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# COUNCIL MEETING BOOK

ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH MEETING

OF

MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL

TUESDAY, MARCH 16, 2021



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ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH MEETING  
OF MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL

TUESDAY, MARCH 16, 2021: 10:00 AM TO NOON

ON-LINE MEETING

(CALL-IN INSTRUCTIONS POSTED AT  
<https://massculturalcouncil.org/about/board/>  
UNDER "MARCH 16, 2021 COUNCIL MEETING")

AGENDA	VOTE
1. Call to Order, Welcomes and Open Meeting Law Notice	
2. Minutes of 149 <sup>th</sup> Council Meeting	X
3. Reports	
a) Chair Report	
b) Executive Director's Report	
i. Agency Updates -including DEIA Report	
c) Advocacy Committee Report-FY22 State Budget	
4. FY21 Financial Update	
5. BIPOC Alumni Committee	
6. Adjourn	

## **OPEN MEETING LAW STATEMENT**

Please note that this meeting is an open meeting of a public body subject to the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law. A notice of this meeting together with the agenda was posted on Mass Cultural Council's website 48 or more hours ago (excluding weekends and holidays).

This meeting shall be open and accessible to all members of the public except at such times when this body has voted to go into closed executive session under the Open Meeting Law.

Please note that this body has invited staff of Mass Cultural Council to be present at the meeting.

Mass Cultural Council welcomes members of the public to attend its public meetings. Under the Open Meeting Law, however, this is not a public hearing and public testimony will not be taken. Individuals may not address the meeting without permission of the Chair.

Any member of the public may record this meeting provided that they first notify the Chair and must not interfere with the meeting. The Chair will then inform the members of the meeting that they are being recorded.

This meeting is a virtual meeting held under the Open Meeting Law as modified by the Governor's recent emergency declaration. Only Committee members, Council members and invited staff will be able to address the meeting. All other persons will be muted. Please note that anyone attempting to disrupt the meeting may be muted, have their ability to project video images shut off or even removed from the meeting, at the discretion of the chair

Draft minutes of the open session of this meeting shall be kept and shall be posted on Mass Cultural Council's website no later than 30 days after the meeting provided that such minutes shall not be considered official until they have been approved by this body in open session. Individuals asserting a violation of the Open Meeting Law may file a complaint with this body within 30 days or with the Attorney General's office thereafter.

**TIPS FOR PARTICIPATING IN A VIRTUAL OPEN MEETING USING VIDEOCONFERENCING  
WHEN THERE ARE SEVERAL PARTICIPANTS  
(adapted from several sources)**

- In order to minimize background noise, please mute microphone when not speaking.
- Please raise hand in order to be recognized by the chair.
- In order for all members to have an opportunity to speak and be heard, please wait to speak until specifically recognized by the chair.
- If there are questions, please direct them to the chair and the chair will then recognize the appropriate person to respond.
- Please limit statements to three minutes.
- The chair will reserve the right to limit discussion in order to allow sufficient time for every member to be heard who wishes to speak.
- Modify Video Settings to "Hide all non-video participants"- this will make it easier to follow who is speaking and participating
- In the event of a service interruption during a Zoom call due to hackers, so-called "zoom bombing" or other technical difficulties, staff will indicate the call is to be terminated. Please exit the call and staff will circulate instructions by email for a new Zoom call to continue the meeting.



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**UNOFFICIAL DRAFT SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE AT ITS NEXT MEETING**

MINUTES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FORTY-NINTH MEETING  
OF  
MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL

THURSDAY, JANUARY 7, 2021

ONLINE MEETING

Chair Nina Fialkow called the meeting to order at 2:07 PM

Council Members Present were

Nina Fialkow, Chair  
Marc Carroll, Vice Chair  
Barbara Schaffer Bacon  
Cecil Barron Jensen  
Karen Barry  
Kathleen Castro  
Jo-Ann Davis  
Shery Dong  
Sandra Dunn  
Matthew Keator  
Susan Leff  
Victoria Marsh  
Allyce Najimy  
Troy Siebels

Also Present were Mass Cultural Council Staff Members David Slatery, Jen Lawless, Bethann Steiner, Charles Baldwin, Ann Petruccelli Moon, Maggie Holtzberg, and Carmen Plazas; Emily Ruddock of MASSCreative; Michael Arnold Mages, and Nora Long.

Nina opened the meeting by causing the following to be read into the record.

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As Chair, Nina welcomed all participants to the 149<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Mass Cultural Council and acknowledged a special guest – Michael J. Bobbitt who was appointed the Agency's Executive Director at the Council's last meeting, and who will begin his tenure on February 1st.

Nina then called for a vote on the minutes from the Council's 148<sup>th</sup> meeting on November 23<sup>rd</sup> and Special Meeting on December 18<sup>th</sup>. Barbara Schaffer Bacon moved to approve the minutes. Troy Siebels seconded the motion. Acting Executive Director David Slatery called the roll. Acknowledging that Council Members Jake Brennan, Lillian Do, Karen Hurvitz, and Ann Murphy were not present it was unanimously

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the One Hundred Forty-Eighth and December 18 Special Meetings of the Mass Cultural Council.

Nina then thanked Agency staff for their work during the pandemic and amidst the social unrest happening in the country. She highlighted the calendar of Council meetings for the coming year included in the meeting materials and then asked Acting Executive Director David Slatery for his report.

David began by acknowledging that it was a difficult day given the insurrection in Washington D.C. the day prior. He then provided Council members with an update on the Cultural Organization Economic Recovery Program. As was discussed at the Council meeting on November 23<sup>rd</sup>, Governor Baker allocated \$10M of the commonwealth's allocation of federal CARES Act funds to cultural organizations and called on Mass Cultural Council to administer a grant program to distribute it. The Agency was to distribute the funds by December 30<sup>th</sup> and was successful in doing so: grants between \$1,000 and \$100K were given to 183 cultural organizations. This represented a super-human effort by staff and David gave special recognition to Jen Lawless, Sara Glidden, and Scott Hufford. The Agency has received a robust positive response to the 183 grant notifications; support has been called transformative. David acknowledged that while it is wonderful to have been able to do this, not getting a grant is crushing to organizations who were not successful and the need continues to be great especially for the about 240 organizations who applied and did not receive a grant. A funding list for the Cultural Organizations Economic Recovery Program is posted on the Agency's website. That concluded David's report.

Nina, acknowledged the tremendous effort made by staff, then asked Public Affairs Director Bethann Steiner for her Advocacy report.

Bethann began by letting Council members know it was a very busy end to the 2020 legislative session. Generally, most things should have happened in July, but were delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic; the most recent session was slated to end at midnight **but didn't conclude until 4:31am**. A key element staff was looking for was within the Economic Development Bill. We were thrilled over the summer to see \$31M in brand new capital spending authorizations and were hopeful this would be embraced and kept in conference report. It was, and has now been sent to the Governor. Staff has written to Governor Baker urging him to sign this into law. Bethann stressed that this is a bond bill and not a budget bill. Should it get signed into law, meetings would need to be held internally to determine priorities and make a strong case with the administration to release any funding. While this is not an immediate infusion of funds, it is a real vote of confidence that the legislature heard and understood the data Mass Cultural Council has collected and presented. Another piece of legislation **on the Governor's** desk is one that has been proposed for decades: a special commission to review the Massachusetts state seal and motto. Mass Cultural Council has a seat on the proposed commission; this is a nice extension of the Agency's DEIA work.

Bethann then provided a brief update on changes in the legislature: House Speaker Robert DeLeo had resigned, and Representative Ron Mariano of Quincy had been appointed to replace him; letters had been sent from the Agency to all new legislators. There would now be a bit of a breather in terms of immediate policy work. The first deadline for Representatives and Senators to file bills is January 15<sup>th</sup> **and the Governor's** H1 budget would be filed on January 27<sup>th</sup>. There are no committees assigned right now, the House Speaker and Senate President will appoint members to committees and there may well be new Chairs and members of the Tourism, Arts, and Cultural Development Committee. **This is a great opportunity to bring the Agency's new Executive Director into** the Committee and begin building relationships. In terms of current relationships, Bethann noted that since her arrival last year the Agency has made direct 1:1 contact with 36 Senators and 66 Representatives; a total of 102 legislative offices. Bethann then invited Emily Ruddock of MassCreative to give a brief update.

Emily thanked Council Members for the opportunity to speak and stated that MassCreative's **partnership with Mass Cultural Council is paramount** to their work. Emily thanked Bethann Steiner for her partnership as well as Troy Siebels who acts as a Board liaison between MassCreative and Mass Cultural Council. MassCreative is about to launch its policy setting for the year and has identified five realms where the creative community needs support: equal access and participation; the ability of young people to develop into leaders thanks to artistic experiences and a strong, rigorous arts education; communities animated thanks to the arts; the creative workforce – making sure individual artists and creative workers are properly supported and able to live in MA cities and towns; and the arts, health, and wellness. The last time MassCreative made policy recommendations the Board adopted them straightaway. This year MassCreative would like to have more dialogue around its policy agenda and seek feedback from artists, organizations, and communities before the document is finalized. Emily stated that MassCreative would also be looking at what bills are filed in the coming week and decide what to support or object to. She concluded by acknowledging that Covid **would be the sixth policy realm of focus, but that the five she'd listed would be the primary focus.**

Nina thanked Emily for her report and her partnership.

