



2026

Collaboration and Innovation Fund

Guidelines and information on how to apply.

Application form: <https://adulteracyforlife.submit.com/>

Closing date: 12pm on Thursday 22 January 2026



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Arna chomhchistiú ag
an Aontas Eorpach
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A quick overview

Thank you for your interest in the 2026 Collaboration and Innovation Fund. It is a great opportunity to fund projects that support adults with unmet literacy needs and projects that support organisations to be literacy friendly.

We have written these guidelines with information about the fund and how you apply for it. Please read them carefully.

Before you apply, here are the main things you should know.

Criteria for funding

- Supporting the aims of the ALL Strategy: Your project should address unmet adult literacy, numeracy, digital, family or financial literacy needs and/or support organisations to create a more literacy friendly society.
- Collaboration and Innovation: **At least two organisations** must be involved. All organisations must be public or not-for-profit. Your project should be new or innovative, that is, not work that is already happening.
- Outcomes: Your project should have clear positive outcomes for adults with unmet literacy needs, including making Ireland more literacy friendly.
- Sustainability: Your project should have the potential to be mainstreamed or rolled out by you or your partners and/or another region or service.
- Cost: Your project should show that it is good value for money.

If your organisation has received funding from the Collaboration and Innovation Fund in the past, you can apply for funding again, but **your project must be new and innovative**. You cannot apply for funding to run the same project again.

Information you will be asked for

In your application you will have to give us;

- company and tax information about the lead and partner organisations;
- the names, addresses and contact details of the lead and partner organisations;

- details about your project and how it will benefit participants;
- information about the cost of the project and details about how the funding will be spent;
- signed declarations from both the lead and partner organisations; and
- financial information, including bank and tax clearance details.

Some of this information must be uploaded as part of your application so you should have this ready before you submit your application. All of the documents to be uploaded are available in the application form and also on our **website**; www.adultliteracyforlife.ie/fund

If you do not upload these documents before the closing date for applications, your application may not be considered for funding.

How to apply

There are 5 steps to making your application for the fund

1. **Read** through these guidelines
2. **Watch** the video on the ALL website (location) that covers;
 - details about the fund;
 - an overview of the application form; and
 - guidance for making a funding application.
3. **Read** through the checklist on page 11 to make sure you have thought about all of the items in it.
4. **Contact** the Regional Literacy Coordinator for your region to discuss your proposal. If you are planning to apply for a national project, contact cif@solas.ie
5. **Make** your application. The form is available here; <https://adultliteracyforlife.submit.com/> You do not have to complete it all at once, the form will save your answers as you are working through it.

After you submit your application

- Your application will be evaluated by a group of people with experience in adult literacy. Together, they will decide which applications will receive funding.

- Once the applications have been evaluated, you will be told if your application was successful or not.
- Unfortunately, we receive more applications than we have money for, so we cannot fund every application. If you are not successful, we can provide you with feedback on your application.
- If you are successful, we will provide you with information on what to do next.
- When your application has been evaluated, other ways of supporting your project may be identified. If this is the case, your contact details and a summary of your project proposal will be shared with the appropriate service(s).

About the Adult Literacy for Life (ALL) Strategy

Adult Literacy for Life (ALL) is a 10-year strategy that aims to:

- ensure that every adult has the necessary literacy, numeracy and digital literacy to fully engage in society and realise their potential; and
- support organisations and services to be literacy friendly and fully accessible to adults with unmet literacy needs.

In Ireland, more than 735,000 people have unmet literacy needs. Even more have unmet numeracy and digital literacy needs. This means they may be unable to fill in a form, vote, read instructions on medicines, add up a bill, help children with homework or search the web for information.

The ALL Strategy is important because it will help people gain literacy skills to achieve their personal, social and employment goals so that they can take part fully in society. The Strategy will also help organisations and services to be literacy friendly and fully accessible to adults with unmet literacy needs. This will support a more inclusive and equal society.

