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COUNCIL MEETING BOOK

ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-THIRD MEETING

OF

MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL

THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 2024

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MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL
THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 2024

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ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-THIRD MEETING OF MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL

THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 2024
10:00 AM-NOON

BROADCAST MEETING

MEETING WILL BE LIVESTREAMED AT

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=4WBI_9--LS8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4WBI_9--LS8)

MEETING MATERIALS WILL BE POSTED ONLINE AT

[HTTPS://MASSCULTURALCOUNCIL.ORG/ABOUT/BOARD/](https://massculturalcouncil.org/about/board/)

UNDER "AUGUST 22, 2024 COUNCIL MEETING"

AGENDA

VOTE

1. Call to Order- Open Meeting Law Notice
 - *Marc Carroll, Chair (Acting)*
 - *David Slatery, Deputy Director (Open Meeting Law Notice)*
2. Guest Speaker – "Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA): Opportunities for Collaboration with Mass Cultural Council"
 - *Michael Bobbitt, Executive Director (Introduction)*
 - *Adam Chapdelaine, Executive Director, MMA*
3. Minutes of 162nd Council Meeting & Retreat **X**
 - *Marc Carroll, Chair*
 - *David Slatery, Deputy Director (reads the roll))*

4. Chair Report

- a) Calendar of Upcoming meetings
- b) Committees
 - *Marc Carroll, Chair*

5. Executive Office Report

- *Michael Bobbitt, Executive Director*
- a. Equity Progress Report

6. Public Affairs Report

- a) Legislative Update
- b) Department Updates
 - *Bethann Steiner, Senior Director of Public Affairs*

7. FY 25 Spending Plan General Presentation

- a) PowerPoint Presentation on FY25 Spending Plan
 - *Michael Bobbitt, Executive Director*
 - *Jen Lawless, Senior Director of Program Operations*
 - *Cathy Cheng Anderson, Senior Director of Business Operations and Chief Financial Officer*

8. FY25 Conflict of Interest Notifications

- *David Slatery, Deputy Director*

9. Program Operations Report

- a) Department Updates
- b) FY 25 Grant Recommendations
 - Jen Lawless, Senior Director of Program Operations*
- c) **GRANTS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS ON GRANT PROPOSALS**
 - *Cecil Barron Jensen and Julie Wake, Grants Committee Co-Chairs*
- d) Advancement
 - i. Mass Humanities
 - ii. New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA)
 - iii. MASSCreative
 - iv. MIT Sloan School of Management (MITx)
 - v. Social Prescription
- e) Organizations
 - i. Unrestricted Operating Support for Organizations
 - ii. Gaming Mitigation Fund

- f) Communities
 - i. Cultural District Investment Grants (Appendix A)
 - ii. Local Cultural Councils (Appendix B)
 - iii. Tribal Cultural Councils
 - g) Arts Education & Youth
 - i. YouthReach (Appendix C)
 - ii. STARS Residencies/School-based Projects
 - iii. Creative Youth Development and Education Grants
 - h) Grants for Creative Individuals
 - i) Equity and Inclusion
 - i. Festivals & Projects (Appendix D)
 - ii. UP Innovation Fund Grants (Appendix E)
 - iii. Equity, Inclusion, and Access Grants
10. **Business Operations Report**
- a) FY 25 Spending Plan Summary
 - *Cathy Cheng Anderson, Senior Director of Business Operations and Chief Financial Officer*
 - b) **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION ON SPENDING PLAN**
 - *Marc Carroll, Chair*
 - c) Approval of FY25 Budget and Spending Plan and Grant Recommendations **X**
 - *Marc Carroll, Chair*
 - *David Slatery, Deputy Director (reads the roll))*
 - d) Business Operations Updates (includes report of Travel Approvals)
 - *Cathy Cheng Anderson, Senior Director of Business Operations and Chief Financial Officer*
11. Adjourn
- *Marc Carroll, Chair*



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MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL

THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 2024

RESOLUTIONS

Section 3- Minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the One Hundred Sixty-Second Meeting of the Mass Cultural Council

Section 10- FY25 Spending Plan and Grants Recommendations

WHEREAS, the General Court of the Massachusetts State Legislature has appropriated, and the Governor has signed into law, a budget of \$26,850,000 to the Mass Cultural Council for FY25;

WHEREAS Mass Cultural Council staff has presented a draft FY25 budget and spending plan to the Executive Committee at its meeting on August 8, 2024 (the "Plan");

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

WHEREAS Council staff presented the Plan to the Mass Cultural Council at its meeting on August 22, 2024 (the "Council Meeting").

NOW THEREFORE, it is hereby

RESOLVED: To approve the Plan as recommended by the Executive Committee and presented to the Council Meeting subject to the further approvals of the individual grant and program recommendations below; and

WHEREAS Council staff presented the FY24 grants recommendations to the Grants Committee at its meeting on August 8, 2024 ("Grants Committee Meeting");

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

Section 9(d)(i)

RESOLVED: To approve a Mass Cultural Council a grant to Mass Humanities totaling \$977, 389 as recommended by the Grants Committee and presented at the Council Meeting.

Section 9(d)(ii)

RESOLVED: To approve a Mass Cultural Council grant to NEFA of \$70,000, as recommended by the Grants Committee and presented at the Council Meeting.

Section 9(d)(iii)

RESOLVED: To approve a Mass Cultural Council grant to Mass Creative for \$30,000 as recommended by the Grants Committee and presented at the Council Meeting.

Section 9(d)(iv)

RESOLVED: To approve a Mass Cultural Council grant to Massachusetts Institute of Technology (or related entity) for \$50,000 for the MITx Arts Entrepreneurship Online Program as recommended by the Grants Committee and presented at the Council Meeting.

Section 9(d)(v)

RESOLVED: To approve a grant of \$100,000 to Art Pharmacy for continuation of the Social Prescription program as recommended by the Grants Committee and presented at the Council Meeting.

Section 9(e)(i)

RESOLVED: To endorse the approach by staff to provide \$7,200,000 in unrestricted operating support grant to cultural organizations under both the Cultural Investment Portfolio program and new Operating Grants for Organizations as recommended by the Grants Committee and presented at the Council Meeting.

Section 9(e)(ii)

RESOLVED: To endorse the approach by staff to provide of the fifth cycle of the Gaming Mitigation Program as recommended by the Grants Committee and presented at the Council Meeting.

Section 9(f)(i)

RESOLVED: To approve up to \$870,000 in Cultural District grants as recommended by the Grants Committee and presented at the Council Meeting.

Section 9(f)(ii)

RESOLVED: To make allocations to the Local Cultural Councils totaling \$5,700,000 as recommended by the Grants Committee and presented at the Council Meeting.

Section 9(f)(iii)

RESOLVED: To approve up to \$103,950 in allocations to Tribal Cultural Councils as recommended by the Grants Committee and presented at the Council Meeting.

Section 9(g)(i)

RESOLVED: To approve grant allocations to YouthReach program in the amount of \$1,870,000, as recommended by the Grants Committee and presented at the Council Meeting.

Section 9(g)(ii)

RESOLVED: To approve Mass Cultural Council grants of \$1,500,000 to the STARS program as recommended by the Grants Committee and presented at the Council Meeting.

Section 9(g)(iii)

RESOLVED: To approve a grant of \$36,000 to the Youth Arts Impact Network with EdVestors, \$25,000 in support of the NEA-funded Poetry Out Loud program and a grant of \$18,000 in leftover funds provided by the Linde Family Foundation for the now-concluded Creative Youth Development Teaching Artist Fellowship program to Health Resources in Action, all as recommended by the Grants Committee and presented at the Council Meeting.

Section 9(h)

RESOLVED: To allocate \$2,175,000 for at least 435 grants of \$5,000 as part of Grants for Creative Individuals Program (plus any unused funds from any other approved grant program for additional grants) as recommended by the Grants Committee and presented at the Council Meeting.

Section 9(i)(i)

RESOLVED: To approve of the Projects/Festivals grants totaling \$1,850,000 as recommended by the Grants Committee and presented at the Council Meeting.

Section 9(i)(ii)

RESOLVED: To approve \$480,000 in UP Innovation Fund Grants, as recommended by the Grants Committee and presented at the Council Meeting.

Section 9(i)(iii)

RESOLVED: To approve a \$50,000 grant to ArtsBoston acting on behalf of the Network Arts Administrators of Color, and a \$100,000 grant to Open Door Arts for the Arts and Culture Accessibility Resource Hub, as recommended by the Grants Committee and presented at the Council Meeting.

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.

This meeting is a virtual meeting held under the Open Meeting Law as modified under current law to permit online meetings. This meeting is being broadcast to the public on a publicly available YouTube channel as described in the posted meeting notice.

Instructions on how to contact the Council with questions or problems accessing the broadcast are also included in such notice. Only Council members, staff and invited guests will be provided access to the Zoom platform hosting the meeting. As a safety measure, in order to prevent disruption of the meeting or non-public communications among the participants, the Chair, Vice Chair and Executive Committee of Mass Cultural Council has asked staff to implement the following protocols for participants in on-line meetings of Mass Cultural Council or its committees:

- Any "chat" or similar function on the Zoom platform hosting the meeting shall be disabled.
- Other than Council members or participants specifically recognized by the Chair of the meeting, all Zoom platform participants will be muted and have no ability to share media or documents or project or type images or text.
- All participants in the Zoom platform may be required to enter a waiting room and digitally sign-in before being admitted.

- Any attendee in the Zoom platform who nonetheless causes a disruption will be summarily removed from the meeting at the discretion of the Chair.

This meeting 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 do not interfere with the meeting.

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 ZOOM OR OTHER VIDEOCONFERENCING PLATFORMS 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 COUNCIL AT ITS NEXT MEETING

**MINUTES OF THE
ONE HUNDRED-SIXTY SECOND MEETING OF MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL
& COUNCIL RETREAT**

THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2024

**IN-PERSON MEETING
MUSEUM OF SCIENCE, 1 SCIENCE PARK, BOSTON, MA 02114**

Council Members Present were

Marc Carroll, Chair
Jo-Ann Davis, Vice Chair
Ché Anderson
Rhonda Anderson
Sherry Dong
Iván Espinoza-Madrigal
Donna Haghghat
Cecil Barron Jensen
Anika Lopes
Diane Asadorian Masters
Allyce Najjimy
Ellice Patterson
Julie Wake

Also Present were Mass Cultural Council Staff Members Michael J. Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jen Lawless, Bethann Steiner, Ann Petruccelli Moon, Christian Kelly, Charles Baldwin, Lisa Simmons, Sara Glidden, Erik Holmgren, Jay Paget, Dan Blask, Deborah Kenyon; Live Captioner Teri Gibson; National Assembly of State Arts Agencies Chief Program & Planning Officer Kelly Barsdate; and Museum of Science President Tim Ritchie.

Chair Marc Carroll called the meeting to order at 10:05am and asked Deputy Executive Director David Slatery to read the 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).

Prepared on 4/23/24

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.

This meeting is an in-person open public meeting in an open public meeting place accessible to the public and is being conducted under the Open Meeting Law as currently in effect and there will be no on-line, remote or broadcast component.

Mass Cultural Council welcomes the public to attend its meetings in accordance with the Open Meeting Law, but any attempts to disrupt a meeting may result in the removal of the responsible party. This meeting 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 do not interfere with the meeting.

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.

The Chair welcomed Council Members, staff, and guests to the meeting. He let Council Members know that Ann Murphy had cycled off the Council and thanked Ann for her years of service. There was then a moment to remember Council Member Kathy Castro who passed away in February. Marc read a statement commending Kathy on her lifetime of service to the arts, especially in Fall River. Vice Chair Jo-Ann Davis read a citation from Governor Maura Healey and Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll posthumously recognizing Kathy for her service to the Massachusetts cultural sector. The Council then held a moment of silence to remember Kathy.

Marc then introduced Museum of Science President Tim Ritchie and thanked him for hosting the Council's meeting. Tim welcomed Council Members, staff, and guests to the Museum, thanked the Council for its support over the years, and shared a few comments on current Museum exhibitions and programming.

Marc asked all present to briefly introduce themselves as it was the first time the Council had met in person in some time. After introductions were made, Marc shared that there had been two new appointments to the Council in recent weeks: David S. Kong of Lexington and Secretary of Economic Development Yvonne Hao of Williamstown. Neither were available to join the meeting today given the short notice, but they will have orientation sessions in the coming months and will most likely join the Council's next meeting in August. He then asked Executive Director Michael Bobbitt to introduce himself.

Michael gave a brief welcome and introduction to the agenda for the day noting that National Assembly of State Arts Agencies Chief Program & Planning Officer Kelly Barsdate had traveled from Washington D.C. to join the Council for its meeting and retreat and would give a presentation *Why Public Funding for the Arts Matters* later in the morning.

The Council then commenced its business meeting during which two items were discussed and voted upon:

- d/Deaf/Disability Equity & Access Action Plan
- Native American & Indigenous Peoples Equity Action Plan

Michael explained that after launching Mass Cultural Council's first-ever Racial Equity Plan in 2021, staff realized an additional suite of plans was needed to address equity areas other than race. The d/Deaf/Disability Equity & Access Action Plan and the Native American & Indigenous Peoples Equity Plan are the first of that suite. The Council received a draft of each plan prior to the meeting, and Michael thanked those Council Members who had submitted thoughts and feedback. Today the staff is seeking the Council's endorsement of both plans. The meeting was then opened for discussion prior to the Chair calling for a vote on each plan.

Ellice Patterson shared concerns she has with the d/Deaf/Disability Equity & Access Action Plan specifically with regard the proposed changes to the UP Initiative's Innovation & Learning Network (ILN). She stated that cultural competency is low throughout the sector, and she believed that transitioning the ILN from its current state where a small cohort of cultural organizations work directly with Equity & Access Program Officer Charles Baldwin to a much larger online training module would be harmful to the d/Deaf/Disabled community. Such a transition she stated would lead to cultural organizations and members of the d/Deaf and disabled community having to take on the unpaid work of raising cultural competency. She shared that her work with Charles Baldwin and the ILN has been positive but that changing from a close, personal and direct program to a much larger online course offering have the potential to harm the community.

Michael shared that the ILN in its current form only accommodates 15 to 20 cultural organizations annually and only those staff from those organizations which participate. He feels the sector has a lot of staff turnover, and when individuals who have completed the ILN move on, they take the knowledge from the ILN with them and by scaling the program and making it accessible to a far larger group of organizations and individuals the impact of the learning can be greatly enhanced. Michael thanked Ellice for sharing her feedback and acknowledged that the new format unfortunately meant a decrease in personal connection.

Ellice stated that her feedback stood and her strong conviction that the shift in approach would yield additional labor and cause harm to the disability community. She added that she feels the work and learning of the current ILN does get embedded into organizations and is not lost if staff members move on.

Ché Anderson asked if there could be language about achieving benchmarks and evaluation added to the plan based on Ellice's comments to assess the impact of the shift on the sector so that future adjustments, if needed could be made.

Michael responded that the plan could explicitly include such language so that it would specifically state that would be an annual review and that feedback would be sought from individuals who participate in the ILN with the aim of addressing Ellice's concern and avoiding any harm befalling the d/Deaf/disability community.

Charles shared that continual assessment is part of the plan and that checking in annually will be key.

