

2024

APPLICANT GUIDE



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Please read our eligibility criteria to ensure that you are eligible to apply to the Ideas Academy.

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).



Eligibility Criteria



- You must have identified a social or environmental problem and have an effective solution to solve it.
- You, and your solution partner (if applying as a partnership), must be aged 18 years or over at the time of applying for the programme.
- You must be the person/people leading on this idea/solution – the main driver(s) and decision maker(s).
- The primary focus of the impact of your solution must be in Ireland.
- You must be available to commit to full attendance for all of the core learning sessions on the Ideas Academy.

Note: Social Entrepreneurs Ireland does not 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.



Introduction

Welcome to your applicant guide for the Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Ideas Academy 2024.

Over the past 20 years, Social Entrepreneurs Ireland has supported more than 600 social entrepreneurs across Ireland, tackling issues in areas such as mental health, diversity and inclusion, the environment, housing and education.

Our alumni have directly impacted millions of lives.


Our mission is to harness the cumulative power of people to accelerate social change. We do this through seeking out people with unique insight and ideas to social and environmental problems and offering support to increase their impact. That's where YOU come in. Over 12 weeks we will provide successful applicants to the Ideas Academy 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.

Apply to the 2024 Ideas Academy to join us in creating accelerated social change in Ireland today.

Social Entrepreneurs Ireland's Core Beliefs



The potential of people to create change



The power of human-first relationships



The force of community to accelerate impact



Overview of the 2024 Ideas Academy

Do you have an innovative idea to solve a social or environmental 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 about our 2021 programme](#).

We have **30 places** available on the 2024 programme. The programme will be delivered remotely in 2024 with an in-person launch, mid-programme event and graduation.

Each project selected will receive a **€500 bursary** to help subsidise any costs you might incur while taking part in the programme.

The Ideas Academy 2024 is kindly supported by Bank of America (Corporate Partner).



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 **€25,000 seed funding** and further support from Social Entrepreneurs Ireland at the end of the programme



€500 bursary for each project selected

What are we looking for?

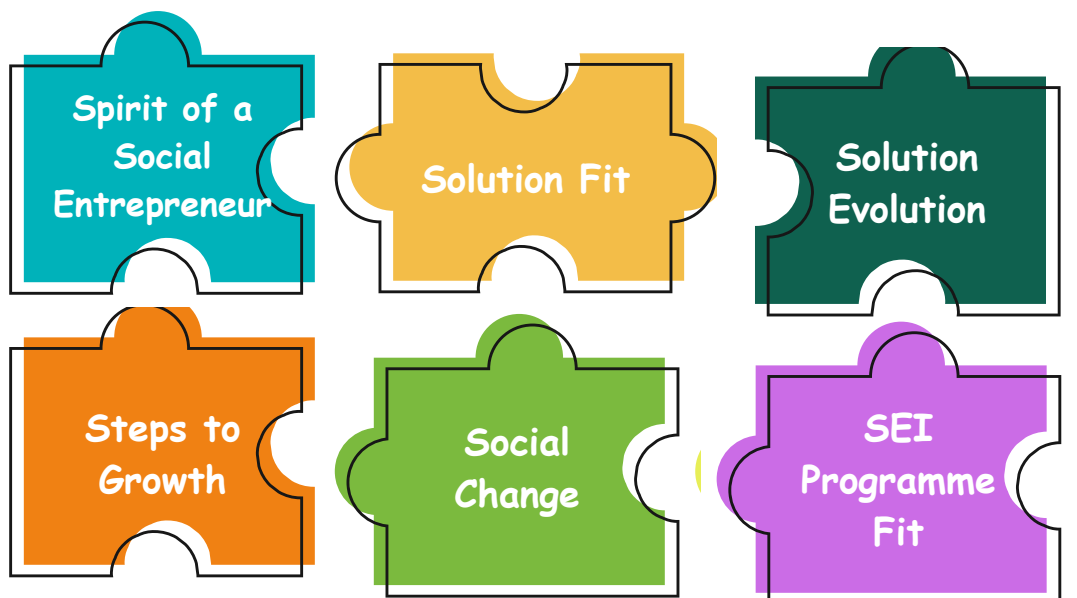


Social entrepreneurs are society's problem solvers. They are people with courage, insight and ambition to put forward a solution to a social or environmental problem, and act on it. Broader than social enterprise, we see social entrepreneurs as people who are driving new approaches to solving social problems, regardless of the business model being used. Social entrepreneurs are mission driven rather than profit driven.