Victoria Marsh asked for clarification around the bond bill Bethann and Emily had mentioned. Bethann explained that the state budget is one thing, and that is the funding the Council will **consider later in today's meeting. The capital budget is not a** direct appropriation, but rather a vehicle to authorize a number of different initiatives that is fully administered by the Governor. Dave added that in any given year there are five to 10 times more bond authorizations as there is money to spend and that the bond bill lives for five years, so the Agency has that long to access the funds. Bethann explained that the Cultural Facilities Fund derives its funding from bond bills as well, but this \$31M authorization is new and that further explanation could be found on the **Agency's blog.**

Nina then asked Communications Manager Carmen Plazas for the Agency's DEIA report.

Carmen stated that Agency staff would participate in one more workshop with our DEIA consultant, Multicultural BRIDGE, and that working groups would soon meet with Gwendolyn VanSant (CEO of BRIDGE) to discuss next steps as, at this point, the racial the internal staff equity and DEIA working groups are on hold. With Gwendolyn the working groups will discuss the all-staff session and seek to discover what their next steps will be. DEIA points were introduced to the guidelines of the Cultural Organization Economic Recovery Program and staff was pleased that 51 organizations given grants have mission statements focused on DEIA work. There are similar preference points in guidelines for Projects grants which Council members will hear about later in the meeting. Finally, staff is looking forward to working with newly appointed Executive Director Michael Bobbitt who will be a partner and a leader in the Agency's DEIA work.

Nina thanked Carmen for her report and then asked David for the financial report.

David stated that this has been a year like no other: a global pandemic, economic collapse, and social unrest. In this transitional year, we are in month seven of the 12-



month fiscal year and are finally bringing forth a proposed fiscal year spending plan. **We've** had interim leadership during a search for a new leader. We are very happy to have Michael Bobbitt starting as Executive Director next month. Staff continues to work from home. Stability, service, and trusted partnership is the focus of **this year's proposed** spending plan. The Agency will offer its normal high levels of service tailored to specific current needs. To do this, a new approach has been adopted: Recover, Rebuild, Renew through which the Agency will provide financial support and services to ensure the **cultural sector has a "safe harbor" and does not fold**; economic investments that are necessary to help organizations and individuals prepare to reopen safely and shift from in-person to remote programs; and an inward look at the sector working to promote access, dismantle systemic racism so when we can reengage with the public we do so starting fresh and anew.

The Agency is adapting to serve the field with modified guidelines across programs to ensure processes are flexible and supportive and to minimize negative impacts of Covid-19 on applicants and grantees. The Agency is also modifying contracting processes to be Covid-19 responsive: emailing contract packages etc.

This year's total budget is \$24,038,741. We rely primarily on the state budget but have other sources of funding. This budget comprises an \$18.1M state appropriation – which represents a 1% increase as it includes no earmarks, an increased grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in the amount of \$959,600, \$3M in Gaming Mitigation Funds, and \$1M in funds from other sources.

David then provided a comparison between the Agency's FY20 and FY21 budgets with and without Gaming funds, and a summary of Legislative language stating that spending must align with **the Agency's strategic plan, that 75% of state funding must go** to grants, and that a report on planned spending was due by January 15<sup>th</sup>. 89% of state funding will go to grants if the proposed spending plan is approved – this does not include Gaming funds. With Gaming funds 108% of state funding would be awarded in grants.

The next portion of the presentation demonstrated how the proposed budget aligns with **the Agency's strategic plan**.

Enriching Communities. The spending plan seeks to provide communities the resources, training, and tools needed to increase their capacity and effect change. Staff proposes an increase of approximately \$196K for the Local Cultural Council (LCC) program and a 50% increase in funding for the Cultural Districts Initiative (CDI) to support their efforts to recover and rebuild. Cultural Districts **depend on people being out and about, since this hasn't been possible, we will** try to provide extra resources. Additionally, the plan seeks to help Festivals rebuild and transition to online offerings. The Cultural District designation process will be reimaged and there will be a robust series of online services offered: bi-weekly check-ins, the Communities team is constantly meeting with people. Also, partnerships with Mass Humanities and the New England Foundation for the Arts will be maintained.

Growing the Economy. David pointed out that right now a \$10M Cultural Facilities Fund (CFF) round is at play and this year that CFF money is specifically permitted to be used to help organizations recover from the impacts of the

pandemic. The agency will maintain vital reliable operating support via the Cultural Investment Portfolio and proposes an increase in investment in Gateway grants which is the pathway into the Portfolio for new organizations. The plan would also award 75 Artist Fellowship Grants and 35 Finalist Grants to working artists. David noted that artists have been hit especially hard by the pandemic and that a second round of funding was being proposed that would reach at least 433 individuals with \$1500 grants; any money not used by other programs would be reallocated to this relief funding. There is currently \$39K left over from the Cultural Organization Economic Recovery Program and staff proposes that we add that funding to this artists relief program – so a total of 460 artists would benefit.

Safe Harbors work would continue with 39 new technical assistance opportunities (webinars) for organizations around a variety of pertinent topics. These webinars would be free to all, regardless of whether they are a grantee or not. Additionally, cross-agency teams have developed technical assistance opportunities to offer guidance related to COVID safety and best practices for remote programming.

Strategic alliances between the cultural sector, private developers, state agencies, and other MA community and economic development groups would be built to stimulate economic growth and recovery; citing again the Cultural Organization Economic Recovery Program which dispersed \$10M of CARES Act funding.

The Agency's ongoing media partnerships would also be maintained.

Advancing Inclusion and Equity. Here the Agency will focus internally as well as externally. Work with our DEIA consultant, Multicultural BRIDGE will continue. A line item has been added to support DEIA initiatives - \$50K, listed as consultants, but does not have to be. Staff will report back after BRIDGE sessions conclude to share what is proposed moving forward. The UP program continues with its Innovation & Learning Network going fully remote this year. As part of the aforementioned cross-agency working groups, workshops focused on trauma and healing arts practices would be offered. An increase in funding for Project grants will help the agency reach organizations that are new to us. Funding for the Network for Arts Administrators of Color (NAAC) would be maintained; David noted that a specific proposal from NAAC had not yet been received. Funding for traditional artists would increase through the **agency's Traditional Arts Apprenticeships** program – this is partially funded with NEA money – of note, this year the Apprenticeships will move from a one-year program to two-year program.

Empowering a Creative Generation. Staff proposes an increased \$20K investment in YouthReach and SerHacer organizations (up from \$19K to \$20K) to help them continue to recover and rebuild. The STARS program would adapt to serve schools working in an ever-changing educational environment. While the funding level will be the same, the application process will change and be open for five days – typically these funds are spoken for within 30 minutes! The application will be open for longer to increase access. It is hard to know what the appetite will be for artist residencies in schools during the pandemic, any

leftover money will be transferred to the artist relief program. Creative Minds Out of School, Poetry Out Loud and the instrument program that supports SerHacer organizations will continue. Additionally, the agency will support the Youth Arts Impact Network to extend Boston-specific resources to organizations outside of Boston and engage new CYD programs ahead of the next grant cycle. The META fellowship program funded by the Klarman Family Foundation will be paused, along with the CYD teaching artist fellowships, Big Yellow School Bus, and the Amplify program. Funding will continue for Mass History Day. To replace Amplify, the agency will pilot the BIPOC CYD Youth Council.

That concluded the general overview, David invited Council Members to ask any questions they had.

Karen Barry was recognized by the Chair and stated that she had three questions. First, she asked for clarification around the 108% and 89% compliance that had been mentioned and whether or not when we look at direct funding can we factor in things like payments to consultants and panelists and other items that appear in lines 8 through 16 of the proposed spending plan. David explained that only things we can properly call a grant can be counted, but that it had been negotiated that the grant money can be provided from any source.

Karen then asked for clarification around the \$38K in CARES Act funds that were retained noting that \$27K would go to making the agency's office space Covid compliant, she wondered if the agency wasn't able to do that under the defined usage of the CARES Act, if there was any ability to take that unused money and put it back into grantmaking.

David explained that this particular CARES money was actually from the NEA and the agency had received it back in the spring – different from the CARES funds that came from the Governor and were dispersed via the Cultural Organization Economic Recovery Program. The cost of making the agency's office Covid compliant is estimated to be \$27K, since it does need to be spent on facilities costs, the agency would put the remaining \$9K towards rent (thus freeing up other resources for grantmaking).

Finally, Karen asked for clarification around line 9: \$15K for a financial consultant.

David explained that this was to upgrade the agency's financial reporting systems. Currently staff works on a spreadsheet and an upgrade is necessary. The team is looking at upgrading to Microsoft Dynamics and the \$15K would be to pay someone to train staff on how to use it. It is important for the agency to improve its financial reporting tool.

There were no further questions from Council Members. Nina stated that the Executive Committee had reviewed the spending plan and recommends its approval, but a vote **would not be taken until after the Grants Committee's presentation. Before moving ahead**, Nina asked David to review the Conflict of Interest procedure.

David asked Council Members to refer to page 50 of their Board book where any possible conflicts of interest are disclosed and that any member who had so disclosed a conflict with respect to a particular organization or grantee would abstain from any vote or discussion regarding any Mass Cultural Council grant or service to such

organization or grantee. David asked Council members to review the list one more time, and there were no questions or changes to be made.