Ellice indicated that she appreciated the modifications discussed but that her concerns still remained.

Iván asked if, considering Ellice's comments, the Council would vote on the plan modified as discussed or if we needed to vote at a subsequent meeting. After discussion, it was determined that the plan would be voted on as modified by Michael's comments. As such, the Chair asked for a motion. Ché moved to approve the plan as amended; Iván seconded the motion. By roll call vote with 11 Council Members (Marc Carroll, Jo-Ann Davis, Ivan Espinoza-Madrigal, Cecil Barron Jensen, Che Anderson, Diane Asadoorian Masters, Donna Haghighat, Julie Wake, Allyce Najimy, Sherry Dong and Anika Lopes) in favor and one Council Member (Ellice Patterson) opposed it was

RESOLVED: To endorse Mass Cultural Council's d/Deaf & Disability Equity & Access Action Plan as modified by the Council at this Meeting.

At some point after this vote, Council Member Rhonda Anderson joined the meeting. There was then a discussion of the Native American & Indigenous Peoples Equity Action Plan. Michael shared that since the Council was sent a draft of the plan. The meeting was then opened for discussion.

Ché asked if the same language about an annual review and benchmarks that were just discussed for the d/Deaf Disability Plan could be added to this plan as well.

Ellice indicated that she supported the Agency's objectives and this plan, and she was pleased to be part of the team that was supporting it.

Donna Haghighat noted that no land acknowledgement was delivered at today's meeting or referenced in the plan and Michael reiterated that the Task Force had suggested the Agency pause delivering Land Acknowledgements until further work had been completed to craft appropriate language.

Rhonda Anderson asked that the staff correct data regarding the number of Native American & Indigenous residents of Massachusetts. The plan indicates 35,000; Rhonda believes the number is closer to 70,000.

The staff will amend the plan by adding an annual review as Ché suggested and will review and correct the data per Rhonda's recommendation.

There was no further discussion, so the Chair called for a motion to approve the plan as amended. Ché moved to approve the plan and Cecil Barron Jensen seconded the motion. By roll call vote it was unanimously

RESOLVED: To endorse Mass Cultural Council's Native American & Indigenous Peoples Equity Plan as modified by the Council at this Meeting.

After the vote, Rhonda added that she had been part of the Task Force that worked with staff as they developed the plan. She expressed gratitude for the deep listening that took place during the process.

That concluded the business meeting. Following a short break the Council reconvened for its retreat and listened to NASAA Chief Program & Planning Officer Kelly Barsdate's

presentation, *Why Public Funding for the Arts Matters*. Kelly offered to make materials available to the Council members and copies of such materials are available upon request.

Marc, as Chair, adjourned the meeting at 12:30pm.



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SCHEDULE: FY25 COUNCIL & COMMITTEE MEETINGS

August 2024

- Executive Committee Meeting – Aug. 8, 10 am-**ALREADY OCCURRED**
- Grants Committee Meeting – Aug. 8, 1pm- **ALREADY OCCURRED**

- 163rd Meeting of Mass Cultural Council – Aug. 22, 10am

October 2024

- Executive Committee Meeting – Oct. 16, 10am
- Grants Committee Meeting – Oct. 16, 1pm

- Advancement Committee Meeting – Oct. 30, 10am

November 2024

- 164th Meeting of Mass Cultural Council – Nov. 13, Noon – **in-person meeting, location TBD**

February 2025

- Advancement Committee – February 5, 10am

- Executive Committee – February 12, 10am
- Grants Committee – February 12, 1pm

- 165th Meeting of Mass Cultural Council – Feb. 26, 10am

April 2025

- Executive Committee Meeting – April 16, 10am
- 166th Meeting of Mass Cultural Council & Council Retreat – April 30, Noon – **in-person meeting, Location TBD**

May 2025

- Advancement Committee Meeting – May 15, 1pm

June 2025

- Executive Committee Meeting – June 25, 10am
- Grants Committee Meeting – June 25, 1pm

Special Meetings of the Committees or Council are occasionally necessary for unforeseen circumstances. If a Special Meetings is needed, as much notice as possible will be provided, the legally required notice at a minimum.



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COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS AS OF 6.13.24

Executive Committee

Marc Carroll, Chair
Jo-Ann Davis, Vice Chair
Ché Anderson
Simone Early, Member-at-Large
Iván Espinoza-Madrigal
Cecil Barron Jensen
Julie Wake

Grants Committee

Marc Carroll – ex officio
JoAnn Davis – ex officio
Cecil Barron Jensen – Co-Chair
Julie Wake – Co-Chair
Donna Haghghat
Emily Bramhall
Simone Early
Ashley Occhino
Mark Snyder

Advancement Committee

Marc Carroll – ex officio
JoAnn Davis – ex officio
Ché Anderson – Co-Chair
Iván Espinosa Madrigal – Co-Chair
Rhonda Anderson
Diane Asadorian Masters
Anika Lopes - accepted
Petrina Martin
Allyce Najjimy



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EXECUTIVE OFFICE UPDATE

AUGUST 2024

Activities report. On Friday, August 2, Deputy Chief of Staff Ann Petruccelli Moon forwarded the August Executive Department Update detailing activities during the previous month. Please look for the next monthly update in early September.

Executive Committee. The Executive Committee met on August 8 to recommend for approval the proposed FY25 Spending Plan discussed in Sections 9 and 10 of the agenda for today's meeting, discussed and recommended for approval as part of the spending approval, approved out of state travel for staff members and approved the agenda for today's Council meeting.

Grants Committee. The Grants Committee also met on August 8 and recommended for approval to the full council, the grant and program recommendations for FY25 made by staff.

Conflict of Interest Notifications. Earlier, Deputy Director Dave Slatery sent out an email notice to Grants Committee members and then all Council members a request to report all potential conflicts of interests and connections with any cultural organizations or potential grantees so that the Agency's minutes and records can appropriately reflect that members recused themselves from any discussion or vote on grants or other Agency arrangements with which a member has a possible conflict. For further information, please refer to Dave's earlier email communications and Section 8 of this Council Meeting Book.

A reminder that all Committee meeting materials (as well as all Council Meeting materials) are posted and available for review at our website's Council page at [Governing Council – Mass Cultural Council](#).



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EQUITY PROGRESS REPORT

August 22, 2024

NEW EQUITY PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

- In July Mass Cultural Council two new equity plans: a [Native American & Indigenous People's Equity Plan](#) and a [d/Deaf & Disability Equity Plan](#) took effect. These plans, which were endorsed by votes taken by the governing Council on March 21, 2024 mark a significant milestone in our ongoing commitment to advancing equity and inclusion within the Commonwealth's cultural and creative sector. The plans represent an expansion of the Agency's equity goals, which initially took shape with the launch of our [Racial Equity Plan](#), and set the stage for a broader dialogue and actionable steps towards addressing racial disparities within our communities. Building on this foundation, the two new plans aim to address additional dimensions of identity and experience, ensuring that our equity initiatives are focused, comprehensive, and far-reaching.
- As the two new plans activated with the new fiscal year on July 1, Public Affairs is now working with colleagues from the program teams to communicate to our external stakeholders why this work is important. The [Power of Culture blog](#) shares a reflection on how – and with who - we crafted the d/Deaf & Disability Plan. More content will soon follow. Further, a [new landing page](#) was built on the Agency's website to detail our work in these spaces. The plans are published here.
- Our Public Affairs department also used the launch of these two new plans to reformat the Agency's existing Racial Equity Journey Map on the Agency website into a broader in scope [Equity Journey Map](#), where we can chart our learning, efforts, and equity initiatives and programming.

SECTOR EDUCATION, SERVICES & ACHIEVEMENT

- We have launched a new learning campaign to provide a framework and educational resources for accessible and inclusive job postings and employment practices. This initiative aims to promote access, equity, and inclusion in our cultural institutions, and to support creative individuals from the

Deaf and Disabilities cultural communities. Please see our first resource, published in the Power of Culture blog: [Guide to Writing Inclusive and Accessible Job Descriptions](#).

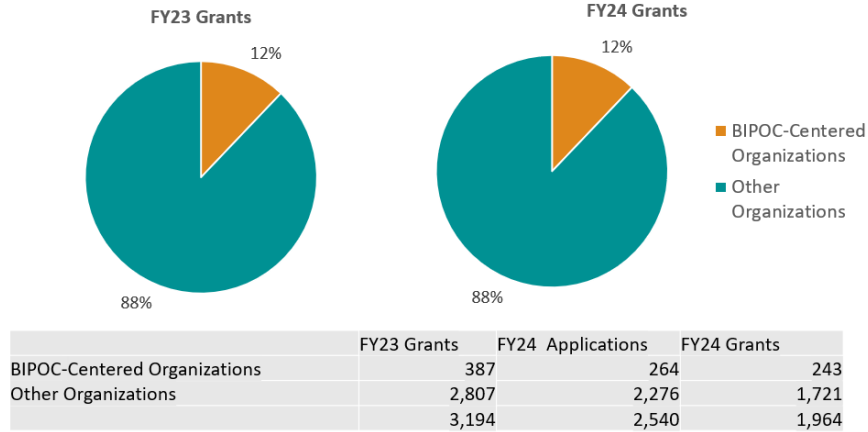
- To support cultural organizations improving access at their public events, we created a "[10 Steps](#)" list for providing increased access at Festivals or Projects published on the Power of Culture blog.
- In FY24, we invested in Open Door Arts' [Arts & Culture Accessibility Self-Assessment](#), a free, comprehensive electronic tool that helps arts and cultural organizations improve their accessibility. This disability-centered tool provides resources for continuous learning, allowing organizations to evaluate accessibility in five key areas (Organizational Approach, Space, Access Services, Communication, and Programming) and receive customized reports with data-driven insights and step-by-step guidance for creating an Accessibility Plan. Now available to the cultural sector, this tool will be integrated into the Universal Participation (UP) Program and promoted through webinars to support its utilization.
- We are scaling and evolving the Universal Participation (UP) initiative as part of the d/Deaf & Disability Equity Plan, including a significant investment in Open Door Arts' Arts and Culture Accessibility Resource Hub. This Hub will serve as a central resource for Innovation Learning Network -style learning, benefiting the Massachusetts cultural sector and people with disabilities. For more details, see the memo for agenda item 10(c).

PROGRAMS

- We are poised to launch the Tribal Cultural Council Program this fall. We are excited about this opportunity to deeply engage with and support Tribal Governments within Massachusetts in an equivalent manner to the way we support municipal governments. Please see the memo for agenda item Agenda Item 7(c) for additional details.
- In June we [presented on our FY24 grant making activities](#) to the Grants Committee. The presentation included information about the demographic make-up of the grantees from FY23 to FY24. FY23 was exceptional in terms of volume (7,000 grants awarded) due to the Cultural Sector Recover grants, but despite the large decrease in grants awarded, the demographic percent make-up was relatively stable from FY23 to FY24:

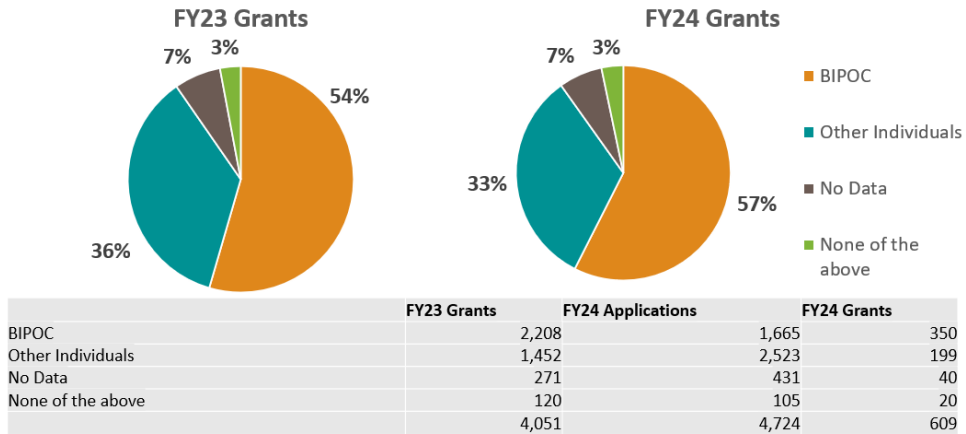
BIPOC-Centered Organizations

32



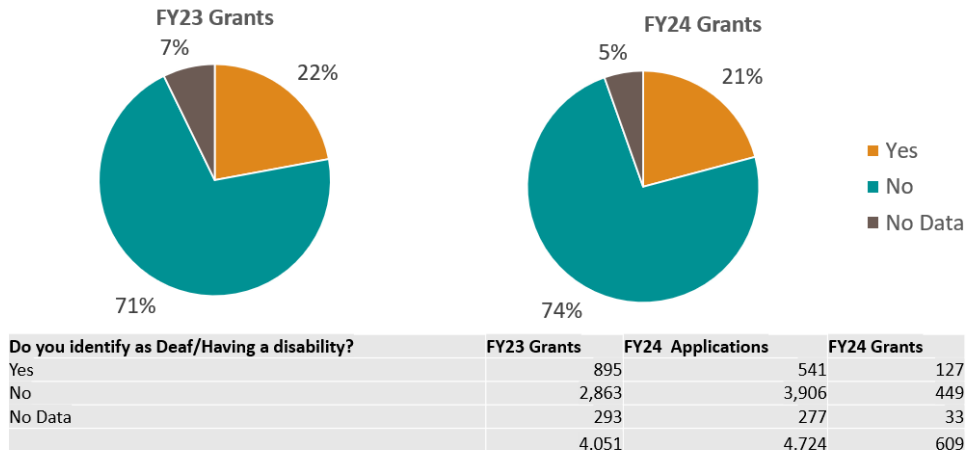
BIPOC Individuals

33



Individuals: Identify as Deaf/Disability

34



- We have developed an acknowledgement receipt of the Agency's d/Deaf & Disability Access & Equity Action Plan for our future contracted employees. By having contractors acknowledge their understanding and commitment, we reinforce the importance of these values and foster a more inclusive workplace culture.
- In August, four staff members (Michael Bobbitt, Charles Baldwin, Cheyenne Cohn-Postell, and Christian Kelly) attended the [Leadership Exchange in Arts and Disability \(LEAD®\)](#) conference in Seattle. This conference, renowned as the premier learning opportunity for promoting the full inclusion of people with disabilities in arts and culture, provided valuable professional development that strengthens our internal capacity to advance the d/Deaf & Disability Equity Plan.



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PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE

AUGUST 2024

Budget/Legislative/Advocacy Report

- Formal legislative sessions for 2023-2024 ended on July 31. The Legislature will continue to meet twice weekly through the end of the calendar year, but, unless a special formal session is called by Leadership, no roll call votes can be taken. Mass Cultural Council was watching and active in advocacy on two matters: the FY25 state budget and the Mass Leads Act, the economic development bond bill.
- Mass Cultural Council fared very well in the [FY25 state budget](#). Our \$26,850,000 appropriation breaks down to \$25,895,000 for operations and \$955,000 for 20 legislative earmarks. We believe that the Agency has never received a higher operating budget than this year's amount.
- The [economic development bond bill](#), however, was not resolved by the Conference Committee before formal sessions concluded at the end of July. Mass Cultural Council had actively engaged with various Committees charged with reviewing this major investment bill as the Cultural Facilities Fund was set to be recapitalized with \$50 million and other policies and language contained within was helpful to the creative and cultural sector. In early August the Governor issued a statement urging the House and Senate to complete its work on this major bill and come back for a special legislative session to take the necessary votes to enact the bond bill. The Speaker of the House and the Senate President both responded with statements that this could happen. Mass Cultural Council will continue to monitor the process and urge the Conferees to retain the items of interest to the Agency in the final bill.
- During the fall and early winter months Mass Cultural Council will work on developing policy internally and with external stakeholders that may be filed as legislation in the upcoming 2025-2026 session.