The Ideas Academy works with ambitious social entrepreneurs who are ready to kick start their projects. Does that sound like you? We hope so!

Throughout the application process, we aim to understand your story, delving into your understanding of the social or environmental issue, the evolution of your solution, plans for growth, why now is the right time for you to apply to the Ideas Academy at Social Entrepreneurs Ireland, and your long-term vision for an Ireland where the problem you are tackling has been solved or significantly changed in some way.

There are six key areas that make up our evaluation criteria and these are outlined below:



"The Ideas Academy was hugely beneficial to me as someone who would have very limited knowledge around social enterprises, and business in general... I have gained a fantastic group of peers who are all very supportive of each other. I have learned that, yes my idea can definitely contribute to solving a problem, with the right supports, capital and resources."

- Ellis Davenport, Learn Local, Ideas Academy graduate 2023



Our Evaluation Criteria



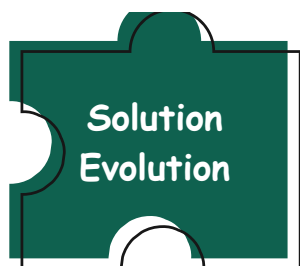
1. Spirit of a Social Entrepreneur

We want to understand your journey and what motivates you to create social or environmental change. We are looking for applicants who demonstrate passion, determination, and a clear vision for their solutions. We want to know why you are well-suited to lead this solution/idea.



2. Solution Fit

Our emphasis on 'solution fit' stems from the belief that you cannot have a viable solution without an in-depth understanding of the problem. We want to see a strong understanding of the problem you're aiming to tackle, the specific group(s) you aim to help, and how the problem directly affects them. Understanding the obstacles hindering your identified social or environmental problem in Ireland today is key. Your solution should demonstrate a clear plan to address the identified problem in light of those obstacles. Our Ideas Academy programme is suitable for people with ideas at either the ideation or piloting stages.



3. Solution Evolution

We want to understand how you plan to implement your solution/idea and any steps taken thus far. For example, we are very interested in understanding what a pilot plan would look like for your solution. We are looking for evidence of research and your drive to develop your solution/idea.



4. Steps to Growth

We're keen to understand your plans for growing your idea and the impact you would like to have created in the next 2 years.



5. Social Change

We aim to understand your vision of what Ireland would look like if the social or environmental problem you identified was solved or significantly changed. We're curious about how it improves what's already being done and fills gaps that others might miss. Here we're looking to get a sense of your vision and ambition to solve the problem.



6. Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Programme Fit

We want to know why now is the right time for you to join the Ideas Academy. We're interested in your commitment to working closely with Social Entrepreneurs Ireland and other social entrepreneurs. We're interested in how you plan to engage with our supports and what your desired outcomes are from engaging with the programme.

Ideas Academy Programme Structure



Core Programme Days

The Ideas Academy 2024 will cover **four core modules over twelve weeks** and will be delivered online through a mix of large and small group sessions.

Core programme dates for 2024 are listed below and are subject to change. The 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

- Thursday 9th May - In-Person in Dublin

Module 1: Understanding the Problem

- Core Learning Day, Wednesday, 15th May, 10am-1pm
- Compulsory 2 hour group discussion*, 21st/22nd May

If you are offered a place on the Ideas Academy in 2024 you must be available to attend all core programme sessions to successfully complete the programme.

