

FY26 Cultural District Designation Application

Topics Covered in Application

- Applicant Information – Review the contact information we have on file and check the attestation boxes.
- Third Party Managing Entity (if applicable)
- Co-Applicant Invitation
- Place
 - District Map
- Partnership and Community
 - District Partnership Team
- Municipal Commitment
- District Management
 - Operational Budget
- Workplan
- Additional Materials

Supporting Documents to Gather for Application

- District Map
 - Applicants may submit a GIS map with assets, a boundary map with an accompanying asset list or spreadsheet, or a Google My Maps map with an accompanying asset list or spreadsheet.
- Partnership Agreement

- Letter of Endorsement from Chief Elected Official
- Resolution Adopted by City Council / Board of Selectmen
- Third Party Management Agreement (if applicable)
- Any additional documentation you think is relevant to determining the scope of your proposed district (optional)
- Official legal documents on zoning overlays or ordinances relevant to the cultural district (if relevant)
- Reports, feasibility studies, visioning results, and/or news articles regarding a proposed district (if relevant)

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The following is a text-based representation of the application for the FY26 Cultural District Designation program, which can be accessed through the [Grants Portal](#).

All required questions are marked with a red asterisk (*). All questions include a description of what type of response is asked for in the Grants Portal (numeric value only, text response with/without character limit, dropdown menu, etc.).

Please note that the application must be completed and submitted through the Grants Portal by the application deadline of March 31, 2028 at 11:59PM.

Applicant Information

Third Party Managing Entity

* Do you have a third party managing entity?

- Dropdown menu
 1. Yes
 2. No

The following questions only apply to organizations who select “Yes” to the previous question and have a third party managing entity.

Third-Party Managing Entity: In order to complete the application, you must invite the third party managing entity to be a “Co-applicant”.

Co-Applicant Invitation

If there is a co-applicant for this application, click on the button below to begin inviting the co-applicant.

Invitations

- **Instructions:** To invite a co-applicant, click the add button below, enter the co-applicant’s first name, last name, email address, and select the Co-Applicant role.
- To cancel an invitation, click the delete button to the right.
 - Button

Prefix	First Name	Last Name	Email	Role	Status
text response	text response	text response	text response	Co-Applicant	Draft

End of questions specific to organizations with a third party managing entity.

Place

City/Town Information

The city/town name and address in your organizational profile serve as the contact information for the city/Town that is applying for designation. You are considered the municipal contact for this application. Please be sure your individual profile information reflects that.

*** Population of City/Town**

- Text response without character limit

*** Median Household Income**

- Text response without character limit

Please describe the community context of the proposed Cultural District. Include relevant demographic, cultural, and economic information about the district area to provide a better understanding of the people, assets, needs, and opportunities within the proposed boundaries.

- You can use the Demographic data aligned as best as possible with Cultural District boundaries (e.g., the Census tract and/or zip code in which the Cultural District is located). You may want to refer to the [US Census American Community Survey](#) and consider things like: language spoken at home, median household income, share of households within income below poverty level, racial and ethnic populations, Tribal nation(s) of your community and indigenous lands, etc.
 - Text response, 1000 characters

Cultural District Information

*** Proposed Name/Title of District**

- Text response, 100 characters

*** Boundaries: Identify the general footprint of the district using street names, landmarks or other place-based identification tools.**

- Text response, 500 characters

*** Why and how were the name and boundaries decided?**

- Text response, 500 characters

*** Describe the characteristics of the district. What makes the proposed district unique?**

- Text response, 2500 characters

*** Give examples of important cultural, historical and recreational facilities or points of interest in the district.**

- Text response, 1000 characters

*** Give examples of cultural programs that have taken place in the district in the last 12 months and any significant upcoming events.**

- Text response, 2000 characters

District Map

This section helps define the proposed district in a clear, mappable way and show its boundaries and cultural assets.

Please provide a map that clearly shows the proposed district boundaries. Applicants may submit a GIS map with assets, a boundary map with an accompanying asset list or spreadsheet, or a Google My Maps map with an accompanying asset list or spreadsheet.

