



Power of culture

MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL

GRANTS COMMITTEE BOOK

FRIDAY, AUGUST 4, 2023

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MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL
GRANTS COMMITTEE
FRIDAY, AUGUST 4, 2023

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**MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL
GRANTS COMMITTEE**

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 4, 2023
11:00 AM-12:30 PM**

ON-LINE MEETING

BROADCAST MEETING

[MEETING WILL BE LIVESTREAMED AT Grants Committee Meeting - YouTube](#)

[MEETING MATERIALS WILL BE POSTED ONLINE
UNDER "AUGUST 4, 2023 GRANTS COMMITTEE MEETING"](#)

<u>AGENDA</u>	<u>VOTE</u>
1. Call to Order- Open Meeting Law Notice	
2. Minutes- June 12, 2023	X
3. Reports- FY24 Grants and Program Plan	
4. Conflict of Interest Notifications	
FY24 Grant and Program Recommendations	X
5. Organizations	
a. Cultural Investment Portfolio & Gateway	
b. Media Transition	
c. Gaming Mitigation Program	
6. Communities	
a. Cultural Districts	
b. Local Cultural Councils	

7. Arts Education & Youth
 - a. YouthReach
 - b. STARS
 - c. Youth Arts Impact Network
 - d. Poetry Out Loud
 - e. Instrument Program

8. Equity and Inclusion
 - a. Festivals & Projects
 - b. UP Innovation Fund Grants
 - c. CultureRx Social Prescription
 - d. Arts Connect International/Creative Equity Learning Cohort (CELC)
 - e. Network of Arts Administrators of Color
 - f. Indian Affairs Commission Truth & Healing Project
 - g. Innovation Learning Network Scale Up Grants

9. Advancement
 - a. Mass Humanities
 - b. MASS Creative
 - c. New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA)

10. Individuals:
 - a. Traditional Arts Apprenticeships
 - b. Individual Creative Grants

11. Remaining Pandemic Recovery Funds Grants

12. Adjourn



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MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL GRANTS COMMITTEE

(IN ADVANCE OF THE 156th MEETING OF MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL ON AUGUST 24, 2021)

FRIDAY, AUGUST 4, 2023

RESOLUTIONS

Section 2

RESOLVED: that the Grants Committee approves the minutes of the June 13, 2023 Grants Committee Meeting in the form presented.

Sections 5 to 11

WHEREAS it is expected that the Massachusetts State Budget for Fiscal 2024 when signed into law shall contain an appropriation \$25,000,000 (plus earmarks) for the Mass Cultural Council for FY24 (the "FY24 State Budget"); and

WHEREAS, previously today Mass Cultural Council's Executive Committee recommended to the Council for approval a draft of the FY24 Budget and Program Allocation Plan submitted by staff; and

WHEREAS, based on such Plan, staff has recommended grant allocations for Mass Cultural Council programs to the Grants Committee at its meeting on August 4, 2023 ("Grants Committee Meeting"),

NOW THEREFORE, it is hereby

RESOLVED: That, dependent upon the FY24 State Budget being signed into law, the Grants Committee, recommends that the Council approve the allocation of grants and processes and procedures presented at the Grants Committee Meeting in accordance with the following resolutions:

Section 5(a)

RESOLVED: To recommend allocations to the Cultural Investment Portfolio and CIP Gateway programs as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting in for an aggregate total of \$6,990,300.

Section 5(b)

RESOLVED: To recommend \$100,000 in Media Transition Grants to 5 public media companies, as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

Section 5(c)

RESOLVED: To recommend approval of the fourth cycle of the Gaming Mitigation Program as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

Section 6(a)

RESOLVED: To recommend up to \$855,000 in Cultural District grants as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

Section 6(b)

RESOLVED: To recommend an allocation to the Local Cultural Councils totaling \$5,500,000 as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

Section 7 (a)

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

Section 7 (b)

RESOLVED: To recommend to Mass Cultural Council recommend grant allocations of \$1,428,100 to the STARS program, as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

Section 7 (c), (d) and (e)

RESOLVED: To recommend the following grants- \$30,416 to the Youth Arts Impact Network with EdVestors, \$20,000 in support of the NEA-funded Poetry Out Loud program and continued grant funding of the Instrument Library in the amount of \$15,000, all as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

Section 8 (a)

RESOLVED: To recommend approval of the Projects/Festivals program with a grant allocation totaling \$1,850,000 as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

Section 8 (b)

RESOLVED: To recommend to Mass Cultural Council \$480,000 in UP Innovation Fund Grants, as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

Section 8 (c)

RESOLVED: To recommend a grant of \$175,000 to Art Pharmacy for continuation of the CultureRx Social Prescription program as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

Section 8 (d), (e), (f) and (g)

RESOLVED: To recommend to Mass Cultural Council a \$62,500 grant to Arts Connect International for continuing the Cultural Equity Learning Community (CELC) 2.0 teaching course in FY24, a \$70,000 grants to ArtsBoston acting on behalf of the Network Arts Administrators of Color, a \$5,000 grant to the Massachusetts Commission on Indian Affairs for support of its Truth Commission project and a \$20,000 grant for an organization to be selected to scale up the UP Innovation Learning Network program, all as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

Section 9

RESOLVED: To recommend to Mass Cultural Council a grant to Mass Humanities totaling \$943,608, a grant to Mass Creative for \$33,000 and a grant to NEFA of \$70,000, all as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

Section 10(a)

RESOLVED: To recommend to Mass Cultural Council the funding of the Apprentice Grants program in the amount of \$180,000 as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

Section 10(b)

RESOLVED: To recommend to Mass Cultural Council a grant allocation of \$1,875,000 for up to 375 grants of \$5,000 as part of the new FY24 Individual Creativity Grants Program as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting

Section 11

RESOLVED: To recommend to Mass Cultural Council continuation of the Cultural Sector Recovery Grants for Individual program in FY24, using whatever leftover Pandemic Recovery Funds are determined to be available by staff, for further grants under the program, as presented to the Grants Committee 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 COMMITTEE AT ITS NEXT MEETING

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

**MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL
GRANTS COMMITTEE**

MONDAY, JUNE 12, 2023

ONLINE MEETING

Committee Members Present were
Jo-Ann Davis, Chair of the Grants Committee
Marc Carroll, Acting Council Chair
Barbara Schaffer Bacon
Karen Barry
Cecil Barron Jensen
Kathleen Castro

Also Present were Mass Cultural Council Staff Members Michael J. Bobbitt, David Slatery, Catherine Cheng-Anderson, Jen Lawless, Bethann Steiner, Charles Baldwin, Dan Blask, Kelly Bennett, Lillian Lee, Deborah Kenyon, Kalyn King, Lisa Simmons, Ann Petruccelli Moon, Carmen Plazas, Carolyn Cole, and Sara Glidden.

Chair Jo-Ann Davis called the meeting to order at 9:01 am. She welcomed Committee Members and Agency staff and asked Deputy 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).

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 open meetings. This meeting is being broadcast to the public on a publicly available YouTube or other channel as described in the publicly posted meeting notice. Only Council members, staff and invited participants and guests will be

Prepared on 7/17/23

provided access to the Zoom or other videoconferencing platform hosting the meeting. As a safety measure, 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:

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

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.

Jo-Ann then asked Committee Members to approve the minutes of their last business meeting held on January 11, 2023. Barbara Schaffer Bacon moved to approve the minutes and Marc Carroll seconded the motion. There were no questions or discussion. By roll call vote and noting that Ché Anderson was absent, all other Committee Members were in favor, and it was

RESOLVED: that the Grants Committee approves the minutes of the January 11, 2023 Grants Committee Meeting in the form presented to the Grants Committee at its June 12, 2023 Meeting.

Jo-Ann let Committee Members know the focus of the meeting would be a review of FY23 grantmaking activities and a preview of FY24 plans. She thanked the staff for their work to prepare for the meeting and asked Executive Director Michael Bobbitt and Senior Director of Programs Jenifer Lawless to begin their presentation.

Michael let Committee Members know he was very excited to share the data included in the presentation with them and to being discussing plans for FY24; he also thanked staff who had worked hard on outreach efforts in FY23 and noted that moving to the Agency's new Grants Management System - which was key in obtaining the data the Committee would review today - has been a "dream come true."

Jen began by recognizing the Operations team who is continuing to work hard on paying out pandemic recovery grants. She then shared her screen and delivered a presentation on the Agency's FY23 grantmaking data noting that this fiscal year a massive number of grants have been distributed thanks to Michael's clear vision on how to improve reach and equity, and outreach efforts made by staff. Jen then presented a PowerPoint presentation to the Committee. A copy of the presentation is available upon request.

Jen let Committee Members know to ask questions at any time during her presentation which also included analysis of how and to whom the grants were distributed.

Jo-Ann asked what percentage of pandemic recovery grants have been paid out at this point and Jen let her know that last she'd checked, 60% of grants awarded have been paid. She asked Catherine Cheng-Anderson, the Agency's Senior Director of Business Operations and Chief Financial Officer, to provide an update once one was available.

Jo-Ann asked if staff had excluded pandemic recovery grant numbers when making their comparison between FY22 and FY23 grantmaking and Jen confirmed staff was excluding it.