Module 2: Refining the Solution

- Core Learning Day, Wednesday, 29th May, 10am-1pm
- Compulsory 2 hour group discussion*, 4th/5th June

Module 3: Pitching and Piloting

- Core Learning Days, 11th and 12th June, 10am-1pm,
- Compulsory 2 hour group discussion*, 19th/20th June

Ideas Academy Alumni Event

- Wednesday 26th June - In-Person in Dublin

Week of 1st July - Reading Week

Module 4: Sharing Your Story

- Core Learning Days, 17th and 18th July
- Compulsory 2 hour group discussion*, 9th/10th July

Mock Pitching Day

- 23rd or 24th July, date TBC - In-Person in Dublin

Programme Close

- Graduation Event, Thursday 8th August - In-Person in Dublin

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

Programme Structure

We are aware that many people applying to us will be working and/or will have other commitments so we are providing an additional option: the first two modules of the programme can be accessed 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 either Tuesdays/Wednesdays/Thursdays during work hours (9am-5.30pm) and the duration is 3 hours.

or

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

“I feel completing the Ideas Academy has given me a better understanding of myself, my organisation and our specific needs. I am confident that we can build something great to help our target audience. From ideation, to defining the issue, to social media and organisational structure and finally telling our story. Overall my confidence in our approach has strengthened.”

- Rob Sheridan AnamVR, Ideas Academy graduate 2023



What we expect from you

Social Entrepreneurs Ireland invests significant time and resources to provide a range of opportunities to everyone who participates in our Ideas Academy programme. Everything we do is to help you develop your solution. We really want you to succeed! 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 collaborative engagement.
- Willingness to participate in group events and share knowledge.
- During the programme you will be expected to complete a number of surveys, primarily the pre-programme, post-module and post-programme surveys.



The Selection Process



Open Applications: 13th February – 12th March

You can apply to the Ideas Academy by filling in a short online application form. Details on how to apply are outlined in the section 'How to Apply'.

Review of Applications: April

Throughout April, we will conduct a comprehensive review of all applications to select 30 ideas/solutions led by social entrepreneurs to be included in the programme.

Ideas Academy Participant Selection: End of April

All participants will be informed if they have been selected by the end of April.

Before you apply:

Read all about the Ideas Academy:

Ensure you're well-informed about the Ideas Academy by thoroughly reading this guide and reviewing our website. Familiarise yourself with the time commitment required, as participation in all events during the programme is mandatory.

Understand our Eligibility Criteria:

Verify that your application aligns with the eligibility criteria provided in this guide. Learn about the individuals we aim to support through the Ideas Academy on our website.

Take your Time with the Application:


Give yourself plenty of time to complete your application form before the deadline on March 12th. The online system allows you to save your progress so you can return to it later. Once you sign up and save your application for the first time, it will automatically save any changes you make from that point on. We strongly advise seeking feedback from a friend, family member or colleague before submission.

Consider attending our Information Event:

We'll be hosting an information event to demystify social entrepreneurship, inspire action on your idea, and show how Social Entrepreneurs Ireland can support you, this will take place online on the 20th of February at 1pm, a recording of the session will then be made available. Follow us on social media for event details and updates.

Consider attending our Application Webinar:

We will also host an application webinar on the 27th of February at 1pm. This webinar aims to help you understand what we are looking for in our application. Additionally, it will offer dedicated time for individuals to ask questions and seek clarification on any points causing confusion. Follow us on social media for event details and updates.



How to apply



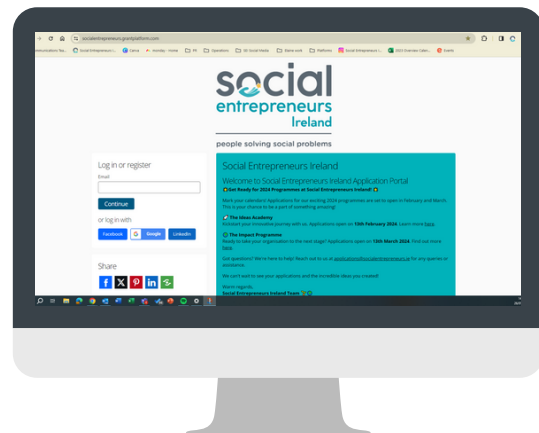
APPLY NOW



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 socialentrepreneurs.ie.