Cultural district assets should include:

- Cultural facilities, organizations, venues, amenities, and historic structures and recreational areas in the district.
- Creative businesses, stores, studios, and participating_entrepreneurs and artists who want to be included in the map.

Maps may also include, if applicable:

- Zoning and land use policy overlays created to support the district.

*** What type of Map are you providing?**

- Dropdown menu
 1. GIS map of boundaries and assets

2. GIS map of boundaries only
3. Google MyMaps map of boundaries only

The following questions only apply to organizations who select “GIS map of boundaries and assets” to the previous question.

*** Map URL**

- Text response, no character limit

*** Map Upload**

- File upload field
 - Maximum file size: 2 GB | Allowed file types: TXT, PDF, DOC, DOCX, XLS, XLSX, JPG, JPEG, PNG, KML, KMZ

End of questions specific to organizations who select “GIS map of boundaries and assets” to the previous question.

The following questions only apply to organizations who select “GIS map of boundaries only” or “Google MyMaps map of boundaries only” to the previous question.

*** Map Upload**

- File upload field
 - Maximum file size: 2 GB | Allowed file types: TXT, PDF, DOC, DOCX, XLS, XLSX, JPG, JPEG, PNG, KML, KMZ

*** Upload GIS Map Data Template**

- To provide the GIS map data:
 - Download the GIS Map Data Template
 - Complete the Excel template
 - Save the template
 - Upload the completed template here
- File upload field
 - Maximum file size: 2 GB | Allowed file types: XLS, XLSX

End of questions specific to organizations who select “GIS map of boundaries only” or “Google MyMaps map of boundaries only” to the previous question.

Incentives

Please identify any incentives/overlays incorporated into your cultural district and include in the map if possible: Mass Cultural Council does not expect that any city or town will have all of the tools on the list. These incentives are not a requirement for designation, however districts that incorporate incentives may be prioritized for designation.

Overlay Zoning/Special Designation

- Checklist
 1. Cultural/Arts District Overlay Zoning
 2. Existing Zoning Overlays for Artist Live-Work Space
 3. Deed Restrictions for Artist Space
 4. Business Improvement District (BID)
 5. Transformative Development Initiative District

Financial Tools

- Checklist
 1. Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
 2. Empowerment Zone
 3. Property Tax Abatement
 4. Economic Opportunity Areas

*** For the items you identified above, indicate if the incentive currently applies to, or is implemented in, the cultural district. And include the start date(s).**

- Text response, 1000 characters

If there is an incentive being utilized that is not listed, please identify it here. (Submit relevant reports as supplemental documents following the instructions found in the 'Additional Materials' portion of the application that follows.)

- Text response, 1000 characters

Partnership and Community

District Partnership

Your District Partnership should include a diverse mix of stakeholders who provide shared leadership, oversight, and coordination across sectors to guide

the district and support its long-term success and sustainability in alignment with state and local goals.

District Partnership Contacts

Complete the following for each organization involved in the management of the district.

Partnerships should demonstrate functional representation across the following sectors, which may be fulfilled by overlapping roles or existing entities. Organizations and individuals forming the partnership should include representatives of the following:

- City or town staff
- Local Cultural Council
- Cultural and/or Arts organization(s)
- At least one artist who lives and/or works in the proposed district
- For-profit creative business (i.e. gallery, dance school)
- Chamber of Commerce or Local business association/collective
- Economic/Community Development or Planning Department

A city or town may elect to include additional entities. This will be dependent upon the available assets of the cultural district, and may include representatives of the following:

- Local or regional tourism bureau
- Historic Preservation Commission
- Overlapping or aligning place-based district entity (i.e. BID, TDI District, Main Streets org., Historic District, TIF, etc.)
- Tribal government or other tribal representation
- Leisure industry, including hotels and similar businesses
- Education institutions

