



Power of culture

MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL

PROGRAMS COMMITTEE BOOK

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2024

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**MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL
PROGRAMS (GRANTS) COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2024
1:00 -2:30 PM**

ON-LINE MEETING

BROADCAST MEETING

MEETING WILL BE LIVESTREAMED AT

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/LIVE/VQM3IMS5PDC](https://www.youtube.com/live/vqm3ims5pdc)

MEETING MATERIALS WILL BE POSTED ONLINE AT

**[HTTPS://MASSCULTURALCOUNCIL.ORG/ABOUT/BOARD/](https://massculturalcouncil.org/about/board/)
UNDER "OCTOBER 16, 2024 GRANTS COMMITTEE MEETING"**

AGENDA

VOTE

-
1. Call to Order- Open Meeting Law Notice
 2. Minutes- August 8, 2024 **X**
 3. Chairs' Reports
 - a. Name of Committee
 4. Programs Report
 5. Financial Health Analysis Tool
 6. Arts Prescriptions and NEA Health and Arts Initiative
 7. Reminder re: Conflict of Interest Notifications

Additional FY25 Grant and Program Recommendations **X**

8. Operating Support for Organizations: Cultural Investment Portfolio & Operating Grants for Organizations

9. Festivals & Projects

10. Creative Projects for Schools

11. Adjourn

**MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL
GRANTS COMMITTEE**

(IN ADVANCE OF THE 164th MEETING OF MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL ON NOVEMBER 13, 2024)

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2024

RESOLUTIONS

Section 2

RESOLVED: that the Programs Committee approves the minutes of the August 8, 2024 Grants Committee Meeting in the form presented.

Section 8

RESOLVED: To recommend approval by the full Council of \$7,200,000 in unrestricted operating support grants to cultural organizations under the Cultural Investment Portfolio program and new Operating Grants for Organizations as described in the memo provided at the Programs Committee Meeting.

Section 9

RESOLVED: To recommend to the full Council approval of up to \$1,500,000 in Creative Projects for Schools grants as presented at the Programs Committee Meeting.

Section 10

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

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

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

**MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL
GRANTS COMMITTEE**

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8, 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 Haghghat
Simone Early
Ashley Occhino
Mark Snyder

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, and Chief Human Resources Officer
Jen Lawless, Senior Director of Program Operations
Ann Petruccelli Moon, Deputy Chief of Staff
Carmen Plazas, Communications & Community Engagement Manager
Dan Blask, Program Manager
Charles Baldwin, Program Officer
Amy Chu, Program Officer
Kalyn King, Program Officer
Erik Holmgren, Program Manager
Summer Confuorto, Program Officer
Timothea Pham, Program Officer
Carolyn Cole, Program Officer
Lisa Simmons, Program Manager

Prepared on 9/17/24

Erik Holmgren, Program Manager

Co-Chair Cecil Barron Jensen called the meeting to order at 1:02pm. She welcomed Committee Members and staff and explained that she and Co-Chair Julie Wake would co-lead the meeting. She then asked Deputy Executive Director David Slatery to read the Open Meeting Law statement:

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

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:

- 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 must 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. 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

Co-Chair Julie Wake then asked if Committee Members had reviewed the minutes of the last meeting held on June 12, 2024. If so, she would look for a motion to approve the minutes. Mark Snyder moved to approve the minutes; Cecil seconded the motion. By roll call vote all were in favor except for Simone Early who was not present on June 12th and chose to abstain. There were no absent members. It was thereby

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

Cecil then asked Executive Director Michael Bobbitt to begin the presentation on FY25 spending plan and grant program allocations.

Michael, joined by Senior Director of Program Operations Jen Lawless, gave a high-level overview of the proposed spending plan and reviewed Advancement-related grantmaking including grants to Mass Humanities, MASSCreative, New England Foundation for the Arts, and MITx Arts Entrepreneurship Online Program. A copy of the presentation is available upon request.