While Jen presented geographic data about FY23 grantmaking, Barbara asked if it would be possible to look at cities that had new applicants versus previous applicants since she is interested to know if in communities where no additional applicants were seen, perhaps different people and organizations applied. Jen will investigate this.

As Jen was presenting information about the change in demand by county, Karen Barry expressed that this information is extremely important; it is good to see growth in so many areas especially Worcester, Norfolk, and Bristol County; it also demonstrates where there is work still to be done.

Jo-Ann asked if this analysis did include pandemic recovery grant data and Jen explained that, yes, it does; every county saw a huge jump as a result of the pandemic recovery grant programs, but to Barbara's earlier point, the proportions did not change; there is still outreach work to be done and this data will shape the work moving forward.

Michael added that the number of applicants will grow in FY24, but the number of grants made will not since there will be no additional pandemic recovery funds like we had this year. Staff plans to engage in a cultural asset mapping project to help illuminate who in Massachusetts is potentially eligible and/or in need of Mass Cultural Council funding; this will inform how staff proposes allocating the Agency's grant dollars.

Jen explained that 7K of the 11K grant applications received this year were from individuals. Jo-Ann noted that managing expectations in FY24 could be a challenge given that the Agency will not have pandemic recovery funds to distribute.

Michael has been thinking a good deal about stewardship and where the Agency can point people if they do not receive a grant; advocacy work around funding will absolutely continue and later in the meeting Committee Members will see a presentation focused on how grants to individuals will be rethought for FY24. Building relationships with other agencies and sectors is a main driver behind the Agency's new

Strategic Plan as these agencies and sectors may have resources for artists and cultural organizations. Mass Cultural Council's funding will most likely not increase enough to accommodate demand, but if staff focuses on advancing the sector and making Massachusetts the best place for artists to live and work, there will be less pressure on grants. This will be a key focus for the next 18 months.

As Jen presented data comparing applications and approvals by county and then by city and town, she noted that 98% of Massachusetts cities and towns had a direct grant recipient in FY23. Karen suggested sticking with looking at data by municipality as breaking it down by community and county can cause confusion when the data is compared nationally.

Barbara added that having a decentralized program – the Local Cultural Council program – ensures the Agency is getting funding to every corner of the state; not every state has such a program.

Jen next shared an analysis of grantmaking to new applicants and the funding priorities staff enlisted to ensure funding reached them. She thanked former staff member Scott Hufford for his work making this data available.

Jo-Ann and Karen expressed that this data is impressive and perhaps the most important slide of the entire presentation.

Karen asked for more information regarding the pandemic recovery grant program extending eligibility to for-profit organizations. Michael explained that it is a priority to fund the entire cultural sector. For small BIPOC organizations gaining 501c3 status can be challenging; Michael noted that most "for-profit" arts organization are not actually making a profit. This is something that will be further examined through the cultural asset mapping project.

Barbara asked for clarification on what for-profit organizations were funded in FY22 and Jen explained that these organizations were funded through the AAPI Arts & Culture COVID-19 Recovery Program – a legislatively-mandated, one-time relief program established by the MA House Asian Caucus. Funding to for-profits was in the statute.

Karen added that is important to look at the compensation level for the directors of cultural organizations as some organizations who are receiving large Mass Cultural Council grants have directors who are making a good deal of money. This is something that Karen has always had a concern about.

Jen explained that for the pandemic recovery programs, staff took financial need into consideration in a very specific way; in FY24 staff will examine how to further define financial need. Michael added that it's important to remember that non-profit is a tax status, not a business model and it might be that the need is not necessarily greater for non-profits over for-profits.

While Jen reviewed grantees by discipline, gender, and age, Barbara commented that she would like to see further analysis on how various disciplines break down and how the Agency has seen disciplines change over time. Jen elaborated on this: the data is by grants and not by type of grantee.

Jen's presentation concluded with the Agency's focus for FY24:

- Continue program consolidations and redesigns.
- Continue progress on Racial Equity Plan and incorporate new Native/Indigenous and Deaf/Disability Equity plans.
- Contract with consultant to work on cultural landscape mapping to inform grantmaking and advancement efforts.
- Strategic plan implementation.

Before Committee Members were invited to ask questions, Catherine informed them that she had an update on the payment of pandemic recovery grants: 48% of grants to individuals and 83% of grants to organizations have been paid as of today. The staff processing the payments is working six days per week and the target to have the grant payments completed is August 31st.

Referring back to Jen's presentation Jo-Ann expressed that the data tells an excellent story about the work of the Agency; about the outreach and the depth and breadth of who is benefitting from it. This is a wonderful place from which to move forward.

Marc added that he appreciated the thoughtful way in which the data was presented and the fact that Committee Members were able to consider every demographic and see how the work moving forward would tie to the new Strategic Plan.

Jen then delivered a second presentation intended to give Committee Members a snapshot preview of how each grant program would operate and potentially evolve in FY24. Jen noted that staff is still in "draft mode" and working towards finalizing plans for the full meeting of the Council in August. Committee Members were invited to ask questions at the end of the presentation. A copy of this presentation is also available upon request. Key points included:

- The Cultural Investment Portfolio is in a transition year working towards launching a new operating support program to launch in FY25.
- The Gaming Mitigation program will see no major changes.
- Jen applauded the efforts of Timothea Pham and Kalyn King who administered the FY23 Festivals & Projects program and then quickly opened application for FY24. The Festivals & Projects program has continually evolved and grown over the years.

Cultural Districts and Local Cultural Councils will see no major changes.

- YouthReach and STARS will see no immediate changes, but staff is working towards a new program for FY25 that will seek to expand the number of programs and schools being served.

Universal Participation (UP) Innovation Fund grants will continue. The Innovation & Learning Network will pause for a second year with an eye toward scaling it up in FY25.

Grants to Artists will see several large changes; the one thing that is not changing

is that FY24 will be the second year of funding for two-year Traditional Arts Apprenticeship grants. Jen invited Program Manager Dan Blask to review some of the proposed changes for Committee Members.

Dan explained that the team is working to launch a new grant program for artists and creative individuals in the fall of 2023; there is still much to be decided. The work began with the Agency's Racial Equity Plan. The Artists team worked with Equity & Inclusion Program Officer Cheyenne Cohn-Postell to look at funding for artists through a racial equity lens; a number of their findings were reinforced in the new Strategic Plan. The three key points for the redesign are: advancing creativity; inclusive, not exclusive reach; and equity and access at every level so that all who practice see themselves in the program. The areas of focus include defining a new mission statement, creating an applicant-centered application process, broadening disciplines, removing anonymity and adding a narrative to applications, funding priorities, and building an equity-focused review process. The team is still working to determine the dollar amount of each grant. Michael has encouraged them to think about the concept of a living wage as they consider this. During the first year of the program the Agency will most likely be able to fund 300 artists and creative individuals. The goal is to eventually fund 500 per year.

Karen thanked Dan for his presentation and asked if staff is recommending that the anonymous application process be lifted entirely or if portions of the review process would still be anonymous.

Dan explained that staff is envisioning a process that will no longer be anonymous. Names would be known by application readers and a narrative would be included in each application. Staff is trying to take some of the elements that worked well in the previous Fellowship program and some of the elements that worked well in the pandemic recovery program for individuals, infuse them into the new program, and devise a new way of evaluating applications. He acknowledged that staff must learn more about participatory grantmaking and how to address conflicts of interest.

Karen expressed concern that the process would no longer be anonymous. She liked that panelists were looking exclusively at the work and not at the individual who created it. She wonders if this might increase bias in the evaluation process.

Michael shared that blind reviews have been shown to be the opposite of equity and contributed to a lack of resources for BIPOC applicants; that it is better to say, "We see you and we know you have been under-resourced." He added that staff has worked to increase representation on its review panels, but that even with a diverse group of reviewers the Agency still has money going mostly to white individuals.

Barbara asked what staff is thinking about in terms of participatory grantmaking acknowledging that this is a significant lift. Dan explained that there is still much to be determined but staff is envisioning a scoring mechanism based on the proposed program mission. Jen added that this is essentially reversing the mechanism used for Fellowships which was designed so reviewers chose the four best applicants. This process will have the goal of supporting creative expression and a commitment to the practice. The pandemic grant program received several very sincere applications from creative individuals who had been making art for as little as three years or as long as 30; what reviewers will look for is a commitment to the practice and an alignment with the mission of the program.

Jo-Ann noted that this is a significant change and asked if the plan is to bring the new program before the Council in August. She anticipates there will be a number of questions. Barbara agreed and asked if staff would seek input from the field on the new program.

Dan explained that elements of the new program would be shared with the field this month and feedback would be gathered via a survey. Jen added that the staff likes to be ambitious and that beyond creating a new grant program, business operations and fiscal are determining how best to serve grantees.

Marc likes the direction of the new program but has concerns that this is a large undertaking and that launching the program in the fall might be too challenging. He added that staff should consider the impact of AI on the work of artists and the work they might see included in applications.

Dan is hopeful that having readers (human readers) will help to surface AI-created art. Michael added that "fall" doesn't necessarily mean September.

There were no further questions or comments on the new Artists program.