Organization

- Text response without character limit

Contact

- Text response without character limit

Address

- Text response without character limit

City, State, Zip

- Text response without character limit

Partner Type

- Dropdown menu
 1. City or town representative
 2. Local Cultural Council
 3. Cultural organization
 4. Artist
 5. Organization that represents artists
 6. For profit creative business
 7. Local business
 8. Chamber of Commerce
 9. Tourism representative
 10. Historic preservation
 11. Hospitality representative
 12. Educational institution
 13. Other: Please describe

Other Partner Type

- Text response without character limit

Email

- Text response without character limit

Role and qualifications

- Text response without character limit

*** At a high level, describe the District Partnership and how the district will be overseen and managed. Include who is represented in the partnership, how decisions will be made, how often the partnership will meet, and who the staff person will report to on a day-to-day basis.**

- Your Partnership Agreement will include more detail, this is meant to be an overview.
 - Text response, 1000 characters

*** Upload your Partnership Agreement**

- Please upload your signed/executed Partnership Agreement that includes agreed upon objectives and a breakdown of each representative's roles and responsibilities.
 - File upload field
 - Maximum file size: 2 GB | Allowed file types: TXT, PDF, DOC, DOCX, XLS, XLSX, JPG, JPEG, PNG

Community Engagement

*** Describe how community members, partners, and stakeholders were involved in shaping the proposed district. Then describe how the district will continue to share information, gather input, and support broad participation after designation.**

- Text response, 1000 characters

Community Meeting Date(s)

- Enter the date of the public community meeting. If you held more than one, you can enter multiple dates.
 - Text response without character limit

*** Describe the strategy that will be established to ensure that all the district's partners and stakeholders are kept up to date about opportunities and decisions.**

- Text response, 1000 characters

Inclusivity and Community

A Commitment to an accessible Cultural District for all users.

We seek continual improvement toward an inclusive sector. With the launch of a comprehensive [d/Deaf and Disability Equity Plan](#), the Mass Cultural Council is examining its internal practices and external policies and taking steps to center

institutional obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) within our programs.

Statement of Commitment

Cultural Districts are expected to improve access over time and support inclusive participation for residents and visitors with disabilities.

In addition to meeting ADA and 504 requirements, designated districts are expected to take part in ongoing learning and identify practical steps to improve accessibility across facilities, services, activities, and programming.

Because districts are a coalition of organizations and individuals, and a unified vision for access can be challenging across partners. To ensure a shared commitment, and to honor this intention, all applicants must make the following commitments:

- At least once per year, members of the District Partnership must participate in learning community and training opportunities. Mass Cultural Council regularly curates and shares opportunities each month.
- Organizational members of the District Partnership shall each complete Open Door Arts' *FREE* [Arts & Culture Accessibility Self-Assessment](#).

I agree to the Statement of Commitment

- Checkbox

Describe how the district and its partners will support accessibility and inclusion in the coming year. Include up to three actions your district will take to ensure/improve access.

- Examples include improving signage/wayfinding and clear identification of accessible assets, developing a communication strategy targeted at serving people with disabilities, creating a plan to ensure people with disabilities are part of the District Partnership and/or developing an advisory committee to help guide the district's work, etc.
- Text response, 1000 characters

Municipal Commitment

Cultural District designation is a formal municipal commitment. These materials show that the municipality recognizes the district, supports its goals, and is prepared to help sustain the work over time.

Describe the municipality's tangible commitment to the Cultural District. This may include funding, staff support, in-kind support, policy alignment, use of municipal resources, or other meaningful investments that will help sustain the district.

Municipal Commitment

*** Chief Elected Official Name**

- Text response without character limit

*** Chief Elected Official Title**

- Text response without character limit

*** Letter of Endorsement from Chief Elected Official**

- File upload field
 - Maximum file size: 2 GB | Allowed file types: TXT, PDF, DOC, DOCX, XLS, XLSX, JPG, JPEG, PNG

*** How is the municipality making a tangible investment in the cultural district: (select all that apply)**

- Checklist
 1. Funding provided to the cultural district or a district project
 2. Compensation for the district manager
 3. Significant in-kind support
 4. Or other tangible investment

The following question only applies to organizations who select “Significant in-kind support” in the previous question.