Cecil then asked Deputy Executive Director David Slatery to review the Conflicts of Interest list to ensure its accuracy prior to the presentation on each grant program.

Dave explained that under state ethics law Council Members may not take official action pertaining to any organization in which they have a financial interest, employment, or board membership; rather than leaving the room for the vote on grant recommendations, their conflicts of interest are disclosed on a list, and they state that they abstain from discussing or voting on any organization which is disclosed as a conflict on the list. He asked Committee Members to review conflicts of interest list in their materials and indicate if there are any updates. Vice Chair Jo-Ann Davis asked David to remove MASSCreative from her list as she is no longer on their Board. There were no further updates.

Julie asked if the grant supporting MITx is intended to be a one-year or multi-year commitment. Michael explained that it will be a one-year commitment. Julie then asked staff to give their presentations on their programs.

Program Manager Erik Holmgren reported on Social Prescription. Staff is recommending a \$100,000 grant to Art Pharmacy for their continued work scaling the program. The grant will support at least 600 doses of arts prescriptions across the Commonwealth and represents a new revenue stream for cultural organizations.

Cecil shared that social prescription is the Mass Cultural Council initiative she is most frequently asked about as a Council Member.

Chair Marc Carroll asked how the number 600 doses was reached and if that referred to the fiscal year or the calendar year. Erik explained that the number referred to the fiscal year and was recommended by Art Pharmacy after their conversations with Mass General Brigham and another major insurance partner.

Julie asked for clarification on the work representing a new stream of funding for the cultural sector. Erik explained that cultural organizations who participate are paid by Art Pharmacy for the prescribed visits.

Program Manager Sara Glidden gave a report on new "Operating Grants for Organizations" organizational support program and the existing "Cultural Investment Portfolio" version of organizational support which the Agency is slowly winding down and transitioning from.

Emily Bramhall asked what the dollar amount would be for Operating Grants; Sara explained that grants will range from \$6K to approximately \$60K though the maximum grant amount has not yet been set. The Council will know more specifics about the grants when they are brought forward for approval in November.

Cecil asked if the Committee could look at the grant application for Operating Grants and a link to the application was shared by the Zoom meeting host via chat. Copy of such application document is available upon request.

Sara also provided a brief update on the Gaming Mitigation Program which would open the application for its fifth round in November 2025. There were no questions.

Program Officer Carolyn Cole gave an update on Cultural District Initiative Investment Grants; the same allocation as FY24 is recommended with three new districts anticipated. Carolyn also mentioned that the program would be paused until FY25, and no additional new districts would be considered while the program undergoes a redesign. There were no questions.

Program Manager Lisa Simmons gave an update on plans for the Local Cultural Council program which would see a 3.6% increase in FY25 and the new Tribal Cultural Council program which would fund between four and six Tribes. There were no questions.

Erik Holmgren returned to share an update on YouthReach which is the longest running grant program supporting Creative Youth Development programs in the country. FY25 represents the third year of funding for 85 organizations in a three-year cycle.

Program Officer Amy Chu gave an update on STARS Residencies which is transitioning to become School-Based Projects; the guidelines will adjust slightly so the program can accept more projects than in previous years.

Ashley Occhino asked what changes would be made to the STARS guidelines and Amy explained that previously grants funded partnerships between artists and schools, now the program would allow schools to apply directly or in partnership with an artist and that the program would be open to projects other than residencies such as school theatrical productions or workshops.

Erik then shared that EdVestors (for the Youth Arts Impact Network), the Huntington Theatre (for Poetry Out Loud), and Heath Resources in Action (for teaching artist fellowships) would also receive Creative Youth Development grants. There were no questions.

Program Manager Dan Blask gave an update on Grants for Creative Individuals, a program that was new in FY24. No major changes will be made to the program in FY25 though it is anticipated that the Agency will be able to give 50 more grants this year than last year.

Vice Chair Jo-Ann Davis recalled that in previous years the Council was able to see examples of artwork by funded individuals and asked if this might be possible in the future. Dan explained that staff shared examples of artwork at a recent celebration for grantees in Somerville and that it would be wonderful to share a similar slideshow at a future Council Meeting.