Events/Communications/Digital Communications Report

Prepared on 8/13/24

- We've been all over the state this year, with events that have advanced the sector and celebrated grant award decisions:
 - *Gaming Mitigation Fund Grant Celebration* at the Hanover Theatre in Worcester (April 8)
 - *Cultural Facilities Fund Grant Celebration* at the Children's Museum of Easton (June 11)
 - *Creative Individuals Grant Celebration* at the Center for the Arts at the Armory in Somerville (June 17)

- With the start of FY25, we are excited to launch a new advancement program – the Spotlight Series! This is a new monthly webinar the Agency will host with public partners to curate information and build awareness about opportunities and resources that may be of interest to the creative and cultural sector. This new program will supplement existing information, marketing, and outreach being conducted by other state agencies on their programming and initiatives and provide members of the creative and cultural sector and opportunity to engage and ask questions about these resources.
 - This series kicked off on August 5 when we partnered with the Mass Office of Travel and Tourism (MOTT) to promote their new Massachusetts 250 Grant Program. More than 250 people registered for the webinar and a recording is now available on our YouTube channel.

- The past few months have seen some significant media coverage of our recent [announcement](#) with Art Pharmacy of the launch of the nation's first statewide arts prescription solution. This has been covered by many major outlets all throughout the state. If you're unable to access any of the coverage below because of a paywall, please let us know and we'll be happy to provide a PDF.
 - [The Boston Globe](#) (June 28)
 - [Boston Business Journal](#) (June 28)
 - [State House News Service](#) (July 1)
 - [El Planeta](#) (July 8)
 - [The Culture Show on GBH](#) (July 9)
 - WBUR's Radio Boston (July 10) – live coverage unavailable online
 - [WCVB Channel 5](#) (July 11)
 - [The Bay State Banner](#) (August 1)
 - NBC Channel 10 News – Expected in the coming weeks

- The FY24 media partnership promoting our grant opportunities with El Planeta Media reached an audience of 986,267 Spanish-speaking

individuals, with a total of 1,329,065 impressions. The partnership included [social media posts](#) and [videos](#) on Facebook and Instagram, and [newsletter mentions](#).

- Over the past year, we've seen significant increases in engagement across all social media channels (except X/Twitter, which remained flat):
 - 15,759 Facebook followers (increase from 15,400)
 - 12,772 Instagram followers (5.8% increase vs. May 2024)
 - 5,790 LinkedIn followers (37% increase)
 - 1,680 YouTube subscribers (13% increase)
- In FY24 we again saw strong growth in our e-newsletter subscribers, as well as consistently above average open rates and click throughs:
 - Power of Culture subscribers increased 20% (from 24,052 to 28,974), open rates averaged 55.3%, and click throughs averaged 6.5%
 - Community Initiative subscribers increased 16% (from 12,580 to 14,541), open rates averaged 52.6%, and click throughs averaged 5.6%
 - Artist News subscribers increased 18% (from 13,914 to 16,402), open rates averaged 53.7%, and click throughs averaged 7.5%
- The Agency's website, MassCulturalCouncil.org, had 1.19 million views and 318k users in FY24.

Last created August 14, 2024

UPDATED Conflicts of Interest Notifications- Mass Cultural Council Members

As of August 15, 2024

PLEASE NOTE- WE HAVE MANY NEW MEMBERS WHO WILL NEED TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL CONFLICTS

1. Marc Carroll
 - a. Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra
 - b. The Rivers School
2. Jo-Ann Davis
 - a. The Care Center
 - b. Springfield Museums
 - c. MASS Creative
3. Allyce Najimy
4. Cecil Barron Jensen
 - a. Artists Association of Nantucket
 - b. Egan Maritime Institute
 - c. Nantucket Cultural District
5. Simone Early
6. Mark Snyder
7. Che Anderson
 - a. Worcester County Mechanics Association (Mechanics Hall)
 - b. Worcester Historical Museum
 - c. Worcester Art Museum
 - d. Institute of Contemporary Art
8. Secretary Yvonne Hao
9. Donna Haghighat
 - a. WAM Theater
10. Ivan Espinosa-Madrigal
11. Julie Wake
 - a. Arts Foundation of Cape Cod
12. Rhonda Anderson

Last created August 14, 2024

13. Emily Bramhall

14. David Kong

15. Anika Lopes

16. Petrina Martin

17. Ellice Patterson

18. Ashley Occhino

- a. Fall River Arts and Culture Coalition/One South Coast Chamber Foundation
- b. Southeastern Massachusetts Visitors Bureau
- c. SouthCoast Community Foundation
- d. Society of Arts and Crafts

19. Diane Asadorian Masters

Procedure for dealing with conflicts of interest on Mass Cultural Council grant votes.

Prior to any Council or Grants Committee meeting, staff will compile a list of conflicts of interest by identifying any potential recipient of council funds to be voted on at that meeting to which any Council member has an identified connection. Unless a Council member indicates otherwise, it is assumed that the Council member will abstain from all discussion and any vote regarding such grantee.

A document listing these possible conflicts of interest (the" conflicts list") will be distributed to the board at the beginning of the meeting.

After presentation of grant recommendations for a particular program, before a motion for vote, the chair should refer to the list and 1) ask the members present if the conflicts list is accurate and if the members identified will abstain from votes and discussion for the relevant organizations as identified on the conflicts list and 2) ask if any other conflicts exist which should be added to the conflicts list.

After dealing with any necessary corrections or additions, the chair will then ask for a motion approving the grant/allocation recommendations noting that the Council members noted on the conflict list will abstain from discussion and votes for certain organizations in accordance with the conflicts list. It will not be necessary for any member with a conflict to leave the room as long as such member does not participate in any decision regarding the affected organization and it is specifically noted in the minutes that such member abstained from all discussion and votes regarding the specified organization.

Sample script for a meeting vote:

CHAIR: We will now consider votes approving the FY25 grant recommendations. Please note the conflicts list that has been distributed. Staff members have compiled these lists to identify members that have a real or potential conflict of interest in connection with this vote. Please indicate 1) if there are any inaccuracies on the list or 2) if any additional conflicts need to be disclosed.

[If any corrections or additions are noted by board members, the conflicts list will be amended at this time]

Noting the abstentions disclosed on the *[corrected]* conflicts list, the chair now calls for a motion to approve the grants recommendations for this program.

Then, upon motion duly and made and seconded, with the abstentions noted above, it was VOTED: ...]"

In the minutes recording this vote, the following will be included

[Council Member X] disclosed that s/he would abstain from any discussion or vote regarding the provision of a grant or other assistance to {list affiliated organizations}



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PROGRAMS UPDATE

AUGUST 2024

Access and Inclusion

Universal Participation (UP)

- The 2024 UP Innovation Fund Annual Reports were submitted and are being reviewed for trends, challenges, and success stories. See the grants memo for more information about the FY25 UP Innovation Fund grants.
- Reviewed access and additional criteria for 2025 Festivals and Projects applications. While architectural or physical access was mostly understood; the rise of Neuro-diversity as an Identifier as an access issue had many applicants taking steps to include people with cognitive disabilities or autism spectrum disorder. More education for the sector is still necessary to allay fears of and improve budgeting for Access.
- UP Office Hours 2024 ended in June; final two sessions focused on Historic Homes and Museums and Education.
- UP Learning Network (ILN) in 2025, working with us and Open Door Arts to activate new tools (self-assessment and ADA compliance) and to support design of an Access Hub, providing learning and resources to the cultural sector. See the grants memo for more information.

Meetings and Events

- Attended online learning sessions on Hand Talk, sign language from indigenous cultures; Creative Aging, the growing senior population expected to exceed youth numbers in the year 2044; and the Wolfgang Brown Audience Monitor, data collection on Access services provided at performance and production houses across the country.
- Ongoing: NEA monthly, Smithsonian monthly, NEFA every other month.
- Consultations with Envisioning Access, Amherst Historic, Mahaiwe Performance Center, Boston Lyric Opera, BARR Foundation

Prepared on 8/13/24

- Events: Presented at NASAA Investing in Access Monday June 10, and Commonwealth Shakespeare Company's Access Night on Saturday July 27.
- Attended LEAD Conference July 29 -Aug 2

Advancement

- Identifying educational opportunities with the Institute for Human Centered Design (IHCD), Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD), our disability consultant Art-Reach, EPIC, Americans with Disabilities Act-Great Lakes office.

Artists

Grants for Creative Individuals:

Please see our grants memo about the second year of the Grants for Creative Individuals, Mass Cultural Council's redesigned program for individual artists, culture bearers, and creative practitioners.

Advancement for Artists

The following represents the Artist Team's ongoing work to advance the creative and cultural sector, especially as relates to individual artists.

- Published "[Guide to Writing a Call to Artists](#)" article on the ArtSake online resource to help other MA state agencies and partners collaborate with artists.
- Ongoing partnership with Governor's Office to exhibit Massachusetts artists in the Governor's waiting room at the State House.
- Researching arts/transit partnerships, busking regulations, and independent contractor law to support possible future partnerships with Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MASSDOT) and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA).
- Continued partnership with [Work Without Limits](#), offering benefits counseling so our grantees can understand the impact of our grants on their public benefits.
- Met with Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) to discuss impact of our Grants for Creative Individuals on their program's benefits. Good news: our grant now considered "non-countable" for DTA's cash benefits programs, meaning beneficiaries of these programs who receive our grants won't be "penalized."

- Summer Confuorto from the Artists Team is partnering with the New England Foundation for the Arts to support Walking Together, a regional initiative that seeks to advance and support communities of color working in the traditional arts.

Community Initiative

The Community Initiative which includes the Local Cultural Council (LCC) program, the Festivals & Projects Program and the Cultural Districts Initiative (CDI) will be launching 2 grant programs in the fall of 2024. The LCC grant program and the CDI Grant Program. The Festivals & Projects grant program which is staffed by both the Organizations team and the Communities team completed the FY24 grant cycle and are in the process of finalizing grants to approved grantees. In FY24 we brought on two new members to the Community Initiative team, Sommers Smith and Greg Torrales who came to us from the new Operating Grants for Organizations program. In FY24 the LCC program received 12,632 applications and funded 7,631 grants totaling \$7,556,474 – which represents a combination of Mass Cultural Council funds and funds raised by LCCs. We have launched a survey to our LCC members to get a better understanding of their experiences with the grant cycle and the grants management system. Those results will help us determine any changes to the LCC program for FY26. In FY25 we will be conducting a series of webinars and workshops as the LCC grant cycle gets underway.

Regional Assignments & Staffing. The Community Initiative program staff work on a regional basis in order to more fully represent and support all Cultural Partners in the communities we serve. In FY25, program staff will continue to work closely with their LCCs as well as their municipalities to better support LCCs by being a connector and convenor, when necessary, between the cultural community and the municipality. We have had much success introducing the municipalities to their LCCs through the Mass Municipal Association trade show in January as well as hosting two webinars for municipal officials to learn more about the LCC program and how they can be a support and champion of arts and culture in their community. The Communities team is currently comprised of 6 full time program officers and 1 Program Manager. Of the 6 program officers, one is designated to support the Cultural Districts Initiative with onboarding and designations, and one is designated to support the Festivals & Project grants. A full report on the Cultural District Initiative and Festivals & Projects is included in these materials.

Local Cultural Councils FY25 Local Cultural Council Recommendations. Please see our grants memo for the recommended town-by-town allocations for the Local Cultural Council Program in FY25.

LCC Online Application. The online application system will open on September 1st with a few new changes to help streamline the process. The Local Cultural Council members continue to have the opportunity to review applications in real time which helps facilitate their voting meetings and enables them to hold meetings sooner in the grant cycle if they wish. The LCC team will be conducting webinars to update councils and applicants of the changes. We are now going into year 8 of the online application and it has been highly successful for councils, applicants and the Mass Cultural Council. The system allows us to gather data on applicants which can help us determine who is applying, the budgets of projects, who is being funded and, who is not being funded. The Application deadline for FY25 the grant application deadline will be October 16th.

Events/Outreach. The team continues to visit their communities and participate in LCC meetings, LCC grant receptions, Festivals and other programming where our LCCs and Cultural Districts are involved. The Fall will be busy supporting our LCCs as they manage the grant cycle as well as assisting applicants with their applications. In addition, Cultural Districts will be applying for grants for their districts mid fall, and we will be supporting approve applicants in the Festivals & Projects grants program.

Festivals & Projects. Please see the grants memo for the program recommendations for The Public Programming/Festivals program in FY25.

Cultural Districts. 54 districts received, and have reported on, last year's round of CDI grants of \$15,000, totaling \$810,000. These grants are supporting our sectoral leaders, their partners, communities, and constituents, through the implementation of equitable initiatives in areas pivotal to their development and sustainability such as diversified, collective marketing and engagement strategies, regional and collaborative programming, creative community placemaking/placekeeping efforts, investments in their local creative economy, and equity and access initiatives, among others. We recommend offering grants of the same amount of \$15,000 to each eligible participating district in this year's FY25 cycle.

New and Prospective Cultural Districts. Formal site visits to potential new districts occurred in Watertown, Holyoke, and Westfield; our fully developed applicants most ready to proceed with designation. These districts are currently on track to be presented for approval in FY25. Additional communities who have inquired about the designation process or who have formally started their pursuit or application include roughly 30 municipalities spanning the entire state and what would be our very first designation in the North Central region of Massachusetts.

Staff continues to field inquiries, hold stakeholder meetings, and conduct informal visits to assess and support these prospective municipalities.

District Offerings & Updates. Staff continues to provide ongoing opportunities for Cultural District leaders and partners to connect and collaborate, share resources, information, and best practices, and to learn from subject matter experts on topics they've identified as their primary areas of focus.

Cultural District Designation Redesign. Additionally, Agency staff, with the help of a hired consultant, will spend FY25 conducting a deep review of all aspects of the Cultural Districts Initiative, in accordance with our Strategic Plan, to ensure the designation and the program truly drives economic growth using creativity and creative placemaking within our districts and their host communities. The program will be paused to new applicants during this time, and all future applicants will be brought into the program under the new program guidelines starting in FY26.

