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MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL

GRANTS COMMITTEE BOOK

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8, 2024

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MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL
GRANTS COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, AUGUST 8, 2024

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**MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL
GRANTS COMMITTEE**

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 8, 2024
1:00 -2:30 PM**

ON-LINE MEETING

BROADCAST MEETING

MEETING WILL BE LIVESTREAMED AT

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

MEETING MATERIALS WILL BE POSTED ONLINE AT

**[HTTPS://MASSCULTURALCOUNCIL.ORG/ABOUT/BOARD/](https://massculturalcouncil.org/about/board/)
UNDER "AUGUST 8, 2024 GRANTS COMMITTEE MEETING"**

<u>AGENDA</u>	<u>VOTE</u>
1. Call to Order- Open Meeting Law Notice	
2. Minutes- June 12, 2024	X
3. Reports- FY25 Grants and Program Plan	
4. Conflict of Interest Notifications	
FY25 Grant and Program Recommendations	X
5. Advancement	
a. Mass Humanities	
b. New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA)	
c. MASSCreative	
d. MIT Sloan School of Management	
e. Social Prescription	

6. Organizations
 - a. Unrestricted Operating Support for Organizations
 - b. Gaming Mitigation Fund

7. Communities
 - a. Cultural District Investment Grants (Appendix A)
 - b. Local Cultural Councils (Appendix B)
 - c. Tribal Cultural Councils

8. Arts Education & Youth
 - a. YouthReach (Appendix C)
 - b. STARS Residencies/School-based Projects
 - c. Creative Youth Development and Education Grants

9. Grants for Creative Individuals

10. Equity and Inclusion
 - a. Festivals & Projects (Appendix D)
 - b. UP Innovation Fund Grants (Appendix E)
 - c. Equity, Inclusion, and Access Grants

11. Adjourn



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MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL GRANTS COMMITTEE

(IN ADVANCE OF THE 163rd MEETING OF MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL ON AUGUST 22, 2024)

FRIDAY, AUGUST 4, 2023

RESOLUTIONS

Section 2

RESOLVED: that the Grants Committee approves the minutes of the June 12, 2024 Grants Committee Meeting in the form presented.

Sections 5 to 10

WHEREAS the Massachusetts State Budget for Fiscal 2025 has been signed into law and contains an appropriation \$25,895,000 (plus \$955,000 in earmarks) for the Mass Cultural Council for FY25 (the "FY24 State Budget"); and

WHEREAS, previously today Mass Cultural Council's Executive Committee recommended to the Council for approval a draft of the FY25 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 8, 2024 ("Grants Committee Meeting"),

NOW THEREFORE, it is hereby

RESOLVED: That, 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 to Mass Cultural Council a grant to Mass Humanities totaling \$977,389 as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

Section 5(b)

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

Section 5(c)

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

Section 5(d)

RESOLVED: To recommend to Mass Cultural Council a grant to Massachusetts Institute of Technology (or related entity) for \$100,000 for the MITx Arts Entrepreneurship Online Program as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

Section 5(e)

RESOLVED: To recommend a grant of \$50,000 to Art Pharmacy for continuation of the Social Prescription program as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

Section 6(a)

RESOLVED: To recommend endorsement of the approach by staff to provide \$7,200,000 in unrestricted operating support grant to cultural organizations under both the Cultural Investment Portfolio program and new Operating Grants for Organizations as described in the memo provided at the Grants Committee Meeting.

Section 6(b)

RESOLVED: To recommend endorsement of the approach by staff to provide of the fifth cycle of the Gaming Mitigation Program as described in the memo provided at the Grants Committee Meeting.

