



We Are Mass Cultural Council

Mass Cultural Council is the Commonwealth's independent state arts agency. Our charge is to bolster Massachusetts' creative & cultural sector.

Our efforts:

- Advance economic vitality
- Support transformational change
- Celebrate, preserve, and inspire creativity across all communities



Mass Cultural Council is working to elevate our rich cultural life in Massachusetts. We serve the Commonwealth and all who live, work, visit, and play there by amplifying creativity, providing resources, expanding relationships, and championing transformational changes that maintain and grow a thriving creative and cultural ecosystem.



We have a massive creative sector in Massachusetts.

In the past year, Arts and Culture accounted for:

- \$29.7 billion economic impact
- 130,263 jobs
- 4.04% of the state's economy

This is larger than construction, 3 times the size of the transportation sector, and the

same size as retail.



[Roxbury Cultural District, Essex River Cultural District, Holyoke Puerto Rican Cultural District]

Cultural Districts Initiative

Established in 2011 through an act of the state Legislature, a cultural district is defined as geographical area in a city or town, reflective of its community, with a density of cultural facilities, activities, and assets. They're navigable, compact, and the center of cultural and economic activity.

- Goals
- Attract artists and cultural enterprises
- Encourage business and job development
- Establish the district as a tourist destination
- Preserve and reuse historic buildings
- Enhance property values
- Foster local cultural development



[Boston Little Saigon Cultural District]

Cultural District Contributions

In every division of '<u>SMUData Arts' Top 40 Arts-Vibrant Communities'</u> across the country, there exists at least one Massachusetts Cultural District.

In FY24, Cultural Districts reported:

- •An 829% increase in visitation!
- Approx. 240 businesses/organizations opened!
- 1.7 MILLION visitors/attendees to cultural district events!

In 2022, Springfield's nonprofit arts and culture industry:

- Generated \$82.4 million in economic activity
- Supported 1,483 jobs
- Generated \$15.3 million in local, state, and federal government revenue.

This past year, the arts and cultural sector grew at more than twice the rate of the total economy.

Nationally, Arts+Culture has reported an annual value added to the U.S. economy of:

- \$1.2 trillion
- representing 4.2% of the nation's GDP
- and supporting 5.4 million jobs

Main Streets, Culture, and a Brief History Lesson

Generally, Creative/Arts/Cultural District categories across the country focus on: **cultural hubs**, **anchor institutions**, **downtowns**, **cultural production**, **arts & entertainment**, **naturally occurring** - rooted in community-based cultures and identities building on asset-based strategies.

Main Streets Program launched in 1977.

To-date, Main Street America has helped to generate over \$107.62 billion in local reinvestment, rehab 335,675 buildings, create 782,059 new jobs, and start 175,323 new businesses in over 2,000 communities.

System-Wide Cultural District (SWCD) framework: placing culture, rather than the economy, at the center.

'CREATIVE ECONOMY'



[Hyannis HyArts Cultural District]

Investing in Cultural Economic Development

2004: John and Abigail Adams Arts Program for Cultural Economic Development was established.

- Required a strong public-private partnership.
- Funded projects that ultimately created jobs and income, revitalized downtowns, and increased cultural tourism, leveraging the assets of the creative sector.
- Embedded and sustained paid cultural positions within municipal government for 20+ years.

Inclusive Community Cultural Planning and 'Moral Site Control'

Example: Little Tokyo Service Center in the nation's largest Japantown, LA + Artist, Rosten Woo Facing increasing pressures of displacement, homelessness, and high costs of living.

Moral Site Control:

A developer cannot build in a neighborhood without the resident organization's approval and operating in synch with their vision.

