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Mass Cultural Council Advancement Committee

Friday, August 21, 2026

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Posted on 08/12/2026



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Agenda
Mass Cultural Council
Advancement Committee Meeting
Friday, August 21, 2026

10:00 – 11:30 AM

Broadcast Meeting

The meeting will be livestreamed on
[Mass Cultural Council's YouTube channel](#)

Meeting materials will be posted online under
[Governing Council Meeting Schedule](#)
"August 21, 2026, Advancement Committee Meeting"
on Mass Cultural Council's website.
<https://massculturalcouncil.org/about/board/>

Agenda Items

- | | | | |
|-----------|---|--|-------------|
| 1. | Call to Order – Open Meeting Law Notice | | |
| 2. | Minutes | | Vote |
| | 2a. Minutes of the Advancement Committee Meeting – June 4, 2026 | | |
| 3. | Chair's Report | | |
| 4. | Acting Executive Director's Report | | |
| | 4a. Advancement Report | | |
| 5. | Proposed FY27 Advancement Spending | | Vote |
| 6. | Adjourn | | |



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Open Meeting Law Statement

(Virtual)

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 the Mass Cultural Council's website 48 hours or more ago (excluding weekends and holidays).

This meeting shall be open and accessible to all members of the public except at such times when this body has voted to go into closed executive session under the Open Meeting Law.

This meeting is a virtual meeting held under the Open Meeting Law as modified under current law to permit online meetings. This meeting is being broadcast to the public on a publicly available YouTube channel as described in the posted meeting notice. Instructions on how to contact the Council with questions or problems accessing the broadcast are also included in such notice. Only Council members, staff, and invited guests will be provided access to the Zoom platform hosting the meeting.

As a safety measure, in order to prevent disruption of the meeting or non-public communications among the participants, the Chair, Vice Chair, and Executive Committee of Mass Cultural Council have asked staff to implement the following protocols for participants in online 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 on the Zoom platform may be required to enter a waiting room and digitally sign in before being admitted.
- Any attendee on 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; public testimony will not be taken. Individuals may not address the meeting without the permission of the Chair.

Any member of the public may record this meeting, provided that they do not interfere with the meeting.

Draft minutes of the open session of this meeting shall be kept and shall be posted on Mass Cultural Council's website no later than 30 days after the meeting, provided that such minutes shall not be considered official until they have been approved by this body in open session. Individuals asserting a violation of the Open Meeting Law may file a complaint with this body within 30 days or with the Attorney General's office thereafter.



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Mass Cultural Council **Resolutions** Friday, August 21, 2026

Section 2 – Minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the Minutes of the Mass Cultural Council Advancement Committee Meeting dated June 4, 2026, in the form presented.

Section 5 – Proposed FY27 Advancement Spending

RESOLVED: To recommend the proposed Advancement spending for FY27 to the full Council.



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Unofficial Draft Subject to Approval by the Council at its next meeting

**Minutes
Mass Cultural Council
Advancement Committee
Thursday, June 4, 2026**

Online Meeting

Committee Members Present:

- Ché Anderson, Co-Chair
- Rhonda Anderson
- Diane Asadorian Masters
- Tom Bernard
- Joyce Linehan
- Allyce Najimy

Mass Cultural Council Staff Members Present:

- David Slatery, Acting Executive Director
- Jen Lawless, Senior Director of Program Operations
- Bethann Steiner, Senior Director of Public Affairs
- Erik Holmgren, Manager of Strategic Partnerships & Advancement
- Ann Petruccelli Moon, Acting Chief of Staff
- Carolyn Cole, Special Projects Manager for Advancement
- Carmen Plazas, Communications & Community Engagement Manager

Co-Chair Ché Anderson called the meeting to order at 10:06am. He asked if members had reviewed the minutes of their October meeting, and if they had, he would entertain a motion and a second to approve them. Diane Asadorian Masters moved to approve the minutes; Joyce Linehan seconded the motion. By roll call vote and noting that Co-Chair Iván Espinoza-Madrigal, Jo-Ann Davis, David Kong, Anika Lopes, Petrina Martin, and Vinny deMacedo were absent, it was unanimously

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the October 9, 2025
Advancement Committee Meeting in the form presented.