It was noted that all votes approving the FY21 grant recommendations will note the various possible conflicts and abstentions of the Council Members in attendance at this meeting.

Sandra Dunn disclosed that she would abstain from any discussion or vote regarding the provision of a grant or other assistance to Discover Central Massachusetts.

Nina Fialkow disclosed that she would abstain from any discussion or vote regarding the provision of a grant or other assistance to Boston Ballet and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.

Susan Leff disclosed that she would abstain from any discussion or vote regarding the provision of a grant or other assistance to the Boston Children's Museum and Mass Humanities.

Victoria Marsh disclosed that she would abstain from any discussion or vote regarding the provision of a grant or other assistance to Company One and WGBH.

Barbara Schaffer Bacon disclosed that she would abstain from any discussion or vote regarding the provision of a grant or other assistance to Arts Extension Institute.

Troy Siebels disclosed that he would abstain from any discussion or vote regarding the provision of a grant or other assistance to the Hanover Theater/Worcester Center for the Performing Arts, Worcester Cultural Coalition, Discover Central Massachusetts, and Indian Hill Music.

Sherry Dong disclosed that she would abstain from any discussion or vote regarding the provision of a grant or other assistance to The Chinese Historical Society of New England.

Kathleen Castro disclosed that she would abstain from any discussion or vote regarding the provision of a grant or other assistance to Little Theater of Fall River, New Bedford Festival Theater, and The Fall River Coalition for Arts and Culture.

Marc Carroll disclosed that he would abstain from any discussion or vote regarding the provision of a grant or other assistance to Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra and The Rivers School.

Jo-Ann Davis disclosed that she would abstain from any discussion or vote regarding the provision of a grant or other assistance to The Care Center.

Cecil Barron Jensen disclosed that she would abstain from any discussion or vote regarding the provision of a grant or other assistance to Artists Association of Nantucket, The Nantucket Historical Association, and the Nantucket Cultural District.

Nina then asked Grants Committee Chair Victoria Marsh for her report.

Victoria stated that the Grants Committee met on December 17<sup>th</sup> to review grant recommendations. The Committee determined that the plan meets the current needs of the cultural sector as it positions itself to rebound. Victoria stated that the Committee unanimously voted to recommend to the full Council that we approve the grant recommendations. She explained that she would walk Council members through each section, but trusted they'd already read the book and the detailed report. Victoria explained that she would read the line and grant name, if there were questions, they could be addressed, but there are many grants to vote on and we will work efficiently through them. She further clarified that rather than voting on individual grants, we are voting to approve the plan as a whole, knowing that each grant is within that vote. There were no questions, and Victoria proceeded to walk Council members through each line:

Section 7, Relief Fund for Individual Artists and Cultural Practitioners

Section 8, Traditional Arts Apprenticeships

Section 9, Artist Fellowships

Section 10, the Cultural Investment Portfolio

Section 11, Media Partnerships

Section 12, Local Cultural Councils, Cultural Districts, and Festivals

Section 13, Creative Youth Development

Section 14, Education Programs: STARS, Creative Minds Out Of School, Mass History Day, Poetry Out Loud

Section 15, UP Initiative

Section 16, Mass Humanities Partnership

Section 17, New England Foundation for the Arts

Section 18, Network for Arts Administrators of Color

Section 19, SMU Data Arts Program

That concluded the Grants presentation. David explained that unless there was any objection, all resolutions could now be voted on with one roll call.

Nina as Chair called for a motion to approve the spending plan and grants for FY21. Jo-Ann Davis moved to approve both; Kathy Castro seconded the motion. David called the roll, noting again that Jake Brennan, Lillian Do, Karen Hurvitz, and Ann Murphy were not present. It was unanimously voted by the members present as follows:

WHEREAS, the General Court of the Massachusetts State Legislature has appropriated a budget of \$18,180,000 to the Massachusetts Cultural Council (the "Council") for FY 21 and the Governor duly signed said budget;

WHEREAS, Council staff presented a draft FY21 budget and spending plan (the "Plan") to the Executive Committee at its meeting on December 10, 2020;

WHEREAS, the Executive Committee reviewed said plan and recommended that it be forwarded to the Council for approval;

WHEREAS, Council staff presented the Plan to the Mass Cultural Council at its meeting on January 7, 2021 (the "Council Meeting").

NOW THEREFORE, it is hereby RESOLVED: To approve the Plan as reviewed by the Executive Committee on January 7, 2021 and as presented at the Council Meeting and attached hereto.

and

WHEREAS, Council staff presented the grants portion of the Plan to the Grants Committee at its meeting on December 17, 2020 ("Grants Committee Meeting"), in connection with recommended grant allocations;

WHEREAS, the Grants Committee recommended to the full Council the allocation of the grants presented at the Grants Committee Meeting;

WHEREAS, the Grants Committee reviewed procedures of grant allocations and recommended that the Council approve the same;

NOW, THEREFORE, it is hereby

RESOLVED: To approve funding a new Relief Fund for Individual Artists and Cultural Practitioners in the amount of \$651,000 plus any contributions from any other source plus unexpended amounts from the STARS program and other approved grant programs all in accordance with the memo submitted to the Council and as recommended by the Grants Committee;

RESOLVED: To approve the Traditional Arts Apprenticeships grant recommendation in the total amount of \$100,000 as recommended by the Grants Committee;

RESOLVED: To approve the recommended Artist Fellowship program grant allocations totaling \$652,500 as recommended by the Grants Committee;

RESOLVED: To approve grant allocations to the Cultural Investment Portfolio, CIP Gateway and CIP Projects, for a total of \$6,203,000 as recommended by the Grants Committee;

RESOLVED: To approve allocations to the Media Partnerships program of \$130,000 as recommended by Grants Committee Meeting.

RESOLVED: To approve a grant allocation to the Local Cultural Councils totaling \$4,350,000 up to \$397,500 in Cultural District grants, \$50,000 to the Festivals Program as recommended by the Grants Committee;

RESOLVED: To approve grant allocations to YouthReach and SerHacer and Amplify, continued funding of the Instrument Library in the combined amount of \$1,490,000 plus expenditure or any remaining NEA CARES Act funds as recommended by the Grants Committee;

RESOLVED: To approve the following Education grant allocations, \$1,150,000 to the STARS program (Provided that any unused funds be repurposed to the Relief Fund for individual artists and cultural practitioners as described elsewhere), \$10,000 to the Creative Minds Out of School program, \$5,000 to the Early Education & Childcare Pilot, \$20,000 in support of Massachusetts History Day, \$20,000 in support of the NEA-funded Poetry Out Loud program, as recommended by the Grants Committee;

RESOLVED: To approve the continuation of the UP Program with grants in the amount of \$80,000,000 as recommended by the Grants Committee; RESOLVED: To approve a grant to Mass Humanities totaling \$686,191 as recommended by the Grants Committee;

RESOLVED: To approve a grant to NEFA totaling 60,000 provided that Mass Cultural Council does not provide more than the other New England states provide to NEFA as recommended by the Grants Committee;

RESOLVED: To approve a grant allocation of \$25,000 to ArtsBoston acting as fiscal agent on behalf of the Network Arts Administrators of Color as presented as recommended by the Grants Committee; and

RESOLVED: to approve a grant to SMU Data Arts to provide the Cultural Data Profile tool as recommended by the Grants Committee.

All resolutions were approved unanimously after roll call vote by all members present.

Nina thanked Council members for their time. There being no further business, questions, or discussion, Nina as Chair adjourned the meeting.



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To: Mass Cultural Council Board  
Fr: Michael J. Bobbitt, Executive Director  
Date: March 16, 2021  
Re: March 2021 Executive Director Notes and Report

## ED Report (March 2021)

### NOTES:

- Most of the time has been spent learning (reading and meetings) the business (agency, state and national).
- Working with staff to do a lite audit of programs and services to better understand the agencies desired impact and where we might be stretched too thin to 1.) accomplish our goals and 2.) to be nimble enough and responsive to the current needs of the sector
- Starting to have vision impulses and connecting with people on the National scale to vet and research.

