

Ulster Bank calls for local community organisations to apply for Skills and Opportunities funding

Ulster Bank's Skills and Opportunities Fund is open to applications from all charities, community groups, state-funded schools and colleges

14th February 2018: Ulster Bank has announced that applications for funding are now open for local not-for-profit projects focused on financial capability and enterprise, via its Skills and Opportunities Fund.

The bank is inviting community organisations with an eligible project or project idea to apply for grants of up to €35,000 at: skillsandopportunitiesfund.ulsterbank.com.

Ulster Bank believes in supporting and strengthening the communities it serves and the Skills and Opportunities Fund plays an important part in supporting its commitment to provide **Help for What Matters**.

Commenting on the fund Joe Heneghan, Interim Director of Customer Experience and Products at Ulster Bank, said, "We are extremely happy that the Fund has had such a positive impact in the three years since its launch, helping over 2,000 people, supporting the creation of over 300 jobs and 300 business start ups. These are important local initiatives that directly benefit people and wider communities and we're really looking forward to seeing what this year will bring."

One organisation that has recently benefited from Skills and Opportunities funding is Innovate Dublin. It's Youth Academy Enterprise Programme in Design Thinking and Project Management Skills provides a 12-week training course for local unemployed young people, supporting them towards self-employment.

CEO of Innovate Dublin, Annabelle Conway, commented, "Innovate Dublin was delighted to receive funding from Ulster Bank's Skills and Opportunities Fund last year. The funding helped us to run our innovative training programme, developed and successfully piloted last year in Ballymun, Dublin. We have 15 marginalised local unemployed people aged between 18 and 24 currently participating in the training programme. This funding has allowed us to embed the value of such a programme locally, while also giving us time to develop a financial model that will ensure we can replicate it on an annual basis both locally and across other disadvantaged communities from next year onwards."

Further case studies can be viewed at: skillsandopportunitiesfund.ulsterbank.com/winners – providing plenty of inspiration for community organisations that are considering applying for the current round of funding: Round 1, 2018.

Applications open from **Monday 5th** until **Friday 23rd February 2018**. A shortlist of projects in each region will be put to the public vote from **Friday 6th April** to **Friday 20th April 2018**, with the winners being announced on **Friday 25th May 2018**.

More information, including full eligibility criteria and how to apply, is available at: <http://skillsandopportunitiesfund.ulsterbank.com>.

Ends