Ché welcomed Committee Members and staff to the meeting. He then shared that since he had been appointed Council Chair, he does not plan to continue as co-chair of the Advancement Committee. He is currently in conversation with Iván Espinoza-Madrigal about who will be appointed in his place. Ché then took a moment to welcome Joyce Linehan, who had recently been appointed to the Committee. He then remarked that it has been amazing recently to step into so many spaces and hear, "I just saw Dave the other day," or "I saw Erik recently." Between them and Bethann being everywhere on the public-facing side, Mass Cultural Council is out there. He expressed his gratitude to the team for everything they are doing on the Advancement front. There were no questions for Ché, and so he asked Dave for his Acting Executive Director's report.

Dave thanked Ché, the Committee Members, and all individuals watching the livestream on YouTube. A full Advancement report is included in the meeting materials, and the team will walk Committee Members through it in more detail. Before they do, though, Dave emphasized just how far the work has come.

It's been about three years since the Agency adopted its strategic plan and made strategic partnerships and advancement a key pillar of its work. Since then, we've really taken off. We're doing programs at a nationally recognized level, and we're in rooms where the arts simply weren't represented before.

A lot of people deserve credit for that. Former Executive Director Michael Bobbitt helped lay the foundation; Ché and several Committee Members have built relationships, and with Erik Holmgren and Carolyn Cole stepping into full-time advancement roles, the team has been able to intentionally channel and focus their efforts.

As Committee Members look through the report, they'll see the breadth of the work. The team is engaged in workforce development, education, healthcare, climate, housing, and community development—areas where, just a few years ago, we didn't have a significant presence. Today, Dave and the team are helping those sectors see the value of the arts, and in turn, those partnerships are creating real benefits for the entire cultural sector.

Dave also highlighted a couple of blog posts that were published this spring, thanking Bethann Steiner and Dawn Heinen for their work on them. One post focuses on creative entrepreneurship—something artists have always done and understood—but through the Agency's partnerships with the Massachusetts Restaurant Association and Massachusetts Lodging Association, we've developed tools to better support and strengthen that work. It's exciting to see how much momentum is being built and how visible the arts have become. Before turning things over to Erik and Carolyn, Dave asked Bethann to give a summary of upcoming events. Bethann shared that there would be grant celebrations on Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard on June 15 and a virtual grant celebration on June 25. Committee Members were encouraged to register for the virtual celebration, and the link to do so was shared in the chat.

Erik and Carolyn were then invited to share their update on the Agency's Advancement work.

Erik thanked Ché and the Committee Members for the opportunity to provide an update on the work. The written materials the Committee received cover the last quarter of work, but they also represent an important milestone. The team has now completed its first full fiscal year with Advancement formalized as a cross-agency function. This has been a staff-wide effort. Advancement isn't the work of one team—it's work that touches every part of the Agency.

It's also different work. This is long-term work. It's systems-change work. It's adaptive work. It's different from grantmaking, and our staff has consistently stepped up and shown an incredible ability to build new relationships, think differently, and seize opportunities.

Before he got into the specifics, Erik took a step back and talked about what the team means when we talk about Advancement. Traditionally, the cultural sector has been viewed primarily as a recipient of grants and philanthropy. What Mass Cultural Council is saying is that the cultural sector in Massachusetts has only scratched the surface of the value it can bring to other sectors. Our goal has been to formalize that work and expand the narrative around what arts and culture contribute.

That work has two primary goals. First, to position the arts and cultural sector as a partner in solving some of the Commonwealth's biggest challenges. Second, to leverage resources from other sectors for the benefit of our own.

For a long time, the arts have relied heavily on philanthropy as their primary source of support. Philanthropy will always be important, but it can't be the only pillar of sustainability. We must diversify the sector's portfolio.

Over the past year, the team has helped leverage millions of dollars into the cultural sector through partnerships in housing, creative placemaking, workforce development, and healthcare. Massachusetts is the only state in the country where two major health insurance companies are investing directly in arts organizations. We have five clinics at Mass General Brigham integrating arts programming. Through the Department of Public Health, Massachusetts is also the only place in the country using arts prescriptions supported through opioid settlement funding.