*** Describe the in-kind support the municipality offers the district.**

- Text response, 500 characters

End of questions specific to organizations who select “Significant in-kind support” in the previous question.

The following question only applies to organizations who select “Or other tangible investment” in the previous question.

*** Please describe the tangible investment in detail.**

- Text response, 500 characters

End of questions specific to organizations who select “Or other tangible investment” in the previous question.

*** Resolution Adopted by City Council / Board of Selectmen.**

- The resolution is the commitment to establish a state designated cultural district. Districts are required to use the [Template Resolution](#) as the foundation but have the option of adding to it.
 - File upload field
 - Maximum file size: 2 GB | Allowed file types: TXT, PDF, DOC, DOCX, XLS, XLSX, JPG, JPEG, PNG

Municipal Resources

Please provide the following information:

- In the 1st column, describe the current funding source or revenue.
- In the 2nd column, enter the amount that will be used in the cultural district.
- In the 3rd column, describe how the funds will be or are being used to benefit the district.
- In the 4th column, enter the status of the funding i.e. in use currently, secured, pending, planned.
- The dropdown menu in the “Status of Funds” column of the Municipal Resources table includes the following options:
 1. In use currently
 1. Secured
 2. Pending
 3. Planned
 4. In-kind
 - Button

Funding Source	Amount	Use of Funds	Status of Funds
text response	numeric value only	text response	dropdown menu

District Management

District Management

The following question only applies to organizations who select “Yes” to the question asking if they have a third party managing entity.

* 3rd Party Management Agreement

- The agreement must be signed by the appropriate municipal representative and 3rd party entity. A financial management section outlining fiscal oversight, responsibilities and reporting must be included in the document. [View a sample agreement.](#)
 - File upload field
 - Maximum file size: 2 GB

End of questions specific to organizations who have a third party managing entity.

Name of District Manager

- Up to two people may share this role. Enter both names if applicable.
 - Text response without character limit

Title of District Manager

- Up to two people may share this role. Enter both titles if applicable.
 - Text response without character limit

Please identify the funding source(s) that pay for the District Manager or other district staff person’s compensation.

- Text response, 250 characters

Operational Budget

Cultural Districts are fostered by unique partnerships among local stakeholders. These efforts must have a strong operational structure that supports consistency of administration and long-term financial and organizational sustainability. Complete the budget form showing your anticipated income and revenue for

one year of operation. Year 1 can either be your current fiscal year, or upcoming fiscal year, depending on what makes the most sense for your district.

Operating Budget

- Button

Income	Year 1	Notes
Ticket Sales	numeric value only	text response
Workshop/Classes Fees	numeric value only	text response
Merchandise Sales	numeric value only	text response
Rental Income	numeric value only	text response
Government Grants	numeric value only	text response
Private Foundation Grants	numeric value only	text response
Corporate Grants	numeric value only	text response
Individuals Donations	numeric value only	text response
Other Income	numeric value only	text response
Total Income	auto-calculation	

Expenses	Year 1	Notes
Ticket Sales	numeric value only	text response
Administrative Staff	numeric value only	text response
Contractors	numeric value only	text response
Artist Fees	numeric value only	text response
Professional Fees	numeric value only	text response
Access costs (ASL, Captioning, etc.)	numeric value only	text response
Materials / Supplies	numeric value only	text response
Rent (Facilities)	numeric value only	text response
Rent (Equipment)	numeric value only	text response
Publicity / Marketing / Printing	numeric value only	text response
Insurance and License Fees	numeric value only	text response
Other Expenses	numeric value only	text response
Total Expenses	Auto-calculation	

*** District Sustainability**

- Please describe your plans to ensure your district's financial sustainability over the next three years.
 - Text response, 1000 characters

