

PRESS RELEASE



**An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige**
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth

Minister O’Gorman announces €10m Capital Grant for the Early Learning and Childcare Sector

- **€10m announced under the Building Blocks - Improvement Grant**
- **Building Blocks - Improvement Grant is part of a wider Building Blocks Capital Programme for Early Learning and Care Services (ELC) and School Age Childcare Services (SAC) under the National Development Plan**
- **Early Learning and Care Services (ELC) and School Age Childcare Services (SAC) who are who are in contract for NCS and/or ECCE with at least one child registered are eligible to apply. Successful applicants must be in contract with Core Funding before any funding is released.**

Roderic O’ Gorman, T.D., Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, has today announced a €10m Capital Grant for the Early Learning and Childcare Sector. The Building Blocks - Improvement Grant is part of a wider Building Blocks Capital Programme for Early Learning and Childcare under the National Development Plan.

Grants will range from €35,000 to €75,000 across two separate strands: Green Energy and Retrofit.

The Green Energy Strand/Strand A will support the Climate Action Agenda and the Programme for Government, which aim to transition to a carbon neutral economy by the end of 2050 and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030.

Under the Green Energy strand, grants will be provided for improvements to increase energy efficiency, utilising renewables where feasible, such as the installation of solar panels and heat pumps, insulation and water conservation measures.

The Retrofit Strand/Strand B will provide grants to existing services in need of upgrading. Eligible works include kitchen works and refurbishment, upgrading of sanitary facilities for children and adults, roof repairs/replacement, and upgrading of flooring.

Applications from eligible services will be accepted in Q4 2022 and successful applicants will be notified in early 2023.

Early Learning and Care Services and School Age Childcare Services who are who are in contract for NCS or ECCE 2022/2023 with at least one child registered are eligible to apply. Successful applicants must be in contract with Core Funding before any funding is released

Welcoming the announcement, Minister O’Gorman said:

“The Building Blocks – Improvement Grant will provide funding of up to €75,000 for upgrading, renovating or refurbishing Early Learning and Childcare settings to improve the quality of learning environments for children as well as energy efficiency of the settings.

This is part of a wider Building Blocks Capital Programme designed to meet current and long-term Early Learning and Childcare infrastructure needs – with details of a €45m Building Blocks - Capacity Grant and a €15m Building Blocks - Innovation Grant to be announced in the coming months.

Services that sign up for the new €221m Core Funding Scheme are eligible for funding under for the Building Blocks Capital Programme.

As well as being a substantial support to the sector in itself, it is my intention that Core Funding will unlock access to a wider package of supports and resources to providers who chose to work in partnership with the State to deliver Early Learning and Childcare for the public good.

The Building Blocks Capital Programme will be just one of an additional incentives on offer”.

ENDS/

Note for Editors:

The Building Blocks – Improvement Grant is broken into two strands, Green Energy and Retrofit.

Eligible works under the Green Energy Strand include:

- Works to reduce emissions and increase energy efficiency (BER rating). Improving the fabric and energy efficiency of an existing building
- Utilising renewables where feasible and measures that improve ventilation
- Installation of Solar Panels. Planning permission, if required, for the installation of solar panels **only**.
- Heat pumps (e.g. air, ground or water source pumps), zoning of heating system
- Water conservation (e.g. water efficient equipment, harvest rainwater, grey water systems)
- Efficient heat generators
- Insulation of attic, walls (internal or external), floors, roof, dry lining

- Pipe insulation
- Solar Thermal Collectors/Solar Hot Water Collectors (installation of a larger hot water cylinder, ancillary works to house cylinder – not requiring planning permission).
- Boiler Upgrade
- Electrical vehicle charging points for staff

Eligible works under the Retrofit Strand/Strand B include the upgrade of electrical, plumbing, gas and heating systems to ensure they meet regulations and standards. Costs associated with installation, replacement and upgrade of areas that form an integral part of the building e.g.:

- Kitchen works and refurbishment
- Upgrade of sanitary facilities for children and adults
- Roof repairs/replacements
- Insulation of roof, walls (internal or external), floors, attic
- Replacement/repairs of windows
- External/Internal Door repair/replacement
- Upgrade of Flooring
- Static wheelchair ramps.
- Stairways.
- Automatic doors.
- Installation of a lift.
- Electrical wiring.
- Electrical switches.
- Electrical distribution boards.
- Fixtures.

Applications from eligible services will be accepted in Q4 and successful applicants will be notified in early 2023. All services who are in contract for NCS or ECCE 2022/2023 with at least one child registered are eligible to apply. Successful applicants must be in contract with Core Funding before any funding is released

Grants will range from €35,000 to €75,000.

Issued by the Press and Communications Office at the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

Tel: 01 647 - 3153/3114

Email: media@equality.gov.ie