Those dollars are flowing into the sector because partners increasingly see arts and culture as helping them achieve their own goals.

The Agency is also influencing policy and changing conversations. Whether it's participating in the STEM Advisory Council or contributing research that demonstrates improvements in mental health, we're helping shift the understanding of what the arts do.

For years, we emphasized the creative economy, and that was important. But sometimes the conversation became too narrow. As former Executive Director Anita Walker often reminds us, we are not an economic development agency. Yet when we do our work well, economic development is an outcome. Improved public health is an outcome. Stronger communities are an outcome.

The narrative is expanding.

We've found that this work grows in several stages. It starts with individual relationships, because people create change. Those relationships become partnerships. Partnerships become systems. And over time, those systems begin to reshape policy and practice.

One lesson we've learned is that we often spend too much time answering the wrong question. The question isn't, "Why the arts?" The question is, "How?"

How do we integrate arts and culture into housing? Into healthcare? Into workforce development? Into climate resilience? Once people understand the value, the conversation becomes practical. It's about implementation.

We've also learned that government silos are real—and they're thick. Arts and culture have a unique ability to cut across those silos and connect people who otherwise wouldn't be working together.

With that, Erik turned the floor over to Carolyn, who has been leading the work at the community level and can speak to where we've been and where we're headed.

Carolyn shared that it is a privilege to be doing this work. She is incredibly proud of our staff. Every new partnership creates ten more opportunities, and that's a great problem to have. Thank you all for your continued support.

Dave added that Carolyn's efforts have been central to our work with the Executive Office of Economic Development and with MassDevelopment. She started by building on the ideas that came out of the Cultural Districts Initiative, but she's taken those ideas much further—developing partnerships across state government and helping agencies see arts and culture as part of their work.

Erik noted that there are several players in the municipal and community development space, and Carolyn has done an outstanding job of mapping that landscape, building relationships, and opening doors. Because of that work, the Council is now having conversations it simply wasn't having before and making sure arts and culture are part of discussions about business development, community investment, and local growth.

Dave concluded by saying there is much more the Committee could discuss, but the purpose of the meeting is really to have a conversation. The team is eager to answer questions, hear ideas, and learn from the Committee. As members of the Advancement Committee, each person around the table has

a role to play in moving this work forward, and the staff deeply appreciates the committee's continued support and partnership. Ché then opened the meeting for questions from the Committee.

Diane Asadorian Masters asked Erik to share the peer-reviewed data on arts prescriptions; Erik confirmed that he would send the data from *Frontiers in Public Health*.

Tom Bernard has a colleague interested in learning more about opioid relief funds as they pertain to arts prescriptions; Erik will connect Tom with his contact in Franklin, MA who can share information about various models.

Ché asked whether there were innovations in community development that stood out to the team.

Carolyn shared that she's seeing pieces of innovative work emerging, but the dots haven't all been connected yet. Much of that has come through the Council's partnership with the Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations (MACDC), which represents 68 member CDCs across the state. Those organizations receive approximately \$15 million annually and are required to work with community partners. Increasingly, many of them have begun collecting data in their annual reports about creative activations and partnerships with the arts, creating an important foundation for understanding how they are already engaging with the creative sector.

That work has snowballed into new educational opportunities. Cultural Districts have begun partnering with local CDCs, while CDC members are learning more about how arts and culture can strengthen their work. In some communities, successful partnerships have even led to the creation of independent 501(c)(3) arts organizations affiliated with CDCs because community leaders recognize the value and impact of the arts.

Carolyn said she sees tremendous potential in bringing these efforts together. Her goal is to develop a working group that can connect these emerging initiatives, identify common themes, and ultimately expand them into broader policy conversations.

Ché noted that the Committee has discussed several innovative models from outside Massachusetts and emphasized the importance of continuing to look both inward and outward for ideas that could benefit the Commonwealth.