Managing the strategy

SOLAS (Ireland's further education and training authority) set up a National Programme Office to coordinate the Strategy across all Government departments and stakeholders.

At regional level, Regional Literacy Coordinators (RLCs) have been appointed in the 16 Education and Training Boards. They drive partnerships between organisations that support the aims of the ALL Strategy. They have set up Regional Literacy Coalitions to share expertise and develop appropriate responses at local level.

About the Collaboration and Innovation Fund

Purpose of the fund

The purpose of the fund is to pay for collaborative and innovative projects that:

- support adults with unmet literacy, numeracy, digital, family and financial literacy needs, and,
- create a more literacy friendly and equal society.

Funding available

In 2026, the total funding available in the Collaboration and Innovation Fund is €1 million.

The funding will be divided into **three strands** for innovative and collaborative local and national projects as follows:

- **€700,000** for projects that;
 - support adults with unmet literacy, numeracy and digital literacy needs, and
 - create a more literacy friendly and equal society.
- **€100,000** for projects that;
 - engage parents with unmet literacy, numeracy or digital literacy needs in **family literacy** projects in the community
 - support parents to support their child's literacy skills in the home.
- **€200,000** for projects that;
 - improve **financial literacy** skills for adults with unmet literacy, numeracy and digital literacy needs, and
 - create a more literacy friendly approach to accessing financial services.

Family literacy strand

This year there is a separate strand in the fund for projects that support family literacy.

'Family literacy happens in homes in Ireland every day when parents engage in fun and rich literacy activities that support their children's language and literacy development, for example reading a book, telling stories and playing games.

Family literacy promotes the relationship between the parent and child that optimises the essential home learning environment.

Family literacy promotes a culture of learning in the home that matters, for our families, our communities and our society.’¹

¹Lana McCarthy 2025

Financial literacy strand

For a second year, the Adult Literacy for Life (ALL) National Programme Office is working with the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC), who are supporting a **financial literacy strand** for the fund.

Financial literacy is the financial awareness, knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours that people need to help them to make sound financial decisions and ultimately achieve individual financial well-being.²

Ireland’s first National Financial Literacy Strategy was published in 2025. To support the strategy, the Consumer and Competition Protection Commission (CCPC) has given €200,000 to the fund for projects on financial literacy.

² 2020 OECD Recommendation on Financial Literacy

Who can apply to the fund?

You must have at least two organisations working in partnership to apply for the Fund. One organisation is the lead applicant, and the other organisation or organisations are the partner applicants.

Organisations that work in the public, not-for-profit, community and voluntary sector can apply for the Collaboration and Innovation Fund but individuals and private sector organisations are not eligible.

As part of their application, the lead organisation will have to provide:

- a tax clearance access number,

- tax reference number, and
- charity number, if applicable.

The partner organisation(s) will have to provide:

- a partner commitment form that describes their role in the project.

Local or national projects

You can apply for funding for either a local or national project.

A local or regional project;

- has an impact in one area, county or ETB catchment area;
- the lead organisation is any public, not for profit organisation;
- the minimum amount of funding available is €1,000; and
- the maximum amount is €15,000.

A national project;

- has an impact in more than one county or happens in more than one Education and Training Board region;
- the lead organisation is a public, not for profit; national representative body **or** an organisation that provides a service in more than one location;
- the minimum amount of funding available is €1,000; and
- the maximum amount is €50,000.

If you are not sure whether your project is local or national, please contact your Regional Literacy Coordinator or the ALL National Programme Office by email at cif@solas.ie.

The contact details for the Regional Literacy Coordinator for each region are on page 21 of this document.

Who is responsible for the funding?

The lead organisation is responsible for all of the funding. They must make sure that the funding;

- is used for the specific purpose intended;
- is spent by 31 December 2026;

- is not used for costs that extend beyond 31 December 2026;
- is returned to SOLAS if any of it is unspent;
- complies with all statutory, European Union and other obligations that apply.