Ashley Occhino noted that memo regarding Grants for Creative Individuals indicates that special guidance and attention is being given to applicants who receive SNAP and MassHealth benefits; Ashley applauds this. Dan shared that staff works with Work Without Limits on this element of the process to avoid having Mass Cultural Council grants result in a disruption of benefits.

Program Officer Timothea Pham provided an update on the plans for Festivals & Projects. In FY24 the Agency was able to give 740 grants and anticipates making the same number of grants in FY25. There were no questions.

Program Officer Charles Baldwin reported that UP Innovation Fund grants would also remain unchanged in FY25 though the grant amount would be slightly lower due to the closure of two organizations who ceased operations.

That concluded staff presentations on recommended grant program allocations and there were no further questions. Julie asked for a motion to approve all recommendations and bring them forward to the full Council at its next meeting. Cecil moved to approve the recommendations; Emily Bramhall seconded the motion. By roll call vote Committee Members unanimously voted to approve the following

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

WHERTEAS, 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:

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

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

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

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;

RESOLVED: To recommend a grant of \$100,000 to Art Pharmacy for continuation of the Social Prescription program as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting;

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.

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;

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

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

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

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

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;

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;

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 ;

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

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

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 \$100,000 grant to Open Door Arts for the Arts and Culture Accessibility Resource Hub, all as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

The following Committee Members abstained from voting and/or discussing grants pertaining to the organizations listed under their name:

Marc Carroll

- a. Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra
- b. The Rivers School

Jo-Ann Davis

- a. The Care Center
- b. Springfield Museums

Cecil Barron Jensen

- a. Artists Association of Nantucket
- b. Egan Maritime Institute
- c. Nantucket Cultural District

Julie Wake

- a. Arts Foundation of Cape Cod

Cecil thanked Committee Members for their time and attention and congratulated the staff noting that it's exciting to see grant programs evolve. Jo-Ann, who previously Chaired the Grants Committee, congratulated the Co-Chairs on the successful meeting.

There were no further questions and Cecil, as Co-Chair, adjourned the meeting at 2:30pm.

Programs Report

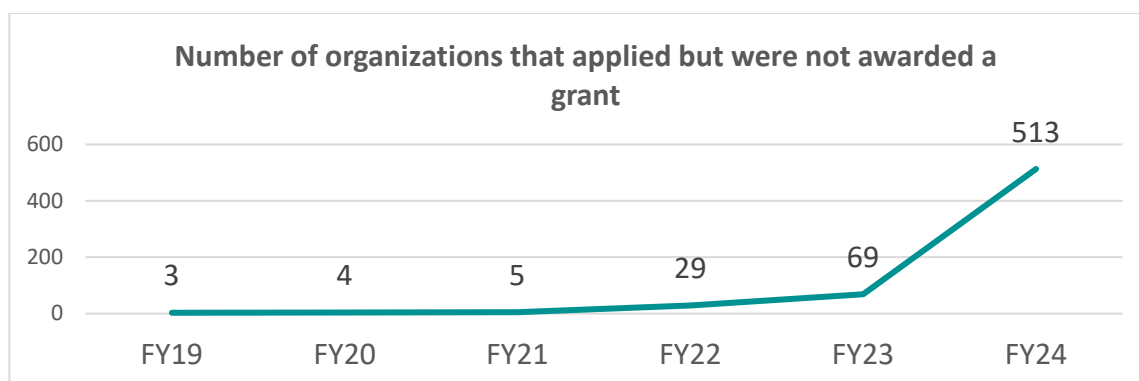
(Agenda Item 4)

To: Mass Cultural Council Programs Committee
Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jen Lawless
Dt: October 16, 2024
Re: Program Updates

Overview. Since we met in August the Program Team has been hard at work both on advancement and grant administration. What follows are updates about programs that are still in process.