### Final Transition Plan

- Scheduled Staff Meetings
  - a. Daily Senior Staff Check In
  - b. Invited Weekly Department Check Ins
  - c. Weekly Supervisors Meeting
  - d. Bi-weekly 411 All-Staff Meeting
- Scheduled Monthly Meetings
  - a. Nina
  - b. Mentor – Torrie Allen
  - c. NASAA BIPOC Affinity Group (as Available)
- As Needed – Regular Meetings
  - a. Mass Creative
  - b. Emily Ruddock/Brian Boyles
  - c. Barr Foundation

### February

- ~~Meet with Each Department Pt. 1 Feb~~ – Done
  - a. ~~Priority Group #1 – EDIA, Race Equity, Demographic Data~~
- Drop-ins to Constituent Gatherings - As Available
- ~~Listening Tour (5 days)~~ – Done
- Governor Baker, also Senior Advisor Mindy d'Arbeloff – Scheduled

Prepared on 3/11/21



- Lieutenant Governor Polito
- ~~State Government Crash Course with Bethann~~ ~~Scheduled~~
- ~~POC Team meeting~~ ~~Scheduled~~
- Legislative/Budgeting Meet and Greet
  - a. reached out in week 1 by email to all 199 legislators, introduced yourself and offered meet and greets at their convenience
- ~~Keiko Orrall, MOTT~~ ~~Done~~
- Barr Foundation Meet and Greet – ~~Scheduled~~
- The Boston Foundation – Paul Grogan, Eva Rosenberg, Lee Pelton – ~~Lee Pelton Scheduled; Paul Grogan & Eva Rosenberg In Process~~
- ~~Philanthropy MA Meet and Greet~~ ~~Scheduled~~
- Secretary Mary Lou Sudders, Health & Human Services
- Commissioner of the Department of Public Health, Monica Bharel

#### March

- 30 Mins Meet with each staff member – ~~Scheduled~~
- ~~Attend Orientation for new Council Members Simone Early and Rob Price~~ ~~Done~~
- Meet with Each Department Pt. 2 - ~~Scheduled~~
- Major Partner Meetings
  - a. ~~Mass Development, NEFA, MassCreative, Mass Humanities, MAPC, NASAA~~ ~~– Done/Scheduled~~
- Drop-ins to Constituent Gatherings - ~~As Available~~
- Arts Consulting Group – Wyona Lynch-McWhite – ~~In Process~~

#### April

- 30 minutes meet with each Council Member – ~~In Process~~
- Meet with Major Funders
  - a. NEA – ~~In Process~~, Klarman, Lindy
- Chat with Anita - ~~Scheduled~~
- Key Mayors – ~~In Process~~
- Union Briefing – ~~In Process~~
- Joann Horgan, Consultant HR – ~~She is away recovering from surgery, will reach out early April~~
- Gaming Mitigation Briefing – ~~In process~~
- Organization Constituent Meetings (~~need to consider Equity~~) – ~~As Available/In Process~~
  - a. ~~The Big Ones: Museum of Science - scheduled, New England Aquarium - scheduled, Museum of Fine Arts, Children's Museum - scheduled, Boston Symphony Orchestra; Worcester Art Museum, Fitchburg Art Museum, Springfield Symphony Orchestra, New Bedford Whaling Museum, Plimoth Patuxet Museums, Cape Ann Museum~~
- Artist Constituent Meetings
- Speaking Engagements/Press – ~~As Available~~

#### DELIVERABLES – First 6 Months

- Meet with Working Groups
  - o Priority Group #2 – Remote Programming/Tech, Trauma, Covid Safety, HR Working Group
- Draft Agency Race Equity Plan
- Agency Budget
- Advocacy - Budget, Bond Bill, Federal Covid Relief

- Support Statewide Commission on the Impacts of COVID on the Creative and Cultural Sectors
- [Children and Youth \(Maybe Grantees\)](#)
- [Mayors and City Council Presidents - Kim Driscoll of Salem, Nicole LaChapelle of Easthampton & Steve DiNatale of Fitchburg, etc.](#)
- Support Commission to review state seal and motto
- Support Operations Efficiency - [In Process](#)
  - o Support Grants Software and 365 Consolidation
  - o Revisit the Employee Handbook to look at policies to reflect modern handbook

#### DELIVERABLES – 6 month to 1 year

- Relook at Strategic Plan in response to current times
- **Draft Michael's list of Priorities** with staff input
- Diversifying our Board
- Local Cultural Council Meeting by Staff Region Assignments
- [CANE: Cultural Access New England](#)
- [Jim Rooney, from Greater Boston Chamber and other chambers like Berkshires, Cape Cod, North Shore](#)
- [Discussions about Statewide event – Governor's Ball](#)
- [Start the strategic Plan Process](#)

OTHER (to be scheduled as available)

TSNE MissionWorks

[Other Non-profit Services Orgs - NEMA, ArtsBoston, Boston Dance Alliance, and Arts & Business Council](#)

Black Economic Council of Massachusetts (BECMA)

Aquinnah Cultural Arts Center

DMH, United Way

Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association

[Interpretive Science Org](#)

[History Org](#)

[Humanities Org](#)

Black Ministerial Association of Boston

Cable Access

Legislative Tourism Council

Housing and Economic Development

Department of Education

Interpretive Science Orgs

Meetings with heads of other State Agencies

DTA, Health Connector, MOTT, Conservation and Recreation, National Parks of MA

NAAC, Arts Administration of New England, YNPN

Jim Rooney – Greater Boston Chapter

Creative Minds Out Loud

Lisa Donovan at Mass College of Liberal Arts

Arts for All Collaborative

CJP – BlackAFinStem

Other Non-Transition Plan Activities/Meetings ([completed](#))

Attended a meeting with regional state arts agencies

Met with Kara Elliott-Ortega – Boston Arts and Culture Department

Chatted with Joyce Linehan  
Met with NASAA POC Affinity Group  
Spoke at American University Arts Management Class  
Attended a Philanthropy MA Arts Funders Meeting  
Met with Erin Williams from Worcester  
**Joined NEFA's board (starting in June)**  
Filmed a welcome speech for Cambridge Community Foundation  
Met with Bridge Gwendolyn Van Sant (Race Equity Consultant)  
Attended Cambridge Arts Forum Meeting  
Met with Dana Hanson, Office of Congressman Auchincloss  
Attended NEA USDA Rural Placemaking Webinar  
Met with Jordan Maynard – Governor Baker's Chief Secretary  
Led Panel discussion at Worcester Legislative Breakfast  
Attended Advisory Committee on Travel and Tourism Quarterly Meeting



*Power of culture*

To: Mass Cultural Council  
Fr: Staff  
Dt: March 16, 2021  
Re: Agency Updates

### EXECUTIVE

Committees. The Executive Committee met on March 2 to approve the agenda for today's Council Meeting. The Advocacy Committee meet on March 5 in advance of the Council's testimony to Legislature's Joint Committee on Ways & Means scheduled for March 9 (discussed further below).

New Council Members. As the Council has previously been informed, the Governor's Office informed us in January of two new appointments to the Council- Rob Price of Sharon, MA and Simone Early of Essex, MA. They were appointed to the vacant seats previously held by Dr. Michael Yaremchuk and Jake Brennan. A formal press release will be sent out on March 15 prior to the Council. Rob and Simone are scheduled for a virtual orientation on March 11. We look forward to welcoming and introducing our new members at the March 16 Council meeting.

Transition. Michael **Bobbitt's** transition has been continuing apace since starting as Executive Director on February 1. Working closely with the Transition Team comprised of Council Members and staff, he has already met with several key constituents and stakeholders across the Commonwealth and is scheduled for many more. Michael will discuss his transition activities in greater detail with the Council at the March 16 meeting.

Disclosures. When Michael was hired as Executive Director, he had several connections with organizations in the cultural sector many of whom are grantees or otherwise doing business with the Council (including being the Executive Director of New Repertory Theater when he was hired) which he wishes to disclose in accordance with state law (much like Council members did last month when they approved the FY21 Council Spending Plan). Michael has had preexisting previous relationships (or, where noted with a \*, ongoing relationships) with the following organizations:

New Repertory Theatre, Boston Conservatory at Berklee, Boston Playwright's Theatre, Craft Institute, Boston Arts Academy, Museum of Fine Arts, Lesley University, Stage Source, Boston University, Arts Connect International, Town of Wayland, Now and Then, Inc., New England Foundation for the Arts, Emerson College, North Eastern University, Gloucester Stage, Revels\*, Cultural Equity Learning, Massachusetts Educational Theater Guild, The Boston Foundation, Theatre Offensive, Arts Boston, Front Porch Arts, Wheelock Family Theater\*

Michael has filed letters (actually) under Section 23(b)(3) of the state ethics law with the Council and Chair covering the preexisting and ongoing relationship indicating how the matters will be handled, including delegation of authority to David Slatery as Deputy Director should any specific matter arise with respect to these organizations. Please contact David if you would like a copy of any of these documents.

### LEGISLATIVE, ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

FY22 State Budget. Governor Charlie Baker kicked off the FY22 state budget building process in January when he released [his spending proposal, H1](#). The Governor recommended Mass Cultural Council receive \$16.3M for operations in FY22, which represents a 10.4% reduction from our FY21 (current year) state appropriation of \$18.2M. This is a very consistent recommendation from the Governor and is a solid place for the Agency to start from in conversations with our partners in the House and Senate to advocate for level funding, at minimum, in the coming fiscal year.

The Joint Committee on Ways & Means invited Mass Cultural Council to testify at an FY22 Budget Hearing on Tuesday, March 9, 2021 on the topic of Economic Development, Housing & Labor. Michael, Dave, and Bethann represented the **Agency at the hearing. The Council's Advocacy Committee** met on Friday, March 5, 2021 to help prepare and shape the testimony and spending request.

New Legislation. Mass Cultural Council is partnering with State Senator Ed Kennedy, MASSCreative, Rep. Ken Gordon and Sen. Adam Hinds on two bills during the 2021-2022 legislative session:

1. Mass Cultural Council enthusiastically supports SD 2105, new legislation sponsored by State Senator Ed Kennedy (D- Lowell), Chair of the Joint Committee on Tourism, Arts & Cultural Development, to create a \$200 million COVID relief and stabilization fund for the cultural sector. [An Act to Rebuild the Commonwealth's Cultural Future](#) would establish the Massachusetts Cultural Economy COVID-19 Recovery Fund, to be administered by Mass Cultural Council. Money for the fund would come from any COVID mitigation and assistance the Commonwealth receives from the federal government. Mass Cultural Council would use the Fund to make COVID relief and stabilization grants to cultural organizations, both non-profit and for profit, as well as individual creative workers.