Advancement. In addition, the Communities Team has been busy connecting and working with other state agencies, foundations and municipal entities to further the work of arts and culture in communities. We have engaged in partnerships and planning with other state and regional entities including, but not limited to, the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities' Mass Downtown Initiative, Massachusetts Office of Business Development, NEFA's Creative Economy Network, Regional Planning Agencies and Tourism Councils, and Transportation Agencies among many others. Recent highlights include:

- Massachusetts Municipal Association
 - Two webinars with full membership to introduce them to the agency and provide information about how to support arts and culture and how arts and culture can increase the vitality of their communities.
 - Presented at Mayor's Meeting in Newburyport to build off webinars and engage them in a discussion about what they need and how they can create the infrastructure to support their goals.
- Partnership with Mass Downtown Initiative and MassDevelopment Transformative Development Initiative (TDI)
 - Monthly meetings to discuss collaborative opportunities
 - UPDATE: Working together on Request for Response (RFR) document for a consultant contract for \$50,000 to be posted in June (2024)
 - UPDATE.2: Request for Qualifications (RFQ) posted, in the amount of \$150,000, to account for future phases of this ongoing

- partnership work. Consultant projected to be hired in early fall for approximately 6 months of planning work services.
- Community One Stop for Growth + MDI
 - UPDATE: Next FY cycle, this program will prioritize projects occurring in cultural districts.
 - Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism (MOTT) + "Mass 250"
 - UPDATE: Grant opportunities for this MOTT grant program released July, 2024. Many cultural districts are working on collaborative and regional projects and programming.
 - MOTT FY25 Destination Development Capital Grant program will prioritize projects occurring in cultural districts.
 - Massachusetts Office of Business Development (MOBD)
 - UPDATE: Great meeting, In-person follow-up scheduled, conversations of creative business pilot program, agreed to be part of Cultural District Re-Design Task Force
 - North of Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau (NOBCVB)
 - Proposed North of Boston region \$100 membership in the organization for LCCs and CDs
 - (July 2024) Together with NOBCVB and Destination Gloucester and 8 Cultural Districts in the North of Boston region established pilot marketing initiative to highlight CD tourism activity.
 - Created a new opportunity for Cultural Districts:
 - eligible for a \$500 Cultural District Tourism Marketing Grant, upon joining, to be used for marketing and promotional efforts in your Districts.
 - eligible for members-only Fall Tourism Marketing grant to elevate Fall and Winter programs and events and Spring Tourism Marketing Grant for Spring & Summer programs.
 - Invited Anne Gobi, Massachusetts Rural Affairs Director, to meet with Communities Team.
 - Successful meeting with Anne led to introductions to other staff and contacts and an invitation to a Rural & Western Massachusetts Conference 2024' in Northampton.

Creative Youth Development / Education (CYD/E)

Social Prescription. At the end of June, the CYD/E team worked closely with our partners at Art Pharmacy and the Public Affairs team to publicly launch the first statewide system for social prescription in the United States. Alongside Mass General Brigham and United Health care the social prescription program represents the creation of a new revenue stream for cultural organization and through the broad recognition of arts and culture as having a measurable therapeutic benefit for personal and public health. We believe this announcement is the beginning of substantial growth for the program across Massachusetts and have been responding to inquiries from across the country, many from state arts agencies, who want to replicate the program.

Program Planning. As we look ahead to FY25 our team has also been deeply engaged with Organizations team in reviewing their current cycle of grants for Festivals and Projects and for Organizational Support. Our two current programs, STARS and YouthReach, will be aligning their cycles starting in FY26 and the review is giving us an opportunity to understand the ways in which these programs might interact as we prepare for our upcoming cycle.

Advancement. Finally, we have continued with our advancement work by continuing to represent the agency on the STEM Advisory Council, chaired by the Lt. Governor and the Secretary of Education, as well as meeting quarterly with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. In addition, our team led a meeting of the Behavioral Health Funders Forum that sought to find overlap in the work of Behavioral Health Funders and Arts funders. We consider the arts sector, as demonstrated by our social prescription program, to be a non-clinical workforce for the mental health crisis that is growing throughout Massachusetts.

Cultural Facilities Fund (CFF)

In May, our statutory partner in this program, MassDevelopment voted to finalize this year's CFF grant recommendations.

The grant recommendations include Capital; Feasibility and Technical Assistance and Systems Replacement Plan Grants. The approvals are as follows:

- 51 Capital Grants: \$5,502,000
- 27 Feasibility and Technical Assistance Grants: \$501,400
- 18 Systems Replacement Plan Grants: \$150,500
- 88 Grants Total: \$6,153,900

The Fund received 231 applications this round. The most ever received in the Fund's history. The requests were as follows:

- Capital Grant requests: 179
- Feasibility and Technical Assistance Grant requests: 35
- Systems Replacement Plan Grant requests: 18

The total dollar request to the Fund was \$23.1 million and the combined total development costs of all projects was \$346 million.

In July, the Healy Driscoll Administration authorized \$10 million for CFF in their FY25 capital spending plan. Staff are working with our partners at MassDevelopment to craft the guidelines and application for the next round of funding.

In addition, we are working with applicants that submitted grant proposals last round and did not receive funding. Announcements about the next round of funding will be made in October 2024.

Grant Systems Team

The Grant Systems Team of the Mass Cultural Council supports the agency's grantmaking via technical expertise of our grants management system (GMS). We are responsible for database management, reporting, technical grant application support, and providing customer service/training both internally and externally. We also contribute to policy, program design, and implementation of grant programs. We are currently a team of three full-time staff; one manager and two officers.

In collaboration with the Executive Office, we launched **Advancement Tracking** in GMS. They will use this feature to track external contacts, meetings and engagements.

In collaboration with Public Affairs, we generated and published **FY24 Legislative Funding Lists** for our website and to share out.

Since January, we supported the launch, application deadline, application review, funding notifications, and report deadlines for **Operating Grants for Organizations, Festivals and Projects, Gaming Mitigation, Cultural Facilities Fund, Grants for Creative Individuals, and additional awards under Cultural Sector Recovery for Individuals**.

We also supported the **Cultural Asset Inventory** project's final deliverable from Diversity North Group which was presented to staff in June.

We are working on early steps of **LCC cycle setup**, launching on September 1 as well as **funding formulas** for combined Organizations Grants for November decisions.

We continue to **review the system for enhancement opportunities** to make user experience better and to pull data more intuitively. The FY24 applicant survey highlighted some recurring complaints and praises that help us in our discussions. Our database partner, SmartSimple has also hired an Arts & Culture Grants Market Manager who has met with us to understand our unique needs as a state funder of arts and culture. We will continue conversations about potential National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) reporting and media file upload enhancements.

Organizations

The Cultural Investment Portfolio (CIP) team has been re-named as the Organizations team, to better reflect and communicate the purpose and activities of the team. As is explained in greater detail in the grants memo, the team is currently managing the transition from the existing organizational support grant program known as CIP or Portfolio to the new Operating Grants for Organizations program. Until that transition is complete, both programs will be running in FY25 and for several years thereafter

FY24 was the final year of our partnership with SMU | DataArts (formerly known as the Cultural Data Project), which has provided the financial platform that the CIP grantees have used for their annual reporting requirements since the beginning of the CIP program in 2010. SMU | DataArts used the data from Massachusetts organizations to present a study on "Arts and Culture in Massachusetts" including the state of the sector, analyzing the post-COVID health of the sector. Available for viewing at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tCvH0ky58zM>

The new Operating Grants for Organizations launched in March, 2024, with the application deadline in June, 2024. We received 480 eligible applications, out of a total of 581 received. Reviewers are currently reviewing the applications, and a list of recommended grantees will be available for the November Council meeting.

We implemented plans for the new simplified year-end reporting requirements for FY24 Portfolio grantees. We worked with a financial consultant to develop a methodology for assessing financial health indicators for grantees, to be used as part of the Operating Grants funding formula

Festivals & Projects program (co-managed with the Communities team)
Please see the grants memo for full details about FY25.

Gaming Mitigation. The FY25 Gaming Mitigation program is expected to launch in fall 2024. The Operating Grants for Organizations application included research questions to help us identify organizations which might be eligible for future cycles of this program, and Program Officer Lillian Lee is analyzing this information and other data to develop recommendations for possible revisions to the program. This program supports performing arts centers across the Commonwealth with grants to help with the costs associated with hosting touring artists and shows.

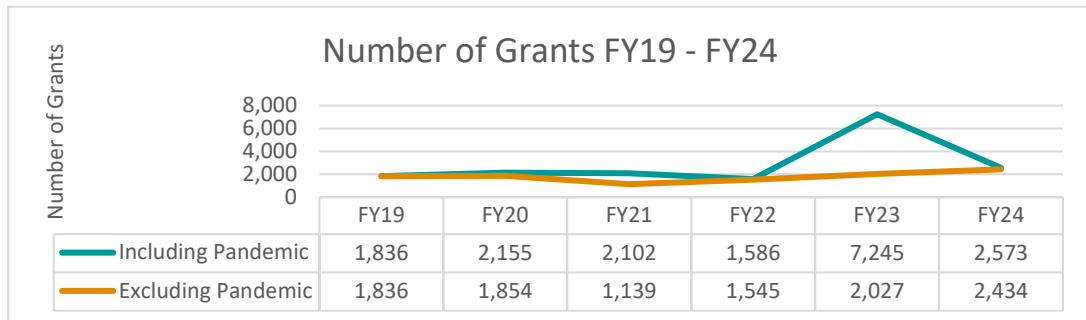


Power of culture

To: Mass Cultural Council
 Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jen Lawless
 Dt: August 22, 2024
 Re: FY25 Grant and Program Recommendations

Overview. In FY25 the Mass Cultural Council is poised to make an estimated 2,500 grants through its programs totaling approximately \$26.85 million.

This is the first year since FY19 that we are not making any pandemic-related grants. However, there will be a slight increase in the number of grants made through our core programs, so, even without pandemic funds, we will make roughly the same total number of grants as FY24.



System Usage. In FY24 our grants management system had roughly **145,000 logins** by **19,600 people**. Across all direct programs and including the Local Cultural Council Program, we had just over **20,000 applications** come in through our grants management system. We presented [analysis of our FY24 grant making](#) to the Grants Committee in June.

The program teams, including the grant management system team, put in an immense amount of work and time supporting applicants, potential applicants, and grantees. We expect a similar volume in FY25.

The following memos describe the FY25 grantmaking and each separate program in more detail. In all cases, the Grants Committee has previously reviewed these requests and have recommended the proposals for approval

by the full Council. Please note, however, that the list of grantees has not been determined and/or guidelines are not complete for certain programs (as further described in the memos below). For those programs, staff will be requesting the Council approval to move forward as indicated and final approvals for will be sought for those programs at either the Council's November or February meeting.

All grant allocation amounts below are based upon Mass Cultural Council's FY 25 Spending Plan which is being brought forward for Council approval at this meeting.

Advancement Grants

(Agenda Items 9(d)(i - v))

To: Mass Cultural Council
 Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Catherine Cheng-Anderson, Jen Lawless, Bethann Steiner, Ann Petruccelli-Moon
 Dt: August 22, 2024
 Re: Advancement Grants

Recommendations

Organization	Initiative	Grant
Mass Humanities	Partnership Grant	\$977,389
New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA)	New England State Touring (NEST)/Annual Grant	\$70,000
MASSCreative	Passthrough - Artist Stipends at State House Event(s)	\$30,000
MIT Sloan School of Management	MITx Arts Entrepreneurship Online Program	\$50,000

\$1,127,389

Mass Humanities. In the FY24 budget we are recommending **\$977,389** for our annual partnership grant with the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities (Mass Humanities). The proposed partnership award for FY25 is approximately 3.58% (\$33,781) greater than the amount awarded in FY24. The percentage increase is the same as the percentage increase in Mass Cultural Council's FY25 state appropriation from the amount received for FY24 (in both cases, after earmarks). We have an agreement with Mass Humanities that this grant will increase or decrease at the same percentage rate as our state appropriation from one year to the next which is documented in a signed Memorandum of Agreement.

This partnership goes back more than twenty years. The partnership is renewed each year through a vote of the full Council.

New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA). In providing an annual grant to NEFA, Mass Cultural Council considers annual funding requests from NEFA for projects and activities that specifically benefit the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In addition, Mass Cultural Council requires an annual accounting of NEFA's expenditure of any Mass Cultural Council funding showing of the benefits to Massachusetts. We work closely with and collaborate with NEFA throughout the year as an important regional and local arts organization representing the region on issues of mutual interest.

Staff proposes FY25 funding in of **\$70,000** to NEFA in accordance with the support structure from the states which NEFA has proposed. In FY24, Massachusetts provided \$70,000 to NEFA.

We will have available upon request from members a report from NEFA detailing use of our FY24 award of \$70,000 which was used to support its New England States Touring (NEST) Program for the benefit of Massachusetts artists and venues.

MASSCreative. For the second year in a row, Mass Cultural Council will join the coalition co-hosting Creative Sector Day at the State House - a day on Beacon Hill to celebrate and amplify the contributions of artists, creatives, cultural nonprofits, and creative businesses in Massachusetts with our elected leaders. This day-long event will feature performances and displays by artists across the Commonwealth, presentations by cultural organizations and storytelling by creative businesses. This is NOT a lobby day, but a visibility and celebration day that will acknowledge the economic impacts and contributions of the creative sector and help build public support for artists, creatives and cultural organizations. As co-host, we propose awarding **\$30,000** to compensate performing artists and cultural organizations at the event. As a matter of administrative simplicity, Mass Cultural Council will award the funds to MassCreative, who will pay the individual artists and organizations directly.

MITx Arts Entrepreneurship Online Program. This grant to Massachusetts Institute of Technology's online learning program (MITx) represents an exciting new opportunity for Mass Cultural Council and the creative sector. The following write-up is distilled from MITx's request which we believe provides a clear summary of this effort.

Artists are entrepreneurs. Artists are small business owners. They are entrepreneurs that too often haven't been equipped with the business skills needed to unlock their success. This free online asynchronous program seeks to inspire in artists the characteristics that will help them

strategically and sustainably commercialize their work and run successful, arts- based businesses.

Current education/training/learning in arts largely focuses on teaching skills related to the artist's craft, less so on business and technology skills. For artists to thrive sustainably in the future, they need knowledge and skills in:

Business: Building and commercializing an audience

Technology: Incorporating technology into the craft and the business

Learning Objectives: At the end of the program, the learner will...

- o Know: Common language/vernacular for running your own arts business
- o Feel: More confident in the business side of art
- o Do: Disciplined process to identify and develop customer base

Request. At MIT, entrepreneurship is a craft that can be taught and applied in any context because it is centered around challenge identification and opportunity maximization. It is in this spirit that Prof. Ben Shields and Lecturer Jenny Larios Berlin have come together to bring their expertise in entrepreneurship and the business of culture production to launch an MITx course in Arts Entrepreneurship that will be available and free to any learner interested in this material. We are seeking at least **\$50,000** in unrestricted funds to help us with the following (this is an illustrative list):

- Pre-production: content development that integrates and expands material from existing MIT courses
- Production: filming of the 12 modules that will comprise this course
- Post-production: editing, formatting, and installing into the MITx online platform, as well as recruiting course assistants to help with the course delivery (e.g., assignment review and hosting of reflection sessions with the participants)
- Course launch: marketing of the course to ensure the community we are seeking to reach knows that they have this resource available to them
- Course delivery: this covers the operational elements needed to deliver the course."

For the reasons stated above, Mass Cultural Council staff is recommending a \$50,000 grant in accordance with the MITx request.

