



Culture creates



Mass
Cultural
Council

Power of culture

Arlington Porchfest

Captioning and ASL Interpretation

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ASL interpreting is by Denise VanderStoel and Jordan Staley, and the CART provider will be Jessica Neiderheide. Service providers are from Partners Interpreting.



If you would like to follow the captions on this presentation, click on the Closed Caption icon at the bottom of the screen

If you would like to follow the captions in a separate device or new window, follow this link:

<https://www.streamtext.net/player?event=MCC>



If you need help accessing the captioning or ASL interpretation, please type a message in the Q&A so we can assist.

Translations and Alternative formats

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Mass Cultural Council is happy to offer alternative formats, auxiliary aids, translation, interpretation, and other services necessary so that any individual can participate in Mass Cultural Council's programs and services. [Contact staff for help.](#)

To facilitate your request in a timely manner, please contact us at least three weeks before any Mass Cultural Council event or grant deadline.

NOTE: This presentation is intended as a supplement to the guidelines and not a replacement for the [Guidelines](#).

Ask Questions via Q&A!

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Beyond the Bounds Performance Series, Cape Cod Region, MA

- Submit questions using the Q&A feature.
- Colleagues will type responses to questions in the Q&A throughout the presentation.
- If time at the end, we will read aloud FAQs from the Q&A and respond to any remaining questions.

Today's presenters:



Kalyn King
Program Officer
She/Her/Hers



Cheyenne Cohn-
Postell
Program Officer
She/Her/Hers



Amy Chu
Program Officer
She/Her/Hers

CreativeExperiences@mass.gov

Today's Info Session- Creative Experiences

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- 1.) Program Overview & Key Dates
- 2.) Eligibility
- 3.) Review Process / Funding Priorities
- 4.) Overview of Application Process
- 5.) Q & A



Chinese Culture Connection's Lunar New Year Celebration, Malden, MA

A close-up photograph of a flower with vibrant pink and orange petals, partially obscured by a large orange diagonal shape that covers the right side of the slide.

Creative Experiences: Program Overview

Detail of an art piece created by a RAW Art Works participant

Creative Experiences

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Creative Experiences supports activities incorporating the arts, sciences, and humanities, where people can engage with creativity, discover and express their voice, explore the natural world, and connect to their history and community.

Mass Cultural Council Values and Vision

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Creativity: Mass Cultural Council believes that creativity is the key to solving many of society's concerns and advancing this asset helps to make the Commonwealth a preeminent place in the nation for it to thrive.

Public Service: Mass Cultural Council serves the Commonwealth and all who live, work, visit, and play here by amplifying creativity, providing resources, expanding relationships, and championing transformational changes that maintain and grow a thriving creative and cultural ecosystem.

Inclusion: Mass Cultural Council works to build a diverse and equitable creative and cultural sector in the Commonwealth, ensuring that all who practice and participate in creative and cultural expression see themselves in it.

Vision: Mass Cultural Council envisions a diverse creative and cultural sector that is valued as essential in the Commonwealth.

Program Overview

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Grant Amount: \$2500 **OR** \$5000

Deadline: April 30, 2026

Notifications: Early September 2026

Eligible Experiences:

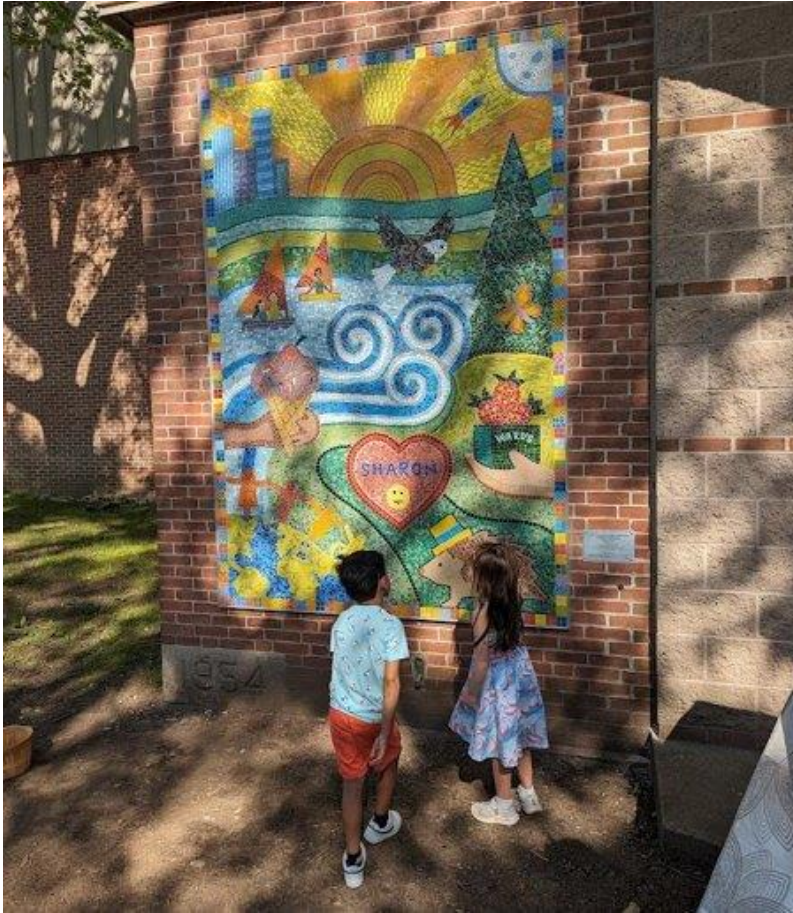
Taking place between July 1, 2026
and June 30, 2027



Teaching artist, Tamar Etingen

Key Dates

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Mural Arts

- Application Open: March 3, 2026
- **Application Deadline: April 30, 2026
(11:59pm ET)**
- Notification: September 2026
- Contracts & payment: Winter 2026
- Final Report Due: July 2027

Office Hours

Thursday, **March 12** @

11 AM

Tuesday, **March 17**

@ 2 PM

Wednesday, **March 25** @

12 PM



Mass Audubon

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Thursday, **April 2** @

10 AM

Wednesday, **April 15** @

12 PM

Thursday, **April 23** @

11 AM

Tuesday, **April 28** @

2pm



Eligibility



Detail of art pieces at "Shop Small" event in New Bedford; Credit: Josh Souza

Who can apply?

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Dorchester Mural Bike Tour (Part of Dorchester Open Studios) Boston, MA – Photo courtesy of Boston Cyclists Union

- Nonprofit organizations
- For-profit organizations
- Other creative businesses, with a fiscal agent
- Government entities
- PreK – 12 Schools – public, private, charter schools
- Unincorporated organizations, with a fiscal agent

All eligible organizations must be...

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- Based in Massachusetts or recognized to do business in the Commonwealth, with a Massachusetts address.
- In good standing with the relevant oversight entity.
- Responsible for the production, presentation or facilitation of the proposed experience.

Eligible Organization Type - Nonprofits

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- Registered with the [Massachusetts Secretary of the Commonwealth](#).

OR

- Recognized by the [IRS](#) as tax exempt and registered with the [Office of the Massachusetts Attorney General's Nonprofit Organizations/Public Charities Division](#).

Eligible Organization Type – For-Profits

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- Registered with the [Massachusetts Secretary of the Commonwealth](#)
 - This includes Profit Corporations, Multiple-Member Limited Liability Companies (including C Corporation, S Corporation, and Partnership LLCs), Limited Partnerships or Limited Liability Partnership, and Benefit Corporations.

Update to Organization Eligibility

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Creative businesses, including sole proprietors and single member LLCs, can apply **with an eligible fiscal agent.**



Blueberry Jam

Eligible Organization Types – Government Entities & Schools

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- Government Entity: A Federally Recognized Tribal, State, or Municipal government entity in Massachusetts.
- Pre-K – 12 School: Any Massachusetts public school district, public school, charter school, private school, collaborative, approved special education school, or approved special education program, serving grades Pre-K to 12. The school must be recognized by the [Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education \(DESE\)](#) with a 2025-2026 DESE School ID.