Grants would consider racial diversity and equity, geographic diversity, and programmatic diversity within the cultural sector. They would also prioritize economic need and recipients' economic impact in terms of job creation and tourism spending prior to March 2020.

2. Mass Cultural Council is thrilled to collaborate with Rep. Ken Gordon (D-Bedford) and Sen. Adam Hinds (D- Pittsfield) during this new 2021-2022 legislative session to advance HD655 and SD1204, bills filed [to expand membership opportunities for Local Cultural Councils \(LCCs\)](#). State law ([MGL Ch. 10, Sec. 58](#)) prohibits "elected public officials" from serving on their LCC.

Mass Cultural Council believes this restriction is appropriate for chief municipal decision makers, like mayors, city councilors, and select board members. However, this law also prevents those who are elected to serve in other local and regional capacities — like town meeting members, school committee members, local assessors, and library trustees — from serving on their LCC. In smaller, rural communities this severely limits the number of residents willing and able to serve as an appointed LCC member. LCCs cannot convene to conduct their important business if they cannot achieve quorum. HD655 and SD1204 amend the statute and authorize local and regional elected officials to also serve on LCCs, excluding the community's chief appointing authority and members of the local appropriating authority, as defined in [MGL Ch. 59, Sec. 21C](#). HD655 and SD1204 offer a technical correction that is good for rural communities, promotes good governance and civic engagement, and strengthens participation in our cultural sector.

Meet Michael Virtual Listening Series. During the week of February 22, Mass Cultural Council hosted five virtual opportunities for cultural sector stakeholders to get to know our new Executive Director, Michael J. Bobbitt. Through the ["Meet Michael"](#) series, Michael was able to introduce himself to 625 attendees, answer questions, and receive feedback on what these cultural leaders, stakeholders, and partners felt he should know, understand, and be aware of in his new position. Each session was recorded and will soon be available on the Agency's YouTube page.

#### Mass Cultural Council in The News

February 8, 2021 WBUR

<https://www.wbur.org/artery/2021/02/08/michael-bobbitt-executive-director-mass-cultural-council>

February 8, 2021 CommonWealth Magazine and Codcast Podcast

<https://commonwealthmagazine.org/podcast/meet-michael-bobbitt-states-new-arts-leader-2/>

February 11, 2021 SHNS/WWLP

<https://www.wwlp.com/news/top-stories/cultural-council-launches-fifth-survey/>

February 12, 2021 Harvard Crimson

<https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2021/2/12/michael-j-bobbitt-profile/>

Mass Cultural Council's 5th COVID economic impact survey has made quite a splash in the media this week!

WBUR

(Radio news coverage with Michael quoted, -copy provided upon request)

NBC10

<https://www.nbcboston.com/news/local/mass-arts-industry-takes-588m-hit-amid-pandemic-study-finds/2323444/>

Berkshire Eagle

[https://www.berkshireeagle.com/coronavirus/totally-devastating-a-year-into-pandemic-berkshire-stages-silent-mostly/article\\_f524c68e-7781-11eb-a141-9b73886b7dc8.html](https://www.berkshireeagle.com/coronavirus/totally-devastating-a-year-into-pandemic-berkshire-stages-silent-mostly/article_f524c68e-7781-11eb-a141-9b73886b7dc8.html)

State House News Morning Briefs:

Cultural Sector Pegs Pandemic Losses at \$588 Million

*The state's cultural sector, which has long thrived on human interaction, has recalculated its significant losses ahead of budget season on Beacon Hill. According to the Massachusetts Cultural Council, which is in line for a 10 percent spending cut under Gov. Charlie Baker's budget, the state's nonprofit and municipal cultural organizations reported \$588 million in lost revenue since March 2020. Individual and teaching artists and scientists/humanists have lost more than \$30.4 million in income due to the pandemic, the council estimated Monday based on its most recent COVID-19 impact survey. "Our once booming, innovative, and vibrant cultural sector is in economic crisis," said Michael Bobbitt, the council's executive director. "One year of closure and cancellations adds up to millions of dollars in lost revenue and income, and thousands of displaced and impacted workers statewide." The losses are tied to 981 cultural organizations in the state, as well as nearly 3,000 individuals, and the survey results were drawn from financial and employment data. The council said 65 percent of the organizations with employees have laid off or plan to lay off, furlough, or reduce the hours and/or wages of employees, with more than 30,000 employees impacted. During a 10 a.m. state budget hearing Tuesday, the council plans to knock Baker's budget plan as "untenable in this moment of crisis." The council this session is backing new legislation filed by Sen. Ed Kennedy (D-Lowell), chair of the Joint Committee on Tourism, Arts & Cultural Development, that would establish a Massachusetts Cultural Economy COVID-19 Recovery Fund seeded with at least \$200 million in future federal COVID financial assistance funds. Museums and performance venues have been*

*shuttered during the pandemic but are slowly coming back online with strict capacity limits and safety protocols. - Michael P. Norton/SHNS*

Lowell Sun/SHNS

<https://www.lowellsun.com/2021/03/09/cultural-sector-pegs-pandemic-losses-at-588-million/>

WCVB Ch. 5

<https://www.wcvb.com/amp/article/boston-lost-billions-of-tourism-dollars-in-2020-due-to-coronavirus-pandemic-experts-say/35789811>

Salem News Editorial

[https://www.salemnews.com/opinion/editorials/our-view-important-funding-for-arts-and-cultural-communities/article\\_b4229709-0c19-501a-868d-2d11fa30b567.html](https://www.salemnews.com/opinion/editorials/our-view-important-funding-for-arts-and-cultural-communities/article_b4229709-0c19-501a-868d-2d11fa30b567.html)

WBUR (again)

<https://amp.wbur.org/commonhealth/2021/03/10/coronavirus-statewide-emergency-pandemic-anniversary-loss-figures>

SHNS Evening Briefs

Cultural Council Makes \$20 Mil Budget Ask

Gov. Charlie Baker's proposal to cut state funding for the Massachusetts Cultural Council by about 10 percent would exacerbate the deep economic damage the sector has faced over the past year, the organization's executive director told lawmakers Tuesday. Baker's fiscal year 2022 budget would direct \$16.3 million to the Massachusetts Cultural Council, less than the nearly \$18.2 million allocated in each of the past two years. Michael Bobbitt, who took over as the MCC's chief last month, said that change would "undo two years of work and investment in the cultural sector." Instead, Bobbitt urged the Joint Ways and Means Committee to bump funding for his organization up further to \$20 million total for the next spending year to help prompt the industry's recovery. "The once-booming Massachusetts cultural sector has been economically devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic," Bobbitt said. "Reducing the Mass Cultural Council's line item to the H1 Recommendation at this time of economic crisis is untenable." During the public health emergency, the council has "bumped up" the services it provides to its member organizations and municipalities, most aimed at helping chart a way through the crisis, Bobbitt said. One day before Bobbitt's appearance at the budget hearing, the Massachusetts Cultural Council reported results from a survey of 981 cultural organizations and nearly 3,000 individuals finding that the cultural sector has experienced \$588 million in lost revenue since March 2020. - Chris Lisinski/SHNS

Eagle Tribune Editorial

[https://www.eagletribune.com/opinion/our-view-important-funding-for-arts-and-cultural-communities/article\\_3d880e7c-6569-557a-8f79-c81da1b241ce.html](https://www.eagletribune.com/opinion/our-view-important-funding-for-arts-and-cultural-communities/article_3d880e7c-6569-557a-8f79-c81da1b241ce.html)



Sentinel & Enterprise (keep reading, it's halfway down)

<https://www.sentinelandenterprise.com/2021/03/10/massachusetts-to-launch-vaccine-preregistration-system/>

Boston Globe Editorial

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2021/03/10/opinion/raise-curtain-light-lights-keep-em-lit/>

Also, the Agency's digital reach continues to grow. As of December 2020, here is our list of subscribers/followers:

Newsletters:

- Power of Culture: 8,077 contacts
- Artists News: 10,141 contacts
- Creative Youth News: 7,623 contacts
- Community News: 4,438 contacts

*Plus, our targeted lists which include: legislators, press, and partners.*

Social Media Platforms:

- Twitter: 14.6K Followers
- Facebook: 11,453 Followers
  - Community Initiative page: 1,619 Followers
- Instagram: 4,240 Followers
- LinkedIn: 1,219 Followers

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND ACCESS REPORT

Michael met with the Race Equity Task Force, the staff DEIA Task Force and the POC group, plus our consultant Gwendolyn VanSant from Multicultural BRIDGE. Now that the Council has spent a year learning about Race Equity, Michael has asked Gwendolyn to revise her scope of work to focus specifically on POC Healing space, Agency Internal Inclusion Training, Feedback on the Race Equity Plan, Prepping us for response to our Race Equity Plan and Training for the Board and Staff on having a POC Leader. Additionally, the staff will be launching its Race Equity Action Plan next month. It'll be made available for

feedback at several phases. Lastly, the DEIA and Race Equity Task Forces have been jointly working on a draft Race Equity Statement.

#### CULTURAL INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO (CIP)

Projects. In January, staff launched the delayed FY21 Projects grant program. These grants are for organizations that do not receive Portfolio or Gateway grants, and that tend to support the activities of smaller organizations. One hundred ninety (190) applications were received by the March 2<sup>nd</sup> deadline, **down slightly from FY20's record of 217 applications. A small number of grantees** (18) from the FY20 grant cycle have been unable to complete their projects due to COVID restrictions. Much like many other funders in their response to the COVID emergency, we have allowed these organizations to reclassify these grants as operating support.