Social Prescription – CultureRx

(Agenda Item 9(d)(v))

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee

Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jen Lawless, Erik Holmgren, Käthe Swaback, Amy Chu

Dt: August 8, 2024

Re: Social Prescription - CultureRx

Summary. For FY25 we are recommending a **\$100,000** grant to Art Pharmacy for Social Prescription.

Background. Mass Cultural Council launched the [CultureRx Initiative](#): Social Prescription in January 2020, as the first social prescription initiative focused on the arts and culture in the United States. While interrupted somewhat and slowed by the pandemic, we were able to implement this project in phases. The first phase of our pilot included eight cultural organizations working with two professional care providers. Phase II and III of the pilot ran from July 2020 through June 2021 and expanded the program to include [12 organizations](#) from throughout the state. The results of Phase III were captured in the [Mass Cultural Council's "CultureRx" Evaluation Report](#) and through [peer-reviewed studies](#). The report highlights the impact and potential of the social prescription of cultural experiences for patients, providers, and cultural organizations. In Phase IV (FY23) we funded [10 cultural organizations](#) and continued to build upon the success and support of this initiative while integrating the robust recommendations from Dr. Golden's report. In FY23, medical and social service providers were able to "prescribe" creative activities like art classes, dance lessons, and visits to museums, nature, and theaters for a total of 1227 prescriptions. In addition, the focus for FY23 and FY24 was to publish the groundbreaking [Arts on Prescription: A Field Guide for US Communities](#) and to find and partner with the next entity to house this initiative, so that Social Prescription could be brought to scale.

To that end, Mass Cultural Council engaged [Art Pharmacy](#), a healthcare services company, to expand and scale social prescribing in Massachusetts. Art Pharmacy works with health plans/systems, community clinics, and other healthcare partners to enable healthcare providers to prescribe arts and culture to patients for both mental and physical health benefits. Their model is being adopted by third-party payers, which is an important element of scaling this kind of care.

In FY24 we contracted with Art Pharmacy for the first of a proposed two-year funding commitment to support the development and implementation of the

first statewide social prescription program in the United States. On June 27, 2024 [Art Pharmacy and Mass Cultural Council officially announced](#) the launch of that statewide system in partnership with Mass General Brigham to bring this healthcare solution to the Commonwealth. We anticipate several other hospital systems and insurance companies signing on to this program in FY25.

Proposal for FY25. We are proposing a **\$100,000** grant to Art Pharmacy for Social Prescription. Through this grant, Art Pharmacy will:

- Support at least 600 doses of art and culture prescriptions in multiple regions within the Commonwealth.
- Build and sustain relationships with arts and cultural partners, health practitioners, payers, funders, and insurance providers.
- Offer a third-party asynchronous training modules for arts and health, psychological first aid, and DEI/Cultural Humility and will provide semi-annual live Webinars
- Address equity, access, and barriers to engagement (such as transportation, caregiver needs, language access and lack of childcare.)

Art Pharmacy will begin filling prescriptions within 30 days of contract execution.

- They will offer group, individual, receptive and active arts engagements that are in-person and virtual.
- They provide prescriptions through the dedicated support of Care Navigators – a coordinator who recommends arts and culture engagements that are appropriate for health goals and interests. They also work to address any barriers patients may have to accessing engagement opportunities and they will check in to gauge success of connection.
- Art Pharmacy's Care Navigation team is trained in psychological first aid and equipped to refer patients to appropriate crisis resources. Art Pharmacy also utilizes the WHO-5, a validated emotional well-being index, to assess and monitor patient well-being and progress. Patients are assessed via the WHO-5 at intake, after participation in each arts and culture engagement, and at the conclusion of their prescription. In addition to assessing patient well-being via the WHO-5, Art Pharmacy tracks uptake and adherence and patient satisfaction.

Unrestricted Operating Support for Organizations

(Agenda Item 9(e)(i))

To: Mass Cultural Council
Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jen Lawless, Sara Glidden, Kalyn King, Lillian Lee
Dt: August 22, 2024
Re: Organizations grants: Operating Grants for Organizations and Cultural Investment Portfolio

Summary

In this section, you will find proposed information on the operating support grant programs for nonprofit cultural organizations and Cultural Affiliates (programs with a parent organization) in Mass Cultural Council's new program, **Operating Support for Organizations**, and the existing **Cultural Investment Portfolio (CIP or "Portfolio")** program which will be winding down and transitioning over the next few years.

A total of **\$7,200,000** has been allocated towards these grant programs to support organizations. This amount is an increase of \$103,700 over the amount that was allocated for various organization support programs for FY24. In FY24, this included the amount allocated to the Portfolio, and the discontinued Gateway and Media Support programs totaling \$7,096,300.

This is a year of major changes to Mass Cultural Council's programs that provide general operating support for organizations.

Background

CIP was launched in 2009 to support organizations with multi-year grants to nonprofit organizations that provide public programs in the arts, sciences, and humanities in Massachusetts. Organizations were assigned to the Portfolio primarily based on track record of successful applications to previous Mass Cultural Council operating grant programs.

In 2021, the CIP team was directed to conduct an internal review of the program with the goals of maintaining the values that are important to grantees – the availability of unrestricted operating support that is reliable and predictable – while also centering equity in our evaluation and program revisions. We made our first announcement about changes coming to the Portfolio program in April 2022. The changes fell into two categories: the sunset of the existing Portfolio grant program, and the launch of the new Operating Grants for Organizations program.

Sunsetting the Portfolio

The existing Portfolio program will be phased out over a five-year period, from FY24 through FY28. For purposes of transitioning into the new program, current Portfolio grantees were randomly assigned to a final year of support from the Portfolio grant program (between FY24 and FY28). After the final year of support, an organization must successfully apply to the new Operating Grants for Organizations program for continued operating support going forward. Organizations were sorted by budget size, and then randomly assigned to a fiscal year for Portfolio grant expiration, with some adjustments to address geographical distribution. Each year, approximately 65 organizations will receive their final Portfolio grant, with the final Portfolio grants being awarded in FY28.

As noted above, two programs have been discontinued: The *Gateway* program was introduced in 2016 as a way for organizations to be admitted to the Portfolio. The *Media Grants* program was intended to support broadcast media organizations that were not previously included in the Portfolio. FY24 was the final year for both programs, as those organizations previously participating in those programs are eligible to apply for the Organization Support Grant program.

Introducing the Operating Grants for Organizations

The guidelines for the Operating Grants for Organizations were launched on March 14, 2024, followed by informational webinars and opportunities for organizations to receive counseling in small groups or one on one sessions. The application deadline was June 13, 2024. We received 581 applications, and 480 of the applications met the eligibility criteria for the program. Eligible applications will be reviewed by a group of internal staff and independent reviewers who will score the applications based on the program criteria which are aligned with the Mass Cultural Council values as presented in the current strategic plan. The timeline is for the review and scoring of applications to be completed by mid-August.

Grant Awards

Following the completed review, the awards for the Operating Grants for Organizations will be calculated with the remaining Portfolio organizations in one funding formula. Consistent with the existing Portfolio, grants awards are based on a formula that takes into account a three-year average of an organization's cash expenses (Formula Expenses). Awards are recalculated annually, and will vary based on the resources allocated to the Organizations grants by the Council, as well as whether an organization's Formula Expenses increase or decrease.

We will continue to implement Equity Impact Points (described in previous Council write-ups) as part of the funding formula calculation, which will increase grant amounts for organizations in or representing communities that have

frequently been disadvantaged in access to philanthropic support. We will also support [BIPOC-Centered](#) organizations (this is a self-identification for organizations that are BIPOC led and/or run, and whose primary mission, programming and/or practices explicitly and specifically reflect and serve one or more communities that self-identify as BIPOC).

Please note that at present, staff is requesting that the Council endorse this approach. The full list of grantees and grant awards will be provided for the Grants Committee review in October, to be submitted for approval at the November Council meeting.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact:

- Sara Glidden, Program Manager, Organizations (617) 858-2710
- Kalyn King, Program Officer, Festivals & Projects, and Portfolio Organizations support (617) 858-2718
- Lillian Lee, Program Officer, Organizations and Gaming Mitigation (617) 858-2737

Gaming Mitigation Program

(Agenda Item 9(e)(ii))

To: Mass Cultural Council
Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jen Lawless, Sara Glidden, Lillian Lee
Dt: August 22, 2024
Re: FY25 Gaming Mitigation Fund

Summary. Under the Massachusetts Gaming Law (MGL Chapter 23K), Mass Cultural Council receives on a monthly basis, 2% of certain casino taxes collected by the Commonwealth. Per statute, these amounts are dedicated first to expenses (7%), then to the Gaming Mitigation Fund (75% after expenses) and "organizational support" (25% after expenses).

Staff is proposing to provide a program allocation of up to whatever funds are available for Gaming Mitigation in the fund as of 12/31/2024 for the fifth cycle of funding under the program. We are estimating **\$3,599,677** will be available (based on last year), but the available amount could be more or less depending on the performance of the casinos and amount of taxes collected.

Background. The Gaming Mitigation Fund aims to mitigate a direct threat to the sustainability of non-profit and municipal performing arts centers in Massachusetts through one-year grants (provided by the Gaming Mitigation funds). Funding decisions are determined by a formula based on the percentage of performances that included an eligible touring artist, and the amount of fees paid to those eligible artists.

The Commonwealth's Casino Gaming Law (MGL Chapter 23K) provides that 2% of the Commonwealth's gross gaming tax revenues to be transferred to a special statutory fund called the Massachusetts Cultural and Performing Arts Mitigation Trust Fund (herein, the "Fund") for, among other things, Mass Cultural Council to use 75% of such funds (after an allowable 7% reserve for expenses), to administer and implement a Gaming Mitigation Fund "to support not-for profit and municipally-owned performing arts centers impacted as a result of the operation of gaming facilities".

In early 2020, the Council approved the first round of funding of the Gaming Mitigation Fund (Approximately \$3.34 million). The Council approved a second cycle of the program in May 2021 supplemented with additional funds in January 2022 (\$3.675 Million), a third cycle of the program in January 2023 (\$3.74 Million), and in January 2024 the fourth, and most recent round (\$3.66 Million).

Summary of Fourth Cycle (FY24)

In total, 58 performing arts centers across the Commonwealth received \$3.66 million. This represents a 35% increase in the number of grants awarded from the FY23 cycle, which is due in part to a targeted outreach campaign. The minimum grant was raised from \$5,000 to \$6,000, so grants ranged from \$6,000 to \$200,000. Of the 58 grantees, 21% were new to the program, 9% were BIPOC-Centered organizations, and 24% were UP-Designated organizations.

Proposed Process of Fifth Cycle (FY25):

For this year, we are making changes to the eligibility and guidelines for the program so that is in greater alignment with the agency's strategic plan values. We have gathered data from 842 organizations and are currently analyzing that data to help inform the redesign process. We anticipate having recommendations and greater details of the program changes by November.

Please see below the proposed timeline of the FY25 cycle of this program.

Proposed Timeline. (Dates are subject to change/approval):

- **August-November 2024:** Redesign Process
- **November 2024:** Guidelines Posted and Application Opens
- **January 2025:** Applications due
- **February 2025:** Review complete and grantees notified
- **March 2025:** Contracts mailed to grantees

Please note that at present, staff is requesting that the Council endorse this approach. The full list of grantees and grant awards will be provided at future Grants Committee and Council meetings.

Cultural District Investment Grants

(Agenda Item 9(f)(i))

To: Mass Cultural Council

Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jen Lawless, Lisa Simmons, Carolyn Cole

Re: Cultural Districts Initiative

Dt: August 22, 2024

Summary. For FY25, we are recommending an **\$870,000** allocation to the Cultural Districts Initiative to support placemaking and placekeeping efforts in the prospective districts. This represents a 5% increase in the total program allocation from FY24 (due to increase in the number of districts). Staff is recommending \$15,000 grant per district, consistent with what was approved in the previous FY24 year. The increase in the total program allocation is a result of three potential new districts.

- There are currently fifty (55) districts designated (listed on the next page), each to receive grants of up to \$15,000: \$825,000
- Additionally, we wish to set aside a reserve for up to an additional three (3) districts currently going through the final stages of the designation process: \$45,000.
- To the extent not all of such \$45,000 set aside can be used in FY25, staff requests the ability to re-allocate any such unused funds to other grant programs.

Background.

To receive funds, a municipality must apply through a streamlined acceptance form agreeing to allocate the funds in support of Cultural District activities and goals. Unless otherwise directed, the funds will go to the municipality to disburse. Applications are reviewed internally by staff. The grant must be spent in FY25, and an Annual Report is due in July, 2025.

The Cultural District Designation program (the process by which communities get a cultural district recognized) will be redesigned over the course of FY25. While this process does not affect the grants to the existing districts in FY25, we wanted to note that we are not taking new applications to the Cultural District program in FY25. We are allowing the three communities that had submitted applications prior to the close of FY24 to complete their process, but additional communities will need to wait until the program reopens in FY26.

The grants to the current Cultural Council Districts can be found in **Appendix A**. Thank you for your ongoing support of the Cultural Districts Initiative program.

Local Cultural Council Program

(Agenda Item 9(f)(ii))

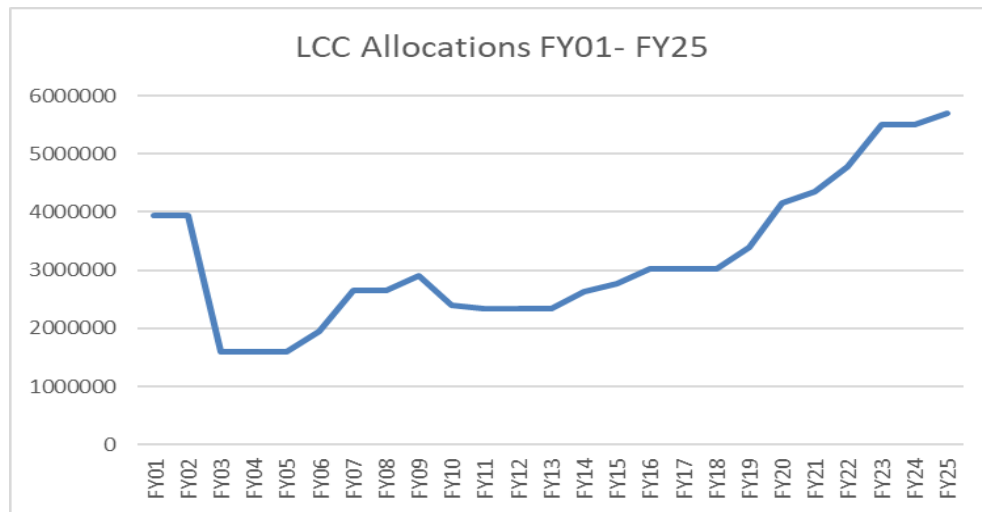
To: Mass Cultural Council

Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jen Lawless, Lisa Simmons, Cheyenne Cohn-Postell, Carolyn Cole, Timothea Pham, Sommers Smith, Greg Torrales, Jay Wong

Dt: August 22, 2024

Re: FY25 Local Cultural Council Allocations

Summary. This memo presents recommended allocations for each of the MCC's 329 Local Cultural Councils (LCCs) in FY25. Mass Cultural Council's FY25 Spending Plan calls for an allocation of **\$5,700,000** to the Local Cultural Council Program. This figure represents an increase of \$200,000 (3.6%) from the previous FY24 fiscal year. For reference, this chart summarizes the last 25 years of LCC Program allocations.