Eligible Organization Types – Unincorporated

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- An unincorporated organization is a group of people who have come together to pursue a common goal without forming a separate legal entity.
- Are *not* operated by a larger organization (i.e. as a program, department, or branch of an organization).
- Must have an eligible fiscal agent to apply

Eligible Fiscal agents

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- Either have active tax-exempt status with the IRS AND are registered to do business in Massachusetts (i.e. with the Secretary of Commonwealth or the Attorney General's Office).

OR

- Are a Massachusetts municipality / city / town

Notes on Fiscal Agents

- Why do we require fiscal agents for other creative businesses and unincorporated groups?
- Fiscal agent is DIFFERENT from parent organizations
- Resources for finding a fiscal agent



Eligibility: Other Mass Cultural Grant Programs

| Mass Cultural Council Program | Can I apply for FY27 Creative Experiences? |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cultural Facilities Funding• Local Cultural Council Program | Yes, your organization can apply and could also receive the Creative Experiences grant. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Operating Grants for Organizations• Cultural Investment Portfolio• Gaming Mitigation Fund• Cultural District Investment Grants | No, an organization may only receive funding from one of these programs in a year, so you cannot apply to receive the FY27 Creative Experiences grant. |
| Applied for FY27 YouthReach | Yes, you can still apply but you will only be funded by one program. If you receive the YouthReach grant, you will not receive this one. |

Experience Eligibility



Sheffield Pride Festival, Sheffield, MA

Eligible experiences must:

- Be intended for and promoted to the general public or offered to a specific community
- Be accessible to people with disabilities
- Take place between July 1, 2026, and June 30, 2027
- Take place in Massachusetts

Grant amounts

- To be apply for a **\$2,500** grant, your experience must:
 - **Incorporate** the arts, humanities, or sciences
 - AND have a minimum project budget (actual cash expenses) of at least \$2,500.
- To be apply for a **\$5,000** grant, your experience must:
 - Have the **primary purpose** of producing, presenting or facilitating an experience in the arts, humanities, or sciences.
 - AND have a minimum project budget (actual cash expenses) of at least \$5,000.

Ineligible Experiences

- Are or include activities that are 'inherently religious' such as religious worship, instruction, and/or proselytization.
- Feature a political candidate running for office.
- Discriminate on the basis of race, gender, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, disability, age, gender identity, or sexual orientation.
- Are for the express benefit of a specific person or closed private group (i.e. defined by personal relationships, employment, or residence, rather than a shared community identity).
- Solely promote sponsorship, fundraising and/or marketing efforts and/or individual sales.
- Solely aim to underwrite presenter, tabling or vendor fees for participating in an event.



Neighborhood Strings Learning First

Multiple and Overlap Applications

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Express Yourself

- One application per organization, per event, per audience
- If we get multiple or overlap applications, the application from the primary producer of the experience or the highest scoring application will be kept
- Tip: Communicate with people and organizations that you work with

Examples of Overlapping Applications

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- Organization
 - The local orchestra submits two different applications for two different performances
- Event
 - A dance company and a band both submit applications for their co-produced music festival
- Audience
 - A school and its PTO both submit applications for activities for the students



Caravan Puppets



Review Process & Funding Priorities

Review Process

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How we make funding decisions

- Geographic distribution
- Funding priorities

Funding priorities are
DIFFERENT from eligibility!



Teaching artist, Yetti Frenkel

Funding Priorities- Supporting the cultural sector

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- Experiences where the **primary purpose is creating, presenting, or providing services in the arts, humanities, or sciences.**
 - These applicants can apply for \$5000
- Experiences that **hire and compensate Massachusetts artists, humanists and/or scientists.**



Teaching artist, Eric Dauenhauer

Looking to work with an artist or org?