Cecil Barron Jensen let staff know that she was happy to hear earlier in the presentation that the Social Prescription program is moving forward and expanding. Michael let Committee Members know that staff will be meeting with a group from the Office of the Attorney General in the coming weeks to talk about this program. The name of the organization enlisted to expand Social Prescription is Art Pharmacy, they are based in Georgia but do a good deal of work in New England.

Karen noted that she would like to be involved with outreach to tribal communities and is curious to hear more about the Agency's new Native/Indigenous Equity plan.

Michael let Karen know that he had several meetings with tribal leaders in December and that he plans to extend the Local Cultural Council program to include tribal councils. Since the Agency gives money to municipalities, tribes can be treated similarly. There is a focus group planned and the new plan will be crafted in the coming year.

Barbara added that the Ford Foundation has a program that might be of interest to the team as they undertake this new plan, she will send information about it to Michael.

At this point there were no further questions or discussion and the Committee had reached the end of its agenda. Jo-Ann, as Chair, adjourned the meeting at 10:39am.

Last created July 27, 2023

UPDATED Conflicts of Interest Notifications- Mass Cultural Council Members

As of July 28, 2023

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. Matthew Keator

4. Allyce Najimy

5. Barbara Schaffer Bacon
 - a. Arts Extension Institute

6. Troy Siebels
 - a. Hanover Theater/Worcester Center for the Performing Arts
 - b. Worcester Cultural Coalition
 - c. Discover Central Massachusetts
 - d. Indian Hill Music
 - e. MASS Creative

7. Ann Murphy
 - a. MASS Creative

8. Sherry Dong
 - a. The Chinese Historical Society of New England

9. Kathleen Castro
 - a. Little Theater of Fall River
 - b. New Bedford Festival Theater
 - c. The Fall River Coalition for Arts and Culture

10. Karen Barry

11. Cecil Barron Jensen
 - a. Artists Association of Nantucket
 - b. The Nantucket Historical Association
 - c. Nantucket Cultural District

Last created July 27, 2023

12. Simone Early

13. Mark Snyder

14. Che Anderson

- a. Worcester County Mechanics Association (Mechanics Hall)
- b. Worcester Historical Museum
- c. Worcester Art Museum
- d. Institute of Contemporary Art

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 FY24 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}

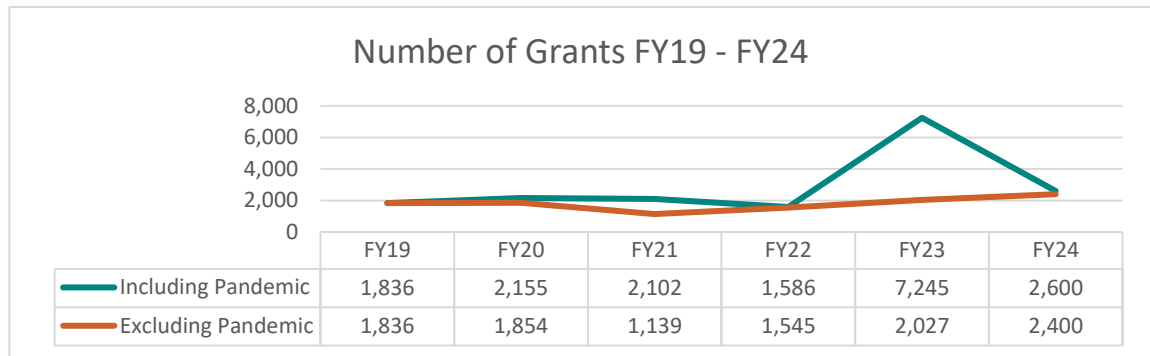


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To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee
 Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jen Lawless
 Dt: August 4, 2023
 Re: FY 24 Grant and Program Recommendations

Overview. In FY24 the Mass Cultural Council is posed to make an estimated 2,500 to 2,600 grants through its programs totaling approximately \$28,000,000.

Since the pandemic started, pandemic recovery funds and grantmaking have been an important part of the work we have done to support the sector. This year, the majority of grantmaking will be related to our core programs and represents the most awards the agency has made excluding pandemic grants.



The increase in the number of grants is supported by an increase in funding through the core grant programs as well. Due to two years of increased appropriations to Mass Cultural Council, every program has seen an increase as well. In FY23 because we paused the Artist Fellowship program, all the other programs saw significant increases. In FY24 as the grant making to individuals returns, you will see we prioritized increasing funds to that program and the other programs were held level.

	FY22	FY23	FY24	% Change FY22 - FY24	\$ Change FY22 - FY24
Artist Fellowships/New Grants to Individuals	\$1,300,000	\$0	\$1,875,000	44%	\$575,000
CIP Portfolio and Gateway	\$6,309,600	\$6,996,300	\$6,990,300	11%	\$686,700
Cultural Districts	\$412,500	\$825,000	\$855,000	107%	\$442,500
Festivals & Projects	\$787,500	\$1,850,000	\$1,850,000	135%	\$1,062,500
Local Cultural Council Program	\$4,785,000	\$5,500,000	\$5,500,000	15%	\$715,000
STARS Residencies	\$1,150,000	\$1,428,100	\$1,428,100	24%	\$278,100
Traditional Arts Apprenticeships	\$100,000	\$180,000	\$180,000	80%	\$80,000
UP Innovation Fund	\$90,000	\$475,000	\$475,000	428%	\$385,000
YouthReach	\$1,613,000	\$1,870,000	\$1,870,000	16%	\$257,000
	\$16,547,600	\$19,124,400	\$21,023,400	27%	\$4,481,800

In FY23 our grants management system had roughly **175,000 logins** by **19,200 users**. Across all direct programs and including the Local Cultural Council Program, we had just over **23,000 applications** come in through our grants management system.

The program teams, including the grant management system team, put in an immense amount of work and time supporting applicants, potential applicants, and grantees. While we expect the numbers to decrease somewhat without the pandemic programs, we do not anticipate a significant decline in activity because we met so many new individuals and organizations through the pandemic programs and we anticipate that they will continue to apply to our core programs in FY24.

New in FY24: e-Signature Contracts. We are excited to be able to move to e-Signature this year for the contracting process. The Grant Systems Team and the Fiscal Team in Business Operations have been hard at work preparing for this big, exciting change.

The following memos describe the FY24 grantmaking in more detail. In all cases, staff is requesting that the Grants Committee recommend the proposals for approval by the full Council on August 24. All grant allocation amounts are based upon the Executive Committee's approval and recommendation of Mass Cultural Council's FY 24 Spending Plan on August 4, 2023.

Cultural Investment Portfolio (Including Gateway)

(Agenda Item 5(a))

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee
 Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jen Lawless, Sara Glidden, Kalyn King, Lillian Lee, Gregory Torrales
 Dt: August 4, 2023
 Re: Cultural Investment Portfolio: FY24 Grant Recommendations

Summary . In this section, you will find proposed parameters for FY24 grant recommendations for nonprofit cultural organizations and Cultural Affiliates (programs with a parent organization) in Mass Cultural Council’s Cultural Investment Portfolio (CIP). A list of the 317 Portfolio grantees can be found in Appendix A of the Appendices section of the Grants Committee materials.

A total of **339** organizations are recommended for grants totaling **\$6,996,300**

<u>Category</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Portfolio	317	\$6,864,300
Gateway	21	\$126,000
Total	339	\$6,990,300

The amount allocated to the programs is consistent with what was allocated in FY23.

Based on this budget, we calculated award assignments for individual Portfolio organizations. Grants are based on a formula that takes into account a three-year average of an organization’s cash expenses (Formula Expenses). We maintained the Maximum grant at \$60,000 and the Minimum grant of \$6,000 with Individual Cultural Affiliates (programs with a parent organization) are capped at a maximum grant of \$20,000, and degree granting conservatories are assigned a flat amount of \$30,000.

In FY23 we implemented Equity Impact Points, which will increase grant amounts for organizations in or representing communities that have frequently been disadvantaged in access to philanthropic support. In FY 24 we will measure this based on whether an organization is [BIPOC-Centered](#) which is defined as 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.

Background. The Cultural Investment Portfolio provides multi-year grants to nonprofit organizations that provide public programs in the arts, sciences, and humanities in Massachusetts. The program was launched in 2009.

The program established various categories of participation based on several factors, including organizational mission, duration of public programming, staff size, and track record of excellence based on previous Mass Cultural Council grant reviews. We have discontinued the Portfolio Engagement Requirement (which has been in suspension since 2020 due to the Pandemic) as we take the next steps in redesigning the program and reducing the requirements for organizations still struggling with the COVID-19 pandemic. The new Organization Support Grant program is planned to launch in spring of 2024 to replace the Portfolio, which will be phased out.

Portfolio grantees are required to submit annual financial data to DataArts, a powerful online financial tracking tool that was created by the Pew Charitable Trusts and launched in Massachusetts in 2009 through a partnership between Mass Cultural Council, Pew, and other Massachusetts funders. Grantees are also required to submit a brief Annual Report, which is useful in identifying changes or concerns.

The Gateway Program was introduced in 2016 as a clearly defined way for organizations to move into the Portfolio. The Gateway program is being discontinued as part of the Portfolio redesign, and a new five-year renewable grant framework will be implemented on a rolling basis beginning in FY24 (for FY25 grants). The current cohort of 22 Gateway grantees will be funded in FY24, after which point, the former Gateway grantees can apply to the new Organization Support Grant program.