Creatively Re-Strategize

- Eligible Activities for CDBG spending, under the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (HCDA) include supporting neighborhood-based organizations to carry out a neighborhood revitalization or community economic development
- Provision of technical assistance to public or nonprofit entities to increase the capacity of such entities to carry out eligible neighborhood revitalization or economic development activities
- Commercial/storefront façade
- National Association of Realtors' Placemaking Grants + Toolkit
- Community Investment Tax Credit Program (CITC)
- Vacant Storefront Program
- Community Preservation Act
- Community Compact Cabinet 'Best Practices' in transportation & public works, housing and livable communities, sustainable development & land protection, and economic development.
- US Economic Development Administration (EDA) Planning and Technical Assistance opportunities
- ARPA funding
- Opportunities offered by Regional Planning Agencies, Regional Tourism Councils

Challenge Accepted

"Growth hurts because change isn't easy. That's why they call it growing pains."

Tony Gaskins

- Funding
- Sustainable operational model
- Turnover
- Accelerating Climate
- Population growth vs. decline
- Lack of affordable housing
- Transportation inequities
- Public safety and perception, and
- General lack of resources to support our most vulnerable and under-served



[Boston Latin Quarter Cultural District]

Re-Design

Re-Design to focus on four primary areas:

- 1. Maximizing the full intent of the program's **legislative** statute with a focus on economic development;
- 2. A plan to ensure that the **districts thrive** and are **sustainable**;
- 3. Alignment and **partnership with other state agencies** and offerings, including BIDs, TIFs, DIF tools and other municipal financing and economic development tools and options, and;
- Assessing and collecting other areas of support and potential support across the Commonwealth government.



Introducing...

CivicMoxie

The Charter's vision 'recognizes that the metropolitan region consists of **a number of** interconnected pieces that must be considered as a part of a whole in order to deliver the benefits of well-functioning urbanism to all its residents'...



Program Policy and A Field Check-in

- Why CivicMoxie responded to RFR
- Over a decade of Program implementation – how are things going?
- Policy vs. Reality: What is success of meeting program goals?
- What has changed since Program Inception?



[Cummington Cultural District]

Baseline: Step 1- Listening and Collecting Data

Understanding Where Things Are:

- Achieving the goals of the legislative statute
- Supporting thriving districts
- Assessing sustainability of district initiatives
- Alignment and partnerships with other state agencies, programs, and quasigovernmental initiatives



[Lexington Cultural District]



[New Bedford's Seaport Cultural District]

Baseline: Program Check-in

Comprehensive Survey to all Districts (44 Districts responded) 15 interviews with MCC Staff, District Managers, City officials, consultants, community partners

7 Focus Groups with total of 34 District Representatives

Insights

- Impacts and Goals
- Image and Organizational Structure/Leadership
- Funding and Resources
 - Mass Cultural Council
 - Outside sources
- Local Buy-in and Partnerships



[Worcester's Salisbury Cultural District]



[Vineyard Haven Harbor Cultural District]

Future Capacity: Invite Partners to Process



Insights

- Eagerness to collaborate
- Innovative thinking regarding partnerships
- Understanding of how best to continue working together



#1 Professionalization#2 Municipal Buy-in#3 Mass Cultural Council's Administrative Role#4 Multi-State Agency and Entity Task Force Partnership

#1 Professionalization:

For Cultural Districts to establish a standardized model with clear governance, funding mechanisms, strategic business goals, and operational structures based on program objectives and identified metrics.

#2 Municipal Buy-in:

To ensure active local municipal support through financial, staffing, planning and/or policy commitments.

#3 Mass Cultural Council's Administrative Role:

To position Mass Cultural Council primarily as the designator and connector rather than primary -or sole- funder and provider of day-today administrative support.

#4 Multi-State Agency and Entity Task Force Partnership:

To focus on continued growth and statewide impact through ongoing communication and collaboration.