If the lead organisation / applicant forwards on funding to another organisation, they must receive an invoice with details of the costs incurred by that organisation.

Our relationship is with the lead organisation we are providing funding to. If they contract another person or organisation to provide a service to the project, they have a relationship with that person or organisation. The lead organisation is responsible for making sure the quality of that service meets the standard required to successfully deliver the project. They are also responsible for making sure that any service they contract complies with legal obligations, for example;

- health and safety laws;
- equality laws;
- data protection laws; and
- any other laws that are relevant.

Existing services

Your proposed project should not have a negative impact on services or provision already funded through SOLAS, Education and Training Boards and or other state agencies. If a proposal duplicates a service that is already being funded in the region, it will not be considered for evaluation.

Your application

Regional Literacy Coordinator

Each ETB has a Regional Literacy Coordinator (RLC). Their role is to work with organisations at a local level, as well as colleagues across the education, health, community development and local government supports and services.

You **must** consult with the RLC in your area before submitting your application. The RLC in your region can provide additional information and answer questions you may have about your application. The list of Coordinators is on page 21.

If you are submitting a proposal for a national project, you must consult with the ALL National Programme Office cif@solas.ie before submitting your application.

When you contact your RLC about your project proposal they will be checking that you have considered the following:

Checklist		Yes	No
A	One or more eligible partners have been identified		
B	The role of each partner is clear		
C	The proposed project clearly addresses the aims of the strategy		
D	The proposed project is innovative and/or a new collaboration		
E	Costs have been considered, and the lead is clear about the maximum funding available		
F	A target cohort has been identified		
G	Tutor availability and cost have been considered		

Who will benefit from your project?

Projects should address the needs of adults with unmet literacy, numeracy and digital literacy needs, specifically the groups identified in the ALL strategy:

Older Adults (55+)	Members of the Traveller Community	Persons with Disabilities
Low-paid Workers	Carers	One-parent Households
Incarcerated Persons and Ex-Offenders	Persons Recovering from Addiction	Long-term Unemployed
Migrants	International Protection Applicants	People with Language Needs

Project focus

Below is a list of day-to-day areas in life where literacy, numeracy and digital literacy is important. For example, in family life, community, health, work and using government and other online services. Your project should reflect one or more of these areas.

Family Life • Have the confidence and ability to read a bedtime story, help with maths, English or Irish homework, or even fill out a form required to register or enrol in school.	Employability • Read job advertisements, fill out applications, be able to search for vacancies, apply online and communicate clearly in interviews.
Good Health • Arrange a follow-up appointment with your doctor online, read the label on a medicine bottle and understand the diet and lifestyle needed to be healthy.	Job Retention • Be able to read safety signs at work, send e-mails, complete health and safety courses, work with and use technology and conduct online meetings.
Living Safely • Be able to understand safety warnings and instructions, understand situations to make sound judgements and decisions.	Shopping • Be able to shop and purchase things online, know your consumer rights and entitlements, assess value for money.
Services • Access Government services and other online services required. Understand rights and eligibility, be able to apply online, provide the necessary evidence, deal with follow-up correspondence and complain about poor service.	New Skills • Be able to learn new skills online, complete online assessments, read theory and do coursework as part of a course.
Finances • Manage finances, budget effectively, pay bills, use an ATM and online banking, access essential financial services and be able to identify a scam.	Security • Be able to identify phishing, protect your personal information and data and avoid other forms of scams, targeting and manipulation online.
Community • Help people learn to live together, have the language and social skills to integrate within their communities, be healthy and thrive, irrespective of their economic, social or cultural background.	Digital • Have the technology and be able to use it to complete many of the functions outlined above. To access news and information, to use e-mail, social media and other tools to interact with others.