Award Assignments for Portfolio Grantees. Portfolio Grantees' award assignments are determined through the following process:

1. Determine available resources for Portfolio, based on the CIP program budget for the fiscal year.
2. Determine budget size for each Portfolio organization.
 - o The current model calculates budget size as the mean of the three most recent years of cash expenses, based in all but a few cases on data self-reported in DataArts. (See Cash Expense Adjustments chart below.)
 - o For the purposes of the award assignments, organizations with budgets of \$10 million and above are treated as equal.
3. Apply maximum and minimum grant amounts for the Portfolio and a maximum grant amount for Cultural Affiliates.
 - o The maximum grant is \$60,000, and the minimum grant is \$6,000.
 - o The maximum grant will be \$20,000 for Cultural Affiliates, with a limit to any single parent organization of more than one Cultural Affiliate set at \$30,000.

- Apply a designated grant amount of \$30,000 for degree-granting art colleges or conservatories. This affects two organizations: New England Conservatory and Boston Conservatory at Berklee.
- 4. Run budget-based formula incorporating the above maximum and minimum grant amounts. Under this formula, larger organizations receive larger grants, but smaller organizations receive larger percentages of their operating budgets from the Mass Cultural Council.
- 5. Assign Equity Impact Points to increase the grant awards to organizations representing communities that have frequently been disadvantaged in access to philanthropic support.
- 6. Identify and adjust groups that had annual reporting compliance issues.
 - Organizations that did not meet the annual reporting requirements by **May 31, 2023**, will have their FY24 grant amount reduced by 25%. Five Portfolio and two Gateway organizations missed the May 31, 2023 deadline.
 - Any organization remaining non-compliant with the annual reporting requirements after **June 7, 2023**, will be ineligible for a FY24 Cultural Investment Portfolio/Gateway grant. One organization missed the June 7, 2023 deadline.

CIP Review Process Details. In Appendix B you will find the following information on the CIP program:

- Cash Expense Adjustments
- Suspensions and Deletions
- Organizations below minimum Cash Expenses of \$50,000
- Holds
- Reduction of Grant

Reconsideration Requests. There were no requests for reconsideration on any of the penalties or reclassifications we are proposing.

If there are further questions, please do not hesitate to contact CIP staff:

- Sara Glidden, Program Manager, Portfolio Organizations and CIP Gateway: (617) 858-2710
- Kalyn King, Program Officer, Portfolio Organizations and Public Programming Grants (617) 858-2718
- Lillian Lee, Program Officer, Portfolio Organizations and Gaming Mitigation (617) 858-2737
- Greg Torrales, Program Officer, Portfolio Organizations and Card to Culture: (617) 858-2722

Media Transition Grants

(Agenda Item 5(b))

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee
 Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jen Lawless, Sara Glidden, Kalyn King, Lillian Lee, Gregory Torrales
 Dt: August 4, 2023
 Re: Media Transition Grants: FY24 Grant Recommendations

Summary. For several years, Mass Cultural Council has provided what we called “Media Partnership Grants” by which we supported nonprofit media organizations by purchasing radio sponsorships to 5 public media providers throughout the Commonwealth to promote our grantees and position Mass Cultural Council as a vital source of support for the cultural sector.

After much discussion, in FY23, staff determined that it was in the agency's best interest to separate the issue of promoting the agency's grantees and mission through purchased advertising from our mission to support cultural organizations which are public media companies through grants. Focusing our messaging and advertising purchases on reaching new markets and new constituents will let us connect with media that reach historically underrepresented communities without conflating that issue with aim of supporting specific cultural organizations. As a result, the former Media Partnership Grantees received “Media Transition Grants” in FY 23

We are proposing to continue this practice and make FY24 be a second transition year and make “bridge” grants to these 5 media organizations. FY24 will be the final year for the Media Grant category, as those organizations will be eligible to apply for the Organization Support Grant program.

FY24 Funding Recommendations

The FY24 recommendation represents level funding from FY23.

Organization	FY24 Grant Amount
WICN Public Radio, Inc.	\$8,000
New England Public Media, Inc.	\$8,000
WGBH Educational Foundation	\$38,000
WBUR Public Radio	\$38,000
WERS-FM	\$8,000

\$100,000

Gaming Mitigation Program

(Agenda Item 5(c))

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee
Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jen Lawless, Sara Glidden, Lillian Lee
Dt: August 4, 2023
Re: FY24 Gaming Mitigation Program

Background. The Gaming Mitigation Program 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 Program "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 Program in the spring of 2020 (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), and the Council approved a third cycle of the program in January 2023 (\$3.74 Million).

Summary of Third Cycle (FY23). In total, 43 performing arts centers across the Commonwealth received \$3.74 million. The minimum grant was raised from \$2,500 to \$5,000, so grants ranged from \$5,000 to \$250,000. Of the 43 grantees, 9% were new to the program (86% were returning FY22 Gaming grantees and 5% were returning FY21 Gaming grantees) and 7% self-identified as BIPOC organizations.

Proposed Process of Fourth Cycle (FY24). For this year, there will be no significant structural changes to the application or guidelines. During the previous cycle, some organizations noted that they had not been able to fully resume programming until 2022, and therefore did not apply. Given that, we do anticipate more organizations applying in FY24 as they will be asked to report on performances and fees paid to artists for calendar year 2022. We will continue our outreach efforts to reach new and varied organizations and hope to see an additional increase in new organizations for this year's cycle.

FY24 Program Allocation. 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 Program (75% after expenses) and "organizational support" (25% after expenses). The amounts intended to be used the FY24 Spending Plan but are expected to come in during the year.

Staff is proposing to provide a program allocation of up to whatever funds are available for Gaming Mitigation in the fund as of 12/31/2023 for the fourth cycle of funding under the program. We are estimating a similar amount as the third cycle (\$3.74 million), but the available amount could be more or less depending on the performance of the casinos.

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

- **December 5:** Guidelines and Application available
- **December 7:** Gaming Mitigation Info Session
- **February 1, 2024:** Applications due 11:59 PM EST
- **Late February/Early March 2024:** Review complete and award amounts determined
- **March 2024:** Contracts mailed to grantees

Cultural District Investment Grants

(Agenda Item 6(a))

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee

Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jen Lawless, Lisa Simmons, Carolyn Cole, Timothea Pham, Jay Wong, Hanako Brais & Guelmi Espinal

Re: Cultural Districts Initiative – FY24 Grant Recommendations

Dt: August 4, 2023

Summary. For FY24, we are recommending an \$855,000 allocation to the Cultural Districts Initiative to support placemaking and placekeeping efforts in the prospective Districts. Staff is recommending a \$15,000 grant per district, consistent with what was approved in the previous FY23 year. The \$855,000 represents a 0% increase in the awarded amount of individual district grants from FY23.

- There are currently **fifty-five districts** designated listed in **Appendix C** each to receive grants of up to \$15,000 for a total of **\$825,000**.
-
- Additionally, we wish to set aside a reserve of **\$30,000** for up to an additional **two new districts** currently going through the designation process.

Should all existing districts receive the full \$15,000 available to them and if the Council approves two additional districts, the total program allocation in FY24 will be \$855,000.

Grant Process and Reporting Requirements. There are no major changes to the FY24 guidelines, application, or review process. To receive funds, a municipality must apply through a streamlined application process 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 FY24, and a Final Report is due in July, 2024.

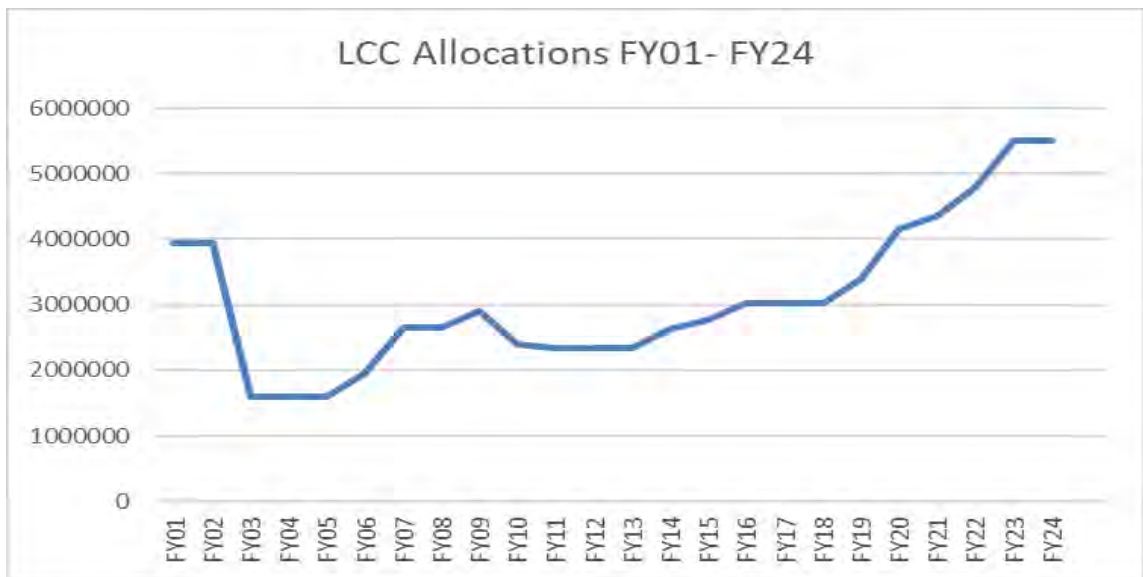
Local Cultural Council Program (Agenda Item 6(b))

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee
Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jen Lawless, Lisa Simmons, Timothea Pham, Carolyn Cole, Jay Wong, Hanako Brais & Guelmi Espinal
Dt: August 4, 2023
Re: FY24 Local Cultural Council Allocations

Summary. This memo presents recommended allocations for each of the MCC's 329 Local Cultural Councils (LCCs) in FY24. Mass Cultural Council 's FY24 Spending Plan calls for an allocation of \$5,500,000 to the Local Cultural Council Program. This figure represents level funding from the previous FY23 fiscal year.

