

social
entrepreneurs
Ireland



2023 APPLICANT GUIDE



BANK OF AMERICA 

Corporate Partner
of the Ideas Academy

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The Ideas Academy

Do you have an innovative idea to solve a social problem? Are you ambitious, entrepreneurial, and passionate about social change? This three-month programme will provide you with the support and direction you need to help you to kick-start your idea and take the next steps to start tackling the problem.

Participants on the Ideas Academy will be supported to clearly articulate, refine and progress your solution, to build skills and accelerate learning in core areas of importance to social entrepreneurs, and to move from idea to action. You can learn more about The Ideas Academy in a [short video here](#).

We have 30 places available on the 2023 programme which will be made up of 15 social entrepreneur-led projects across two groups. The programme will be delivered remotely in 2023 and each project selected for the programme will receive a €500 bursary to help subsidize any costs you might incur while taking part in the programme.

Together with a group of fellow innovators, you will receive training and support to:

- Deepen your understanding of the problem you've identified
- Refine and validate your solution
- Develop an action plan to pilot your idea post-programme
- Expand your network
- Grow in confidence as a social entrepreneur
- Gain an insight into the social entrepreneur journey
- Apply for a portion of €20,000 seed funding and further support from SEI at the end of the programme

The Ideas Academy 2023 is kindly supported by Bank of America (Corporate Partner).

What We Are Looking For

The Ideas Academy will provide guidance and support to people with ideas to solve social problems, sparking a new generation of social entrepreneurs. We are looking to find individuals with a passion for social change, a strong understanding of the problem they are addressing, a great idea to solve it, and the drive and courage to act on it.

We welcome applications from people of all backgrounds and we are committed to providing equal opportunities regardless of gender identity, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity or religion. (Equal Status Acts, 2000-2018)

What that means in more detail:

We're looking to support budding social entrepreneurs..

The Ideas Academy is for passionate, driven individuals, who are interested in solving a social problem. They should be ambitious, visionary, and open to learning and developing themselves and their idea through The Ideas Academy. We are accepting applications from individuals and two-person partnerships.

A societal challenge..

There are a lot of problems and issues to be addressed in Ireland so we're looking for people who can clearly demonstrate why the issue they want to address is of particular importance and why they're passionate about it.

An idea...

Applicants should have an idea with the potential to solve a social problem. The idea should be new, better or different to existing initiatives which are currently tackling the problem. The Ideas Academy programme is suitable for people with ideas at either the research or testing stages.

Eligibility Criteria:

- You must be aged 18 years or over at the time of applying for the programme.
- You must be the person leading on this idea – the main driver and decision maker.
- The primary focus of your idea is on benefiting society in Ireland.
- You must have identified a social or environmental issue and have a new or better idea to solve it.
- You must be available to commit to full attendance for all of the core learning sessions on the Ideas Academy.

Note: Social Entrepreneurs Ireland is not in a position to support research projects, party-political projects, or projects with an explicit religious or faith-based agenda – as opposed to projects that are driven by a personal belief system but are open to all the community.

The Selection Process

Before you apply:

Read all about The Ideas Academy

The Ideas Academy involves a certain time commitment from participants. Please read this document fully and review our website to ensure that you know all about it before applying. All events are mandatory during the application process and programme itself.

Find out what we are looking for

You can read all about the type of people we are looking to support through The Ideas Academy above and on our website. Please ensure that your application meets the relevant criteria and descriptions provided.

We will be holding informative Spark Session events which will aim to demystify what it is to be a social entrepreneur, inspire you to get started or take the next steps with your idea and show you how Social Entrepreneurs Ireland can support you. Please follow us on social media to find out more.

Take time to complete your application

Be sure to allow as much time as possible to complete your application form. The online system will allow you to save your application and return to it at a later date, so you don't have to complete the form in just one sitting. Once you sign up and save your application the first time, it will from then on save any changes automatically. We would also strongly advise that you get feedback on your application before you submit it. If you have a problem with your application or a specific question not answered in this guide, you can email applications@socialentrepreneurs.ie or call 01-685-3919 and we will seek to assist you.

Take note of and ensure you can attend all mandatory Selection Process and Ideas Academy Programme dates outlined below

Open Applications: 18th April – 16th May 2023

You can apply to the Ideas Academy by filling in a short online application form.

Review of Applications: May

A review of all applications will be carried out. A selection of shortlisted applicants will be selected and invited to take part in the Ideas Academy Virtual Judging.

The Ideas Academy Virtual Judging: 21st June

A selection of applicants will be invited to pitch their idea to a virtual panel of judges in the afternoon of Wednesday 21st of June.

The Selection Process

Ideas Academy Participant Selection

All participants will be informed as to whether they have been selected by the end of June.