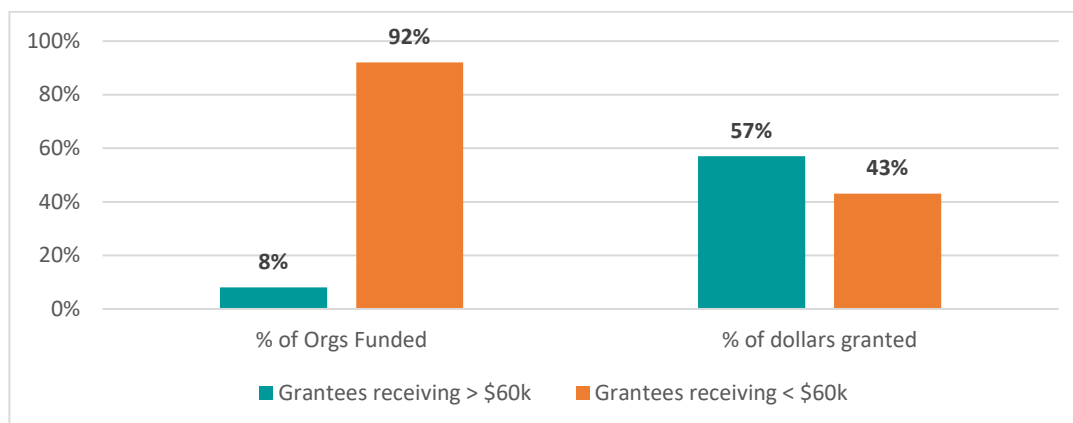
Advancing Equity and Extending Our Reach. To support our equity goals, Mass Cultural Council has expanded the organizations we reach through recruitment and outreach. Our applications have been simplified and streamlined and eligibility has been expanded over the past 3 years. We have seen a steady increase in applications from organizations in the cultural sector.

Already, as of early October we have received 2,543 applications from organizations and we have one program that is still open (Creative Projects for Schools), and two that are yet to open (Cultural Facilities Fund and Gaming Mitigation Fund). This exceeds the total applications we received from organizations in FY24 (2,515). Despite the increases to our budget, we have had to turn away an increasing number of organizations.



Mass Cultural Council staff reviewed the overlap between programs to see what impact organizations receiving multiple awards had on our ability to serve the sector more broadly. In FY24 86% of organizations received one grant, while 14% received more than one grant. We focused in on those organizations (excluding Local Cultural Councils) that received more than \$60,000 in total. These organizations typically receive one or more of our largest grants (CIP, Gaming, CFF).

We found that **8% of our grantees (118 organizations) received 57% of grant funds** made available to organizations in FY24:



	Number of Orgs	Dollars Granted
Grantees receiving > \$60k	118	\$15,771,131
Grantees receiving < \$60k	1,290	\$11,928,984
	1,408	\$27,700,115

To ensure that we can fund as many organizations as possible, we are working to thoughtfully coordinate and limit our grants. We have been

moving in this direction over the past couple fiscal years. In FY25 we are taking additional steps to address this issue:

- Cultural Facilities Fund will increase from a 1-year to a 2-year wait period for successful Capital Grant recipients.
- Organizations can only receive one of the following grants: Festivals & Projects, Creative Projects for Schools, Cultural Investment Portfolio(CIP)/Operating Grants for Organizations(OGO), Cultural District Investment Grant.
- The Gaming Mitigation Fund guidelines will specify that organizations receiving CIP/OGO are not eligible for Gaming. However, in this transition year we will allow organizations to apply to both programs to determine which is most advantageous for their organization. More on this later in the memo.

As we move into FY26 and finalize the design and redesign of our programs we anticipate that ensuring our funds can reach as many organizations as possible will mean further coordination of and communication about our programs so that organizations will be able to determine which program is the best fit for them.

Program Updates. In August, we let you know several programs were in the process of being redesigned or finalized for FY25. The following are updates about the programs, for your information/reference.