Summarizing the last 24 years of LCC Program: From FY11 – FY18 there was a steady increase but on average the LCC's were level funded and from FY19 to the present the increases have been modest to significant, and with the increase in the FY23 budget the LCCs saw an increase from \$4,785,000 to \$5,500,000.

For reference, below is a chart that summarizes the last 24 years of LCC Program allocations.



Local Cultural Council Allocations. In FY24, all 329 Local Cultural Councils will receive the same allocation that they received in FY23. The recommended allocations for all 329 Local Cultural Councils are detailed in **Appendix D**.

Each council's individual allocation is determined by following the Department of Revenue's percent distribution of lottery funds to each city and town, which is done using a state local aid formula, based on population and property values. Because funding has remained level this year, there is no change to the minimum allocation a council will receive (\$5,500).

Local Cultural Council Program Updates. The [FY24 LCC Program guidelines](#) are available online. Updates to the FY24 guidelines include:

- To help cover rising costs, we strongly encourage grants of at least \$250 to grantees.
- LCCs now have the option of funding for-profit entities that propose projects that provide public benefit. LCCs continue to have the option to limit or prioritize the applicants they fund using their local guidelines.
- Clarified that "public entities" include Tribal, Federal, State, and municipal government entities.
- Clarified that sole proprietors are considered individuals and are eligible.
- Specified that advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and access is part of evaluating public benefit, and updated public benefit question in application.

YouthReach

(Agenda Item 7(a))

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee

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

Dt: August 4, 2023

Re: FY24 YouthReach Grants

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 and, in March 2014, Mass Cultural Council celebrated the 20th anniversary of the grant program by hosting 200 thought leaders at the [National Summit on Creative Youth Development](#), which catalyzed the growth of CYD into a national field of practice.

In December of 2014 the Mass Cultural Council also launched SerHacer, the first public grant program to support El Sistema-inspired work in the United States. That program ran alongside YouthReach. As a result of our work in consolidating and simplifying our program offerings we merged the two programs under the name YouthReach.

FY24 Recommendations. We are pleased to bring forward recommendations for 85 YouthReach grants totaling \$1,870,000, with each program receiving a \$22,000 grant:

33 YouthReach Partners

32 Applicants for continued YouthReach funding

20 Applicants with programs new to YouthReach funding

We anticipate these investments reaching more than 10,000 young people across the Commonwealth, 80% of whom are BIPOC. This recommendation is the result of an application process for three-year grants that took place during the previous fiscal year to provide funding from FY23-25 for successful applicants. FY24 represents year two of that three-year funding commitment. The lists of YouthReach grants can be found in **Appendix E**.

STARS Residencies

(Agenda Item 7(b))

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee

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

Dt: August 4, 2023

Re: FY24 STARS Residencies Program

Summary. We are recommending level funding for the STARS Residencies program in the amount of \$1,428,100. This will result in an estimated 250 to 300 grants in FY24 to schools and organizational or individual cultural partners.

Background. STARS Residencies provides grants of \$2,500-\$6,100 to support residencies in Massachusetts K-12 schools of 3 days or more with a teaching artist, scientist, or scholar. In FY23, we made several changes to the program to increase equity, access, and inclusion, including:

- First-time applicants or applicants that have not received funding from Mass Cultural Council in the last three fiscal years.
- Residencies serving schools with student populations that are 50% or more Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Color (BIPOC) as reported by DESE.
- Residencies for schools located in cities and towns that are below the state's median household income and below statewide educational attainment (the percentage of adults who have attained at least a bachelor's degree). This includes, but is not limited to, places designated as Gateway Cities. [A full list of these under-resourced communities is available.](#)

As a result of these changes, we received 335 eligible applications in FY23. 75% of these addressed one or more priority areas listed above. Of the funded applications:

- 35% (95 applicants) have not received funding from Mass Cultural Council in the last three fiscal years.
- 54% (148 applicants) of residencies are at schools with student populations that are 50% or more BIPOC as reported by DESE.
- 57% (156 applicants) of residencies are at schools located in cities and towns identified as under-resourced.

FY24 Program Updates. In FY24 we plan on carrying through the program with only modest changes from a successful FY23, including:

- Adding a new funding priority for schools with student populations that are 25% or students with disabilities as reported by DESE.
- Adding a new funding priority for schools with student populations that are 45% or more low income students as reported by DESE.
- Changing the under resourced community funding priority to a tie-breaking mechanism along with geographic distribution.
- Eliminating evaluative scoring of application responses.

Unlike many programs submitted to the Grants Committee for approval and recommendation to the full Council, FY24 grantees under the STARS program have not yet been identified; grant awards are made pursuant to an application process previously approved by the Council.

Creative Youth Development and Education Grants

(Agenda Items 7(c), (d) and (e))

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee

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

Dt: August 4, 2023

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 Poetry Out Loud, and several service initiatives that include the Johnson String Project and the Youth Arts Impact Network. Information about CultureRx – Social Prescription is included later in meeting materials.

FY24 Recommendations

Organization	Initiative	Grant
Edvestors	Youth Arts Impact Network (YAIN)	\$36,000
Huntington Theatre Company	Poetry Out Loud (POL)	\$20,000
Johnson String Instrument	Instrument Library	\$15,000
		\$71,000

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. In FY22 and FY23 we partnered with EdVestors to bring these services to potential and existing CYD organizations and school-based partnership organizations outside of Boston (FY22 budget of \$22,150 and FY23 budget of \$30,419).

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 participated in quarterly networking opportunities with related, shared resources. In FY23, Julia Gittleman provided one-on-one consultations with **33** organizations or programs for a total of more than **90** individual consulting sessions, representing considerable geographic diversity. These services covered a range of topics and served organizations of varying sizes and maturity. Important to note is some of these organizations learned of the resources through various channels and were not necessarily recipients of Youth Reach funding. For example, A. R. T. S Foundation in Brockton learned of the free consulting services and contacted Julia, who worked with them on building out their arts program for young people in Brockton.

In FY24, we would like to continue to offer resources equitably across Massachusetts through our partnership with EdVestors, continuing our thought partnership with YAIN. We request to expand our investment in FY24 to \$36,000. Funding will allow consultant Julia Gittleman to continue to provide resources and guidance on redesigning, evaluating and improving programming to address the many challenges of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic for a wide range of youth arts serving organizations from across the state whether or not they currently receive Mass Cultural Council funding. YAIN can foster the needed networking and trainings that the CYD sector, STARS, and Teaching Artists have all requested as necessary to their recovery and sustainability. This will allow us to consolidate and align our systems with the greatest possibilities for access. We will prioritize under-resourced communities (with a focus on BIPOC communities), as we center our work on supporting practitioners and building cross-sector partnerships to enhance our impact, bolster the ecosystem, and strengthen our infrastructure.

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. The \$20,000 for 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.

Johnson String Project. The Johnson String Project continues to work closely with music programs supported through YouthReach to remove the barriers and burdens of purchasing, renting, and maintaining an instrument for programs and families. Eligible programs receive an allocation of instruments that include all maintenance and insurance in addition to the ability to swap instruments out for different sizes as needs change. For families, this program means they do not need to travel to a string instrument shop to purchase or maintain an instrument, making high quality instruments available without the traditional barrier of transportation, cost, and potentially unwelcoming store environments. In FY23, Johnson String Project provided more than 300 instruments to YouthReach supported programs. For FY24 we are proposing a reduction of funding from \$30,000 in FY23 to \$15,000. This reduction is part of our redesign process based on our new strategic plan that will have a likely outcome of providing an opportunity for the Johnson String Project to apply for funding on a yearly basis beginning in FY25, rather than being a stand-alone outside grant.

Festivals & Projects

(Agenda Item 8(a))

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee

Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jen Lawless, Kalyn King, Timothea Pham

Dt: August 24, 2023

Re: FY24 Festivals & Projects Program

Summary. This memo presents the funding scenario for the Mass Cultural Council Festivals & Projects program in FY24. The Mass Cultural Council's FY24 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 1,238 grant applications, the program will seek to fund 740 grants, the same amount funded in FY23. A list of the 740 grantees will be made available at the Council Meeting on August 24 in **Appendix F**.

