

Irish government grants \$1 million to New York's Irish Arts Center

James Wilson

[@jameswilson1919](#)

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Heather Humphreys TD, Ireland's Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, called in on the Irish Arts Center in New York City this week to award it a grant of \$1,070,000 (€1 million) from the Irish Government.

2017 marks the start of a new era for the center as work begins on site for a much larger facility. With [\\$54 of the \\$60 million needed now raised](#), the Irish Government's check brings the IAC that bit closer to fully funding the project.

The Minister was [in New York](#) this week to launch Ireland's massive new [Creative Ireland Initiative](#), which gave her the chance to see first-hand where the Department's euros are going. Humphreys arrived fresh off from a meeting with members of the City Council's Irish Caucus. She posed for photos outside the new building - which appropriately dates back to 1916 - before being whisked inside for a welcoming performance by four of the center's Irish dancers.



Afterwards guests were treated to some fiddle music and a reading of a Patrick Kavanagh poem - an fitting choice as Kavanagh and Humphreys both hail from rural [County Monaghan](#).

Irish American philanthropist Loretta Brennan Glucksman reflected on the project's inception 12 years ago and told the Minister she was welcome anytime "even if you always bring a million with you."

In her speech to the assembled audience, Humphreys said it was a "joy" be there and joked that the atmosphere was so familiar it was "just like home". She acknowledged the great work the center had done in promoting Irish talent in the United States and how much it meant to the Irish community in New York.

Speaking later to IrishCentral, the Minister said she "delighted to support [the IAC] with additional capital funding. It facilitates Irish artists coming to America, this is probably their first port of call and we're very proud that Irish artists travel here.

“It’s a huge undertaking for the board here and the committee and it’s very much an endorsement of the Irish Government’s commitment and support for the Irish Arts Center here in New York.”



She also said that the centenary of America’s entry into the Great War would be a further chance for reflection on the links between the two countries as, 1917 was the first year of the conflict that Irishmen were fighting not just in British uniforms, but American ones as well.

“It’s very much a shared history in terms of so many Irishmen fought in the First World War. And for many years that sacrifice had gone unrecognised, so as we come into 2017 we will be working with all the different [Governments] of people who were involved in the First World War and we will look to commemorate those who lost their lives... including Irishmen who wore the American uniforms.”

Aidan Connolly, the IAC’s Executive Director praised the Irish Government for the help they had given the center, “There is a wonderful sense of commitment, [across] the entire Government to bring this project to fruition,” he told IrishCentral.

He said the larger building would allow “more breadth and more vigor”, particularly for theatre and dance which will especially benefit from the extra space.



Loretta Brennan Glucksman described the IAC, “as such an important integral part of our community” and that the center had done “mind boggling work” over the years. She even though she was not a native New Yorker she was a “true New York chauvinist” and it was the perfect place for Irish America to showcase itself due to its diversity. “We have so much to offer just in the variety! Not so much comparing Irish culture but merging it with all these rich cultures, what a great opportunity.

“Our roots are cultural, that’s what people think about when they think about Ireland!”

Demolition on the center’s new building will begin at the end of the year and it is anticipated that construction will take two years in total.