Grants for Creative Individuals

The Artist Team has begun accepting applications for the FY25 [Grants for Creative Individuals](#) to award unrestricted grants of \$5,000 to applicants who demonstrate achievement of creative expression and commitment to their artistic/cultural practice.

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)

Funding Priorities

- Funding Priority (or modest ratings advantage) for “Underfunded” applicants (including those who identify as BIPOC (Black/Indigenous/Person of Color) or as having a Disability)

- New grant recipients (no direct grant past 6 yrs)
- Traditional/Folk Artists/Culture Bearers. **New this year:** slightly higher priority points for Culture Bearers/Traditional Artists with a current or upcoming traditional arts apprenticeship with another Massachusetts artist
- Recipients of anti-poverty benefits
- **New this year:** Veterans of the United States Armed Forces

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

Timeline

- Deadline October 24, 2024
- Recommendations to this committee February 12, 2025

Cultural Districts

In August the council approved reserving funds for three (3) additional districts that were going through the final stages of the designation process at that time. The three municipalities positioned for designation approval at the upcoming 164th Meeting of Mass Cultural Council on November 13th include:

- City of Watertown's 'Watertown Square Cultural District'
- City of Holyoke's 'Holyoke Puerto Rican Cultural District'
- City of Westfield's 'Downtown Westfield Cultural District.'

Watertown, known for bridging cultures and with a motto of 'Founded in Peace', sees a Cultural District designation as their galvanizing force for the creative economy, bringing together public, nonprofit, and business entities to create strong cross-sector collaborations that will reverberate throughout the community.

Holyoke is known as the birthplace of volleyball, and their proposed Cultural District is referred to internationally as 'Little Puerto Rico,' lending to its recognition as the largest Puerto Rican population, per capita, of any city in the U.S. outside of Puerto Rico. Public artworks and creative interventions tell the story of the culture of Holyoke, symbolizing where people have come from and how the City and the Cultural District corridor is a central part of that story.

Westfield is known as The Whip City, due to its history of whip manufacturing in the 19th century. A Cultural District designation will tie together Westfield's rich history of industrial work and educational institutions to their present artistic and cultural gems.

We look forward to presenting these districts to the full council in November for designation. If approved, the newly designated districts will receive [Cultural District Investment Grants](#) through a streamlined application process agreeing to allocate the funds in support of Cultural District activities and goals.

Cultural District Designation Redesign: The Cultural District Designation program (the process by which communities get a cultural district recognized) is being redesigned. We are not taking new applications to the Cultural District program in FY25.

We are excited to announce we will be working with [CivicMoxie](#) on the program redesign and look forward to sharing updates and information at future council meetings. The goal is to launch the redesigned program in July for FY26.

Tribal and Local Cultural Councils

We are excited to let you know the first Tribal Cultural Council launched in September. The [Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribal Cultural Council \(HPWTCC\)](#) is accepting applications until November 1. We are in communication with three other Tribal Governments, and we anticipate additional councils launching in the winter. The 329 Local Cultural Councils are accepting applications until the Local Cultural Council Program deadline on October 16.

Gaming Mitigation Fund

For the FY25 Gaming Mitigation Fund we have updated the program to better align with the agency's equity goals and to better serve performing arts centers across the Commonwealth who present touring shows and artists.

Process: Data Collection and Analysis. To ensure that any updates made would meet our goals as stated above, we first gathered data from two sources:

- 842 organization's responses to questions asked in the Operating Grants for Organizations applications and the Cultural Investment Portfolio annual reports.
- Post-application surveys of Gaming grantees (one from FY24 and one from FY22).

The data gathered from the application questions showed that 178 organizations present touring entities, of which 95 meet our definition of a performing arts center. Of those 95, the organizations identified as not previously receiving funding from Gaming Mitigation will receive targeted outreach for the FY25 cycle.

From this data, we found that of 178 organizations, only 25% use an artist roster to book touring entities. As being listed on an artist roster was one of the main credentials used to define and identify touring entities in previous years, this piece of the program needed to be updated to better reflect the reality of how organizations operate.