Applicant Eligibility. Eligibility is intentionally broad and includes the following: Federally or state-recognized tribes and Urban Indian organizations; fiscally sponsored organizations; small for-profit corporations, cooperatives, partnerships, or Limited Liability Companies; municipal entities such as Local Cultural Councils, public libraries, and recreational departments; and Massachusetts nonprofits. Ineligible entities will include those receiving funding from Mass Cultural Council's Cultural Investment Portfolio program or YouthReach program during FY24.

Program Eligibility. Eligible programs will include projects, festivals, and/or activities incorporating the arts, humanities, or sciences, that are intended for and promoted to members of the general public, or intentionally serve portions of the general public requiring specific accommodations. These programs will have most of their activity taking place between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2022. 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 and projects representing communities who have been historically underfunded, including:
- 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.

FY24 Program

The Mass Cultural Council's FY24 Festivals and Projects grant program is currently in its second cycle after running for the first time in 2022. On April 25, 2023, the FY24 grant cycle opened shortly after the end of the first cycle to accommodate the needs of smaller organizations and festival producers. **We received 1,238 applications.**

Of the 1,238 applications received:

- 440 of the organizations have not received funding from us in the last three years, including previously unsuccessful applicants and new applicants.
- At least 186 are from BIPOC-Centered organizations (some BIPOC-Centered self-identification forms are still in the process of being reviewed.)
- 449 would fund programs taking place in a priority community.
- 167 applicants are participating in the Card to Culture program.
- 776 programs are listed as free to the public.

Applications are being reviewed by staff for eligibility now and will be presented for Council review at the next full council meeting. We are on track to make grant announcements in early September.

The program is jointly managed by Timothea Pham from the Communities team and Kalyn King from the Cultural Investment Portfolio team. The review and support team includes Sara Glidden, Lillian Lee, Greg Torrales (from the Cultural Investment Portfolio), Hanako Brais, and Jay Wong (from Communities).

UP Innovation Fund

(Agenda Item 8(b))

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee

Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Catherine Cheng-Anderson, Jen Lawless, Charles Baldwin

Dt: August 24, 2023

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 is for the purpose of enabling these organizations to enact "Access"-foundational, sustainable, aspirational. The grant is awarded each year of an organization's UP Designation status, which is currently a 5-year badge earned via direct application or upon completion of the UP Initiative Learning Network (ILN). In FY24 we have recommended a program allocation of \$480,000 which represents level funding to what was approved in FY23.

Background . Between 2015 and 2022, organizations applied to the UP Initiative, either directly or via the ILN, earning a 5-year UP Designation. This 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). In FY2023, UP Designation applications were halted to develop a Disability Equity Plan to enhance the efficacy, growth, and sustainability of the Learning Network, and address internal policies for Disabled or Deaf individuals. The Innovation Fund then became a 5-year monetary grant for all organizations with UP Designation. Of the 97 eligible organizations in FY23, 95 accepted a \$5k grant for accessibility improvements. (Two didn't accept; one had closed, and the other lacked capacity.) Monthly UP meetings provided support on ADA obligations, Access Plans development, technological assistance, local resources, and emphasized the voices of people with disabilities in cultural institutions.

FY24 Award. While the status of the UP Designation is being reviewed by consultants from Open Door Arts (FY23) for impact and sustainability and applications for both UP Designation and the ILN have been paused for FY24, the Innovation Fund was met with great success by recipients noting both the ease of the application (a simple confirmation on status and criteria) and the investment by the Mass Cultural Council to provide funding. For FY24, staff is requesting the Innovation Fund consist of a \$5,000 grant to each of the 96 organizations with UP Designation at a total cost of \$480,000. A list of these Organizations can be found in **Appendix G**.

Social Prescription – CultureRx

(Agenda Item 8(c))

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee

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

Dt: August 4, 2023

Re: Social Prescription - CultureRx

Summary. For FY25 we are recommend a \$175,000 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. The first phase of our pilot included eight cultural organizations working with two professional care providers. Phase II and III of the program 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 1,227 prescriptions written and estimated to be fulfilled.

In addition, the focus for FY23 was to find the next entity to house this initiative, so that Social Prescription could be brought to scale. Consultant Amy Bantham conducted over 30 interviews with cross-sector partners and designed a Think Tank for 13 cross-sector health partners (yielding important resources). Many follow up cross-sector Zoom and in person meetings also resulted.

Art Pharmacy was chosen as the entity to move the work of Social Prescription forward. They are best able to explore and implement systems that provide reimbursements through insurers and managed care providers.

Proposal for FY24. "Arts on Prescription: A Field Guide for US Communities" will be released in Sept. 2023. Mass Cultural Council has partnered with Dr. Tasha Golden, Director of Research at the International Arts + Mind Lab at Johns Hopkins Medicine, and the University of Florida Arts and Medicine to create a Field Guide providing practical steps for integrating arts, culture and nature into

health and social care via arts on prescription programs. As an innovative approach to whole-person care, this new field guide will gain much interest. We are strategically designing a PR campaign for fall of 2023.

[Art Pharmacy](#) has supported art/culture prescription since 2021 and will be expanding to NY, MA, and CA in 2024. The goal for FY24 is for Art Pharmacy to fully implement social prescription (art/culture/nature) in MA in three regions. Art Pharmacy will work with staff to establish the size and scope of social prescription that can be undertaken this year and next by:

1. Designing and beginning to implement how best to sustain, scale and replicate Social Prescription in Massachusetts. Identify possibilities, target population(s), and regions.
2. Facilitating cross-sector partnerships with public health, social services, insurance, other funders and the cultural sector. Identifying cross-sector partners in healthcare, health plans, and others who may have a valued-added benefit in partnerships.

In partnership with Art Pharmacy and with the publication of the Field Guide, we will be able to effectively partner with other state agencies, health providers, and cultural organizations to enhance the scaling of this initiative, while positively impacting providers, patients, and communities.

Through this \$175,000 grant, Art Pharmacy will:

- Support at least 600 doses of art and culture prescriptions in three regions
- 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.)
- Begin filling prescriptions within 120 days of contract execution.
- Offer group, individual, receptive and active arts engagements that are in-person and virtual.
- Provide prescriptions through the dedicated support of a Care Navigator – 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).
- Track uptake and adherence and patient satisfaction.

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,

Equity, Inclusion, and Access Grants

(Agenda Items 8(d), (e), (f) and (g))

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee

Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Catherine Cheng-Anderson, Jen Lawless, Charles Baldwin, Cheyenne Cohn-Postell, Carmen Plazas

Dt: August 4, 2023

Re: Equity, inclusion, and Access Grants

Overview. In addition to Festivals & Projects, the UP Innovation Fund, and Social Prescription, we are pleased to present for your review recommendations for funding for four additional grants that promote equity, inclusion, and access including a grant to expand/scale up the UP Innovation and Learning Network (ILN), funding for the Cultural Equity Learning Community, The Network for Arts Administrators of Color, and the Truth and Healing – Reconciliation Event.

FY24 Recommendations

Grantee Organization	Initiative	Grant Amount
1. Arts Connect International	Cultural Equity Learning Community (CELC)	\$62,500
2. ArtsBoston	Network for Arts Administrators of Color (NAAC)	\$70,000
3. MA Commission on Indian Affairs	Truth Commission	\$5,000
4. [Grantee TBD through RFP]	Scale up the UP Innovation and Learning Network	\$20,000
TOTAL		\$157,500

1. *Cultural Equity Learning Community(CELC).* Mass Cultural Council has been supporting the development of the Cultural Equity Learning Community (CELC) program, through Arts Connect International (ACI), from its beginning. The goal of that support has been to help create an online community and educational platform open to members of the arts and cultural sector in Massachusetts that are committed to building intersectional racial equity and creative justice, as well as subsidizing the use of the platform for these cultural workers and creatives.

The CELC 2.0 cohorts in FY22 were the first to try the platform while we were still refining the program & infrastructure.

- Summer Cohort (July 22 - December 22)
- Fall Cohort (September 22 - March 23)

The CELC 2.0 cohorts in FY23 were our first effort at encouraging attendance to and subsidizing the cost of registration.

- Summer Cohort (August 23 – January 24) – 260 participants
- Fall Cohort (January 24 – June 24) – 285 participants
- Registrants who did not actually start – 106

The program available to each cohort is open for six months but is often extended by 1-2 months at the request of registrants.

For FY24 a total grant to ACI of \$62,500 is recommended. This award amount will underwrite 250 total course participants at \$250 each between the CELC Summer and Fall cohorts. This grant will be specifically dedicated to residents and members of the Massachusetts cultural community, but not paid on a reimbursement basis.

In FY24 Mass Cultural Council has expressed desire for the CELC program to continue focusing their recruitment and enrollment to residents that are BIPOC, located in rural areas, individuals with disabilities, and those with limited access to similar learning opportunities.

CELC 2.0 Commitments & pricing. In addition to watching and/or reading the 12 pre-recorded lecture sessions and continued learning resources, available via the learning platform Miestro, participants have the option to participate in:

- Peer-to-peer mentorship - The CELC team makes the initial match based on stated preferences, and then participants choose how frequently to meet. Matches deepen learning through cohort support.
- Drop-in meetings - This is a space to process the course content in a facilitated group setting. Drop-ins will take place in groups no larger than thirty.

