

Ulster Bank opens first round of 2017 Skills & Opportunity Fund

€175,000 available in 2017 for charities, community groups, state-funded schools and colleges in Ireland

03 February, 2017: Ulster Bank has announced today that the first round of funding from the 2017 Skills and Opportunities Fund is now open for application. The bank is calling on community groups, charities, state-funded schools and colleges throughout Ireland to apply. The €175,000 Fund is part of Ulster Bank's commitment to provide **Help for what matters** to communities and make a real impact on people's lives.

Past projects that have benefitted from the Fund have included Docklands Early Learning Initiative, Longford Women's Link, Suas Educational Development, Grow It Yourself (GIY) Waterford and Inner City Enterprise, Dublin.

Pauline McKiernan, Corporate Sustainability Manager at Ulster Bank encouraged applications, saying: "The Skills & Opportunities Fund gives projects in disadvantaged communities the opportunity to make their mark and help people improve their lives. The Fund supports projects that help people to budget, understand personal finance and enable better access to banking services, as well as projects that help people start a business or develop their entrepreneurship skills. We welcome the opportunity to support our local communities and invite all community groups and charities to visit skillsandopportunitiesfund.ulsterbank.com to learn more about the Fund and how it can help them."

To apply for funding, or for further information, please visit skillsandopportunitiesfund.ulsterbank.com. The application process will close on Friday 24th February 2017 at 12:00 noon.

Applications will then be subject to a shortlisting process and a public vote, which will run for six weeks from Monday 27th February 2017 until Friday 7th April 2017.

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