Erik agreed, adding that precedent matters when building relationships with new partners. He pointed to Canada, where arts integration is more advanced in several policy areas, and to the United Kingdom's leadership in social prescribing, as examples the Council continues to watch closely. At the same time, he emphasized that Massachusetts has its own unique strengths. While the arts sector is naturally imaginative, imagination also brings responsibility. The challenge is translating local successes into broader systems change. Rather than reinventing models developed elsewhere, the Council's role is to adapt

proven ideas, so they work within Massachusetts' unique context. Looking ahead, he said, the Agency will continue learning from innovations elsewhere while recognizing that its capacity will always be smaller than its imagination.

Ché asked whether there were any additional questions from Committee Members. Hearing none, he thanked Erik and Carolyn for their presentation and asked if there were any final thoughts or other business. With no further discussion, he thanked everyone for their participation, noted that he looked forward to seeing everyone again soon, and proclaimed "Knicks in Four" as he adjourned the meeting at 10:45am.



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Advancement Report

August 2026

FY26 Advancement and Strategic Partnerships

FY26 was the first full fiscal year of advancement and strategic partnerships work and was defined by a broad approach to building the brand of the Mass Cultural Council as a partner in solving some of the most pressing challenges across the commonwealth, including healthcare, community development and housing, and workforce and economic development. This work was done in partnership with both public and private agencies and, while broad, maintained a focus on supporting individual artists and cultural organizations.

The structure of this work involved engaging with existing program teams to craft specific, measurable goals for the year and work with each team monthly to work toward those goals. In addition, we convened the full program team to share progress across the agency and share information, relationships, and ideas across areas of work and across program teams.

Below is a high-level overview of some of the achievements of the staff of the Mass Cultural Council during FY26.

Arts, Health, and Opioid Relief Funding

The Communities team contacted every municipality that received more than \$75,000 in Opioid Relief Funding to encourage arts-based use of those funds.

- As a result, more than 20 communities are now actively using or are in conversation to utilize the more than \$90 million of funding being allocated to municipalities between now and 2038.
- We also continued to support SocialRx in expanding their work across Massachusetts, including utilizing additional NEA funding to support three

Federally Qualified Health Centers in implementing arts prescriptions. Final reports from those grants indicate significant patient outcomes and anecdotal accounts of the work from both the provider and patient side.

- Our staff joined the [Mental Health Equity Boston Collaborative](#)
- Our staff joined the [National Neuroarts Blueprint Coalition](#), in partnership with the [Berklee College of Music, Music and Health Institute](#)

Individual Artists

- MITx launched with more than 1,430 students in the first year, primarily from New England, but also including participants from 81 other countries.
- The Artist team published 39 [ArtSake](#) posts highlighting cross-sector resources, building a public library of examples connecting the arts to health, housing, and community development.
- Staff worked with EEA to support an artist exhibition and auction at the New England Aquarium.
- Public Affairs and the Artist team collaborated on establishing a partnership with the Mass Lodging Association and Mass Restaurant Association to make connections between local businesses and local artists, facilitated through a new tool created by Public Affairs.

Housing & Community Development Partnerships

- For FY27, we are proposing an investment of \$25,000 to explore the feasibility and growth potential of a Creative Wealth fund in Massachusetts. A creative wealth fund is built on three primary ideas:
- A cross-team group of staff partnered with MassHousing on a statewide convening, hosted by MassHousing, called "Building Community Through Arts & Culture." The conference strengthened ties between the arts and affordable housing sectors across the Commonwealth and included local cultural Councils and vendors.
- Both MassHousing and the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities made Creative Placemaking grants for their financed and operated facilities. MassHousing granted \$150,000, and we are awaiting a final number for EOHLC.
- Staff partnered with MassGIS and MAP to train communities on developing cultural maps to be included in the Commonwealth's GIS data library.
- Staff worked with the [Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations](#) (MACDC) to educate their membership on

how to include arts and cultural districts and organizations in community development projects and programs. We were also invited into their Community Business Network, connected to the State's CDFI Coalition, and partnered on trainings through the Mel King Institute.

- We continued our work with the Downtown Interagency Initiative Partnership, moving forward with support from Undersecretary Patrick Field. The next phase will inform a flagship downtown support program for the state with a coalition of state agencies.