Advancement

Agency Advancement Goals:

- Position the arts and culture sector as a visible, recognized resource and an essential partner in problem solving across the Commonwealth
- Leverage resources from outside of our sector for the benefit of those within

Next Steps: Collective Action, Partnerships, and Policy

Arts Prescriptions

Supporting Public Transit

Construction & Development

Creative Aging Health & Wellness Professional Development

Student Engagement Housing Development Green Infrastructure

Youth Development Traffic Calming Civic Engagement

Community Development Arts in Hospitals Public Health Campaigns

Veteran Rehabilitation Lodging & Hospitality Educational Outcomes

Violence Prevention Criminal Justice Cultural Placemaking

Employee Retention Tourism Promotion Wayfinding Social Justice

Restorative Justice Leadership Training Media & Technology

*Historic Curatorship

*Local **Housing** Creative Placemaking

*Safe **Neighborhoods**

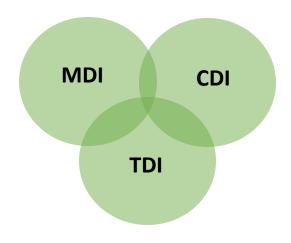
*Regional **Planning**

Place Me Downtown

These three programs share a common theme of assisting Commonwealth communities with downtown/town center revitalization through proven economic development tools, place-based investment, and multi-stakeholder collaboration.

Executive Office of Economic Development's **Mass Downtown**Initiative provides a blueprint for downtown revitalization through technical assistance support.







MassDevelopment's **Transformative Development Initiative** builds local capacity, leadership, partnerships and strategic investments in Gateway Cities.



[provided by Leroux Solutions]

'Initiatives' Three

MDI

Technical Assistance Reports via Consultants Business Improvement Districts

CDI

Annual Grants
Community/Peer Learning Spaces
Technical Support as-needed

TDI

Place-Based Investment with on-the-ground Fellow

United by:

- Place-Based Investment: Our programs fund projects that take place within a specificallydesignated area, often making use of a mapped service area
- Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration: Encouraging municipalities, community members, businesses, and other stakeholders to actively explore ways of improving their communities







[provided by Leroux Solutions]

Partner*trip*

Scope of Work

Phase 1

Assessment, Interviews, Preliminary Report

Phase 2

- Landscape of district designation distinctions
- Identify agencies offering targeted support to downtowns, district entities
- Identify potential external partnerships

Phase 3

Strategic Action Plan:

- Action Plan and roadmap between the collaborators, a listing of roles and responsibilities, examples of institutionalizing implementation going forward.
- General State Policy Recommendations on the successful growth of this partnership, including recommendations on core competencies or staffing needed to execute its growth.



[Fenway Cultural District]

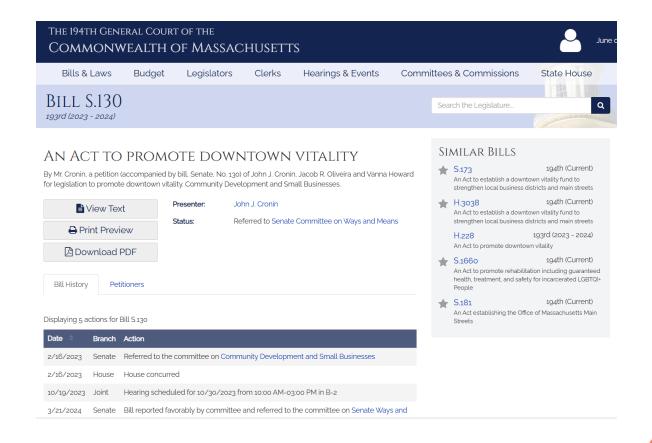
[provided by Leroux Solutions]

Continued Partnership

The information collected through this partnership initiative will inform statewide collaborative program and policy support in FY26/27.

Bill S.130 An Act to Promote Downtown Vitality

Will establish a revenue source for **district management entities**, specifically BIDs, TDI Districts, Cultural Districts, and Main Street entities, by equitably channeling funds back into our communities to mitigate the negative effects of online retail on locally owned small businesses.







Cultural Asset Inventory

Mass Cultural Council worked with <u>Diversity North Group</u> to develop a Cultural Asset Inventory.