The need to update how we define touring entities was further supported when we looked at the survey results. Most organizations identified that finding and reporting on the credentials required to verify touring entities was the most challenging and time-consuming aspect of the program.

Based on this information, we held feedback sessions with previous grantees as well as some organizations who are part of our targeted outreach pool described earlier. These sessions allowed us to get deeper and more specific information on how organizations book and work with touring entities to refine our definitions and required credentials.

Updates to the FY25 Program. Based on the above data gathering and analysis process as well as our desire to better align this program with the agency's equity goals, the following changes are being implemented:

- Inclusion of performing arts centers owned by Federally Recognized Tribal Governments as eligible organization types. Non-profit Tribal, Native American, and Indigenous performing arts centers continue to be eligible for the program.
- Redefinition of Touring Entities and the credentials required to verify them in the application.
- Organizations will report on finances and performances for *their* Fiscal Year 2023 instead of a calendar year.

- Equity Impact Points will be added to the formula for BIPOC-Centered Organizations to ensure we are funding more equitably.
- Organizations receiving funding from the following Mass Cultural Council Programs are not eligible to apply: FY25 Cultural Investment Portfolio, FY25 YouthReach, and FY25 Operating Grants for Organizations.
- Moving Impact Questions from the application to a new Final Report.

For the FY25 cycle, we have more specifically defined a touring entity as shows or artists that have independent performing arts work that is generated or produced by the touring entity which they then make available to be booked for live performances.

Touring entities can either be presented by the organization or featured as Headliners in a work produced by the organization and must have the following credentials depending on whether the work is presented or produced.

- Presented Touring Entities must have a history of touring or touring schedule and a dedicated way of being booked for that independent performing arts work.
- Produced Touring Entities (Headliners) must have a history of touring or touring schedule as a headliner and name recognition that is used as a marketing tool.

Instead of capturing impact and advocacy data in the application, we are instead instituting a Final Report for this program. This will be more consistent with other grant programs and reduce the time and burden of the application process overall. As we are hoping to expand the number of applicants to this program through the changes made, simplifying and streamlining the application was a key goal.

Timeline

November 12, 2024: Online application opens

January 9, 2025: Applications due by 11:59pm (ET)

February 12, 2025: This committee will receive funding recommendations

Unrestricted Operating Support for Organizations

(Agenda Item 8)

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee
Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jen Lawless, Sara Glidden, Kalyn King, Lillian Lee
Dt: October 16, 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 **Operating Support for Organizations (OGO)**, and the **Cultural Investment Portfolio (CIP)**. A separate list of the grantees and grant amounts is listed in **Appendix B**. Due to the increase of funds and the redesigned Operating Grants for Organizations Program we are able to provide unrestricted operating support to at least 45 more organizations in FY25 (388) than we did in FY24 (343)

The grant amounts for the two programs are formula based and were calculated together in one pool of grant recipients. Some organizations receive grants from multiple Mass Cultural Council programs, and as we move in a direction that is consistent with our Equity plans and the goal of distributing funding across more organizations, these organizations will be directed to decide between various funding opportunities. Grant recommendations are built on the likely outcomes of these decisions.

Background

The Cultural Investment Portfolio (CIP) 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 and will be phased out over the next 4 years. In 2023, as part of a review of the agency's granting programs in the context of our Racial Equity policy and other equity concerns, it was decided that we would 'sunset' the Portfolio and redesign our operating support programs. Operating Grants for Organizations (OGO) was designed to retain some of the strengths of CIP, but also to be closely aligned with agency values as stated in the FY24 Strategic Plan. OGO launched in March 2024, and the FY25 grants will be the first awards made in this new program.

Operating Grants for Organizations

OGO will provide multi-year, unrestricted operating grants to nonprofit organizations that enrich Massachusetts' cultural life. These grants will work to strengthen a cultural sector that generates \$1.2 billion in economic activity, creates thousands of jobs, and delivers programs to more than 20 million people a year.