LCC Allocations. The recommended allocations for all 329 Local Cultural Councils are detailed in **Appendix B**.

Consistent with Mass Cultural Council's enabling act, each council's individual allocation is determined by following the Department of Revenue's formula distribution of lottery funds to each city and town, which is done using a state local aid formula, based on population and property values. It is weighted towards communities with lower property values and/or larger populations. Because funding has increased by \$200,000, the minimum level a council will receive is being increased from \$5,500 to \$5,700.

In FY25, 107 communities (30% of municipalities) will receive the minimum allocation. The largest increase, of \$9,900, will go to Worcester.

Tribal Cultural Council Program

(Agenda Item 9(f)(iii))

To: Mass Cultural Council

Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jen Lawless, Lisa Simmons, Cheyenne Cohn-Postell, Carolyn Cole, Timothea Pham, Sommers Smith, Greg Torrales, Jay Wong, Erin Genia

Dt: August 22, 2024

Re: FY25 Tribal Cultural Council Program

Summary. The FY25 Spending Plan allocates **\$103,950** for the Tribal Cultural Council Program, an expansion of the Local Cultural Council Program for between 4 and 6 Tribal Cultural Councils. The recommended allocation per council is \$17,325, which is the average Local Cultural Council allocation. We will provide an update, and details about specific allocations, at the November Grants Committee and Council Meeting.

Background. Mass Cultural Council recently completed a [Native American and Indigenous People's Equity Plan](#). While working on the plan, we also worked with a task force comprised of Native American and Indigenous people and the Massachusetts' Commission on Indian Affairs (MCIA) to create an equivalent regrating program to our [Local Cultural Council Program](#) for Tribal Governments in recognition of their inherent tribal sovereignty and right to self-determination. Through the expanded program, Tribal Governments will be able to establish their own Tribal Cultural Council. The Tribal Cultural Council Program:

- Provides funding that Tribal Cultural Councils can regrant to the benefit of their community and use to support its own projects and initiatives; and
- Is driven by local autonomy. Tribal Cultural Councils can tailor the program to their unique goals, define what community benefit means to their community, and set local priorities.

For the first year of the program, based on the Tribal Task Force Meetings, we have invited the following Tribes to take part:

1. Hassanamisco Nipmuc Band and Chaubunagungamaug Band of Nipmuck Indians
2. Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe
3. Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe
4. Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah)

Additionally, the Task Force recommended establishing a 5th and possibly 6th TCC; an Intertribal Cultural Council that would serve Native American and

Indigenous communities with ties to Massachusetts that are not Federally, or state recognized and/or Native American and Indigenous people who currently reside in Massachusetts, and whose native lands or territories are outside Massachusetts. We are in conversation with MCIA and the Tribal Task Force to see if this will be possible in FY25.

Our hope is that Tribal Cultural Councils will open their first grant cycle in September 2024. However, we will work with each TCC to launch their cycle whenever they are ready. Staff will be on hand to support the council through the grant cycle and ahead of the launch, Mass Cultural Council staff will be available to:

- Provide training and support to new council members.
- Assist the council in drafting local guidelines and priorities if they would like
- Provide toolkits, samples, forms, and templates that the council might find useful

Timeline

(Based on September 1 Grant Cycle start. Timelines may vary depending on each TCC)

Aug 8: Tribal Cultural Council information sent to Mass Cultural Council

Aug 9 – Aug 30:

- Mass Cultural Council sets up TCC and allocation contract in its systems
- Trainings and orientation for TCCs provided by Mass Cultural Council
- Mass Cultural Council works with TCCs to tweak common online application for all TCCs to use
- TCCs craft and then post their local guidelines and priorities

September 1: Applications to TCCs opens

October 16: Applicants submit applications to TCCs

October 16 to January 16: TCCs review applications and make funding decisions

January 16: TCCs complete their report to Mass Cultural Council by recording their grant decisions in the online grants management system.

Tribal Task Force

Rhonda Anderson

*Iñupiaq – Athabascan from Alaska.
Native enrollment village, Kaktovik
Member, Mass Cultural Council
Governing Council, Western
Massachusetts Commissioner on
Indian Affairs, Member of
the Advisory Council for the New
England Foundation for the Arts,
Founder and Co-Director of the
Ohketeau Cultural Center and the*

*Native Youth Empowerment
Foundation*

Darlene Flores

*Traditional Medicine Keeper, Taino
Higuayagua Caribbean Tribe
Organizer, Indigenous Peoples' Day
Newton*

Erin Genia

*Task Force Organizer
Enrolled member of the Sisseton-*

Wahpeton Oyate
Multidisciplinary artist, educator and community organizer specializing in Native American and Indigenous arts and culture

Cheryll Holley

Sonksq of the Hassanamisco Nipmuc Band
Professional researcher, writer, and speaker specializing in African American and Indigenous peoples of New England

Jim Peters

Executive Director, Massachusetts Commission on Indian Affairs
Member, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe

Bettina Washington

Tribal Historic Preservation Officer,

Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah)

David Weeden

Tribal Historic Preservation Officer and Tribal Councilman, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe
Chairman of the Town of Mashpee Selectboard and Native American Representative member of the Cape Cod Commission

Berta Welch

Board President, Aquinnah Cultural Center
Member of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head
Aquinnah Health Committee and Membership committee, Town of Aquinnah Arts District member

Please note that at present, staff is requesting that the Council approve of the Tribal Cultural Council Program with allocations to be made to each TCC as is established and ready to administer the program. To the extent not all 6 TCCs are not established during FY25, staff requests the ability to re-allocate any unused funds to other grant programs.

YouthReach

(Agenda Item 9(g)(i))

To: Mass Cultural Council

Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jen Lawless, Erik Holmgren, Kätthe Swaback, Amy Chu

Dt: August 22, 2024

Re: FY25 YouthReach Grants

Summary. We recommend funding the 85 existing YouthReach grants which are currently funded by the program at \$22,000 totaling **\$1,870,000**. FY 25 is the third year of a three year cycle for the program.

Background. The YouthReach Initiative was launched in 1994 to support learning opportunities that infused youth development practices with creative experiences for young people— especially those at risk of not making a successful transition from adolescence to young adulthood. The program has received several national awards and has been replicated by the Ohio and Colorado arts councils. More than 40 YouthReach grant recipients have been also honored over the years with *National Arts & Humanities Youth Program (formerly Coming Up Taller)* awards from the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, recognizing exemplary arts and humanities programs.

Massachusetts Cultural Council has consistently been a leader in the support and growth of work in Creative Youth Development. YouthReach is currently the longest running grant program to support CYD. 2024 marks the 10-year anniversary of the 2014 [National Summit on Creative Youth Development](#) when Mass Cultural Council hosted 200 thought leaders and helped catalyzed the growth of CYD into a national field of practice.

FY25 Recommendations

We are continuing to recommend funding 85 YouthReach grants totaling \$1,870,000 to the programs which have participated in the program for the past two years.

The recommended grant amounts are \$22,000. The grants represent level-funding from FY24. FY25 represents year three of that three-year funding commitment. The lists of YouthReach grants can be found in **Appendix C**.

As we look ahead to the next grant cycle for this program, we are working closely with the organizations team to explore the potential integration of these two programs together to create internal efficiencies at the agency and external clarity for applicants.

STARS Residencies/School-Based Projects

(Agenda Item 9(g)(ii))

To: Mass Cultural Council

Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jen Lawless, Erik Holmgren, Kätthe Swaback, Amy Chu

Dt: August 22, 2024

Re: FY25 STARS Residencies Program/School-Based Projects

Summary. We are recommending funding for the STARS Residencies program in the amount of **\$1,500,000** an increase of \$18,350 over the FY24 program grant amount of \$1,481,650. This will result in 300 \$5,000 grants in FY25 to schools and organizational cultural partners for school-based creative education projects. The Program's name is yet to be determined, but it will be updated to reflect the broader focus.

Background. For nearly two decades, STARS Residencies have provided grants of \$2500-\$6100 to support school-based residency projects in Massachusetts K-12 schools of three days or more with a teaching artist, scientist, or scholar.

Program Changes. To further consolidate and simplify our grant offerings at the agency we have been working closely with the Festivals & Projects team on the potential of integrating these programs together beginning in FY26. Both programs support projects on an annual basis throughout the Commonwealth with, with STARS supporting school-based projects, specifically artist residencies. For FY25 we are proposing taking a step toward that full integration by utilizing the Festivals & Projects application and guidelines to better understand how the programs would work as a single program instead of two separate programs. We will also build off the experience we gained when we combined CIP Projects and Festivals together into the current Festivals& Projects program in FY23.

A few important notes on FY25:

- We will continue to support school-based residencies as we have for nearly two decades.
- We will be expanding eligibility to include other school-based projects, beyond residencies that can be proposed based on the needs of each school.
- Each school will be eligible for only one grant, as in similar years.
- The priority points will be similar to Festivals and Projects and previous iterations of STARS and will include priorities points for BIPOC-centered schools and organizations, schools in under-resourced communities, and applicants that have not received funding in the past three fiscal years.
- We will move to a flat grant of \$5,000, which means that eligible projects must have \$5,000 of expenses including overhead and administrative costs.

The benefits of integrating these programs together include:

- New efficiencies across our agency including from our grants management team, public affairs team, program teams and fiscal teams
- Applicants will see one program on one grant cycle, rather than needing to manage multiple cycles
- The application will be simpler and much easier to complete for applicants
- In FY26, school based applicants would be able to apply in the spring for the following fiscal year, rather than having to wait to find out if they receive a grant until several months into the school year.

Please note that at present, staff is requesting that the Council endorse this approach. We will provide an update at the October Grants Committee meeting and a full list of recommended grants for approval at the November Council Meeting.

We will be working closely with the Festivals and Projects team throughout the year to evaluate the implementation and outcomes of the revised grant program in FY25 and will be making recommendations for full implementation based on those findings for FY26.

Creative Youth Development and Education Grants

((Agenda Item 9(g)(iii))

To: Mass Cultural Council

Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jen Lawless, Erik Holmgren, Kätthe Swaback, Amy Chu

Dt: August 22, 2024

Re: Creative Youth Development and Education Grants

Overview. In addition to YouthReach and STARS Residencies, we are pleased to present for your review recommendations for funding for the Youth Arts Impact Network, Poetry Out Loud, and a final grant to close out our prior Music Educators and Teaching Artist (META) Fellowship. Information about CultureRx – Social Prescription is included elsewhere in these meeting materials.

FY25 Recommendations

Organization	Initiative	Grant
Edvestors	Youth Arts Impact Network (YAIN)	\$36,000
Huntington Theatre Company	Poetry Out Loud (POL)	\$25,000
Health Resources in Action	Creative Youth Development Teaching Artist Fellowship Funds	\$18,000
		\$79,000

Youth Arts Impact Network (YAIN). With a goal of extending the services of convenings and consulting beyond the greater Boston area to the rest of the Commonwealth, Mass Cultural Council formalized our partnership with EdVestors in FY21 to support funding for the [Youth Arts Impact Network](#). Since then, we have partnered with EdVestors to bring these services to potential and existing Creative Youth Development (CYD) organizations and school-based partnership organizations outside of Boston (FY23 budget of \$30,419 and FY24 budget of 36,000). Quarterly YAIN convenings included topics of communication and data collection in schools, the role of CYD organizations in mental health and belonging, and mental health and wellness among CYD professionals. Additional in-person coffee chats were also attended by Mass Cultural Council and EdVestors staff.

Organizations throughout the state have now been able to access the services of consultant, Julia Gittleman, PhD for planning, evaluation, and program development support. In addition, they are able to participate in quarterly networking opportunities with related, shared monthly resources. By offering pro bono technical support to youth arts organizations statewide, Julia was able to consult with 18 organizations over more than 70 sessions in weekly office hours, covering topics including survey design, logic model design, data analysis, and reporting and representing considerable geographic diversity.

These services covered a range of topics and served organizations of varying sizes and maturity.

With the [success of YAIN in FY24](#), in FY25, we would like to continue to offer resources equitably across Massachusetts through our partnership with EdVestors, and YAIN. We request to expand our investment in FY25 to \$36,000. Funding will allow consultant Julia Gittleman to continue to provide resources and guidance on redesigning, evaluating and improving programming for a wide range of youth arts serving organizations from across the state whether or not they currently receive Mass Cultural Council funding.

Poetry Out Loud. Again, this year, we will be contracting with the Huntington Theatre Company to implement the national Poetry Out Loud program on behalf of Mass Cultural Council here in Massachusetts.

POL is a program of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the Poetry Foundation. **The NEA fully funds this program with a specific dedicated grant** and in FY25 has increased its funding by 25% from \$20,000 to \$25,000 in FY25. The contract is designated for the program by the NEA in their grant to us. The Huntington Theatre Company raises in excess of \$50,000 in additional funds to carry out the program, which has been one of the five largest programs in the country for the last twelve years and the largest in New England those years as well. In FY24 student **participation increased 29%**— from 12,700 to 16,400 students. We are proud to partner with the Huntington Theater on this successful project.

CYD Fellowship Funds. In FY23 we sunset our Creative Youth Development Teaching Artist Fellowship. We are holding leftover funds from Linde Family Foundation which has provided the funding for this program over the years. Linde has selected a new organization to continue the administration of the CYDTA Program and has asked us to transfer the remaining balance of \$18,000 to the new operating organization, Health Resources in Action

Grants for Creative Individuals

(Agenda Item 9(h))

To: Mass Cultural Council

Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jenifer Lawless, Dan Blask, Kelly Bennett, Summer Confuorto

Dt: August 22, 2024

Re: FY25 Grants for Creative Individuals

Summary. The Artist Team is proud to have administered the first year of the Grants for Creative Individuals in FY24, launching a program that broadly and equitably supports creative expression throughout the Commonwealth.

The program awards unrestricted grants of \$5,000 to applicants who demonstrate achievement of creative expression and commitment to their artistic/cultural practice.

We propose awarding up to 435 grants of \$5,000 (or **\$2,175,000** total) as part of the FY25 Grants for Creative Individuals Program. We do not anticipate major changes to the program, its guidelines, and its administration in FY25.

Program summary:

- **Eligibility**
 - Artists/creative practitioners in ALL categories, including artists in visual, literary, music, design, performance, drag, and all other creative disciplines
 - Culture bearers/traditional and folk artists (formerly may have applied for Traditional Arts Fellowships and Apprenticeships)
- **Application Process**
 - Applicants apply as artists/culture bearers, not by discipline
 - Brief artist narrative plus work samples
 - Not anonymous
 - Focus on access – applicants can submit audio or video in lieu of text
- **Funding Priorities**
 - Funding Priority (or modest ratings advantage) for “Underfunded” applicants (including those who identify as BIPOC or as having a Disability)
 - New grant recipients (no direct grant past 6 years)
 - Traditional/Folk Artists/Culture Bearers
 - Recipients of anti-poverty benefits
- **Review Process**
 - Geographic Distribution (same % of grants as % applications in each County)
 - Funding Priorities (as listed above)

- Scores by reviewers from Massachusetts creative/cultural sector
- **Timing and Outcome**
 - Application anticipated opening in September '24
 - Deadline late October '24
 - Grants awarded late February '25
 - Grantees who receive public benefits (for example SNAP, MassHealth, or Supplementary Security Income) receive benefits counseling through our partnership with Work Without Limits, a program of UChan Medical School
 - Grant celebration expected in May or June '25, Council Members encouraged to attend

FY25 Program Updates. While not yet finalized, the following reflect updates and changes we are considering that we believe will strengthen the program in meeting its goals:

- Explore distribution according to experience level, similar to the program's Geographic Distribution, e.g. 30% applications in More than 25 Years Experience = 30% grantees in More than 25 Years Experience, for example.
- Add a new Funding Priority category in the "Under-funded" group: Veterans of the United States Armed Forces.
- Explore clearer articulation/implementation of the idea of traditional arts apprenticeships in the Culture Bearer or Traditional Artist Funding Priority.

