


Education and Training Fair 2012

Roscommon County
Citizens Information
Service.



Roscommon County Citizens Information Service



- We're one of over 250 independent Citizens Information Centres, part of 42 Citizens Information Services.
- We are supported and funded by the Citizens Information Board, the national support agency responsible for the provision of information, advice and advocacy to members of the public on their civil and social rights and entitlements.



When did we start work?

- The start of the service in County Roscommon can be traced back to 1979 when the Boyle Community Information Service, run entirely by volunteers, was founded.
- In 1999, the countywide Roscommon Citizens Information Service (RCCIS) was founded.
- Our main offices are in Roscommon & Boyle & we have Outreach Centres in Ballaghaderreen & Castlerea



Who provides the service?

- The service is run by a voluntary board of Directors
- The service is managed on a day-to-day basis by a Development Manager.
- Information Officers, Volunteers and Community Employment participants provide the service to the public.
- A full professional independent advocacy/representation service is provided



Our mission statement

- “...that the people of County Roscommon have an **information, advice and advocacy** service in relation to their civil and social rights. This service is **free, confidential, comprehensive and non-judgmental**. We will endeavour to provide a service of the **highest quality, accessible** to all in our community.”



Information, advice and advocacy – categories covered:

- Travel
- Justice
- Education
- Employment
- Family
- Health
- Housing
- Social Welfare
- Taxes
- Communications
- Consumer
- Environment
- Insurance/finance
- Agriculture
- Voluntary sector
- European Union
- Government
- Local information



How many use our service?

- Approx 20,000 queries annually

THE TOP FIVE

1. Social welfare – all schemes
2. Employment – rights; terms and conditions
3. Housing – grants, private rented, local authority
4. Health – medical and GP cards; services for people with disabilities
5. Taxation – PAYE system; tax relief's; over/underpayments



Social Policy

Social Policy work is integral to the work of CIS

- CIS's are well placed to become aware of situations where people have been unable to access what they are entitled to, or where there is discrimination, anomalies, lack of information or gaps in services being provided.
- CIS's deliver social policy reports to the Citizens Information Board, to highlight general issues of concern where social services are not meeting the needs of citizens adequately or equitably.
- This enables policy matters to be addressed at national level, via submissions to government departments and through pre-budget submissions.



Other services we facilitate....

- **FAS Employment supports: Boyle, 1st and 3rd Tuesdays** - by prior appt with FAS
- **Money Advice Budgeting Service (MABS)**
 - at Boyle CIC, 1st and 3rd Friday,
 - by prior appt with MABS
- **Free Legal Advice Centre:** -by prior appt with CIC
Boyle – last Wednesday of month
Roscommon - every 2nd Tuesday



Other services we provide....

Community Education:

- **Roscommon Citizens Information Service is available to provide information talks & presentations on issues relating to people's rights and entitlements for community, statutory, voluntary and support groups in Co. Roscommon.**

Please contact our office if you wish to avail of this facility.



The three strands to Citizens Information Service



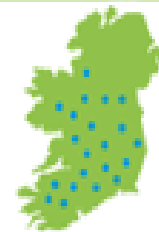
LOG ON

www.citizensinformation.ie



LO-CALL
1890 777 121

Mon to Fri 9am to 9pm



DROP IN

250 locations nationwide

Contact Details & Opening Hours

Roscommon CIC

17-18 Castle View,
Castle Street,
Roscommon.

Phone: 076176380

Email:
roscommon@citinfo.ie

- Open: Mon-Fri
- 10am-1pm & 2pm-5pm

Boyle CIC

7 Elphin Street,
Boyle.
Roscommon

Phone: 0761076330

Email: boyle@citinfo.ie

- Open: Mon-Fri
- 11am-1pm & 2pm- 4pm



Roscommon CIS Outreach Centres

Ballaghaderreen Outreach

North-West Roscommon
CDP,
Market Street,
Ballaghaderreen.

Opening hours
Wednesdays

10 am to 12.30 pm
Phone: 094-9862565.

Castlerea Outreach

Roscommon Women's
Network
The Old Mill
Castlerea

Opening hours
Wednesdays

2.00pm to 4.45 pm.
Phone: 094-9621690

Supports when undertaking Education & Training Options

Back to Education Allowance

Secondary Benefits

VTOS

Medical Card/GP Visit Card

Back to Education Allowance

BTEA:

- If you are unemployed, parenting alone or have a disability and are getting certain payments from the Department of Social Protection, you may attend a second-or third-level education course and get the Back to Education Allowance (BTEA).



Back to Education Allowance

- You must always have been accepted onto a qualifying course.
- In general you must be over 21 or over 24 for post graduate courses and have been getting a qualifying social welfare payment.

Back to Education Allowance

- **Qualifying social welfare payments**
- Jobseeker's Allowance or Jobseeker's Benefit
- Farm Assist
- One-Parent Family Payment
- Deserted Wife's Benefit or Allowance

Back to Education Allowance

- For second level courses you must have been getting a qualifying social welfare payment for at least **3 months (78 days of unemployment*)** *immediately* before you start the course.
- For third level courses you must have been getting a qualifying social welfare payment for **9 months (234 days of unemployment*)** *immediately* before you start the course

Back to Education Allowance

- To qualify for the Back to Education Allowance, you must be at least 21 years of age. You must be 24 for a third-level postgraduate course.
- However, if you are getting **J. A**, **J. B** or **O.P.F.P** for the required period (3 or 9 months), are aged between 18 and 20 and have been out of the formal education system for at least 2 years you may qualify.