OGO had its first application deadline in June 2024. We received 581 applications, of which 480 were deemed eligible because they met the requirements stated in the published guidelines.

Applications were first reviewed by staff for eligibility, and all eligible applications were then reviewed by a team of internal and external reviewers—one internal staff reviewer and two external for each eligible application. Applications were sorted into 5 budget categories (A – E, largest to smallest), and were reviewed with similarly sized organizations.

Applications were scored on responses to 3 sets of questions which were based on criteria that are aligned with the strategic plan and counted for 75% of the total potential score. The remaining 25% of the score was based on the Prioritization categories stated in the guidelines: Funding History, BIPOC-Centered organizations, participation in Card to Culture. The scored components were:

1. Demonstrate equitable practices (required)
2. Support Massachusetts' artists, humanists and scientists (required)
3. Advance the cultural sector, or engage their community deeply and authentically

149 organizations are being recommended for funding, with additional organizations being held on a 'waitlist', pending the outcome of applications to the Gaming Mitigation grant program. Approximately 33% of the applications have been recommended for funding and will be added to the 249 Portfolio organizations for a total of 388 proposed grantees.

Organizations recommended for funding:

- Have formula expenses that range from \$50,000 to over \$10,000,000 (2 organizations), and are proportionally representative of each budget group, which means that the highest scoring applicants in each budget group are present in the recommended group.

- One hundred twenty-six (126) organizations will be receiving operating support for the first time.
- Fifty-eight (58) grantees have successfully completed the BIPOC-Centered self-identification form, and 39% of recommended grantees are BIPOC organizations.
- Seventeen (17) grantees have not received funding from Mass Cultural Council in the past 3 fiscal years.
- Seventy-two (72) are participants in the Card to Culture program.
- Twenty-five (25) organizations had previously been funded in either the Portfolio or Gateway grant programs, out of seventy-two (72) eligible organizations which applied, which is statistically consistent with the proposed funding rate of the overall program.

Cultural Investment Portfolio

CIP has provided annual unrestricted operating support to approximately three hundred (300) organizations since 2009. It is winding down over a five-year period. Organizations were randomly assigned to FY24 – FY28 as their final year of CIP support, at which time these organizations need to apply to OGO for the opportunity to continue to receive unrestricted operating support. These organizations must continue to meet eligibility and annual reporting requirements.

Grant Award Calculations

The Organizations awards budget of \$7.2 million was approved by the Mass Cultural Council at the August 2024 meeting. This amount is an increase over \$7.096 million that was allocated for CIP's Portfolio, Gateway, and Media grants in FY24.

Based on this budget, we calculated award assignments for individual CIP and OGO grantees. Grants are based on a formula that takes into account a three-year average of an organization's cash expenses (Formula Expenses). In response to the large number of applicants, and our desire to increase the number of grantees, we reduced the Maximum grant from \$60,000 to \$55,000 and maintained the Minimum grant of \$6,000. Individual Cultural Affiliates (programs with a parent organization) are capped at one-third of the maximum grant, resulting in a Cultural Affiliate maximum of \$18,300. Grant amounts are redetermined annually, and as an organization's Formula Expenses and the agency's allocation to these programs fluctuate, the grant calculations will reflect the changes. For FY25 Portfolio grants, 114 organizations will see an increase, 93 organizations will see a decrease (including organizations that were at the previous maximum grant amount), and 30 will be unchanged.

In FY23 we implemented Equity Impact Points, which increase grant amounts for organizations representing communities that have frequently been disadvantaged in access to philanthropic support. BIPOC-Centered 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. Grant awards to these organizations reflect the additional weighting for BIPOC organizations.

For grantees of OGO, we have an added component. We have developed a Financial Health Analysis to identify organizations whose financial performance indicates that they are facing financial challenges. The Financial Health Impact Points are reflected in the grant recommendations for 23 organizations.