Workplan

This Work Plan is a road map for your work in supporting and growing your Cultural District and in meeting the [State-mandated goals](#) of the Mass Cultural Council's Cultural Districts Initiative. All of your District's work should be guided by the Work Plan you outline below. The Mass Cultural Council expects that you will craft this Work Plan through a collaborative process involving every member of your partnership body as well as others as applicable. The process of creating this Work Plan should include:

- Identifying existing initiatives that support the Cultural District Initiative (CDI) Goals
- Highlighting areas of collaboration among your local partners
- Identifying new strategies to move forward

Please show consideration of/input from the following local and municipal entities in the implementation of the Cultural District Work Plan, where applicable:

- Arts and Cultural Department/Staff
- Planning/Community Development Department/Staff (if applicable)
- Public Works/Infrastructure and Facilities
- Economic Development Department/Staff (if applicable)
- Parks and Recreation
- Transportation
- Housing (i.e. Local Housing Authority, Housing Advocacy Agency, CDC) (if applicable)

Goal 1

Select Goal 1

- Dropdown menu
 1. Attracting artists and cultural enterprises to the community
 2. Encouraging businesses and job development
 3. Establishing the district as a tourist destination
 4. Preserving and reusing historic buildings
 5. Enhancing property values
 6. Fostering and preserving local cultural development

Goal 1 Strategies

- Your Proposed Strategies to Achieve Goal/Action Items. Please include a minimum of 1-2 strategies.
 - Text response without character limit

Goal 1 Alignment

- Identify corresponding existing Municipal goals/strategies that support this CDI Goal and your proposed strategies (reference specific comprehensive and municipal plans, investments, and policies).
 - Text response without character limit

Goal 1 Activities

- Your Proposed Projects/Activities/Action Items to Achieve Goals
 - Text response without character limit

Goal 1 Roles

- Who will lead? Who will support (indicate if the municipality will lead, the CDI governing body/staff, or others).
 - Text response without character limit

Goal 1 Timeline

- Proposed Timeline – what progress do you hope to make in the next year?
 - Text response without character limit

Goal 1 Challenges

- Anticipated challenges, issues, or resources needed (and how you will meet these needs)
 - Text response without character limit

Goal 2**Select Goal 2**

- Dropdown menu
 1. Attracting artists and cultural enterprises to the community
 2. Encouraging businesses and job development
 3. Establishing the district as a tourist destination
 4. Preserving and reusing historic buildings
 5. Enhancing property values
 6. Fostering and preserving local cultural development

Goal 2 Strategies

- Your Proposed Strategies to Achieve Goal/Action Items. Please include a minimum of 1-2 strategies.
 - Text response without character limit

Goal 2 Alignment

- Identify corresponding existing Municipal goals/strategies that support this CDI Goal and your proposed strategies (reference specific comprehensive and municipal plans, investments, and policies).
 - Text response without character limit

Goal 2 Activities

- Your Proposed Projects/Activities/Action Items to Achieve Goals
 - Text response without character limit

Goal 2 Roles

- Who will lead? Who will support (indicate if the municipality will lead, the CDI governing body/staff, or others).
 - Text response without character limit

Goal 2 Timeline

- Proposed Timeline – what progress do you hope to make in the next year?
 - Text response without character limit

Goal 2 Challenges

- Anticipated challenges, issues, or resources needed (and how you will meet these needs)
 - Text response without character limit

Goal 3**Select Goal 3**

- Dropdown menu
 1. Attracting artists and cultural enterprises to the community
 2. Encouraging businesses and job development
 3. Establishing the district as a tourist destination
 4. Preserving and reusing historic buildings
 5. Enhancing property values
 6. Fostering and preserving local cultural development

Goal 3 Strategies

- Your Proposed Strategies to Achieve Goal/Action Items. Please include a minimum of 1-2 strategies.
 - Text response without character limit

Goal 3 Alignment

- Identify corresponding existing Municipal goals/strategies that support this CDI Goal and your proposed strategies (reference specific comprehensive and municipal plans, investments, and policies).
 - Text response without character limit

