



Wednesday October 1, 2008

\$1,518,500 In Grants Announced For U.S. Frontline Irish Immigration Organisations

This week, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Micheál Martin, T.D., announced grants totaling \$1,518,500 (€1,030,500) to 16 frontline Irish immigration organisations in the US which provide frontline support and advisory services to Irish emigrants.

This brings the grants total for all Irish immigration and community organisations in the United States this year to \$3,163,500.

Speaking after a meeting with the community organisations in New York, the Minister said: "I am delighted to be in a position to allocate funding once again this year from the Government's Emigrant Support Services grants programme to frontline Irish immigration organisations in the US.

"The Government remains committed to supporting Irish communities overseas, particularly the most vulnerable members of those communities.

"The Irish immigration organisations in the US provide an invaluable service to the Irish communities there and I am delighted that we are in position once again this year to make a significant financial contribution to enable them to continue that work.

"Irish emigrant communities have over the years contributed in different ways to the economic well-being of this country.

"It is important now that we continue to provide financial support to organisations that work with those Irish communities in the US and elsewhere.

"The allocations that I am announcing today are to organisations that are to the forefront in providing essential frontline services to Irish communities across the US, particularly to the elderly and those in need.

"They also work with the undocumented Irish, whose status remains an issue of the highest priority for the Government and which I have raised with key US legislators in the course of my visit."

The grants to the Irish immigration and community organisations announced today total US\$1,518,500.

Earlier this year, grants were approved and announced to support the Kennedy Library, Boston (\$1million); the Irish Cultural Centre, Canton (Boston) (\$350,000); the American Irish Historical Society, New York (\$255,000); the Irish Arts Centre, New York (\$20,000) and the Annie Moore Memorial, New York (\$5,000).

Taken together, this brings the current total for Emigrant Support funding in the United States this year to US\$3,163,500, a 47% increase on the corresponding total for 2007 (this was \$2,149,815).

Since the establishment of the Irish Abroad Unit in 2004, the Department of Foreign Affairs has allocated more than \$8 million to the Irish Community Centres and Organisations in the United States.

Funding supports the delivery of key welfare, information and advice services to Irish emigrants in the US.

Particular priority is attached to supporting the work of the front line community organisations engaged with vulnerable Irish citizens, including undocumented Irish people.

Overall, Government funding for emigrant services continues to rise. In 2008, Department of Foreign Affairs funding in this area rose to €15.183 million, representing a three-fold increase since 2004.

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