Back to Education Allowance

- If you are **aged 18 or over** (over 24 for the post graduate option) and getting **Blind Pension, Disability Allowance, Invalidity Pension or Incapacity Supplement** for the required period (3 or 9 months) you may qualify.
 - *Time spent on certain training courses and employment schemes, in direct provision or prison, can count towards the qualifying period*

Back to Education Allowance

- The Back to Education Allowance is paid at a standard rate. This means, if you are getting a reduced rate of social welfare payment it is increased to the maximum standard rate of payment while you are getting BTEA.
- If you are already getting the maximum rate, you continue to do so.

Back to Education Allowance

- It will include any increases you are getting for a qualified adult and qualified children
- Even though your BTEA is not means-tested, any increase for a qualified adult may be means-tested if your spouse/partner has earnings or income in their own right
- If you were previously getting a jobseeker's payment, you do not get the Back to Education Allowance during the summer period between academic years

Back to Education Allowance

SECONDARY BENEFITS:

- If you qualify /transfer to the Back to Education Allowance, you can keep your entitlement to any secondary benefits you already have, for example:
- Fuel Allowance, Rent Supplement and Mortgage Interest Supplement, Medical Card.
- *However, any increase in income may affect your entitlement /amount of Rent/Mortgage Interest Supplement, in instances where you move from a reduced SW payment to the standard rate BTEA.*
- If you transfer to BTEA, and have had a medical card, you will retain it while getting BTEA

Back to Education Allowance

Where to apply for BTEA:

Fill in BTEA application form (available in pdf)

- **If you are getting a Jobseekers payment, apply for BTEA to your local Social Welfare office**
- **If you are getting certain other SW payments you may need to apply to the Dept of Social Protection in Carrick-on-Shannon, or Sligo or Longford, it all depends on your type of payment.**

Back to Education Allowance

BTEA / Student Education Grant?

- If you are getting the BTEA you do not qualify for the maintenance component of the student grant but you *can* apply for a fee grant to cover the student contribution / course tuition fees.
- You should complete a grant application form as early as possible and submit it to your local authority or VEC.

Cost of Education Allowance

- In addition to your weekly BTEA payment, you also get an annual Cost of Education Allowance, which is paid at the start of each academic year.
- The Cost of Education Allowance will reduce from €500 to €300 in 2012.

Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)

- Part of the Government's Back to Education Initiative.
- Suitable for people out of school for some time and can lead to qualifications such as Junior Cert/Leaving Cert/Further Education Training Awards Council Cert (FETAC).

VTOS:

- Aims to give unemployed people education & training to help find a job or to further their education leading to paid employment
- VTOS are full-time courses -approx 30 hrs pw & up to 2 yrs duration.
- VTOS courses listed on Qualifax website

VTOS - qualifying criteria

- Aged 21 yrs or over &
- On J/S Benefit or J/S Allowance – 6 months
- On OPF, Disability Allowance, Illness Benefit or Invalidity Pension – 6 months
- Blind Person's Pension, Deserted Wife's Allowance/Benefit, Widows'ers or Surviving Civil Partner's Contributory or Non-Contributory Pension, or Prisoner's Wife's Allowance – 6 months (certain conditions apply)

VTOS – qualifying criteria

- A dependant spouse, civil partner or cohabitant of an eligible person for at least 6 months
- Time spent on FAS training courses, Community Employment, Job Initiative, Youthreach programmes, or prison time, counts towards qualifying period.

VTOS - Rates

- If on J/S Benefit or Allowance, you will instead get a training allowance at a rate equivalent to the maximum rate of J/S Benefit.
- VTOS training allowances are not taxable
- If you are getting one of the other eligible SW payments, you will get a payment equivalent to the maximum rate of your current SW payment.

VTOS

- Since 2010, people on PLC courses getting VTOS allowances are not eligible for student support grants
- This does not affect any entitlement they have to exemption from college fees or student contributions.
- No fees for VTOS courses – free books and materials at start of course
- A training bonus payment of €20 if on an eligible SW payment for 12 months prior.
- Meal Allowance; Travel Allowance; Childcare supports maybe be applicable, in certain circumstances.

Medical Card



- A medical card allows the holder to access certain health services free of charge, e.g. free GP care, free A & E services, free prescribed drugs, free in-patient public hospital services.
- A medical card is means tested – all income after tax and PRSI is taken into account, minus reasonable rent/mortgage payments, childcare and travel to work costs

GP Visit Card



- A GP Visit Card allows the holder to visit his/her GP for free
- GP Visit Card is means tested
- Income limits are higher than medical card limits



Medical Cards/GP Visit Cards

- Young people aged 16 years to 25 years, who are financially dependent on their parents, each get their own card when they apply - (*if their parents are eligible for a Medical Card*)
- If you are not dependent on your parents, your own means and income is considered for assessment.

Medical Cards/GP Visit Cards

– where to apply

- Contact your local health centre or Local Health Office if you have any questions about medical cards and eligibility.
- You can apply online at www.medicalcard.ie
- You can also contact the HSE Infoline: Callsave 1850 24 1850
- **HSE Central Medical Card Office**
Client Registration Unit
P.O Box 11745
Finglas,
Dublin 11

Presented by Co. Roscommon Citizens Information Service



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SERVICE***

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(for Employees, Older People, People with Disabilities; People Bereaved; Young People & School Leavers; Supports for Self-Employed and Farmers; EU & its citizens; Keeping Your Home (Tenants/Homeowners); Losing Your Job & Unemployed)

***Co. Roscommon Citizens Information Service is funded by the
Citizens Information Board***