Section 7(a)

RESOLVED: To recommend up to \$870,000 in Cultural District grants as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

Section 7(b)

RESOLVED: To recommend an allocation to the Local Cultural Councils totaling \$5,700,000 as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

Section 7(c)

RESOLVED: To recommend up to \$103,950 allocation to Tribal Cultural Councils as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

Section 8(a)

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

Section 8(b)

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

Section 8(c)

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

Section 9

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

Section 10(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 10(b)

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

Section 10(c)

RESOLVED: To recommend to Mass Cultural Council a \$50,000 grants to ArtsBoston acting on behalf of the Network Arts Administrators of Color, and a \$1000,000 grant to Open Door Arts for the Arts and Culture Accessibility Resource Hub, all as presented at 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**

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12, 2024

ONLINE MEETING

Committee Members Present were

Cecil Barron-Jensen, Co-Chair of the Grants Committee
Julie Wake, Co-Chair of the Grants Committee
Marc Carroll, Council Chair
Jo-Ann Davis, Council Vice Chair
Emily Bramhall
Donna Haghighat

Staff Members Present were

Michael J. Bobbitt, Executive Director
David Slatery, Deputy Executive Director
Catherine Cheng-Anderson, Senior Director of Business Operations & Chief Financial Officer
Jen Lawless, Senior Director of Program Operations
Bethann Steiner, Senior Director of Public Affairs
Ann Petruccelli Moon, Deputy Chief of Staff
Carmen Plazas, Communications & Community Engagement Manager
Dan Blask, Program Manager
Carolyn Cole, Program Officer
Deborah Kenyon, Grant Systems Manager
Kalyn King, Program Officer
Kelly Bennett, Program Officer
Lillian Lee, Program Officer
Lisa Simmons, Program Manager
Sara Glidden, Program Manager
Summer Confuorto, Program Officer
Erik Holmgren, Program Manager

Prepared on 7/18/24

Co-Chair Cecil Barron Jensen called the meeting to order at 1:01pm and asked Deputy Executive Director David Slatery to read the Open Meeting Law statement:

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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 provided access to the Zoom or other videoconferencing 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:

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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. 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

Cecil then asked if Committee Members had reviewed the minutes of the last meeting Committee at that time and clarified that if they had reviewed the minutes, they were voting to accept them based on that review- it was not necessary that any member had attended the prior meeting. Emily Bramhall moved to approve the minutes; Committee Co-Chair Julie Wake seconded the motion. By roll call vote and noting that Simone Early and Mark Snyder were absent all were in favor, and it was

RESOLVED: that the Grants Committee approves the minutes of the August 4, 2023 Grants Committee Meeting in the form presented to the Grants Committee.

This marked the first meeting of the Grants Committee since Cecil Barron Jensen and Julie Wake were appointed as its Co-Chairs and the first meeting for many other appointees. As such, Cecil asked all Committee Members and staff to briefly introduce themselves. After introductions, Cecil asked Executive Director Michael Bobbitt for his Executive Director's report.

Michael let Committee Members know that over the past several months, a major analysis of grantmaking has been undertaken and advancement continues to be a major strategic priority. Trends in equitable grantmaking have been explored as well. Grant application guidelines have been revised and outreach promoting grant opportunities has been energized. The Agency has gone from 18 grant programs to 12 programs and further consolidation is being explored. Under the leadership of Senior Director of Program Operations Jen Lawless the programs team is now operating as a department with ample cross-program collaboration taking place. Michael then reviewed the Grants Committee Charter; the charter is available upon request.

Cecil thanked Michael and let Committee Members know they'd next hear a robust presentation on grantmaking by Jen that would help them determine where to focus the Agency's attention and to determine where further consolidation might be possible. The presentation will also give Committee Members a sense of the depth and breadth of Mass Cultural Council's impact across the Commonwealth.

Jen explained that the presentation would provide a look back at grantmaking in the current and previous fiscal years and a preview of proposed changes to grantmaking for the coming fiscal year. The purpose of the presentation is to give the Grants Committee a chance to provide feedback and ask questions before the staff creates a final draft of the FY25 spending plan which will be presented to the Committee and the full Council in August for their review and endorsement. No votes would be taken today. Jen then shared her presentation; a copy of the presentation is available upon request.

After the data presentation Jen paused and Committee Members were invited to ask questions. Council Vice Chair Jo-Ann Davis noted that 4,500 creative individuals applied for grants, but only 384 received funding and asked how the Agency could keep those individuals engaged if they were not receiving grants. Jen and Michael shared that this is the exact reason why advancement work is a priority right now. Relationships are being built across state government with the goal of identifying other sources of support for artists. The Agency also regularly sends an e-newsletter including non-Mass Cultural Council artist opportunities; this is an enormously popular publication. Michael added that the number of creative individuals in MA is probably far larger than we understand it to be at this time.