Creative Youth Development

- The Mass Cultural Council continued to contribute to the 3C Data Alliance, a global platform advancing data equity and access in creative youth development. This national initiative has pilot sites in Massachusetts and is supported by the Wallace Foundation and Bloomberg Philanthropies.
- Staff connected with the Global Extended Learning and Youth Development Association, contributing to a creative youth development-themed double issue of Extension magazine.

Workforce Development

- The agency hosted two convenings of the leadership of higher education institutions and programs in the arts focused on curriculum change within institutions and structural change in the sector with the goal of connecting employers to these institutions. In the second convening, we were joined by representatives from the Executive Office of Labor and the Executive Office of Education
- The agency, in partnership with the Executive Office of Education, launched the STEAM Subcommittee of the STEM Advisory Council. The goal of the committee is to explore ways to integrate the arts and creativity into the robust and well-funded STEM ecosystem in the Commonwealth.
- The agency developed a partnership with the Commonwealth Corporation, a quasi-public agency that executes the priorities of the Executive Office of Labor, to present two webinars focused on their available grant funding, which exceeds \$100 million.
- Staff worked with the Tufts Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning program on a spring field project to make a case for, and design, a creative workforce pipeline for the Commonwealth.

Climate & Energy

- The agency partnered with the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs on a webinar focused on engaging the cultural sector in brainstorming and envisioning a climate-resilient Massachusetts in 2050.
- Staff built relationships and contacts amongst public and private sector climate and green energy partners, gathering resources for a future web toolkit.

Pivoting to a Strategic Focus in FY27

The FY27 advancement plan leverages the work that has been done over the last year by program staff, the Advancement Team, Public Affairs and the Executive team to build the infrastructure, partnerships, and systems necessary to dramatically expand the impact of the cultural sector across key areas of the Commonwealth. FY27 represents a year we take what we have built and go on offense to engage a broad group of stakeholders toward strategic change.

Through our advancement efforts, our goals are to:

- 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.

The plan for FY27 spans across the entire agency and includes an internal focus on collaboration among Public Affairs, Program Staff, and Senior Leadership. At the center of this plan are two core values:

- **Leveraging Resources:** The agency will continue to work with partners in the public and private sector to expand investment in our field and in our Advancement strategy. This may include the generation of new revenue sources for our field and the potential of leveraging private philanthropic dollars through the agency to support existing programming and strategies.
- **Equity as Strategy:** Equity and inclusion are key values in the mission and vision of the Mass Cultural Council. This plan ensures that the benefits of Advancement and Strategic Partnerships reach all people and communities of the Commonwealth.

FY27 Advancement Plan

The FY27 Advancement plan is organized around three primary areas of work:

- **Narrative Change:** Reframe arts and innovation infrastructure in public discourse, policy, and decision-making.
- **Cross Sector Alignment and Systems Thinking:** Rather than working in individual program teams, which were constructed to run program-specific work, we will be restructuring the way we work with program teams to support staff in thinking across the entire agency and, through this work, across sectors. Building on the relationships and primary areas of investment in the Commonwealth, we will focus our work on three cross-team working groups: Workforce Competitiveness, Health, Community Development and Housing.
- **Creative Wealth Fund:** Our field is undercapitalized to meet its full potential. We are recommending an investment (described elsewhere in this memo) in the feasibility of the creative of a Creative Wealth Fund that compounds and leverages the long-term value of creative infrastructure into a pool of funds that can be utilized to invest in future projects and can allocate a percentage toward the priorities of the Mass Cultural Council.

Narrative Change

In work with the STEAM Subcommittee, MassChallenge, and Industry partners, a common theme has emerged: the narrative of the impact of the arts is not broad enough for our partners across sectors to engage and invest to their full potential. There is an inherent understanding, for example, that the arts are good for your health. The full extent of the clinical impact of the arts on certain conditions like social isolation and loneliness is not understood. Based on peer-reviewed publications utilizing Massachusetts clients, the impact of arts prescriptions is not only effective but cost-effective as compared to medicalized pharmacological treatments.

The same is true in working with the business community. The World Economic Forum identified Creativity as the #1 skill in demand across industries in their 2023 Future of Jobs Report. Yet few employers have built partnerships with higher education and non-college pathways to engage with creatives throughout the commonwealth.