See **Appendix A** for additional details about reviewers and grant calculations. The list of awardees can be found in **Appendix B**.

If additional organizations that opt to pursue the Gaming Mitigation Fund grants instead of operating support, we will use the same methods described above to award grants to the next highest scoring organizations in each budget bracket. While we seek approval to make these awards prior to the next meeting, we will report on the final list of grantees at the next meeting for our reference.

Festivals & Projects

(Agenda Item 9)

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee

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

Dt: October 16, 2024

Re: FY25 Festivals & Projects Program, Grant Recommendations Update

Overview

In August, we presented a preliminary funding scenario for the Mass Cultural Council's Festivals & Projects program for FY25. The approved FY25 Spending Plan includes an allocation of \$1,850,000 to support programs in the arts, humanities, or sciences that offer community and public benefits. The program received a total of 1,340 grant applications and aims to fund 740 organizations.

Of the 740 organizations recommended and approved for funding in the FY25 cycle of Festivals & Projects, 220 of these awards were only tentatively approved, and had holds placed on their contracts – either because the organization needed to take action to resolve an issue, or because the organization also applied for OGO.

Organizations were given a deadline of September 30, 2024, to resolve any contracting issues. Only two organizations did not resolve their hold reasons by the deadline. Their awards will be revoked and reassigned to the next eligible applicants.

104 organizations still have holds on their contracts, which will be released or revoked after the full Council meeting in November.

Second Round of Awards

Of the 104 awards still on hold, 103 are because the organization also applied for also applied for OGO. Organizations can apply for both OGO and Festivals & Projects but can only receive funding from one.

Should an organization be awarded a grant from OGO, that grant takes precedence, and the Festivals & Projects grant will be reassigned to another applicant. If an organization is not awarded an OGO grant, their Festivals & Projects grant will be released for payment.

Additionally, an organization cannot receive both Festivals & Projects and Creative Projects for Schools grants. If an applicant is recommended for a Creative Projects for Schools grant, that grant takes precedence, and the Festivals & Projects grant will be reassigned to another applicant. Because that program's deadline is October 10, we cannot finalize the list of Festivals & Projects grantees until just after the committee meeting. A full list of the first and second round Festivals & Projects grantees (740 total) will be provided for the November 13 Council meeting and will be listed in **Appendix C**.

Creative Projects for Schools

(Agenda Item 10)

To: Mass Cultural Council Grants Committee
 Fr: Michael Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jen Lawless, Erik Holmgren, Amu Chu, Käthe Swaback
 Dt: October 16, 2024
 Re: FY25 Program Update and Grant Recommendations

Summary. In early September we launched FY25 [Creative Projects for Schools](#). Creative Projects for Schools offers \$5,000 grants for school-based projects that foster creative learning experiences for K-12 students. In place of the STARS Residency program, we expanded the guidelines to include all types of projects including, but not limited to, residencies, field trips, performances, art showcases, poetry readings, mural projects, arts integration trainings, oral history projects, and more.

Key Eligibility (full details in guidelines)

- Non-Profit School or Organization, For-Profit School or Organization, Public School or other Government Entity (including Tribal Governments), Unincorporated Organization.
- Primarily serves students and is operated by or in partnership with a Massachusetts public, charter, or private school serving grades K-12.
- Incorporates the arts, humanities, or interpretive sciences.

Funding Priorities

- Projects with schools in priority communities
- Projects that pay MA artists, scientists, and humanists
- Applicants that have not been funded in the past three years
- Applicants that are BIPOC-majority schools or BIPOC-centered organizations

Review Process

- Staff Review
- Eligibility
- Funding Priorities (as listed above)
- Coordinate with Festivals & Projects and Operating Grants for Organizations to ensure grantees only receiving one award

Timeline

- Application deadline October 10, 2024
- List of awardees approved November 13, 2024

Shortly after the committee meeting, we will have the 300 recommended grants as well as some statistics about the applicants and grantees. The updated memo will be provided ahead of the meeting and the grantees will be listed in **Appendix D**.