If you are thinking about proposing a financial or family literacy project, the CCPC and the ALL National Programme Office have put together some ideas you could consider. The project ideas are available on our website www.adultliteracyforlife.ie/fund. For examples of other

ideas for projects, there are videos and descriptions of many of the projects that have been funded previously through the CIF on our website.

Project budget and costs

Costs

There are different types of costs you can include in your budget. These include direct costs, programme costs and indirect overhead costs. When you are putting your budget together please note:

- If you are including staffing costs, please tell us how many members of staff are included and what the cost will be for each
- Venue hire costs should not be included if the venue is already owned or rented by the lead organisation.
- If you need to prepare materials for a course, please make sure include this cost under programme costs.
- If you are using tutors on your project, please give us a breakdown of costs by -number of tutors; number of hours and hourly rate. Adult literacy tutors must be paid at the ETB hourly tutor rate.
 - **If the lead organisation is an Education and Training Board (ETB)**, tutor hours allocated to the project that **are already included** in the ETB FAR 4 should not be included in your application. If the tutor hours are not covered in your FAR 4, we will include a declaration on this in the funding documentation we send to you.
 - **If the lead organisation is not an ETB** and you have an allocation of ETB tutor hours **already covered** by the ETB's existing budget, tutor costs should not be included in your application. If these tutor hours are not covered by the ETB's **existing budget**, we will include a declaration on this in the funding documentation we send to you.
- If you are including 'other costs' in your budget, please describe what these costs are.
- Indirect overhead costs are things like rent, light, heat and so on. Indirect costs **should not be more than 10%** of the direct cost of the project.

Capital equipment

The Collaboration and Innovation fund should not be used to purchase single items of furniture and equipment that cost over €1,000 inclusive of VAT.

If you purchase equipment for your project, this comes under the ownership of the lead organisation. If equipment is being loaned out by the lead organisation, the lead organisation should have a loan scheme and policy in place and keep records of loans.

Reach funding

Proposed projects may apply for other sources of funding such as Reach. However, there must be no duplication of State funding and the project **must not be dependent on receiving funding from another source**. If you are applying for Reach funding for this project your information may be shared within the ETB. There is more information about Reach funding in Appendix 1 on page 22.

Support on projects

People who provide support to projects, for example volunteer tutors, must be over 18.

Transition year students should not participate in projects on behalf of project lead or partner organisations.

Evaluating applications

All of the applications will be reviewed to make sure they meet the criteria set out in this document. An independent expert panel will consider the applications that meet the criteria. You must have clearly identified and demonstrated the need and reasons for your proposed project.

Eligible applications

Your application is eligible if:

- You have consulted with your Regional Literacy Coordinator.
- You have completed all of the sections of the application form.
- Your project has two or more partners who are public or not for profit organisations.
- The lead organisation is tax compliant.
- There is no duplication of State funding in your application.

Once all eligible applications have been evaluated, we will write out to the lead organisations to tell them of the outcome. As the fund is limited to €1 million, if we have more projects that achieve the minimum score that we have funding for, we will fund the projects with the highest scores.

The amount of funding recommended by the evaluation panel may be lower than the funding applied for. If this happens, the lead organisation may be asked to resubmit their application reflecting the recommended funding.

We will issue successful projects with a funding letter and terms and conditions of funding. Once these have been acknowledged, SOLAS will issue the funding.

Scoring for applications

The criteria for scoring eligible applications is below.

The maximum mark available is 100 and a minimum score of 70 must be achieved for a project to be considered for funding.