“The CELC is offered with a sliding scale payment structure. The CELC team recognizes that many arts organizations and individuals face challenging economic realities particularly exacerbated by COVID-19. We honor and appreciate all support, and above all else, your participation in this work is the most important thing.”

Tickets available include:

Suggested Donation [**\$250**]

Equity Supporters [**\$500**]

Equity Champions [**\$1,000**]

50% off Tix [**\$125**]

Free Admission Tix [**\$0**]

2. *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 \$70,000 grant would support the below-described activities in FY24. Additional funds to support the total program budget for NAACBoston in FY24 of \$243,526 (reflecting more complete full-cost budgeting than prior year proposal submissions) will be allocated from foundation, corporate, and unrestricted individual giving to ArtsBoston on behalf of NAAC.

Mentorship & Sponsorship Program: In August, 2023, NAACBoston will open applications for the fourth cycle of its Mentorship & Sponsorship program, which supports a learning cohort of BIPOC leaders in different stages of their professional development, pairing early-career professionals with Mentors for individual support, guidance, and role modeling, as well as mid-career professionals with Sponsors who can tap into resources of power and open doors. The FY24 cycle will run from December, 2023-May, 2024, with six Mentor/Mentee pairs and six Sponsor/Sponsee pairs. Regular one-on-one meetings for each pair will be complemented by a series of six interactive panel discussions with guest speakers, which are designed to engage the full NAACBoston membership. Panels will be held in-person and on Zoom at partnered locations such as Boston Children's Chorus and the Pao Arts Center, with live virtual and recorded options that will extend the reach of these offerings to arts professionals across the Commonwealth.

Member Convenings: Responding to members' desire to spend time together and building on our two successful mixers in FY23, for which NAACBoston collaborated with the Eliot School, Coolidge Corner Theater, the Secret Society of Black Creatives, and RoxFilm, NAAC will host four NAACBoston member social events in partnership with small arts venues, BIPOC-owned businesses, and other Boston-based and statewide networks of Black and Brown professionals. NAACBoston will facilitate free and discounted tickets to ArtsBoston member organization events, as well as additional community-building opportunities. The program also plans to deepen collaborations with media and film creatives begun in FY23 and leverage staff networks, member connections, and the enhanced searchability of the NAACBoston database to reach out to additional members, collaborators, and untapped areas of the arts and culture sector.

Member Services: Building on momentum, NAACBoston will continue to spread the word about NAACBoston to attract new members. Streamlining our processes and systems will make NAACBoston more accessible and visible to prospective and existing members, collaborators, funders, and the public. To

learn how to better serve the network, we are surveying members via one-on-one conversations to learn about their lived experiences as arts administrators, artists, and NAACBoston members. Program staff are also researching new platforms for sharing resources, while assessing how to improve current offerings such as NAACBoston's listserv, newsletter, and social media platforms. This work will extend NAACBoston's reach not only in Greater Boston but statewide. Further, the program is currently recruiting additional Steering Committee members to help guide, support, and plan for NAACBoston's next chapter.

3. *Truth Commission.* Suffolk University Law School, Ohketeau Cultural Center, UMass Boston, and the Institute for New England Native American Studies, with the support of the Massachusetts Commission on Indian Affairs, have begun the process of understanding the possibilities of a Truth Commission in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. One of the essential needs voiced by Tribal citizens is ensuring that the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990 is upheld in a way that protects and supports the arts of Tribal citizens in the Commonwealth. A Truth Commission would be the start and the backbone of creating a process to ensure the rights of State Acknowledged Tribal citizens to cultural and artistic pursuits.

As Mass Cultural Council is developing its own Native and Indigenous Peoples Equity Plan for arts & culture, we believe this commission would be invaluable in helping us to develop such a plan and we are very interested in supporting the Commission's desire to address the arts & culture aspects of their mission. To that end, staff is proposing a \$5,000 grant through the Massachusetts Commission of Indian Affairs to support the work of the proposed Truth Commission, specifically to support the budgeted arts & culture-related expenses such as to create Truth Commission flyers developed with Native Artists for print and for online use and to pay honoraria for traditional openings by Tribal dignitary, Traditional singers/drummers and event moderators.

4. *Expanding and Scaling Up the UP Innovation and Learning Network.* Mass Cultural Council anticipates a robust series of recommendations from the Disability Consultants currently working on the scaling and sustainability of the UP Initiative's Learning Network, the Agency's program on developing equity and access for the cultural sector. The redesign of the UP Initiative is anticipated to begin in 2024 and be implemented in 2025. Following the trajectory of the Agency's investment in the Cultural Equity Learning Community (CELC), staff is asking that **\$20,000** be reserved for a grant in 2024 for the implementation of an Access Hub.

Advancement Grants

(Agenda Item 9 (a)-9(c))

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee

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

Dt: August 4, 2023

Re: Advancement Grants

Recommendations

Organization	Initiative	Grant
Mass Humanities	Partnership Grant	\$943,608
MASSCreative	Advocacy Week	\$33,000
New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA)	Yearly Support	\$70,000
		\$1,046,608

Mass Humanities. In the FY24 budget we are recommending **\$943,608** for our annual partnership grant with the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities (Mass Humanities). The proposed partnership award for FY23 is approximately 11.1% (\$93,253) greater than the amount awarded in for FY23. The percentage increase is the same as the percentage increase in Mass Cultural Council's FY24 state appropriation from the amount received for FY23 (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 and as documented in a signed Memorandum of Agreement.

This partnership goes back more than twenty years. The qualifications of both organizations for these partnerships were re-established through a statewide RFP process in July 2008. The partnership is renewed each year through a vote of the full Council.

MASSCreative. MASSCreative, Mass Cultural Council's primary advocacy, partner, after discussion with staff has requested a **\$33,000** grant for two programs that will advance a more equitable and inclusive creative sector for all residents of the Commonwealth.

MASSCreative has requested \$20,000 to support an event it will be co-hosting **Creative Sector Day at the State House** - a day at the State House to celebrate the contributions of artists, creatives, cultural nonprofits and creative businesses in Massachusetts. 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 contributions of the creative sector

and help build public support for artists, creatives and cultural organizations. MASS Creative would use the grant funds to compensate performing artists and cultural organizations at the event.

Mass Creative is also requesting \$13,000 to support its efforts around building a **Future of Creative Work Coalition**. This coalition will convene creative stakeholders across Massachusetts for a series of meetings to define the pipeline of creative workforce development in the Commonwealth and identify opportunities, obstacles, and strategies to ensure more residents in the Commonwealth have pathways to creative work and ensure retention in these professions. By convening stakeholders and establishing a statewide coalition, the hope is that creative work will be accessible to every resident regardless of zip code or school district. Funds will be used specifically to defray expenses of hosting up to 12 stakeholders (both virtual and in-person) including documentation and staff time.

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 FY24 funding in of \$70,000 to NEFA in accordance with the support structure from the states which NEFA has proposed. In FY23, Massachusetts provided \$70,000 to NEFA.

We will have available upon request from members a report from NEFA detailing use of our FY23 award of \$70,000 which was used to support its New England States Touring (NEST) Program for the benefit of Massachusetts artists and venues.

Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program

(Agenda Item 10 (a))

To: Mass Cultural Council

From: Michael J. Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jenifer Lawless, Cathy Cheng-Anderson, Bethann Steiner, Dan Blask, Maggie Holtzberg, Kelly Bennett

Date: Aug 4, 2023

Re: FY24 Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program

Summary. We are pleased to present 18 grant recommendations of \$10,000 each, for Mass Cultural Council's FY24 Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program totaling \$180,000. This is the second year of a two-year grant cycle and represents level funding from FY23.

Background. The Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program is an important part of Mass Cultural Council's strategy to help the many diverse communities in Massachusetts preserve their living cultural heritage. Folk and traditional artists are among the most vulnerable members of the creative community, often coming from new immigrant and under resourced communities. The program funds mentorships in which an individual learns skills, techniques, and artistry under the guidance of a recognized and skilled practitioner. Apprenticeships are designed to strengthen traditional arts lacking a strong infrastructure for cultural transmission, especially those that may be endangered.

The Review Criteria included quality of the mentor's work according to cultural defined standards, teaching ability, skill/commitment of the apprentice, feasibility of work plan, and impact on the tradition.

In FY21, we switched from a 10-month to a two-year Apprenticeship grant. Funds (up to \$10,000 per apprenticeship per year) compensate the mentor artist for time spent planning, preparing, and teaching. Beginning in FY23, the hourly rate was set at \$125 with a minimum of 80 hours per year. Mentors must compensate apprentices over 18 years of age or older to encourage participation of apprenticeships from all income levels. Below is a table of the 18 apprenticeships that recently completed the first year of their two-year grant.

