public support, with 97% of respondents to a public consultation backing the move to make the scheme permanent.

Of the over 17,000 total respondents, 47% thought that recipients should be selected based on economic need, while 37.5% thought they should be selected based on track record/artistic merit. A further 14% preferred random selection.

These findings come as budget negotiations reach a critical stage, with five major departments yet to agree their budget allocations for next year.

The programme is also said to generate substantial social and economic benefits, providing approximately €1.39 back to the state for every €1 invested.

In a written statement, the Irish Minister for Culture, Communications and Sport, Patrick O'Donovan, said: "The economic return on this investment in Ireland's artists and creative arts workers is having an immediate positive impact on the sector and the economy overall."

The scheme's permanence is seen as a significant commitment by the Irish government to stabilise the precarious working conditions of those in the arts sector, enabling artists to contribute to national and global culture and creativity.

You can visit the Irish government's website reports page for the BIA here

Images Credit: National Campaign For The Arts