Core Programme Days

The Ideas Academy will cover four core modules over twelve weeks and will be delivered online through a mix of large and small group sessions. If you are offered a place on the Ideas Academy in 2023 you must be available to attend all core programme sessions to successfully complete the programme. Core programme dates for 2023 are being finalised and this guide will be updated with the confirmed dates for each cohort at a later date. Estimated time commitment required is 3-6 hours per week (core programme elements, group sessions and individual work) for the duration of the programme.

Programme Launch

- Tuesday 4th of July - virtual

Module 1: Understanding the Problem

- Core Learning Day 10am-1pm Tuesday, 11th July
- Compulsory 2 hour group discussion* 19th/20th July

Module 2: Refining the Solution

- Core Learning Day 10am-1pm Tuesday, 25th July
- Compulsory 2 hour group discussion* 2nd/3rd August

Module 3: Building a Social Business

- Dates TBC - Workshop
- Compulsory 2 hour group discussion* 16th/17th August

Week of 28th August - Reading Week

Module 4: Sharing Your Story

- Dates TBC - Workshop
- Compulsory 2 hour group discussion* 12th/13th September

Programme Close

- Close Out Event – Date TBC - In person in Dublin

*date is dependent on the cohort you are assigned to.

This year we are trialing a new way of delivering our content for the programme. We are asking applicants this year if they would prefer to access the first 2 modules of the programme either:

- By joining live online workshops where you engage with the facilitator and other participants on the programme at a specific time and date - These are held on Tuesdays/Wednesdays/Thursdays during work hours (9am-5.30pm) and the duration is 3 hours

or

- By engaging in self-directed learning ie. by watching pre-recorded content and completing assignments in your own time.

What We Expect From Participants

Social Entrepreneurs Ireland invests significant time and resources to provide a range of opportunities to participants of the Ideas Academy. In return we expect:

- Full participation and attendance on core programme support elements, outlined above, in order to successfully complete the programme and avail of other opportunities.
- Open-minded, professional, and collegial engagement;
- Willingness to participate in group events and share knowledge.

How to Apply

All applications must be submitted online using our online application form. Please access socialentrepreneurs.grantplatform.com to login/register and create your application. You can find all the details you need to enter the application process on our website at www.socialentrepreneurs.ie.

You will be asked to create a profile and login details, you can then log into your application at any time during the selection process period (18th of April to 16th of May 2023). After submission **you will not be able to amend your application**, so please ensure you have reviewed your work carefully before submission.

You will find a [visual guide here](#).

Please check out the **[Frequently Asked Questions](#)** section on our website for any queries on the programme or the application process.

If you have a problem with your application or a specific question not answered in this guide, you can email applications@socialentrepreneurs.ie or call 01-685-3919 and we will seek to assist you.

Application Questions

The Problem

Q1. The Problem

The Ideas Academy seeks to support people who have an insight into a particular social problem in Ireland. Please communicate as clearly as you can the urgency and effect of this problem in this section.

Note: In this section, please do not provide any details about your idea to tackle this problem. **Please just focus on describing the problem itself.** Please draw on any relevant examples or research to support your answer.

a. What social problem are you trying to solve? Please include in your response the scale of the problem, e.g. number of people affected by this problem in Ireland. (200)

b. How does this problem affect the lives of those experiencing it? (200) **c. What are the key obstacles that are preventing this problem from being solved in Ireland today?** (200)

The Solution/Idea

Q2. The Solution

Through our programmes, we support social entrepreneurs who have found new and/ or better ways to solve a pressing social or environmental problem. In this section, we want to hear about your idea to tackle the problem you've identified.

a. Please describe the solution/idea that you have developed to solve the problem you outlined in question 1. (200)

b. How do you know that your specific idea has the potential to solve the problem you have outlined in question 1? (200)

c. How is your idea better or different from the work of other people trying to solve this problem? (200) **Note:** No matter how unique your idea is, there should be at least one organisation to which you can compare yourself.

The Social Entrepreneur

Q3. The Social Entrepreneur

The Ideas Academy seeks to support people who have the desire, ambition, and potential ability to drive this idea forward. In this section, we would like to get to know you better.

a. What is motivating you as an individual to create social change in this specific area? Please tell us your connection to this social problem and why you want to tackle it. (200)

b. Based on your experience to date, why are you the right person to lead this change? Please include information about any relevant experience and abilities you have. (200)

c. What impact would you like to have created in two years time through this project? Please give us a sense of your ambition and how you will achieve it. (200)

The Ideas Academy

Q4. The Ideas Academy

The Ideas Academy provides guidance and support to people with ideas to solve social problems, through training, peer mentorship, and access to support. In this section, we would like to know more about why you would like to participate in the programme.

- a. What do you hope to get out of participating in the Ideas Academy?** Please outline your three core objectives for the programme. (200)
- b. What challenges do you think you might face if participating in the Ideas Academy, and how do you intend to overcome these?** (150)
- c. Please tell us why you feel it is the right time for you to take part in this programme.** (150)



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