Emily Bramhall asked if staff had looked at the number of people organizations who received grants served and if there might be overlap. Jen stated that this had not been considered as part of this presentation. Michael added that having worked at large and small arts organizations, he knows that access to funding is related to the number of staff the organization has. The impact of the dollars given to smaller organizations is greater for smaller organizations. It is also challenging to say no to more than 500 cultural organizations in one year; once we truly understand how large the cultural sector is this will become an even greater challenge.

Cecil thanked Jen and Michael for the thoughtful presentation, noting that their work would help navigate the challenge Michael identified.

Jen then continued and invited program staff to present grant program snapshots to the Committee explaining proposed changes for FY25; she noted that while there was no slide for the Grants team, they do an enormous amount of work and grantmaking would not happen without them. No major changes to their operation are proposed for FY25. The staff then gave a brief presentation on each grant program.

Cecil thanked Jen and the staff and opened the meeting for questions and comments from Committee Members.

Co-Chair Julie Wake shared that she was impressed with the Grants for Creative Individuals program and inspired to create a similar opportunity at the Arts Foundation of Cape Cod; she also applauded the Agency's Card to Culture program noting that the cross-agency partnership takes the responsibility of vetting income off of the grant maker.

Michael asked Jen to speak briefly about the idea of evaluating the quality of artwork. Jen explained that in this year's Grants for Creative Individuals grant reviewers looked at where artists were in the life cycle of their careers to balance the success rate of more experienced artists and less experienced artists. Reviewers were also careful to balance artistic disciplines. Michael added that since we are the state government we are here to fund the sector, not just the best of the sector.

There were no further questions or comments and the end of the meeting agenda had been reached. Cecil, as Co-Chair, adjourned the meeting at 2:24pm.

Last created July 31, 2024

UPDATED Conflicts of Interest Notifications- Mass Cultural Council Members

As of July 31, 2024

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

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

Last created July 31, 2024

14. David Kong
15. Anika Lopes
16. Petrina Martin
17. Ellice Patterson
18. Ashley Occhino
19. Diane Asadorian Masters

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

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

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

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

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

Sample script for a meeting vote:

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

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

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

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

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

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

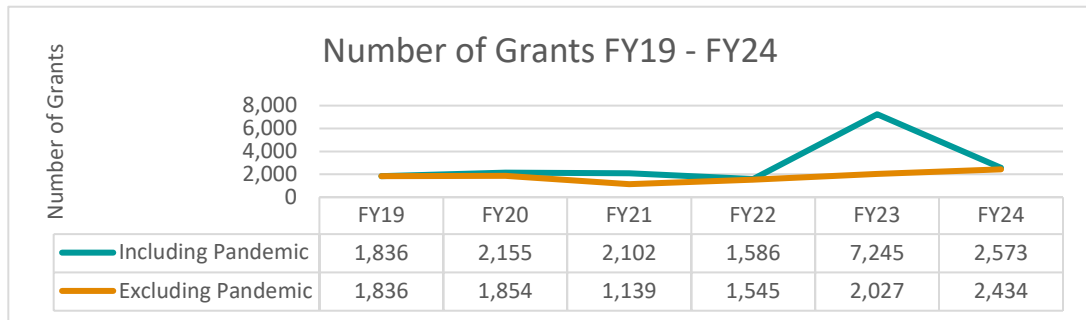


Power of culture

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee
 Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jen Lawless
 Dt: August 8, 2024
 Re: FY25 Grant and Program Recommendations

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

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



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

The program teams, including the grant management system team, put in an immense amount of work and time supporting applicants, potential applicants, and grantees. We expect a similar volume in FY25. The following memos describe the FY25 grantmaking in more detail. In all cases, staff is requesting that the Grants Committee recommend the proposals for approval by the full Council on August 22. Please note, however, that the list of grantees has not been determined and/or guidelines are not complete for certain programs (as further described in the memos below). For those programs, staff will be

requesting the Committee recommend preliminary approval at the August meetings to move forward as indicated and final approvals for them will be sought at either the Council's November or February meeting.

All grant allocation amounts below are based upon the Executive Committee's approval and recommendation of Mass Cultural Council's FY 25 Spending Plan on August 8, 2024.