Goal 3 Activities

- Your Proposed Projects/Activities/Action Items to Achieve Goals
 - Text response without character limit

Goal 3 Roles

- Who will lead? Who will support (indicate if the municipality will lead, the CDI governing body/staff, or others).
 - Text response without character limit

Goal 3 Timeline

- Proposed Timeline – what progress do you hope to make in the next year?
 - Text response without character limit

Goal 3 Challenges

- Anticipated challenges, issues, or resources needed (and how you will meet these needs)
 - Text response without character limit

District Metrics

All Districts are required to collect the following 2 specific data points:

1. Visitation rates to the Cultural District
2. Business openings/closings in the Cultural District

Additionally, districts must identify at least one additional data point they will collect to track progress toward the district's goals.

*** Visitation Rates**

- Please describe how your district plans to collect and track visitation rates.
 - Text response without character limit

*** Business Openings/Closings**

- Please describe how your district plans to collect and track business openings and closings.
 - Text response without character limit

*** District Specific Metric**

- What is your district specific metric? How does your district plan to collect and track the data? What district goal does it support?
 - Text response without character limit

Optional District Specific Metric

- This is not required but if your district has another meaningful metric it plans to track, please share here. What is your optional metric? How does your district plan to collect and track the data? What district goal does it support?
 - Text response without character limit

Municipal and Regional Planning and Alignment

The following questions should incorporate and refer to all three of your district's goals.

*** Master/Comprehensive Plan**

- Please tell us the date of your Municipality's most recent Comprehensive/Master Plan and when a new or amended plan is anticipated:
 - Text response, 500 characters

*** Planning Process**

- Does your Municipality incorporate or intend to incorporate Cultural District goals into efforts to update or create a new comprehensive plan or other pending plans (economic development, transportation, open space, etc.)? Indicate which plans are in progress or planned for the near future.
 - Text response, 1000 characters

* Regional collaboration

- Please describe how proposed Cultural District and Municipal goals and strategies align generally with those of your Regional Planning Agency, and if/where there are specific plans, investments, policies to support that alignment.
 - Text response, 1000 characters

Additional Materials

Please upload electronic or scanned copies of all documents. If you cannot for accessibility reasons, please contact program staff.

Upload

Optional: Please include any additional documentation you think is relevant to determining the scope of your proposed district.

- File upload field
 - Maximum file size: 2 GB | Allowed file types: TXT, PDF, DOC, DOCX, XLS, XLSX, JPG, JPEG, PNG

Official legal documents on zoning overlays or ordinances relevant to the cultural district (if relevant)

- File upload field
 - Maximum file size: 2 GB | Allowed file types: TXT, PDF, DOC, DOCX, XLS, XLSX, JPG, JPEG, PNG

Reports, feasibility studies, visioning results, and/or news articles regarding a proposed district (if relevant).

- File upload field
 - Maximum file size: 2 GB | Allowed file types: TXT, PDF, DOC, DOCX, XLS, XLSX, JPG, JPEG, PNG

If you prefer to provide access links to these resources, rather than to upload them as files, please provide those links here:

- Text response without character limit

Acknowledgement

Ready to Submit?

Once you click "Submit" below, you will no longer have access to make changes to your application. If your application is large, you will receive an email confirmation after you submit that includes a copy of your application without any uploaded files.

Please note: You have not successfully submitted your application until you see the following message: "Congratulations – You have successfully submitted your application."

Authorized Signature: I certify that all the information contained in this application, including all supporting documents and materials, is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I hereby release Mass Cultural Council, its members, and employees, from any liability and/or responsibility concerning the submission of materials to this program. In addition, I agree that the required public acknowledgment will be given to Mass Cultural Council if this application is approved. I understand that failure to respond to any of the items requested in this application may seriously hinder its consideration. I certify that we are committed to the completion of the proposed activities in compliance with legal requirements and granting procedures and will file the report required by the Mass Cultural Council.

Clicking "submit" below serves as an authorizing electronic signature.

*** Attestation:**

- Checkbox
- 1. I agree