Check out [CreativeGround.org!](https://CreativeGround.org)

The screenshot displays the CreativeGround.org website interface. At the top, the logo features a green and white checkered pattern above the text "CREATIVEGROUND.ORG". Navigation links include "Search", "About", "Dig In | Resources", "Blog", "Log in", and a yellow "Get Listed" button. The main content area shows search results for "State: Massachusetts". A sidebar on the left contains a search bar and "Search Filters" for Institution / Business Type, Professional Discipline, Activities / Services, Special Designations, and Location. Under "Location", "State" is selected with a dropdown arrow, and "Massachusetts (12800)" is checked. The main results area shows "1-10 of 12800 results" and a grid of six profile cards. Each card includes a circular profile picture, the organization's name, its professional discipline, and a "Read more" button. The profiles shown are: Ammaya Dance & Drum (Performing Group, Dance - Ethnic, MA), Sophy Tuttle Studios (Artist / Creative (Individual), Visual/Crafts - Painting, MA), Acoustic Nomads (Performing Group, Music - Band, MA), Guy Mendilow Ensemble, Mouli Pal Indian Classical Dance, and Rita Parisi/Waterfall Productions.

Funding Priorities- Funding history

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“Alliance from a Viable Future” for [Indigenous Peoples' Day](#), Great Barrington, MA

- Applicants that have **not received funding from Mass Cultural Council in the last three fiscal years** (FY26, FY25, FY24), or that are applying to the Mass Cultural Council for the first time.
- Applicants that **have only received a total of \$5000 in the last three fiscal years** (FY26, FY25, FY24).

Funding Priorities- Access for low-income individuals and families

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- Applicants participating in the Agency's **Card to Culture program**. (Applicants may sign-up for this voluntary non-granting program in the Agency's grants management system)

OR

- Experiences that are **free to the public**.



Playful Engineers

Funding Priorities- BIPOC centered organizations or BIPOC Majority schools

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- Organization applicants that self-identify as led by and serving people of the global majority — Applicants wishing to make this **BIPOC Centered Organization** identification will need to fill out a form in the Agency's grants management system.

OR

- **School Applicants** that are recognized by Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) with a 2024-2025 DESE School ID with student populations that are **50% or more Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Color (BIPOC)** as reported by Data Source (2024-2025).

How to Register for Card to Culture and BIPOC-Centered Self-Identification

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Home



Welcome Kylie Kean

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Current Opportunities

Current Opportunities



Apply to a Local
Cultural Council



My Profile

Update your own profile and if
you've applied for grants, view
them here.



Organization Profile



Change Password

Change the password for your
user account.

Funding Priorities- Priority Communities

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- Experiences in **cities and towns that are below the state's median household income and below statewide educational attainment.** This includes but is not limited to places designated as Gateway Cities. [A full list of these under-resourced communities is available.](#)



Teaching artist, Amy Kotel

Funding Priority Overview

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1. Experiences where the **primary purpose is creating, presenting, or providing services in the arts, humanities, or sciences.**
2. Experiences that **hire Massachusetts artists, humanists and/or scientists.**
3. Applicants that have **not received funding from Mass Cultural Council in the last three fiscal years**, or that are applying to Mass Cultural Council for the first time.
4. Applicants that **have only received \$5,000 in the last three fiscal years.**
5. Applicants participating in the Agency's **Card to Culture program.** **OR** Experiences that are **free to the public.**
6. **BIPOC-Centered Organizations** (self-identified) **OR schools with 50% or more BIPOC students**
7. Experiences or schools in **priority communities and towns**



Application Process & Walkthrough

Overview of the Application Process

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- 1.) Login page (<https://massculturalcouncil.smartsimple.com/>)
- 2.) Homepage
- 3.) Eligibility Quiz
- 4.) Application Overview

Ongoing support

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- Office hours, small group meetings: [Agency Dates](#)
- Email: CreativeExperiences@mass.gov
- Phone: 617-858-2821
- Grants Management System Help Desk: Grants.Team@mass.gov
- To stay up-to-date on Mass Cultural Council's latest news and deadlines, [sign up for our newsletter](#) or visit the [Power of Culture blog](#).



Questions?

Email us!

CreativeExperiences@mass.gov

*And follow us on social media
@MassCultural*