Services. In February, CIP introduced Recover, Rebuild, Renew, 42 webinars and countless hours of one-on-one consulting. **Alongside Mass Cultural Council's** ongoing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work, we believe these services represent the most critical areas of need to help plan a post-COVID operating environment for cultural nonprofits and creative workers. Sessions have been well-attended, and feedback has been very positive. Most sessions have been recorded and are on our website and YouTube channel as an ongoing resource.

Gaming Mitigation Program. Finally, we have conducted a survey of organizations that applied for Gaming Mitigation funds in March 2020. We will use this information to revise and improve the process for the next round of grants. The next application date has not yet been confirmed.

#### COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

General. The Community Initiative Team opened two additional grant programs since January. The Festivals Program and the Cultural Districts Program each with updated guidelines in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The grant cycle for the Local Cultural Council Program opened in October 2020 and we saw close to 7,500 applications submitted to councils across the Commonwealth. While this number is down from last year, it is promising to see the creativity and resilience of communities and the commitment of residents and artists to find ways to bring arts and culture amidst the pandemic. We have seen more councils taking on council programs as well as being able to fully grant projects and all applicants when they have not been able to before. Councils are currently working with Community Program Officers to complete their annual reports, send out approval letters, and engage their communities in an array of cultural activities. The team continues to support communities with office hours for LCCs, monthly Community Check-ins that center around partnerships, cross-sectional programming, resilience, and innovative

programming. The community check-ins are a way for all the programs that fall under the Community Initiative to come together and learn from each other. In addition to the check-ins, the Cultural Districts meet bi-weekly to share best practices, network and learn about ways they can continue to engage and support their communities. In addition, the Community Team is working on organizing a rural convening as well as a convening of youth members of Local Cultural Councils for early summer.

Festivals. The Festivals Grant Program application deadline for FY21 is March 15<sup>th</sup>. This grant cycle we are offering not only grants for in-person and online festival programming but also funding for audience development and audience engagement. The program is focusing on recovery and rebuilding for festivals. Festivals are an important part of community engagement and community identity and the focus on helping them be sustainable by offering the engagement and development option is key. In addition, the new Festivals Toolkit provides an array of resources and modules for all festivals.

Festival grantees are chosen through an in-house review process, based on the eligibility requirements of the program. Regional diversity is taken into consideration.

We will continue our work with ArtsBoston who will present webinars and workshops based on the toolkit providing a deeper dive into some of the areas around marketing and social media.

#### Cultural Districts

Grants. Forty of our 49 Cultural Districts have successfully submitted their applications for FY21 Cultural District Initiative Grants. Staff is working with the rest to have those completed and funds dispersed in March. Staff is working with Public Affairs to create a press release to roll out in the next week. We were encouraged to see that of the applications submitted, all were from districts that regularly attend the bi-weekly Cultural Districts check-in.

Designation Renewals. Work has started on moving forward renewal recommendations for the Districts delayed due to COVID-19: Beverly, Plymouth, and Worcester. **Boston's Literary District, designated in 2014, has decided not to move forward with a renewal.** In 2018, the chief proponent of the application and managing entity for the district, Grub Street (a literacy based nonprofit) moved to Boston's Seaport District which placed management of the District in the hands of Emerson College. Emerson's internal committee was leaning towards not renewing as the pandemic began. Staff identified a potential management entity, but the decision was eventually made to not renew.

Staff has started connecting with Districts eligible for renewal in 2021 and will work with them to present recommendations to the Council at its August

meeting. They are:

- Crossroads Cultural District, Greenfield
- Amherst Cultural District
- West Concord Junction Cultural District
- Nantucket Cultural District
- Aquinnah Cultural District
- Scituate Harbor Cultural District

New Cultural Districts. Staff site visits, along with a new COVID-19 safety protocol has been established. Staff is working with communities in Bedford and the Little Saigon District in Fields Corner (Boston) to schedule dates and Zoom meetings where appropriate. We anticipate submitting recommendations to the Council at its May meeting. Staff is also working with consultant Anita Lauricella to establish a new site visit assessment as we recruit additional site advisors for this final component of the designation process.

## ARTISTS

FY21 Artist Fellowships. The deadline for applications to the FY21 Artist Fellowships was February 8, 2021. Currently totals are: Crafts 166, Dramatic Writing 149, Film & Video 168, Music Composition 165, Photography 303, and Sculpture/Installation/New Genres 292, for a preliminary total of 1,243. That is an increase from a total of 1,085 in FY19 (the last time these disciplines were reviewed).

Panel meetings for these categories will take place via Zoom in April, and those panel's recommendations will go to the May Grants Committee and Council meetings.

COVID-19 Relief Fund for Individuals. In late February, we were pleased to award \$1,500 grants to 781 artists and teaching artists/humanists/scientists through the COVID-19 Relief Fund for Individuals.

ArtSake. We continue to support the field with online artist resources on [ArtSake](#), our on-line blog. From the beginning of the fiscal year to February 11, 2021, the site had 62,646 unique pageviews, with the most visited pages being the "artist opportunities" roundups (7,492 unique pageviews) and the "creative space classifieds" page which lists available work and live/workspaces for artists (4,596 unique pageviews).

Folk Arts & Heritage. Maggie Holtzberg is serving as podcast host for [Revels Connects](#) as part of their salon series featuring traditional musicians. February's [podcast](#) featured 2020 MCC Artist Fellow Josee Vachon.

Maggie will be part of Maritime Gloucester's winter lecture series on March 23, "[A Shipwright Documented](#)," a film screening and panel discussion. The film was produced by Mass Cultural Council last spring, with support from the NEA. Traditional Arts Apprenticeships: Maggie has checked in with the [13 funded apprenticeships](#). A handful are meeting in person, with the rest meeting virtually, or a combination of both. From reading their informal progress reports, lots of exciting learning is taking place.

The *Boston Irish Reporter* published a [feature](#) on the Bay State's "on the go" folklorist: Feb 1 a plug for the work of Mass Cultural Council in the Folk Arts and Heritage field.

### CREATIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT (CYD)

Youth Arts Impact Networks Expands Statewide Through a public-private partnership. This month, Mass Cultural Council established a partnership with [EdVestors](#) to extend the offer of services, expertise, and resources of the [Youth Arts Impact Network](#) (YAIN) to organizations across the Commonwealth. Through this expansion, Mass Cultural Council aims to support the state-wide [Creative Youth Development](#) (CYD) network with critical support in a time of changing program delivery models and focus areas. The Youth Arts Impact Network, facilitated by EdVestors, is a cohort of more than 75 youth arts organizations, working to strengthen the local youth arts community and build capacity of the larger CYD field, resulting in those organizations better serving young people and maximizing their impact. YAIN will offer workshops, webinars, and one-on-one consulting office hours focused on program development and the evaluation of impact across sectors for the past five years.

Upcoming Youth Forum. On March 19<sup>th</sup> the Mass Cultural Council, in partnership with the City of Boston Mayor's Office of Arts & Culture and Edvestors, will present a youth-led event that will celebrate the creativity and experience of young people during the COVID-19 pandemic. This forum will be facilitated by youth members of the Bloomberg Arts Internship Alumni Advisory Council and Mass Cultural Council's CYD BIPOC Alumni Council.

Meet the Creative Youth Development BIPOC Alumni Council. On February 4<sup>th</sup> the Agency announced the first Creative Youth Development BIPOC Alumni Council. After launching the Amplify program in 2015, which provides grants for youth-led projects in CYD organizations, the alumni council is the next step in integrating the essential voices of young people into our work. This pilot program will run through June 30, 2021 and will offer the Agency an opportunity

to understand the potential of the Alumni Council in future years. Thus far, the group is meeting once per week and joining our biweekly Creative Youth Development calls on Thursdays as facilitators and speakers. They will also participate in planning the previously mentioned March 19<sup>th</sup> youth forum. Read more about each of the fellows [here](#).

## EDUCATION

STARS Residencies. We are pleased to announce that we are awarding more than \$681,000 in STARS Residencies grants to 154 schools across the Commonwealth for the 2020-2021 school year. The number of applications is a testament to the resiliency of schools and cultural partners in this challenging year. And, with the support of the Legislature, we are funding all applications that were eligible and successfully met the review criteria. The residencies will bring creative learning to more than 11,700 students across the state. They also will provide work for more than 90 teaching artists, scientists, and humanists, many of whom have been facing difficult times since the pandemic began. This year, we required residencies to include a plan for remote delivery should circumstances require that. Even so, the range of residencies that the schools and cultural partners are providing is as rich as ever: students in Petersham will be storytelling and singing with a master storyteller; Cape Cod students will learn outdoors each season with Mass Audubon; students in Springfield will take year-long instrumental lessons in school with teachers from the Community Music School of Springfield; English language learning high schoolers in Boston will write and perform original plays in English with Company One theatre artists; 4<sup>th</sup> graders in North Adams will explore ways to amplify indigenous voices through art-making with a Crow-heritage artist through Mass MoCA. The description provided by one residency best captures the essence of all this year's STARS experiences: "through cooperation, flexibility, and compromise, [students will create] pieces to permanently remind ... all who enter the building in coming years how together we create and share light even in dark times."