Advancement Grants

(Agenda Item 5 (a)-5(d))

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee
 Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Catherine Cheng-Anderson, Jen Lawless, Bethann Steiner, Ann Petrucelli-Moon
 Dt: August 8, 2024
 Re: Advancement Grants

Recommendations

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

\$1,127,389

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Artists are entrepreneurs. Artists are small business owners. They are entrepreneurs that too often haven't been equipped with the business skills needed to unlock their success. This free online asynchronous program seeks to inspire in artists the characteristics that will help them strategically and sustainably commercialize their work and run successful, arts- based businesses.

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

Business: Building and commercializing an audience

Technology: Incorporating technology into the craft and the business

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

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

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

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

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

Social Prescription – CultureRx

(Agenda Item 5(e))

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee

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

Dt: August 8, 2024

Re: Social Prescription - CultureRx

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

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

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

In FY24 we contracted with Art Pharmacy for the first of a proposed two-year funding commitment to support the development and implementation of the first statewide social prescription program in the United States. On June 27, 2024

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

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

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

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

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

Unrestricted Operating Support for Organizations

(Agenda Item 6(a))

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee
Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jen Lawless, Sara Glidden, Kalyn King, Lillian Lee
Dt: August 8, 2024
Re: Organizations grants: Operating Grants for Organizations and Cultural Investment Portfolio

Summary

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

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

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

Background

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

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

Sunsetting the Portfolio

The existing Portfolio program will be phased out over a five-year period, from FY24 through FY28. For purposes of transitioning into the new program, current

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

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

Introducing the Operating Grants for Organizations

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

Grant Awards

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

We will continue to implement Equity Impact Points (described in previous Council write-ups) as part of the funding formula calculation, which will increase grant amounts for organizations in or representing communities that have frequently been disadvantaged in access to philanthropic support. We will also support [BIPOC-Centered](#) organizations (this is a self-identification for organizations that are BIPOC led and/or run, and whose primary mission,

programming and/or practices explicitly and specifically reflect and serve one or more communities that self-identify as BIPOC).

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

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

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

Gaming Mitigation Program

(Agenda Item 6(b))

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee
Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jen Lawless, Sara Glidden, Lillian Lee
Dt: August 8, 2024
Re: FY25 Gaming Mitigation Fund

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

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

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

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

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

Summary of Fourth Cycle (FY24)

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

Proposed Process of Fifth Cycle (FY25):

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

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

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

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

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

Cultural District Investment Grants

(Agenda Item 7(a))

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee

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

Re: Cultural Districts Initiative

Dt: August 8, 2024

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

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

Background.

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

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

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

Local Cultural Council Program (Agenda Item 7(b))

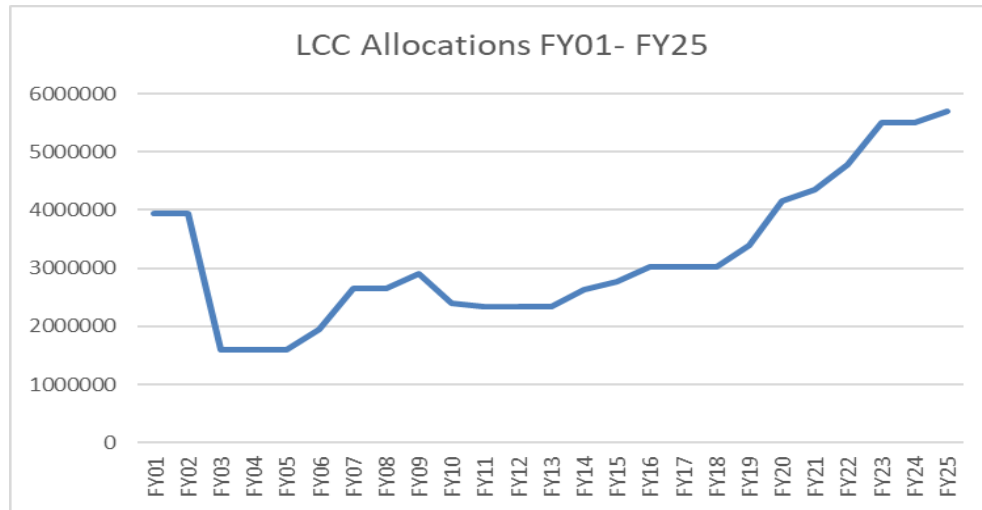
To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee

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

Dt: August 8, 2024

Re: FY25 Local Cultural Council Allocations

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



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

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

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

Tribal Cultural Council Program

(Agenda Item 7(c))

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee

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

Dt: August 8, 2024

Re: FY25 Tribal Cultural Council Program

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

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

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

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

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

Additionally, the Task Force recommended establishing a 5th and possibly 6th TCC; an Intertribal Cultural Council that would serve Native American and Indigenous communities with ties to Massachusetts that are not Federally, or state recognized and/or Native American and Indigenous people who currently

reside in Massachusetts, and whose native lands or territories are outside Massachusetts. We are in conversation with MCIA and the Tribal Task Force to see if this will be possible in FY25.

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

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

Timeline

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

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

Aug 9 – Aug 30:

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

September 1: Applications to TCCs opens

October 16: Applicants submit applications to TCCs

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

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

Tribal Task Force

Rhonda Anderson

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

Darlene Flores

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

Erin Genia

Task Force Organizer Enrolled member of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Multidisciplinary artist, educator and community organizer specializing in Native American and Indigenous arts and culture

Cheryll Holley

Sonksq of the Hassanamisco Nipmuc Band

Professional researcher, writer, and speaker specializing in African American and Indigenous peoples of New England

Jim Peters

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

Bettina Washington

Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah)

David Weeden

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

Berta Welch

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

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

YouthReach

(Agenda Item 8(a))

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee

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

Dt: August 8, 2024

Re: FY25 YouthReach Grants

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

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

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

FY25 Recommendations

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

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

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

STARS Residencies/School-Based Projects

(Agenda Item 8(b))

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee

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

Dt: August 8, 2024

Re: FY25 STARS Residencies Program/School-Based Projects

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

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

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

A few important notes on FY25:

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

The benefits of integrating these programs together include:

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

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

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

Creative Youth Development and Education Grants (Agenda Item 8(c))

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee
Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jen Lawless, Erik Holmgren, Käthe Swaback, Amy Chu
Dt: August 8, 2024
Re: Creative Youth Development and Education Grants

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

FY25 Recommendations

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Grants for Creative Individuals

(Agenda Item 9)

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee

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

Dt: August 8, 2024

Re: FY25 Grants for Creative Individuals

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

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

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

Program summary:

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

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

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

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

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

Festivals & Projects

(Agenda Item 10(a))

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee

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

Dt: August 8, 2024

Re: FY25 Festivals & Projects Program

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FY25 Program

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

Of the 1,340 applications received:

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

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

Recommended Grants:

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

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

Hold Reason

Organizations may have more than one reason for their hold:

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

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

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

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

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

Equitable Distribution:

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

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

UP Innovation Fund

(Agenda Item 10(b))

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee

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

Dt: August 8, 2024

Re: UP Innovation Fund

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Equity, Inclusion, and Access Grants
 (Agenda Items 10(c))

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee
 Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Catherine Cheng-Anderson, Jen Lawless, Bethann Steiner
 Dt: August 8, 2024
 Re: Equity, inclusion, and Access Grants

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

FY25 Recommendations

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

Network for Arts Administrators of Color (NAACBoston)

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

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

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

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

Arts and Culture Accessibility Resource Hub

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

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

Originally, this amazing, in-depth learning opportunity was offered to 10 to 13 organizations a year. The goal of the agency was to make this opportunity available more broadly to as many organizations as possible. The program was paused in FY23 to develop the [d/Deaf & Disability Equity Plan \(FY25-28\)](#) plan, and to look for a partner to assist in our goal to reach a much larger number of constituents and ensure that all Massachusetts Cultural organizations have access to this excellent, in-depth learning to promote and improve accessibility at their organization for people with disabilities.

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

1. The Arts and Culture Legal Responsibilities Identification Tool:

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

2. The Arts and Culture Glossary:

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

3. The Arts and Culture Accessibility Self-Assessment:

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

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

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

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

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