Mentor Artist	Traditional art	Town	Grant
Beth Bahia Cohen	Violin in traditional Greek music	Watertown	\$10,000
Isaura Oliveira	Samba Traditional do Recôncavo movement/dance	Boston	\$10,000
Andre R. Gaines	Traditional brain-tanning of hides, paddle making, wampum	Grafton	\$10,000

Zhonghe Elena Li	Chinese papercutting with scissor	Cambridge	\$10,000
Aimaiti Abulikemu	Uyghur calligraphy	Lexington	\$10,000
Laurel Martin	Traditional Irish fiddling: regional	Westford	\$10,000
Sharon Correnty	African American quilt making	Pepperell	\$10,000
Karen Young	Taiko kumi-daiko style	Roslindale	\$10,000
Jorge Santiago-Arce	Bomba & Plena	Boston	\$10,000
Stelvyn Mirabal	Dominican carnival traditions	Lawrence	\$10,000
John Abarta	Uilleann pipes	Stoughton	\$10,000
Vincent Crotty	Traditional sign painting	Boston	\$10,000
Sunanda Sahay	North Indian Mithila painting	Acton	\$10,000
Judy Bressler	Yiddish song & dance tradition	Sharon	\$10,000
Urmi Samadar	North Indian Kathak dance	Belmont	\$10,000
Paul Rishell	Country blues and guitar	Newton	\$10,000
Chris Pantazelos	Lutherie and Restoration	Lowell	\$10,000
Ling Chu	Chinese long ribbon dance	Boston	\$10,000
TOTAL			\$180,000

Since the program's founding in FY02, Mass Cultural Council has awarded 108 apprenticeships (\$679,782). In accord with our new Strategic Plan and re-design of how we fund individual artists, culture bearers, and creatives, we may sunset the Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program in FY25.

Redesigned Funding Program for Artists

(Agenda Item 10(b))

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee
 Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jenifer Lawless, Dan Blask, Kelly Bennett, Maggie Holtzberg
 Dt: August 4, 2023
 Re: FY24 Redesigned Funding Program for Artists

The Artist Team recommends a redesigned funding program for artists, provisionally named the **Individual Creativity Grants**, that foregrounds inclusion in its support for creative individuals in Massachusetts.

The mission of the **Individual Creativity Grants** is to equitably advance creativity throughout the Commonwealth with unrestricted grants to individuals who demonstrate **realization of their creative expression** and **commitment to their artistic/cultural practice**.

We propose a program allocation of **\$1,875,000** and awarding up to **375 grants of \$5,000** as part of the FY24 Individual Creativity Grants Program.

We envision the following program details:

- **Eligibility**
 - Artists/creative practitioners in ALL categories, including past Artist Fellowships disciplines plus previously excluded artists like performers, designers, drag artists, etc.
 - Culture bearers/traditional and folk artists (formerly may have applied for Traditional Arts Fellowships and Apprenticeships)
 - For the time being, we are NOT expanding to related fields like culinary, health/fitness, martial arts, and beauty
- **Application Process**
 - Applicants apply as artists/culture bearers, not by discipline
 - Brief artist narrative plus work samples
 - Not anonymous
 - Focus on access
- **Funding Priorities**
 - Employ Funding Priorities to reach underfunded groups
 - BIPOC
 - d/Deaf 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**

- Review combines equitable grant practices with elements of Participatory Grantmaking, where community impacted by funding has voice in process
- Geographic Distribution (same % of grants as % applications in each County)
- Funding Priorities (as listed above)
- Scores by Participatory Readers from Massachusetts creative/cultural sector
- **Timeline**
 - Application/deadline dates still pending
 - We anticipate recommended grant recipients go to March '24 Grants Committee and Council Meetings

Summary of Redesign Process. Mass Cultural Council has funded individual artists almost continuously since 1975. Our long-standing Artist Fellowships Program supported artists through an anonymous review based solely on artistic excellence of the creative work submitted. Grants ranged as low as \$500 (for "Finalist" designations) to \$15,000 at the program's highest funding level.

In FY23, the Council paused the Artist Fellowships to evaluate the Agency's funding for individuals as part of our Racial Equity Plan. Beginning in March 2022, the Artists Team worked with Equity and Inclusion Officer Cheyenne Cohn-Postell and Agency leadership to identify key areas of focus. These areas of focus, including rethinking anonymity, questioning the sole focus on artistic excellence, and widening the applicant pool, served as the basis for a program redesign.

The Agency's three-year Strategic Plan, finalized in March 2023, provided further clarity. The Artist Team presented a general outline for a redesigned artists funding program at the May 2023 Grants Committee Meeting.

The Agency then shared the general outline of our redesign plans with our constituents in the creative/cultural sector through an article on ArtSake blog, June '23.

Response from the Field. The ArtSake article included a link to a brief feedback survey. Of the 251 constituents who responded by July 12, 2023, 74.4% chose Strongly Favor and another 16.4% chose Somewhat Favor for the new program mission (stated above). 54.18% chose Very Likely and 25.1% chose Somewhat Likely, as to how likely they were to apply for the new program.

Along with survey questions, we gave the field the opportunity to offer feedback in their own words. While much of this feedback was supportive of our plans, many respondents did voice concerns. Common concerns included:

- Support for the Fellowships' anonymous review
- Preference for funding based solely on excellence

- Worry that expanding the applicant pool/including funding priorities would decrease their own chances of receiving grants
- Concern that older artists would be overlooked

We will consider this feedback from the field as well as guidance from Agency leadership and the Council as our redesign moves into finer detail.

Please note that we are seeking this vote as an approval of the process by which Individual Creativity Grants will be made. We will bring all recommendations for Individual Creativity Grants to the Grants Committee and full Council in March for final approval.

Cultural Sector Recovery Grants for Individuals

(Agenda Item 11)

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee

Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jenifer Lawless, Catherine Cheng-Anderson, Bethann Steiner, Dan Blask, Kelly Bennett, Maggie Holtzberg

Dt: August 4, 2023

Re: Remaining Pandemic Recovery Funds

Summary. We recommend allocating the remaining Pandemic Recovery Funds to additional eligible individuals from the FY23 [Cultural Sector Recovery Grants for Individuals](#) applications. Staff will report on the amount of the remaining funds and resulting number of additional awards at the Grants Committee meeting on August 4.

Background. Under the Commonwealth's Act Relative to Immediate COVID-19 Recovery Needs (Chapter 102 of the Acts of 2021) enacted last December 2021, Mass Cultural Council in Line item 1599-2043 was provided \$60,147,000 (referred to as "Pandemic Recovery Funds") to:

"... administer a grant program for the purposes of assisting cultural organizations and artists recover from the 2019 novel coronavirus pandemic and operate more efficiently..."

In Spring/Summer of 2022, Mass Cultural Council staff developed two pandemic relief programs, one for Organizations and one for Individuals. We kept three key points in mind when designing the Cultural Sector Recovery Grants for Individuals:

- Unlike other pandemic relief funding that focused on loss, this program focuses on recovery.
- The program assumes that all working artists, teaching artists, and cultural workers, in every creative discipline, experienced loss during the pandemic.
- The funding is not intended to compensate for that loss. Rather it provides broad funding help eligible individuals, and therefore the sector, recover by providing unrestricted support.

The program has a broad and inclusive eligibility, accepting applications from artists/cultural bearers, teaching artists/scientists/humanists, and independent cultural workers. It was designed to benefit a wide swath of the cultural sector, making special efforts to reach new grantees or those that have, historical, been underserved by grant programs.

To address the legislative mandate that the Council "shall consider racial, geographic and programmatic diversity and equity within the cultural sector,"

the program guidelines include Funding Priorities. The program prioritizes applications to: 1. people who identify as BIPOC/People of the Global Majority; 2. people who identify as Deaf or as having a disability; 3. people who live in communities that are under the state's median income and educational attainment levels; and 4. new/non-recent grantees. To ensure geographic fairness, the program distributes grants to six regions of the Commonwealth (as set forth in the published guidelines) in proportion with that region's percentage of applications. By keeping the eligibility broad and committing an intensive, Agency-wide recruitment effort, the range of applicants and their creative disciplines is far-reaching and diverse.

The initial plan was to commit \$15 million, or 3,000 individual \$5,000 grants, to the Cultural Sector Recovery for Individuals program. A revised plan (approved by the Council at the January 2023 meeting) committed an additional \$5 million of available Pandemic Recovery Funds to the Individuals grants, for a total of 4,000 grants of \$5,000. The Agency began accepting Cultural Sector Recovery for Individuals applications on August 15, 2022. The application deadline was November 1, 2022. Cultural Sector Recovery Grants for Individuals received **7,593 applications** (more than 1 out of every 1000 residents of the Commonwealth).

In January of 2023 the Council approved awards to 4,000 individual applicants, meaning we were able to fund 53% of the demand. In order to spend the remaining funds and honor the time and effort applicants already put into the application process we recommend we use the existing review process to continue fund further down the list of eligible individual applicants to the Cultural Sector Recovery Grants for Individuals program.

Remaining Pandemic Recovery Funds. At the Grants Committee meeting, staff will present data regarding the number of Cultural Sector Recovery Grants approved last year were ultimately cancelled (due to lack of response or failure to return contract documents, ineligibility, refusal or other reasons) and a calculation as to remaining unallocated Pandemic Recovery Funds. We are anticipating approximately \$1 million in Pandemic Recovery Funds being available for this purpose meaning about 200 additional Individual Cultural Sector Recovery Grants could be made.

Timeline. Depending on the final timeline set for the new program for individuals and several other factors, we would look to award these funds in the Fall/Winter:

- Staff review of submitted materials to identify additional eligible applicants
- Applicants would be asked to confirm residency and confirmation they are ready to accept the funds
- Contracting process would then begin
- Contracting and payments would be completed