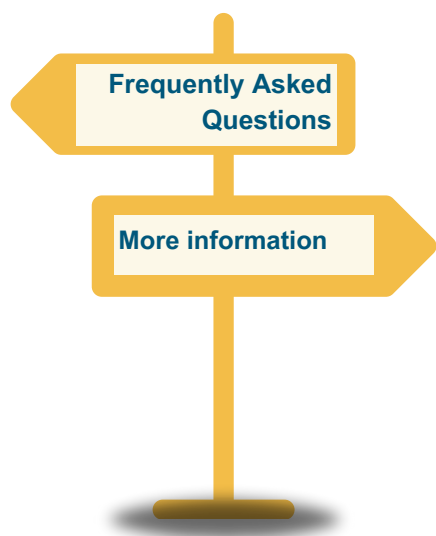
You will be asked to create a profile and login details, you can then log into your application at any time during the selection process period (13th of February to 12th of March 2024). **Please note:** watch the video guides below to help you register and login.



1. [How to Register on Good Grants](#)

2. [How to Apply on Good Grants](#)

After submission you will not be able to amend your application, so please ensure you have reviewed your work carefully before submission.



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 do our best to answer you.



What supports does Social Entrepreneurs Ireland offer to help with the application process?

Information Session - Tuesday, 20 February at 1pm

Application Webinar - Tuesday, 27 February at 1pm



Application Questions

We will be taking your whole application into consideration. Please ensure you fill in all questions to the best of your ability during the application period (13th of February to 12th of March 2024).



Question 1

Spirit of a Social Entrepreneur

What is motivating you to solve the social or environmental problem you have identified? **(200 words)**

How do your experiences and strengths make you the right person to bring about this change? **(200 words)**

Question 2

Solution Fit

What social or environmental problem are you trying to solve? **(200 words)**

What are the key obstacles preventing this problem from being solved in Ireland today? **(200 words)**

Describe the idea/solution that you have developed to solve the problem. In your answer, please include how it addresses the key obstacles you outlined above. **(200 words)**

Question 3

Solution Evolution

Please Note: This programme is aimed at early-stage ideas to solve social and environmental problems, it is not mandatory for you to have already completed a pilot. We are looking for evidence of your research and your drive to develop your idea.

What have you done so far and how has that allowed your idea to evolve? **(200 words)**

Your answer might include:

- Research
- Initial conversations with stakeholders
- The details of any pilots you are planning to conduct (when, who, how) and how you plan to measure the outcomes
- The details of any pilots you have already conducted (when, who, how) and the outcomes of those pilots and how you measured the impact



Application Questions

Question 4

Steps to Growth

To deliver this idea/solution, what progress would you like to have created in two years' time? **(150 words)**

What impact would you like to have created in two years' time? **(200 words)**

***Please Note:** different sections of the application are weighted differently to others. Social Entrepreneurs Ireland provides programmes at different stages of the social entrepreneur journey, to reflect this we weight the questions accordingly. **Spirit of a Social Entrepreneur, Solution Fit and Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Programme Fit** will be scored at a higher weight than Solution Evolution, Steps to Growth and Social Change.*

Question 5

Social Change

How is your idea new or different from the work of other people trying to solve this problem in Ireland? or different from the work of other people trying to solve this problem in Ireland? **(200 words)**

Imagine that the problem you have identified has been solved in Ireland – what would that look like? **(200 words)**

Question 6

Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Programme Fit

Why do you feel like now is the right time for you and your solution/idea to apply to the Ideas Academy? **(150 words)**

What do you aim to achieve by the end of the programme? – Note: based on the outline of the programme in the applicant guide. **(200 words)**



Social Entrepreneurs Ireland

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