Poetry Out Loud. The 16<sup>th</sup> annual Poetry Out Loud Massachusetts contest takes place this month – regionals were March 6-8 and state finals are Sunday, March 14. Poetry Out Loud is the national recitation contest for high school students created by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation. The Huntington Theatre Education Department runs the program in Massachusetts for Mass Cultural Council. In a typical year, POL brings poetry into the lives of more than 20,000 young people across Massachusetts. The young people experience the power of the written and spoken word by making three poems their own and bringing them to life through performance. They dig deep into their rich literary heritage, develop critical thinking and public speaking skills, and build self-confidence. Through all this, they bring the power of culture into the lives of their teachers, their families, and their friends.

Last year, the contest finished – in person! -- the day before the state locked down. This year, both the state and national contests are virtual. This year, we have 42 students in the Semi-final contests – 40 school champions, and 2 students who entered the contest through a cultural organization, or as an individual (the first year this has been allowed.) While this is half the usual number, it is still a testament to the commitment of teachers and students to the program. To tune in to any of the contests, check the [Agency Dates](#) page on our website.

National History Day in Massachusetts. In March, we have another statewide national competition. [History Day](#) in Massachusetts is an affiliate of [National History Day](#), the competition sponsored by the National History Day organization and supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Middle and high school students do deep research related to the annual theme, analyze and interpret their findings, and capture their findings in a research paper, exhibit, documentary, performance, or web site. In a typical year, 5-6,000 students participate statewide. This year, the state competition is completely virtual. This year's theme is "Communication in History: The Key to Understanding." Mass Cultural Council provides a grant to the Massachusetts Historical Society for Mass History Day to grow access to the program by students and teachers statewide.

#### CULTURAL FACILITIES FUND (CFF)

On January 15<sup>th</sup> the Cultural Facilities Fund received 148 applications for the 13<sup>th</sup> Round of the Cultural Facilities Fund. The requests by grant category were as follows:

- Capital Grant requests: 111
- Feasibility and Technical Assistance requests: 20
- Systems Replacement Plan requests: 17

The total dollar request to the Fund is \$20.1 million. The combined total development costs of all the projects in this round is \$306 million. The Fund has been allocated up to \$10 million this fiscal year.

Application Review Process. From March 1<sup>st</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>, Mass Cultural Council will convene six panels on Zoom to review and score the applications. Staff enlisted 24 expert panelists drawn from a variety of fields including: non-profit business planning, real estate development, capital fundraising, community development, arts administration, architecture and historic preservation. To give panelists sufficient to review the materials, applications were sent to the panelists four weeks in advance of the meetings. Each panelist was carefully instructed to assess the materials in accordance with the published CFF guidelines and review criteria.

The panelists numerically score each application. Cultural Facilities Fund Program Director, Jay Paget will facilitate each panel discussion to ensure that all applications received a thorough review based on the criteria in the published guidelines. CFF Program Officer Miranda Cook will facilitate the online presentations and take notes during each panel.

Grant Approval Process. The next step in the process is to bring the panel recommendations to the CFF Advisory Committee for discussion and approval. After the Advisory Committee, the final step is a vote by the MassDevelopment Board, scheduled for mid-May.

Following the MassDevelopment Board, the Mass Cultural Council and MassDevelopment will issue grant notifications, press releases, and legislative notifications.

#### UP: UNIVERSAL PARTICIPATION INITIATIVE.

Applications for UP Designation and the Innovation and Learning Network (ILN) launched in January 2021. Eight organizations received the UP Designation: Arisia (Somerville), BalletRox (Boston), Community Music Center of Boston (Boston), Families Creating Together (Boston), Gnome Create (Fall River), The Nature Connection (Concord), New Repertory Theatre (Watertown), and Talking Information Center (Marshfield).

Ten organizations were accepted into the ILN and will receive a 3K stipend, a website audit from the National Center for Accessible Media (NCAM) at WGBH, and a User/Expert program assessment from the Institute for Human Centered Design (IHCD). The ten organizations in the ILN 2021 are:

- The Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery (Cambridge),
- Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum (Boston),
- Institute of Contemporary Art (Boston),
- Urban Media Arts (Malden),
- Monkeyhouse (Malden),
- New Bedford Art Museum (New Bedford),
- Theatre Espresso (Boston),
- Trustees of Reservations (Boston w/127 properties), and
- Umbrella Arts Center (Concord)

All workshops, reviews, consultations, and peer sessions are deployed on virtual platforms.



Twenty-seven applications have been received for the 3k Innovation Fund.

UP Office hours are ongoing, addressing access queries from cultural organizations across the state (and beyond). These office hours are open to the public.

Card to Culture. Card to Culture discount partnerships continued to be incredibly popular and successful in 2020, despite the closures and challenges of Covid-19. 89,389+ visitors attended hundreds of organizations for free or at a steep discount, over the course of the year. This brings us to 569,727+ visitors through the program to date. Although ever-more people eligible for these discounts, and cultural organizations are experiencing financial stress due to closures, new sites continue to sign up. As of March 4th, 270 sites will be offering discounts for Card to Culture populations during 2021.

Finally, here are two quotes from a recent report, to highlight the program's impact:

"We're told regularly by cardholders how much they appreciate this program because without it they may not be able to afford to bring their families."

"To see the weight lifted from someone's shoulders when they realize they'll be able to attend a live production without much financial stress...makes it all worth it!"



*Power of culture*

To: Mass Cultural Council Board  
Fr: David Slatery, Deputy Director  
Date: March 16, 2021  
Re: FY21 March Financial Update

We are now eight months through the fiscal year but due to the truncation of this fiscal year due to the pandemic, just over two months past the date when our FY 21 Spending Plan was approved, and our spending is on target or below in most accounts. We are moving with all deliberate speed to get the approved grants out the door.

Following this memo is a budget spreadsheet for FY21. It consists of three parts. The first is the typical "one pager" (though it has expanded to two or three pages over the past few years as our activities have expanded) and showing the grants expenses we have made to date. The second is a list of what we call "new grants"- these are four separate items (down from 14 last year) totaling \$193,225. This part is reflected in the aggregate on line 36 of the first sheet under "Other New Grants" in the "GRANTS AND STIPENDS (PP)" part one the first page.

The third part consists of reporting of the funds Mass Cultural Council is receiving from casino tax revenues through the Massachusetts Cultural and Performing Arts Mitigation Trust Fund pursuant to the Massachusetts Casino Gaming Law (Mass. General Laws Chapter 23K). For ease of reference these will be called the Chapter 23K funds. Everyone should have received our report to the legislature filed as required by law on March 1. We account for the spending of the Chapter 23K funds separately so as to reinforce the fact that these funds are separate from and do not support the Council's general activities.

Other matters.

*Reallocation of Grant Funds.* The attached spreadsheet will reflect that the Council will award 781 Relief Grants for individual artists and cultural practitioners in the amount \$1,171,500. While only \$651,000 was approved for this program, the Council also approved the use of other "leftover" unexpended funds from other approved grant programs which due to a reduced demand this year did not use their full allocation in the spending plan due and also funds from any other available source. Additionally, the request

for funding from the Network of Arts Administrators of Color (NAAC) came in at \$35,000 rather than \$25,000 as we reported in January. Since there was Council discussion around increasing this grant at the Council meeting, we elected to fund the amount of the request. To meet the amount necessary to fund all of the eligible Relief Grant applications and the increased NAAC grant, we reallocated \$530,500 from other programs and sources as follows

- \$39,400 for the Cultural Organization Economic Recovery Grants program funded by the Governor's allocation of federal CARES Act funds
- \$427,550 from the approved allocation to STARS program grants. (Only \$722,448 of the \$1,150,000 allocated for this program). NOTE- this number may increase as we continue to review the eligibility of the submitted STARS applications.
- \$20,000 from the YouthReach program, as one of the grantees has relocated to out of state and thus has left the program NOTE- there may be an additional \$40,000 available from this program as two grantees determine whether they are able to accept a grant in FY21
- \$15,000 in approved Cultural District grants as one district has elect to cease operations and another district declined their FY21 grant.
- The balance (\$28,550) from the "prepayment **reserve**" to the extent necessary. (Please note that not all of the approved Festival Grants funds may be applied for this year allowing for additional funds to be reallocated but we will not know that amount, if any, until later in March)

Of course, if there are additional funds leftover after all analysis, we will, as we do every year, apply such funds to the prepayment reserve for FY22.

*NEA Audit.* In June 2019, we were notified by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Inspector General that the Council would be subject to a Performance Audit on selected awards. Starting in 2017, the NEA's Inspector General undertook to audit all state arts agencies (apparently audits had not occurred for years). Please see <https://www.arts.gov/about/inspector-general/reports/audits> for a list (and copies) of audits to date. The NEA auditor visited our office from August 5-9, 2019 and held a preliminary exit conference on the last day of the visit. The review indicated that while the Council had generally complied with terms of its grant award, there were going to be findings related to not being compliant in all of our reporting obligations – this problem related to the fact that historically we have over-reported our match obligation- including all council grants. This longstanding practice unintentionally caused many grants to be unknowingly and unnecessarily subject to federal restrictions and, as a result, not being able to provide some of the required backup documentation requested. Upon having been made aware of these issues, Council staff updated its procedures in 2019- reducing the amount of the grants it reported as "match" and clearly notifying grantees so identified of their obligation to meet federal requirements.