Scoring				
	Total minimum score of 70 must be achieved	Minimum Required	Maximum Marks	
A	The project supports the aims of the ALL Strategy to address unmet adult literacy, numeracy and digital literacy needs ¹ and/or to support organisations to create a more literacy friendly society	10	15	
B	The application proposes collaborative and innovative approaches with other organisations	10	15	
C	Applications will be scored under either C(i) or C(ii)	15	20	
	(i) The project targets identified cohorts under the ALL Strategy who have unmet literacy/numeracy/digital literacy needs (maximum 20) or			
	(ii) Other adults who have unmet literacy/numeracy/digital literacy needs (maximum 15)			
D	The application shows clear and demonstratable positive outcomes	15	20	
E	The project has potential to be mainstreamed or rolled out by the lead/partner organisations and/or another region or service	5	10	
F	The project represents value for money	15	20	
Total score		70	100	

¹ For projects applying for;

- the financial literacy strand, the project must address financial literacy; and
- the family literacy strand, the project must address family literacy.

Completing your project

Regional Literacy Coordinator

You must contact your Regional Literacy Coordinator to let them know when your project is starting. They will arrange to visit the project once it has begun.

Reporting

We will ask you to send us a final report on the outcomes at the end of the project. This will include details of the amount of funding you have spent by 31 December 2026. We will send a report template to the Lead Organisation to be completed and sent back to us at the end of January 2027.

When you submit the project report, we will **review the final expenditure** on the project and will recoup any unspent money.

We might ask for **additional evidence** of how the grant has been spent and may look for more supporting documentation. You should keep receipts and a record of all of the funding spent.

Logos

The ALL logo should be on all information and communication materials produced by or on behalf of projects funded through the Collaboration and Innovation Fund. If your project was funded through the financial literacy strand of the fund you must include the CCPC logo.

Materials and research

You should send on any training materials, supports, reports and / or research that you developed through the Collaboration and Innovation Fund with your end of project report.

Any content and/or material produced will be **jointly owned** by the ALL National Programme Office for further circulating, use, and development. Any content and/or material produced under the financial literacy strand will be **jointly owned** by the ALL National Programme Office and the CCPC for further circulating, use, and development.

This will be done with full acknowledgement of the project development included.

Documents in the Application

There are a minimum of three additional documents you must complete as part of your application. These are part of the online application and should be downloaded, completed and then uploaded with your application. If you do not submit these documents your application may not be considered for funding.

Designated signatory and declaration by lead organisation

All funding documentation must be signed and dated by the designated signatory for your organisation. This is the Chief Executive (CE) or a staff member who has the authority to sign funding documentation and reporting returns for your organisation.

If your organisation is an Education and Training Board (ETB), your designated signatory is the CE or FET Director of the ETB.

If there is any change to the designated signatory during the year, please tell SOLAS in writing to cif@solas.ie

The designated signatory for the lead organisation must fill in and sign this declaration on behalf of their organisation.

The declaration covers the terms of the application including;

- confirming that the information in the application is accurate and complete;
- acknowledging that making the application does not guarantee funding;
- consenting to the ALL Office / SOLAS making enquiries to a third party about the funding application;
- acknowledging that information in the application may be made available on request under the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003 or under the 2018 EU General Data Protection Regulation;
- agreeing that any funding unspent in 2026 must be returned to SOLAS;
- agreeing with the terms and conditions of funding.

Declaration by Partner Organisation

Each partner organisation for the project must fill in a copy of this declaration and it must be signed and dated by the designated signatory for their organisation.

As part of the declaration, the partner organisation must describe what their role will be as a project partner.

By signing this document the partner organisation is agreeing that:

- they have read the 2026 Guidelines for ALL Strategy Collaboration & Innovation Fund
- they have agreed to act as a partner organisation for this project
- the information in the application about their organisation is accurate and complete.

SOLAS Bank Authorisation Form

The bank authorisation form gives us the bank details for your organisation.

This can be completed either:

- in full by an authorised Bank Official and must be stamped by the bank, or
- by an Accountable person (see note below) in the organisation. It can then be uploaded with the top section of a bank statement, confirming the bank account details given here. The bank statement must be dated within the last three months. Please make sure it includes the date, IBAN and name of the account.

Further information and questions

If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact your Regional Literacy Coordinator in one of the 16 Education and Training Boards (ETBs) or the ALL National Programme Office cif@solas.ie.