> This new tool will inform the development of policy and supports for individuals and organizations that populate the state's cultural sector.



Diversity North Group



['Buy the Block', Nubian Square-Roxbury Cultural District]

Key Findings

- 15,063 cultural Organizations and programs across MA
- Cultural organizations employ thousands = Economic
 Impact
- At least 112,190 Individual cultural generators, making up 3% of the state's workforce.
- The median income of individual cultural generators is **\$49,182**, which falls below the state's living wage of \$58,011
 - Of the 36 occupations representing the work of cultural generators, 28 have median incomes below the living wage, underscoring income inequity for cultural sector professionals.
- Equity Challenges: **Income disparities persist** across gender, race, ethnicity, disability status, and immigration status, especially among women, BIPOC individuals, immigrants, and those with disabilities working in the cultural sector.

2024 Massachusetts Cultural Asset Inventory

Mass Cultural Council and its partners worked with Diversity North Group to design a cultural asset inventory to describe, understand, and direct policy and support to individuals and organizations that populate Massachusetts' cultural sector.

112,19 Not included in this study: people making <50% income from their creative occupation, cultural workers, teachers Source: American Community Survey Data, Federal Census. FOR-PROFIT PUBLIC **MASSACHUSETTS MOST POPULOUS GENERATOR** OCCUPATIONS >>>>

Learn more: massculturalcouncil.org/inventory



Collective Action, Partnerships, and Policy

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Supporting Public Transit
Arts Prescriptions
                                                Construction & Development
          Creative Aging Health & Wellness
                                              Professional Development
                                            Green Infrastructure
Student Engagement Housing Development
         Youth Development Traffic Calming
                                             Civic Engagement
                                             Public Health Campaigns
 Community Development Arts in Hospitals
                                                  Educational Outcomes
     Veteran Rehabilitation Lodging & Hospitality
             Violence Prevention Criminal Justice Cultural Placemaking
  Employee Retention Tourism Promotion Wayfinding Social Justice
       Restorative Justice Leadership Training Media & Technology
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Cultural Policy Development Advisory Committee

Define Cultural Economy:

Map the cultural economy and standardize a definition.

- •Elevate Arts, Humanities & Culture Within State Government:
- Encourage cross-sector partnerships and integrate arts professionals directly into state government.
- •*Establish Capital Initiatives to Support Downtown Revitalization and Space Preservation*: Review capital authorizations and explore public-private partnerships.
- •Promote Business Acumen and Workforce Development for Creative Workers: Explore ways to develop educational pathways for artists and cultural workers.
- •Identify Permanent Sustainable Revenue Stream:

Convene a group to discuss the plausibility of a sustainable, consistent revenue stream for arts, humanities, and culture.

H.228/S.130: An Act to Promote Downtown Vitality

This would establish the Downtown Vitality Fund and allocate 5% of receipts from online sales originating in Massachusetts to support staffing and operations of business improvement districts, main street associations, state-designated cultural districts, and parking benefit districts in Gateway Cities and other low-income communities.

- District management entities in every community in the Commonwealth would be eligible for these state matching funds.
- Grants would cover start-up expenses and provide near -and medium-term- working capital
 to help districts gain enough strength to self-finance their activities in perpetuity.

The Downtown Vitality Fund would provide communities with the state partnership they need to cultivate places that attract visitors, investments, and jobs.

The missing ingredient for many of our under-resourced communities is capacity to adopt local economic partnerships and tools to unlock economic self-sufficiency.

Mass LEADS Act: An Act Relative to Strengthening Massachusetts' Economic Leadership: Tourism, Arts, and Culture'

The tourism industry employs more than 130,000 Massachusetts residents, and the creative economy delivers more than \$27 billion in economic value to the state's economy.