We had thought the audit would be done by the fall of 2019 but the auditor ultimately decided to look further at our grantees which they began in March 2020 which was then affected by COVID-19 work restrictions which delayed work on the audit throughout most of 2020. Therefore, this audit is coming out about a year late due to COVID.

We were notified earlier this month that the NEA IG's office had completed their work and prepared a draft audit and would be able to hold a Final Exit Conference with us on March 9. The draft report was issued March 5 and found that Mass Cultural Council generally met the financial and compliance requirements set forth in our federal award documents but did not fully comply with certain grants management requirements (as alluded to above). It cited the reporting requirement violations identified by the Auditor in 2019 which were corrected by us in the filing of our Fall 2019 reports with the NEA.

Additionally, the report concluded that certain federal funds (the "Folk Arts portion of our annual NEA awards those years) we spent on Traditional Arts Fellowship programs in FY16 and FY 18 and is looking for us to document other eligible costs or refund that portion of the grant (\$60,000). We believe we have sufficient other costs to support to meet the requirements of the grant. During the exit conference, the auditors made it clear that they were recommending that we work with NEA grants staff to identify these other costs.

Our management responses to the draft report are due by Monday, March 15 with the expectation that the report will be released later that week. It will be posted on the NEA Inspector General's website cited above and on the Federal Government's oversight.gov website. Copies can be made available to any Council member who requests one.

MASSACHUSETTS CULTURAL COUNCIL			
FY 21 BUDGET			
Mass Cultural Council Meeting- March 16, 2021			
	FY 20	FY 21	FY 21
	FINAL BUDGET	BUDGET	GRANT SPENDING
		PLAN	TO MARCH 5, 2021
<b>SALARIES, SPACE, AND ADMINISTRATION (NON-PROGRAM &amp; SERVICES)</b>			
1 AA: Salaries	\$ 2,759,087	\$ 2,632,225	
2 AA: Fringe & Indirect (Salaries & Contracts Paid Thru Fed. or Trust Accounts)	95,800	140,000	
3 BB: Employee Related Expenses	22,603	7,000	
4 CC: Interns and Contracted Employees	14,853	25,000	
5 DD: Pension and Insurance Related Expenditures (State Chargebacks)	46,824	57,000	
6 EE and FF: Administrative Expenses (NPS)	87,224	92,500	
7 GG: Space Rental and Utilities	354,010	354,010	
8 HH: Consultant Service (NPS) Contracts	68,101	95,500	
9 JJ: Operational Services	2,393	65,500	
10 KK: Equipment Purchases	-	27,654	
11 LL: Equipment Leases and Maintenance (Non-IT)	26,660	18,000	
12 UU: Information Technology Expenses	195,549	165,580	
13 <b>SUB-TOTAL ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES</b>	<b>3,673,104</b>	<b>3,679,969</b>	
<b>EXPENSES ATTRIBUTABLE TO PROGRAMS AND SERVICES</b>			
14 EE: Administrative Program Expenses	43,248	7,500	
15 HH&JJ: Consultants & Panelists	378,784	519,415	
16 LL&UU: P&S Tech and Equipment	-	13,600	
17 <b>SUB-TOTAL P&amp;S EXPENSES</b>	<b>422,032</b>	<b>540,515</b>	
<b>GRANTS AND STIPENDS (PP)</b>			
18 Cultural Districts	250,000	382,500	
19 Artist Fellowships	603,000	652,500	
20 Cultural Investment Portfolio	6,021,300	6,203,000	2,077,250
21 Media	130,000	130,000	
22 Festival	90,500	50,000	
23 Local Cultural Council Program	4,154,000	4,350,000	
24 Mass. Cultural Data Project	47,500	47,500	
25 Poetry Out Loud	17,500	20,000	
26 Traditional Arts Apprenticeships	-	100,000	100,000
27 Big Yellow School Bus	100,250	-	
28 STARS	1,150,800	722,450	
29 CYD -YouthReach/SerHacer (Incl NEA CARES)	1,810,050	1,490,500	11,750
30 CYD: META (KFF-Funded)	103,442	-	
31 CYD-Amplify	22,500	-	
32 UP Program Stipends/Challenge Grants	59,000	80,000	
33 Compact Grants	-		
34 Other Grants (list on Sheet 2))	269,974	193,225	
35 Individual Artist Relief	303,000	1,171,500	
36 <b>SAFE HARBORS STIPENDS</b>	<b>747,000</b>		
37 <b>GAMING MITIGATION GRANTS</b>		3,339,654	3,339,654
38 FY20 Catch up		20,400	20,400
39 CARES ACT (COER)		9,960,600	9,353,600
40 <b>SUB-TOTAL GRANT EXPENSES</b>	<b>15,879,816</b>	<b>28,913,829</b>	
<b>PARTNERSHIPS, RE-GRANT AND PROJECT FUNDING PROGRAMS</b>			
41 Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities	679,397	686,191	428,762
42 NEFA Project	55,000	60,000	30,000
43 Pass Through Earmarks	180,000		
44 <b>SUB-TOTAL PARTNERSHIPS/ RE-GRANT PROGRAMS</b>	<b>914,397</b>	<b>746,191</b>	
45 PERCENTAGE OF GRANTS TO STATE APPROPRIATION(EXCLUDING GAMING FUNDING)	89.15%	144.18%	
46 <b>OTHER</b>			
47 Prepaid Expenses and Carryforward	723,708	158,237	
48 <b>SUB-TOTAL, OTHER</b>	<b>723,708</b>	<b>158,237</b>	
49 <b>SUB-TOTAL, ALL PROGRAM</b>	<b>17,939,953</b>	<b>30,358,772</b>	
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>21,613,057</b>	<b>34,038,741</b>	
<b>REVENUE</b>			
50 State: Basic Appropriation (0640-0300) less Earmarks	18,000,000	18,180,000	
51 State: Pass-Through Funds	180,000		
52 MassDevelopment: For MCC Expenses Associated with	325,821	325,000	
53 Prepaid Expenses (Funding from Prior Years' Budgets)	680,350	458,762	
54 National Endowment for the Arts: Basic State Plan	599,400	633,700	
55 National Endowment for the Arts: Arts in Education	63,500	63,500	
56 National Endowment for the Arts: Arts in Underserved	200,300	212,400	
57 National Endowment for the Arts: Folk Arts Infrastructure	30,000	30,000	
58 National Endowment for the Arts: "Poetry Out Loud"	17,500	20,000	
59 National Endowment for the Arts: CARES ACT	475,300	68,800	
60 Chapter 23K Funds (Gaming)-Applied	822,863	3,882,962	

[illegible]

<b>OTHER NEW GRANTS (NEW PP)</b>			
Art Week		\$ 25,000	
Fair Saturday		\$ 18,000	
Audience Lab		\$ 20,000	
CIP Capacity Accelerator Network (CAN)		\$ -	\$ -
CultureRX (from Gaming Funds)		\$ 50,000	\$ 108,225
Early Education and Childcare			
Mass History Day		\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
Instrument Program		\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000
META Expansion (AET)		\$ 27,899	
Foster Families Pilot		\$ 19,075	
Holyoke Arts Ed Task Force		\$ -	\$ -
Kennedy Library		\$ 35,000	
Network of Arts Administrators of Color		\$ 25,000	\$ 35,000
<b>SUBTOTAL NEW GRANTS</b>		<b>\$ 269,974</b>	<b>\$ 193,225</b>

CHAPTER 23K (GAMING) FUNDS	CONTRIBUTED	ALLOCATED
INITIAL DEPOSIT- JANUARY 2020	\$ 3,702,411	
COUNCIL ALLOCATION 1.28.2020		
EXPENSES (7%)		\$ 259,169
GAMING MITIGATION (75 % AFTER EXPENSES)		\$ 2,582,431
ORG. SUPPORT (25% AFTER EXP)		\$ 860,810
ADDITIONAL DEPOSITS JAN 2020-MAR 2020	\$ 1,236,596	
COUNCIL ALLOCATION 4.7.2020		
ADDITIONAL GAMING MITIGATION FUNDS		\$ 757,225
ADDITIONAL ORG SUPPORT -SAFE HARBORS, SOC. PRESCR.		\$ 252,940
ADDITIONAL DEPOSITS APR 2020 - FEB 17 2021	\$ 1,735,312	
TOTAL DEPOSITS THROUGH FEB 17 2021	\$ 6,674,319	
FUNDS PREVIOUSLY ALLOCATED BY COUNCIL	\$ 4,708,073	
UNALLOCATED FUNDS AS OF FEB 17 2021	\$ 1,966,246	

## NOTES

1. For the Gaming Mitigation Program, grants in the amount of \$3,339,654 were awarded in June 2020 and paid in July 2020
2. Of the allocated Org Support Funds, \$753, 750 was allocated to Safe Harbors Grants, \$240,000 to Consulting Services, and \$120,000 to the Social Prescription Pilot in APR 2020. In NOV 2020, amounts for consulting services were reallocated among different vendors
3. Of the unallocated funds, up to \$207,961 is available for expenses, at least \$1,314,963 must be spent on gaming mitigation grants, and at least \$438,321 is available for organizational support
4. Expenses consist of employee retained to run Gaming Mitigation Program and website design for funded programs and costs of program kaizen