ETB	First Name	Mobile	Email
Cavan and Monaghan	Ceinwen Fergus	087 068 7841	ceinwenfergus@cmetb.ie
Cork	Veronica Bowen	086 0296086	veronica.bowen@corketb.ie
City of Dublin	Andrew Connolly	086 601 8180	andrew.connolly@aes.cdetb.ie
Donegal	Adele McElhinney	086 084 9284	adelemcelhinney@donegaletb.ie
Dublin and Dun Laoghaire	Helena Browner	086 832 8150	helenabrowner@ddletbaes.ie
Galway and Roscommon	Patrick Fox	085 7566251	patrick.fox@gretb.ie
Kerry	Paula Tiller	087 337 2139	paula.tiller@kerryetb.ie
Kildare and Wicklow	Iryna Avalishvili	087 188 4355	Adultliteracyforlife@kwetb.ie
Kilkenny and Carlow	Deirdre Geoghegan	087 767 5547	deirdre.geoghegan@kcetb.ie
Laois and Offaly	Tamara Latham	085 856 0160	tlatham@loetb.ie
Limerick and Clare	Tom Kent	087 056 4369	tom.kent@lcetb.ie
Longford and Westmeath	Anne-Maria Egan	085 857 0991	aegan@lwetb.ie
Louth and Meath	Niamh McShane	086 201 1988	nmcshane@lmetb.ie
Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim	Róisín Egan	086 032 0520	RoisinEgan@msletb.ie
Tipperary	Ester Mackey	087 062 6937	emackey@tipperaryetb.ie
Waterford and Wexford	Edel Finan	086 084 5354	edelfinan@wwetb.ie

Appendix 1: Reach Fund

The aim of Reach funding is to provide support to educationally disadvantaged learners to access and participate in Community Education.

The main differences between the Collaboration and Innovation Fund and Reach funding are set out below:

Collaboration and Innovation Fund	Reach Funding
Any public, nonprofit organisations can apply to the ALL National Programme Office for the Collaboration and Innovation Fund.	Community Education providers can apply to their ETB for Reach funding.
Partnership model required with a minimum of two organisations needed.	A single organisation can make an application for Reach funding.
The purpose is to support collaborative and innovative activities that will help achieve the aims of the strategy and create a more equal society. This includes activities that: • Support adults with unmet literacy, numeracy and digital literacy needs. • Supports a whole-of-society response to adult literacy needs.	The purpose is to assist community education providers to widen and increase their capacity to deliver, support and encourage participation of educationally disadvantaged learners, particularly those on accredited programmes at NFQ levels 1 to 3
The aim of the fund is to support individuals and or groups experiencing unmet literacy, numeracy or digital literacy needs through new and innovative approaches using a partnership model.	The aim of funding is specifically to tackle inequalities and support access to community education.

Targets funding of innovative activities that support the priority groups named in the Adult Literacy for Life Strategy.	Targets funding of educationally disadvantaged learners in accessing and participating in Community Education.
Must be used to support organisations that support individuals with unmet needs.	Can be used to support an individual with unmet needs.
Target groups: • Older adults (55+); • members of the Traveller community; • people with disabilities; • one-parent households; • low paid workers; • careers; • long-term unemployed; • migrants; • international protection applicants; • people with language needs; • incarcerated persons and ex-offenders; • persons recovering from addiction.	Key target groups: • Learners under 25 years of age; • long-term unemployed; • people with disabilities; and • migrants and refugees. Other priority target groups: • Early school leavers; • members of the Traveller and Roma communities; • women wishing to return to the labour market; • lone parents; • people who are educationally, economically or socially disadvantaged; • people impacted by mental health issues or addiction; • women's groups and men's groups; • people impacted by homelessness; • carers; • LGBTQIA; and • older people.
The ALL National Programme Office in SOLAS manage the Collaboration and Innovation Fund.	The ETBs manage Reach funding.

