



An Roinn Gnóthaí Fostaíochta
agus Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of Employment Affairs
and Social Protection



An Roinn Cultúir,
Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta
Department of Culture,
Heritage and the Gaeltacht

Social Welfare Scheme for Professional Artists on Jobseeker's Allowance is accepting applications from professional artists engaged in a wide range of art forms

Friday, 06 September 2019:

The Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Regina Doherty T.D. and the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Josepha Madigan T.D., have today announced that the Social Welfare Scheme for Professional Artists on Jobseeker's Allowance is now open for applications from a wide range of professional artists. A pilot scheme open to visual artists and writers under the Creative Ireland Programme was announced by An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar T.D., in June 2017.

A review of the pilot scheme for artists was recently undertaken by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection in consultation with the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The review recommended that the pilot should be established as a permanent scheme in its own right and extended to include professionals from other artistic disciplines.

In line with this recommendation, Ministers Doherty and Josepha Madigan announced, on 5 July 2019, that the scheme would be extended on a permanent basis to other self-employed artists such as those working in theatre and music.

This expanded scheme recognises the unique creative circumstances of professional artists in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance and gives them special assistance in their first year out of work, allowing them to focus on their creative output.

Professional artists engaged in a wide variety of art forms who are on Jobseeker's Allowance will now be able to focus on their artistic work and to develop their portfolio. They will be exempt from participating in the normal labour market activation activities for the first year that they are out of work.

Minister Doherty said:

"Ireland is well known throughout the world for its unique contribution to all art forms. Giving professional artists an opportunity to expand their creative work in a practical way is our way of acknowledging the important work that professional artists do. We know that creativity must be fostered and allowed to develop rather than imposing restrictions on the time needed to produce creative work to a professional standard."

I am delighted to extend my Department's scheme as was recommended in the review undertaken by my Department in consultation with the Department of Culture Heritage and Gaeltacht. I would also like to acknowledge the support and input from The Arts Council along with representatives from Visual Artists Ireland and the Irish Writers Centre.

My Department looks forward to accepting applications from professional artists who satisfy the qualifying conditions and to support them in the development of their professional careers."

Minister Madigan commented:

"This Government recognises the crucial role that the arts and culture play in our nation. That's why we have already made significant progress on our public commitment to double funding for culture, heritage and the Gaeltacht by 2025. In Budget 2019, funding for arts and culture increased by €22.6m to almost €190m, an increase of 14% on 2018.

Artists, performers and stage designers are central to this. They deserve our full support particularly given the significant income challenges they can face. That's why we expanded this scheme, a pilot initiative of the all-of-Government Creative Ireland Programme, to include other self-employed artists.

The Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht will work with the Arts Council and the representative bodies for artists from different art forms to develop an independent and objective validation process that will certify the artists' professional credentials."

In order to qualify for the scheme, professional artists must apply for and satisfy the qualifying conditions for Jobseeker's Allowance including a means test. They must be unemployed, capable of, available for and actively seeking work. Applicants are also required to provide a certificate/declaration from their professional body as to their status as a professional artist. They must be registered as self-employed with the Office of the Revenue Commissioners and at least 50% of their income should be derived from their art in the previous year. Participants on the scheme can continue on a voluntary basis to avail of the supports of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection's Public Employment Service.

Visual artists from Visual Artists Ireland and writers from the Irish Writer's Centre have now been joined on the scheme by screen writers, film directors and film actors. The theatre art form is open to actors, costume designers, theatre directors, set designers and stage designers. Musicians, dancers, choreographers, opera composers and circus and street performers complete the list of artistic disciplines who are now included in the scheme.

More information on the scheme is available [here](#).

ENDS