Narrative change is not easy, but **our objective in our narrative change work is to move the Arts and Culture sector from being a recipient of philanthropy to being a partner in solving the challenges facing the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.**

We will work to achieve this through four levels of engagement:

- **Individual Relationships:** At an Executive level, we will be working to normalize communication with the leadership of several agencies. We will also continue to build relationships and cultivate champions in other public and private spaces so that our voice will be in spaces we are not.
- **Committees and Convenings:** In addition to the STEAM subcommittee will be exploring the feasibility of an Executive Order for an Interagency Task Force focused on exploring the integration of the arts across the public sector for FY28. This will be based on an existing Executive Order focused on Early Childhood Education and Care.
- **External Communication:** Working closely with public affairs, we will focus on messaging our impacts, in language that resonates with specific sectors, which may include the Boston Business Journal, Commonwealth Magazine, WBUR, WGBH, The Boston Globe, and other non-arts outlets.
- **Policy:** In addition to policy relevant to our field, we will continue to explore ways of ensuring that the arts are included in economic competitiveness, housing, health, education, and other priority areas.

Cross Sector Alignment and Systems Thinking

We will continue our work with the program team but restructure it to help develop agency and field-wide thinking, in addition to cross-sector thinking, that will help place our work in a broader context of resources. This will include the creation of three working groups, as described above. These groups will be tasked with identifying approximately three concrete objectives for the year, while the Advancement and Executive Team will continue to explore new opportunities across the dynamic landscape of the Commonwealth.

The benefits of working in this way include:

- Flexibility of staffing in each group based on grantmaking workloads
- The development of expertise and sector-wide thinking in specific Strategic Partnership areas
- The sharing of expertise, relationships, and partnerships across agency teams
- The reduction of the current 5 working groups (existing program teams) to three working groups with a more specific focus
- More focus for program staff on specific, concrete areas of work

Creative Wealth Fund

As described in our spending proposal, we will also be exploring the feasibility of creating a Massachusetts Creative Wealth Fund.

What the Fund does for the Commonwealth

The Massachusetts Creative Wealth Fund is a proposed public-private investment vehicle designed to strengthen the Commonwealth's creative economy by capturing and reinvesting a share of the long-term value that Massachusetts' cultural sector creates. Today, the Commonwealth supports culture through grants and public investment, but there is no mechanism to recycle and expand the economic growth those creative works generate. The Fund is designed to complement and maximize the existing grant program, never to replace it, creating a permanent source of capital that attracts private investment and supports Massachusetts' home-grown creators and their enterprises.

What the feasibility year involves

FY27 is a feasibility and design year that will determine how the Fund can be responsibly established within the Commonwealth. Working together, the Mass Cultural Council, our fund infrastructure partner [PNAQL](#), legal counsel, academic partners, and industry experts will settle the Fund's governance, legal structure, investment framework, policy recommendations, and initial investment pipeline. The objective is to produce a fully designed and legally validated model, supported by independent research and market engagement, to launch an initial fund for deployment in FY28 and enable deeper investment in Massachusetts' creative economy.



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FY27 Advancement Spending

August 2026

To: Mass Cultural Council
 From: David Slatery, Erik Holmgren, Carolyn Cole
 Date: August 21, 2026
 Re: **Proposed FY27 Advancement Spending**

Advancing the Cultural Sector in Massachusetts

Advancement work is focused on building a statewide ecosystem of partners in the public and private sector that work hand in hand with Mass Cultural Council grants to maximize the resources and visibility of the Commonwealth's internationally recognized Cultural Sector. Complementing our advocacy work, the Advancement and Strategic Partnerships team works across the rest of the agency to leverage our expertise, relationships, and connections to expand the narrative and impact of our work. The Cultural Sector is an economic force and is also part of the solution to spiraling health care costs and the behavioral health workforce. It is an economic force and creates community, which aids in addressing social isolation, housing stability, and climate resiliency. It is an economic force and is focused on developing the #1 skill in demand by employers across industries: creativity. The Advancement and Strategic Partnerships team is about leveraging that work to tap into the existing resources in other economic sectors and elevating our sector and the Commonwealth.