- \$40 million for Destination Development Grants, offered by the Mass Office of Travel and Tourism with preference given to projects in state-designated cultural districts.
- \$8 million for Historic Preservation Grants to preserve historic properties.
- Live Theater Tax Credit, based in the Mass Office of Business Development with DOR, to support the local and regional theater industry, including businesses that benefit from theater production, and MA artists working towards Broadway or off-Broadway to launch a national tour.
- For the Community One Stop for Growth funding program, housed within Executive Office of Economic Development, projects occurring in state-designated cultural districts will be given additional consideration.

Ongoing Cross-Sector Policy Development

STEM to STEAM: Mass Cultural Council is backing legislation to expand the Commonwealth's commitment to STEM by rebranding it as STEAM.

H. 561, An Act advancing Massachusetts from STEM to STEAM, is under review by the Joint Committee on Education. A technical correction to existing Mass General Laws, the bill proposes to add "A" for "arts" to the three existing references to "STEM" in the MGLs.

Social RX: Art Pharmacy and Mass Cultural Council proudly launched the nation's first statewide arts prescription solution, also known as arts-based social prescribing.

'Social prescribing' is the practice of referring patients to community-based resources – like arts and culture engagements – to effectively promote whole person health.

Arts-based social prescribing supports patients' health needs, while building capacity for cultural organizations to play a key role in the health and well-being of individuals and communities.

Early outcome data collected from older adult participants include:

- 40% reduction in emergency room visits
- 350% reduction in Behavioral Health Admissions
- 72% of members improved their loneliness scores.

Ongoing Cross-Sector Policy Development cont.

Current proposals and considerations:

Housing

- Tax credit proposals attached to projects occurring within Cultural Districts
- Possibility for communities with designated Cultural Districts to receive prioritization in programs in planning and zoning opportunities

Planning & Community Mitigation

- To identify and institute anti-displacement planning tactics.
- Collaborate on policy to address affordable artist-supportive housing in districts.
- Projects or initiatives occurring in and around Cultural Districts to receive prioritization for funding as it pertains to Community Planning, Public Safety, and Workforce Development.

Environmental Justice

- Incorporating Cultural Districts as priority locations for programs that revitalize and stabilize economies of underserved and Environmental Justice communities.
- Prioritize/Encourage projects occurring in Cultural Districts within Safe Neighborhoods grant programs.

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EOED + MDI +
  Rural Affairs
  MassDOT +
   EOHLC +
   MassEcon
  Mass Gaming
 Commission +
     MBTA
  DPU + EEA +
DCAMM + MMA
MAPC + MOBD +
Mass Development
  DCR + Mass
   Historical
  Commission
 EPS + MOTT +
   MGCC +
   Massinc.
 MDAR + DBS +
NAIOP + CHAPA
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Ongoing Cross-Sector Policy Development cont.

Current proposals and considerations:

Rural Development

Projects occurring within designated Cultural Districts for consideration to receive prioritization in the review process for the annual Rural Development Fund and Community Planning Grants

Transportation

- Municipalities with projects occurring in designated Cultural Districts to receive prioritization in the review process for any or all 'Grant Central' transportation funding programs.
- Incorporate Cultural Districts into the work of the Beyond Mobility MA Transportation Plan

Space Preservation

Coalesce around policy or programming with the purpose of supporting municipal surplus properties being positioned for reuse.

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EOED + MDI +
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   MassDOT +
    EOHLC +
    MassEcon
  Mass Gaming
  Commission +
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  DPU + EEA +
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  DCR + Mass
    Historical
   Commission
  EPS + MOTT +
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 MDAR + DBS +
NAIOP + CHAPA
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Conclusion

Cross-Sector Integration & The Charter's Vision

Each of us is uniquely capable of servicing our sectors and constituents, but only together can we serve the entirety of the state of Massachusetts and all its residents to support and sustain resilient, affordable communities.



If we want cities/towns that are not only functional but also inspiring, inclusive, and alive, we must design with culture and creativity at the foundation - not the fringe.



Thank you!

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