Please note that at present, staff is requesting Council endorsement of this approach. In February we will present the Grants Committee and Council with a list of recommended grantees.

Festivals & Projects

(Agenda Item 9(i)(i))

To: Mass Cultural Council

Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jen Lawless, Sara Glidden, Lisa Simmons, Kalyn King, Timothea Pham,

Dt: August 22, 2024

Re: FY25 Festivals & Projects Program

Summary. This memo presents the funding scenario for the Mass Cultural Council Festivals & Projects program in FY25. The Mass Cultural Council's FY25 Spending Plan calls for an allocation of **\$1,850,000** to support programs incorporating the arts, humanities, or sciences that provide community and/or public benefit. These grants are meant to expand access to a wide range of cultural experiences and support a program's sustainability. This year, the Festivals & Projects program will grant \$2,500 to eligible applicants. After receiving a total of 1,340 grant applications, the program will seek to fund 740 grants, the same amount funded in FY24. A list of the 740 grantees is included in **Appendix D**.

Applicant Eligibility. Eligibility is intentionally broad and includes nonprofits, for-profits, municipal entities, and unincorporated organizations applying with fiscal agents. Based on agency-wide discussions and decisions, ineligible entities includes, individuals, single-member LLCs, Cultural Districts receiving funding in FY24, and FY24 YouthReach and Cultural Investment Portfolio grantees; additionally, eligible fiscal agents, foreign LLCs, and foreign corporations must be registered to do business in Massachusetts.

Program Eligibility. Eligible programs will include projects, festivals, and/or activities incorporating the arts, humanities, or sciences, and those that are community-based and/or publicly available. For this program, "Community-based" means any cultural activity that focuses on serving the needs of

- a geographic community, ethnic heritage, or cultural/tribal tradition and may include events, education, performances, conservation, or cultural revitalization efforts, or
- portions of the general public requiring specific accommodations (i.e. seniors in care centers, incarcerated individuals, people with disabilities, people in recovery programs, etc.).

"Publicly available" means any cultural activity that is available to the general public by paid or free admission. These programs will have most of their activity taking place between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025. Projects must have a minimum of \$2,500 in cash expenses, but there are no limits on overhead or indirect costs.

Funding Priorities. Grants of \$2,500 will be awarded based on the number of eligible applicants and the prioritization categories listed below.

- First-time applicants or applicants that have not received funding from Mass Cultural Council in the last three fiscal years.
- Applicants that self-identify as "BIPOC-Centered," according to Mass Cultural Council's definition.
- Applicants/projects located in cities and towns that Mass Cultural Council has defined as "under-resourced communities."
- Applicants participating in the agency's Card to Culture programs.
- Projects/events that are free to the public.
- Projects/events that significantly incorporate the arts, humanities, and sciences.

In addition to the prioritization factors applied to the program in FY24, we added the following funding priority in FY25:

- **Festivals, projects, or activities** that align with the agency values of public service and inclusion.

This allows the program to prioritize projects and festivals that go beyond merely being "available" to the public as well as those projects and festivals that have an intentional equity/inclusion focus.

FY25 Program

The Mass Cultural Council's FY25 Festivals and Projects grant program is currently in its third cycle after running for the first time in FY23. On April 2, 2024, the FY25 grant cycle opened shortly after the end of the second cycle to accommodate the needs of smaller organizations and festival producers. **We received 1,340 applications, an increase of 102 applications from FY24.**

Of the 1,340 applications received:

- 490 (36.5%) of the organizations have not received funding from us in the last three years, including previously unsuccessful applicants and new applicants.
- 253 (19%) are from BIPOC-Centered organizations.
- 514 (38%) would fund programs taking place in a priority community.
- 219 (16%) applicants are participating in the Card to Culture program.
- 942 (70%) programs are listed as free to the public.

Each category has seen an increase from the last cycle in FY24.

Recommended Grants:

Of 1340 applications, 62 were determined to be ineligible for funding. Of 740 applications recommended for funding, we are recommending 220 of them receive Holds. Organizations that do not resolve the reason for their hold by early October or who are recommended for funding through the Operating Grants for Organizations program will have their grant reverted, and the next

highest-scoring organizations will be recommended to receive the grant instead.

Hold Reason

Organizations may have more than one reason for their hold:

Pending OGO application	70
Missing FY24 Festivals & Projects Final Report	52
Incorrect contracting information	115
Additional information required	6

As such, 250 organizations will receive a soft denial of funding from Festivals & Projects. Some number of those 250 organizations will be presented to senior staff, the Grants Committee, and the Governing Council for a second round of grant awards in the fall.

Because the final 740 decisions will not be made until November, the following information may change, but from the preliminary list of 740 grants we are recommending:

- 441 (60%) of the organizations have not received funding from us in the last three years, including previously unsuccessful applicants and new applicants.
- 240 (32%) are from BIPOC-Centered organizations.
- 342 (46%) would fund programs taking place in a priority community.
- 100 (14%) applicants are participating in the Card to Culture program.
- 563 (76%) programs are listed as free to the public.

98% of all eligible BIPOC-Centered organizations are recommended for funding. 94% of all eligible organizations that have not received funding from us in the last three years, including previously unsuccessful applicants and new applicants, are recommended for funding.

Equitable Distribution:

Ties for the final awards were broken using County, to ensure equitable distribution of funds by geography.

Applications have been reviewed by staff for eligibility and (as stated above) are presented for Council review in **Appendix D**. We will be on track to make grant announcements in late August to early September. The program is jointly managed by Timothea Pham from the Communities team and Kalyn King from the Cultural Investment Portfolio team. The core review and support team included Amy Chu and Erik Holmgren (from Creative Youth Development), Lisa Simmons, Jay Wong, Sommers Smith (from Communities), and Sara Glidden (from the Cultural Investment Portfolio). Application reviewers also included Miranda Cook, Dan Blask, Summer Confuorto, Käthe Swaback, Charles Baldwin, and Jen Lawless.

UP Innovation Fund

(Agenda Item 9(i)(ii))

To: Mass Cultural Council

Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jen Lawless, Charles Baldwin

Dt: August 22, 2024

Re: UP Innovation Fund

Summary. The Innovation Fund is a financial award to organizations that have previously obtained from the Agency an UP Designation. The UP Innovation Grant enables these organizations to enact "Access"- foundational, sustainable, and aspirational. In FY25 we recommend a program allocation of **\$470,000** to make up to 94 \$5,000 awards. This represents a \$10,000 decrease in funding from what was approved in FY24 due to the closure of two organizations which previously received grants from this program, New Repertory Theatre and Arts Are Essential.

Background. Between 2015 and 2022, organizations applied for UP Designation, either directly or via the Innovation Learning Network (ILN), earning a 5-year UP Designation status. This status entitled them to apply for the UP Award (\$10k unrestricted grant for achieving Accessibility, determined by peers and panelists), the Innovation Fund (\$3k for accessible practice development), and the LEAD stipend (\$1k for staff professional development at the LEAD Conference). However, not all UP Organizations could receive the limited funding through these programs.

In FY23, UP Designation applications were halted to develop a Disability Equity Plan that would enhance the efficacy, growth, and sustainability of organizational learning, advance relationships with Deaf and/or Disabled artists, and to address internal policies and practices. Due to the pause, we have allowed all UP Organizations to maintain their UP Designated status, even those beyond their original 5-years. Once the Designation is redesigned (FY25/FY26) the existing up Designated Organizations will go through the new process for their redesignation.

Also, in FY23, we collapsed those smaller UP grant programs into the single Innovation Fund program. The Innovation Fund became an annual grant available to all UP Designated Organizations for the duration of their Designation if they continued to meet the program's reporting requirements. Of the 96 eligible organizations in FY24, 94 accepted the \$5k grant and 2 had closed. Monthly UP office hours provided continued education and support on legal obligations, access planning, and technological assistance.

FY25 Awards. With the launch of the Agency's d/Deaf and Disability Equity Plan, determining the characteristics of UP Designation (what makes an organization

successfully accessible) is one strategy towards measuring impact and sustainability of the Agency's investment. Working with Open Door Arts, organizations with UP Designation will be expected to participate in a newly developed self-assessment tool.

A list of UP Organizations that will receive funding can be found in **Appendix E**

Equity, Inclusion, and Access Grants

(Agenda Item 9(i)(iii))

To: Mass Cultural Council

Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Catherine Cheng-Anderson, Jen Lawless, Bethann Steiner

Dt: August 22, 2024

Re: Equity, inclusion, and Access Grants

Overview. In addition to folding equity and access into all the agency’s grant programs, we are pleased to present for your review recommendations for funding for two additional grants that promote equity, inclusion, and access.

FY25 Recommendations

Organization	Initiative	Grant
ArtsBoston	Network for Arts Administrators of Color (NAAC)	\$50,000
Open Door Arts	Arts and Culture Accessibility Resource Hub	\$100,000
		\$150,000

Network for Arts Administrators of Color (NAACBoston)

ArtsBoston and the Network for Arts Administrators of Color, Boston (NAACBoston) have requested renewed support from Mass Cultural Council. A **\$50,000** grant would support the effort to reflect/research and plan for the future of NAAC.

NAAC’s Request: With our partners at ArtsBoston, NAAC’s staff and steering committee are committed to NAAC’s continuity and growth. In recent meetings and surveys, members have raised the NAAC listserv as a valuable resource for connections and opportunities, yet also requested more opportunities to connect directly, and speak to the need for both BIPOC-only spaces and those in which they can engage with white colleagues in productive dialogue on the work of racial justice and change. For FY25, we propose a one-year hiatus for the Mentorship and Sponsorship Program, to allow us to engage more broadly with NAAC’s full membership and plan for the future. Activities will include:

- A series of topic-focused member dialogues, surveys, and gatherings to invite more voices into the conversation informing NAAC’s strategic direction. The goal is to capture information about members’ needs, hopes, pain points, and new ideas as we approach NAAC’s 10th anniversary in 2026;

- Facilitated strategic planning meetings to help us assess what structural and administrative changes we may need, including but not limited to appropriate staffing levels, roles for stipend-supported and/or volunteer leadership, and whether fiscal sponsorship by ArtsBoston or another organization would help support NAAC's fundraising needs;
- Recruitment of new Steering Committee members as several founding members rotate off (including onboarding of two NAAC members who are ready to join the committee and exploration of interest in leadership from other NAAC members);
- Additional data gathering to quantify the geographic reach of NAAC's current member base and to help us plan statewide programs, responding to members outside of Boston who have shared that NAAC offers resources not available in their regions;
- As identified by the membership at our recent town hall, professional development workshops for the full NAAC membership hosted in partnership with such organizations as Arts & Business Council of Greater Boston, Lawyers for Civil Rights, Assets for Artists at MASS MoCA, Boston's Black and Brown Creatives, and others.

Arts and Culture Accessibility Resource Hub

In FY25, Mass Cultural Council's [d/Deaf & Disability Equity Plan \(FY25-28\)](#) calls for the agency to collaborate with a specialized vendor, other agencies and service orgs, on the deployment, revision, scaling and launch of the Mass Cultural Council's Universal/Inclusive Design learning program, called the Innovation and Learning Network (ILN), in order to reach hundreds of organizations and individuals in the creative sector using a universal design for learning framework and a dynamic mix of online delivery and small group/peer group discussion opportunities.

Background. Historically, the [Innovation and Learning Network \(ILN\)](#), was a series of professional development workshops on Universal Design and accessibility practices run directly by Mass Cultural Council staff, collaborative partner organizations and hired consultants. The ILN facilitated the development of a Community of Practice; examining and activating physical, digital, educational, and social systems. Originally it consisted of 5 to 6 in-person day-long learning sessions held at cultural organizations and became an online service during the pandemic. In FY21 and FY22 the ILN consisted of a series of webinars, meetings, evaluations, and audits to steward the implementation of an access plan for cultural organizations. Program activities were designed and delivered in partnership with the National Center for Accessible Media, the Institute for Human Centered Design, Partners for Youth with Disabilities, and Open Door Arts.

Originally, this amazing, in-depth learning opportunity was offered to 10 to 13 organizations a year. The goal of the agency was to make this opportunity available more broadly to as many organizations as possible. The program was paused in FY23 to develop the [d/Deaf & Disability Equity Plan \(FY25-28\)](#) plan, specifically our goals to create/promote shared “accessibility in the arts” language, and a definition/rubric that sets clear, measurable criteria and benchmarks for organizations in the creative sector. This rubric may suggest progressive levels of achievement, aiding organizations in understanding auditing and improving their accessibility work. The tools, which are set to become available this summer include:

In FY24 we awarded Open Door Arts a \$20,000 grant to support some very important tools that support the [d/Deaf & Disability Equity Plan \(FY25-28\)](#) plan, specifically our goals to create/promote shared “accessibility in the arts” language, and a definition/rubric that sets clear, measurable criteria and benchmarks for organizations in the creative sector. This rubric may suggest progressive levels of achievement, aiding organizations in understanding auditing and improving their accessibility work. The tools, which are set to become available this summer include:

1. The Arts and Culture Legal Responsibilities Identification Tool:

- Consists of 12 yes or no questions to help organizations identify which accessibility laws apply to them based on characteristics
- Creates customized report that outlines the laws, regulations and their responsibilities as well as links to resources
- Recommended as a precursor to the Self-Assessment tool

2. The Arts and Culture Glossary:

- Consists of 90 terms related to accessibility
- Includes brief definitions and links for resources, templates, examples, etc.
- Directly linked with self-identification and self-assessment tools

3. The Arts and Culture Accessibility Self-Assessment:

- Is a Comprehensive electronic 300 question self-assessment
- Creates a customized report synthesizing responses and providing step by step instructions and templates to create an Accessibility Plan
- Supplemental tools include glossary and self-identification tool, external links, and resources
- Allows for large scale data collection and research

We will promote the resources and tools to the cultural sector in FY25 and UP Designated Organizations will be required to complete a self-assessment. We also see these tools as a key part of our long-term work on the Disability Plan. Building off this strong foundation, Open Door Arts has developed the framework and model for an Arts and Culture Accessibility Resource Hub:

- Website containing comprehensive centralized information, resources, rosters and training related to accessibility for arts and culture organizations
- Content and structure are aligned with the Self-Assessment
- Includes:
 - Informational content, introductory videos, resources
 - Rosters of disabled artists, user/experts, access consultants, and service providers
 - Asynchronous training modules with assessments
 - Peer networks and cohort learning opportunities

We see huge potential in the Hub to serve as a central place for organizations to get access to the ILN style learning we have been offering. We would like to serve as a foundational partner to help establish the Hub to the benefit of the Massachusetts cultural sector and to the people with disabilities they serve. Open Door Arts has provided a budget that includes the projected costs for the build of the Hub website (main content, resources, rosters, etc.) as well as 8 asynchronous video training modules. The expenses reflect the 18-month estimated time of completion, with both the content and the training modules being developed simultaneously. The goal is to launch the Hub in January 2026.