While the Advancement and Strategic Partnerships team endeavors to be a net revenue generator for the agency, we are recommending

three investments to support the growth of our work across Massachusetts, elevating our sector and the Commonwealth together.

Measuring the Creativity Economy

\$10,000 to define, measure, and integrate the creative economy into the existing decision-making data sets across sectors.

- In 2025, the Cultural Policy Development Advisory Council released a set of recommendations to grow the Creative Economy. The top recommendation was to measure and define the Creative Economy (or the “Cultural Sector” or “Creative Sector”- we have used the terms interchangeably throughout this memo). Since that time, no direct action on this recommendation or the other recommendations in the report has been taken outside our agency, but we have and will continue to drive these recommendations forward.
- “Measuring the Creative Economy” is more than a question of creating a definition and survey. This effort would be different than our Cultural Asset Inventory, which gave us a sense of the size and scope of the organizations and the workforce. Instead, it is specifically designed to help develop partnerships within state government, primarily with the economic development agencies and the Department of Economic Research particularly to measure the Creative Economy in a way that is consistent with the methods used to measure and define other economic sectors and put the cultural sector on an equivalent footing in terms of research and identity. The outcome of this investment is that the size, scope, and impact of our sector would be defined and utilized by the Mass Cultural Council and other decision-making entities across state government when developing policy.

Cross Sector Statewide Convening

\$10,000 to support a convening of cross sector partners celebrating the contributions our sector makes to a stronger Commonwealth.

- The purpose of this funding is to bring together the partners, collaborators and champions we have developed across the public and private sector into one space to celebrate and deepen the groundbreaking impacts that the arts and culture sector are having in other areas such as healthcare, community development and housing, and economic competitiveness.

- Rather than being an insular solely arts-focused convening where people within the cultural sector present to each other about challenges, this convening is intended to be a solutions-oriented event led by public and private leaders in many different sectors.
- The convening will act as a bridge and catalyst between sectors and will work to expand our impact. We are tentatively planning this convening for Advocacy Week in March, which will also give our new Executive Director the opportunity to deepen connections with colleagues in the public and private sectors.

The Massachusetts Creative Wealth Fund

\$25,000 to explore the feasibility of a Massachusetts Creative Wealth Fund

- For FY27, we are proposing an investment of \$25,000 to explore the feasibility and growth potential of a Creative Wealth Fund in Massachusetts. A creative wealth fund is built on three primary ideas:
 - The value of the Creative Sector builds over time, and we have an opportunity to capture that long-term value, let it compound, and create more resources for our field in ways that other industries already do.
 - There are more investors in the world than philanthropists, and the Creative Economy is an unrealized investment opportunity for those who choose to participate.
 - It is unlikely that this fund would be operated long-term by the Mass Cultural Council. Rather, we would act as a catalyst for its development and potentially have a role in governance over the long term to ensure that the deployment of any of the value created is in line with our funding priorities.
- The Massachusetts Creative Wealth Fund is a proposed public-private investment vehicle designed to strengthen the Commonwealth's Creative Economy by capturing and reinvesting a share of the long-term value that the Massachusetts Cultural Sector creates. Today, the Commonwealth supports culture through grants and public investment, but there is no mechanism to reinvest and expand the economic growth that creative work generates. The Fund would be designed to complement and maximize the existing grant programs, and create a growing, permanent source of capital

to attract private investment and support Massachusetts' creators and their enterprises.

- FY27 is a feasibility and design year that will determine how the Fund can be responsibly established within the Commonwealth. Working together, the Mass Cultural Council, our fund infrastructure partner [PNAQL](#), legal counsel, academic players, and industry experts will design the Fund's governance, legal structure, investment framework, and policy recommendations while also exploring initial investment pipelines. The objective is to produce a fully designed model that supports launching an initial fund for deployment in FY28, enabling deeper investment into the Massachusetts Economy.
- If feasibility is determined and the fund is deployed, it would be a vehicle to fund new artistic and cultural ventures, provide seed funding for new projects, and potentially play several other roles in bolstering the work and lives of individual artists and organizations across the Commonwealth.