Request. We are recommending a **\$100,000** investment in the project in FY25, and a potential second investment, of an amount yet to be determined in FY26 to assist in the launch of the project and incorporation into the evolution of our Universal Participation Initiative.



Power of culture

To: Mass Cultural Council
 From: Michael Bobbitt, Executive Director
 David Slatery, Deputy Executive Director
 Cathy Cheng-Anderson, Senior Director of Business Operations and Chief Financial Officer
 Date: August 22, 2024
 Re: **BUDGET AND PROGRAM ALLOCATION SPENDING PLAN FOR FY25**

Following this page is our proposed budget and program allocation spending plan for FY25. In line with our legislative mandate, the proposed plan aligns with our strategic objectives and exceeds the minimum requirement of allocating 75% of state appropriation to grant spending. This plan was presented to the Executive Committee on August 8, 2024, and received a recommendation for approval by the full Council. Additionally, the FY25 grant recommendations for most Mass Cultural Council grant programs were presented to the Grants Committee on the same date, which also recommended approval by the full Council. We now submit the FY25 Spending Plan and related Grant Recommendations for review and approval by the full Council.

FY25 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

- The \$26.85 million state budget allocated for Agency operations represents a 3.62% increase from last year. Broken down, this is \$25,895,000 for operations and \$955,000 for 20 legislative earmarks. This year's budget gives Mass Cultural Council the highest operating budget in the Agency's history.
- Mass Cultural Council's total funding is \$33.97 million in FY25, considering all sources. Our plan dedicates 81% (\$27.61 million) to grants, keeping administration and program-related expenses modest at 19%. When looking exclusively at our state funding allocation of \$26.85 million, we are dedicating a similar distribution: 79% (\$21.38 million) to grants and 21% to administrative and program-related expenses. In both scenarios, we have exceeded our legislative mandate to allocate at least 75% of our state funding to grant programs.
- A notable decrease in our FY24 vs FY25 total revenue is the absence of the federal Pandemic Recovery Funds, which were established under the Commonwealth's Covid Response Act (Chapter 102 of the Acts of 2021). The agency completed this two-year grant program in FY24.

- Our plan includes state appropriated revenue (\$70,800) from a reserve allocation established by the administration to pay for union cost of living increases and steps, and cost of living increases for managers. We will ask the administration for this funding in May 2025.
- The plan proposes to dedicate approximately \$5.37M from the casino tax revenue available through the Massachusetts Gaming Fund for the upcoming year of the Gaming Mitigation Grant Program. We are seeking approval to utilize the funds available as of June 30, 2024 (\$2,376,010), and to allocate an additional \$2,996,945 for organizational support to cultural organizations, and other administrative expenses. This anticipated funding of \$2,996,945 is an estimate based on whatever will be available as of December 31, 2024.
- Notable Fy25 advancement investments include:
 - We will prepare a comprehensive advancement plan designed to enhance and expand our strategic partnerships. This plan will outline specific engagement tactics and identify new partnership opportunities, driving the sector forward with clear goals and actionable steps.
 - To support our strategic plan and partnership efforts, we will recruit and develop a dedicated advancement team. This team will be responsible for executing the advancement plan, fostering relationships, and ensuring the successful advancement of arts and culture initiatives.
 - We will hire a consultant tasked with exploring and securing new funding opportunities, sponsorships, and revenue-generating activities. This initiative aims to generate resources to expand our advancement work with research, advocacy, and infrastructure and potentially expand our financial resources to support continued growth and development in the cultural sector.
 - Development of the MITx training program covers business acumen topics such as finance, legal considerations, negotiations, marketing, branding, pricing, business models, and civic engagement. It includes curriculum design support and templates from the Sloan School to provide essential resources and support to the sector.
- Notable equity investments include:
 - Scaling up our access and disability learning hub, and implementation of the [d/Deaf & Disability Equity Plan](#).
 - Roll out of the new Indigenous Cultural Council grant program and implementation of the [Native American & Indigenous People's Equity Plan](#).
 - Dedication of resources to assist individual grantees, especially those with disabilities and/or limited income, in obtaining grant funding and services from the Mass Cultural Council (Work Without Limits).



Power of culture

REVENUE	STATE FUNDING	GAMING*	CULTURAL FACILITIES FUND	NEA FEDERAL	MCC TRUST	TOTAL
FY25	26,850,000	2,996,945	348,506	1,209,900	-	31,405,351
FY24 CARRY OVER / TRANSFER IN	70,800	2,376,010	5,397	-	114,328	2,566,535
TOTAL REVENUE	26,920,800	5,372,955	353,903	1,209,900	114,328	33,971,886

*Estimated FY25 revenue

EXPENSES	STATE FUNDING	% TOTAL STATE FUNDING	GAMING	CULTURAL FACILITIES FUND	NEA FEDERAL	MCC TRUST	TOTAL	% TOTAL FUNDING ALL CATEGORIES
AA: SALARY	4,114,759	15%	236,169	178,548	22,570		4,552,046	13%
BB: EMPLOYEE REIMBURSEMENT	55,328	0%		5,397	0	0	60,725	0%
CC: CONTRACT STAFF								
DD: PAYROLL TAX AND FRINGE	66,654	0%	106,394	80,435	10,173	0	263,656	1%
EE: ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES	199,748	1%	25,239	21,855	2,257	0	249,098	1%
GG: RENT AND ELECTRICITY	296,675	1%	27,668	27,668	0	0	352,011	1%
HH: CONSULTING SERVICES	193,774	1%	8,500	0	0	26,231	228,505	1%
JJ: PROGRAMMATIC SERVICES	293,350	1%	0	40,000	0	0	333,350	1%
KK: NON-IT EQUIPMENT	2,200	0%	0	0	0	0	2,200	0%
LL: LEASES	7,444	0%	1,855	0	0	0	9,299	0%
PP: GRANTS PROGRAMS	20,426,628	76%	4,966,088	-	1,174,900	88,097	26,655,713	78%
PP: LEGISLATIVE EARMARKS	955,000	4%	-	-	-	-	955,000	3%
UU: INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	309,240	1%	1,043	0	0	0	310,283	1%
TOTAL EXPENSES	26,920,800		5,372,955	353,903	1,209,900	114,328	33,971,886	

PP: GRANTS PROGRAMS (DETAILED)	STATE FUNDING	GAMING	CULTURAL FACILITIES FUND	NEA FEDERAL	MCC TRUST	TOTAL	% TOTAL GRANT FUNDING
ORGANIZATIONS						7,200,000	27%
PORTFOLIO, MEDIA AND GATEWAY	5,029,489	1,366,411		804,100		7,200,000	
INDIVIDUALS						2,175,000	8%
GRANTS FOR CREATIVE INDIVIDUALS	2,175,000					2,175,000	
COMMUNITIES						6,570,000	25%
CULTURAL DISTRICTS	870,000					870,000	
LOCAL CULTURAL COUNCILS	5,700,000					5,700,000	
ARTS EDUCATION AND YOUTH						3,449,000	13%
CYD-YOUTH REACH	1,524,200			345,800		1,870,000	
NATIONAL GUILD/KLARMEN					18,000	18,000	
POETRY OUT LOUD				25,000		25,000	
STARS	1,500,000					1,500,000	
YOUTH ARTS IMPACT NETWORK (YAIN)	36,000					36,000	
EQUITY AND INCLUSION						2,683,950	10%
FESTIVALS & PROJECTS	1,850,000					1,850,000	
OPEN DOOR ARTS (INNOVATION LEARNING NETWORK)	100,000					100,000	
CULTURE RX	100,000					100,000	
NETWORK OF ARTS ADMINISTRATORS OF COLOR	50,000					50,000	
TRIBAL CULTURAL COUNCIL	103,950					103,950	
UNIVERSAL PARTICIPATION (UP)	480,000					480,000	
ADVANCEMENT						907,989	3%
MASSACHUSETTS FOUNDATION FOR HUMANITIES AND PUBLIC POLICY, INC.	977,389					977,389	
NET CREDIT AND CARRY FORWARD	-219,400					-219,400	
NEW ENGLAND FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS, INC.	70,000					70,000	
MASSCREATIVE INC.	30,000					30,000	
MITx	50,000					50,000	
OTHER GRANTS						3,669,774	14%
MCC TRUST (GRANT RESERVE/UNCOMMITTED)					70,097	70,097	
CHAPTER 23K FUNDED GRANTS GAMING MITIGATION PROGRAM		3,599,677				3,599,677	
TOTAL GRANTS	20,426,628	4,966,088	0	1,174,900	88,097	26,655,713	

AA: SALARY	We currently have 39 full-time employees, and 4 vacancies in FY25. Our payroll projections include a 3% across-the-board cost of living increase for managers, union employees and the executive director effective on January 12, 2025. Mass Cultural Council adopts the executive branch pay increase parameters to ensure pay equity amongst other state agencies.
BB: EMPLOYEE REIMBURSEMENT	This line covers reimbursements for employee expenses like in-state travel for meetings, conferences, professional licenses, and other work activities. It also includes out-of-state travel costs that are subject to approval by the Council.
CC: CONTRACT STAFF	
DD: PAYROLL TAX AND FRINGE	This line covers payroll tax for staff salaries. It also includes fringe and indirect charges related to federal or state trust-funded salaries or contracts. Several salaries are paid from a trust account for the Cultural Facilities Fund and a casino tax revenue trust for employees managing the Gaming Mitigation Program or "organizational support" from Gaming Revenues under the Gaming Law.
EE: ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES	This line covers costs including Commonwealth chargeback on payroll system/services, office supplies, water, printing, postage, membership fees, subscriptions, event-related costs, professional development expenses, credit card purchases, and administrative costs associated to grant program panels.
GG: RENT AND ELECTRICITY	This line includes our annual office space lease (\$332k) and utility costs.
HH: CONSULTING SERVICES	This line includes expenditures related to outside attorneys, mission moments, event speakers, program consultants, advisors, and stipends for taskforces.
JJ: PROGRAMMATIC SERVICES	This line includes expenditure related to photographers, auxiliary services, staff trainers, videographers, audio visual providers, language/ASL interpreter service/accommodations, grant reviewers, and program panelists/readers.
KK: NON- IT EQUIPMENT	This line includes expenditures for non-IT equipment purchases; office equipment, and ADA accommodation requests.
LL: LEASES	This line includes all non-IT equipment rental agreements, copier and postage meter leases, and rental car expenditures for staff travel.
PP: GRANTS PROGRAMS & EARMARKS	A detailed grant allocation list is included in this packet.
UU: INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	This line covers costs including Commonwealth chargebacks for accounting system/services and technology services, information technology expenditures such grants management system, ISP Servicer Retrofit, tech service providers, phone services/charges, laptop leases, and web developers.



Power of culture

BUSINESS OPERATIONS UPDATE

August 22, 2024

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER UPDATE

- Mass Cultural Council's Financial Policies and Procedures have been updated, with the last revision on August 27, 2019. The updated document includes revised travel guidelines approved at the Executive Committee meeting on October 12, 2023, and policies related to credit card use, purchasing goods and services, internal controls, fraud mitigation, and cybersecurity. This living document will be updated as needed, no less than annually. Summary of the revised 2024 policy document include:
 - All needed approvals and authority as written in the 2019 policy remain the same in the revised 2024 policy.
 - We have thoroughly revised and modernized the document to align with the latest standards and practices of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In alignment with the Commonwealth, we have made the policy more restrictive in certain instances to increase controls, security, and compliance.
 - New sections on cybersecurity and access control provide additional safeguards for the agency's operations.
 - The updates ensure our financial management and procurement processes are efficient, transparent, and responsible.
 - The policy has been rewritten and formatted to be more readable and eliminating redundant procedures covered by Commonwealth job aids that are only needed for fiscal staff members.
- The annual update to the internal controls document is underway. This involves reviewing and revising existing procedures to ensure they meet the latest requirements and best practices, including evaluating financial controls, operational processes, and compliance measures to identify and address any gaps or areas for improvement.
- Under the Mass Cultural Council's Financial Policies, all out-of-state travel must be approved by the Executive Committee. The proposed travel requests for Michael J. Bobbitt, Summer Confuorto, and Cathy Cheng-Anderson have been reviewed and approved, as they benefit the Council and its constituents, align with our strategic plan and newly adopted d/Deaf and Disability Equity Plan, and justify expenses through the travel's value. Travel Authorization Forms are on file for each employee. Approved travel includes the National Assembly

of State Arts Agencies Assembly 2024 in San Juan, Puerto Rico, the Grantmakers in the Arts Annual Conference in Chicago, IL, and the Strategic HR Conference in Bretton Woods, NH, with total costs amounting to \$6,363.

FISCAL OPERATIONS HIGHLIGHTS

- The final payment for the two-year \$54M Cultural Sector Recovery Grant program was disbursed in June 2024, marking the successful completion of a significant initiative aimed at supporting and revitalizing the cultural sector.
- The FY24 accounting year is being closed out, which involves finalizing all financial activities and ensuring every transaction is accounted for. This process includes reviewing and reconciling all accounts, verifying the completeness and accuracy of financial records, and addressing any outstanding financial payments or issues.
- The new FY25 accounting year is being set up by establishing contracts to ensure the smooth operation of the agency. This involves negotiating and finalizing agreements with various vendors and service providers, coordinating with different departments, and ensuring all contractual obligations are aligned and in compliance.
- Please join in welcoming Alanah Haynes, the new Fiscal Contracts Officer. In this role, she will interact with agency staff, vendors, and grantees to manage the grant contracting process from contract generation to payments and monitor contractual compliance. Her expertise will be invaluable in expediting payments to grantees and supporting the agency's mission.

PEOPLE OPERATIONS HIGHLIGHTS

- To support the strategic plan and advancement work, a dedicated advancement team will be formed. The [Manager of Strategic Partnerships and Advancement](#) is currently being actively recruited for. This will be a vital role in advancing the mission to enhance the creative sector across the Commonwealth. The ideal candidate will collaborate with the Executive and Senior Leadership Teams to develop and secure strategic partnerships locally and nationally. As advancement work grows, capacity will be expanded by incorporating additional responsibilities into existing staff roles to support various aspects of the initiatives.
- To expand the network and build relationships beyond the creative and cultural sector, staff participated in a three-part training series focused on relationship-building techniques and best practices. By applying these techniques, staff will be better equipped to drive collaboration across various sectors.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND OFFICE OPERATIONS HIGHLIGHTS

- The lease for Mass Cultural Council's current space is scheduled to expire on January 14, 2026. In anticipation of this date, the procurement process directed by the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) has been initiated, and the assessment of space requirements is underway to ensure all decisions are cost-effective and align with the Administration.
- A new lease for laptop computers is being procured for deployment in the fall to ensure all staff have access to the latest technology, mitigating cybersecurity and information technology risks.