

Culture connects



Power of culture

[Aquinnah Cultural Center,
Aquinnah Circle Cultural &
Historic District]

Mass Cultural Council

Mass Cultural Council works to elevate our rich cultural life in Massachusetts. We serve 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.

2



[Cummington, Vineyard Haven Harbor, and Great Barrington Cultural Districts]



CULTURE: Spurs Economic Development, Enhances Tourism, and Creates Jobs

Arts and culture are essential for economic prosperity, innovation, creativity, and good health. The sector is key to a strong state economy.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, in 2022 arts and culture in Massachusetts:

- Generated **\$28.6 billion** in spending and economic activity
- Accounted for **4.1%** of the state's gross domestic product (GDP)
- Supported **133,773 jobs**

This puts us ahead of the construction industry, more than twice as big as transportation, and nearly as large as retail.

Arts and cultural attractions help drive tourism.

The AEP6 study, conducted by Americans for the Arts found:

- **30%** of attendees to an average arts or cultural attraction traveled from **outside the region** to attend
- **77%** of them said the attraction was the **sole reason** for being in the area
- Those who travel for arts and culture **outspend locals by nearly double** on other event-related spending including restaurants, lodging, shopping, transportation, etc.

Mass Cultural Council's Cultural Facilities Fund provides major improvement grants to nonprofit cultural organizations and municipalities.

- Recipient organizations employ **2,957 full-time equivalents** representing **\$341 million** in wages and salaries
- The projects supported by these grants created **3,220 new jobs**
- These projects have employed nearly **37,000 architects, engineers, contractors, and construction workers**

Mass Cultural Council Funding Opportunities

4

Cultural Facilities Fund (CFF)

Grants to support the acquisition, design, repair, rehabilitation, renovation, expansion, or construction of municipal cultural facilities. Grants range from \$7,000 to \$200,000.



[Essex River Cultural District]

Creative Experiences

NEW: Grants to organizations (including schools) to fund festivals, projects, residencies, and other cultural activities in the arts, humanities, and sciences.
(Application opens March 2025)

Gaming Mitigation Fund

Two-year grants to Massachusetts nonprofit and municipal performing arts centers to spend on touring shows or touring artist fees. Grants have ranged from \$6,000 to \$200,000.

Operating Grants for Organizations

Multi-year, unrestricted operating grants to organizations that enrich Massachusetts' cultural life. Municipal cultural organizations that manage their own budget and have at least one full-time compensated administrative staff position dedicated solely to operation of the cultural entity are eligible.

(Applications open February 2025)

Local Cultural Council Program

5

The Local Cultural Council Program remains the most extensive volunteer-run cultural funding program in the nation! Investing in local arts and culture efforts for more than 44 years the program features:

- 329 LCCs serving all 351 MA cities and towns
- 2,400+ volunteers serve as LCC members statewide each year
- More than \$7.5 million in grants awarded last year

The LCC Program promotes local autonomy and decision-making. LCCs work with their municipalities to make decisions, Mass Cultural Council makes suggestions and provides guidance and support.

How LCC allocation amounts are determined:

- The state legislature provides the Agency with its annual budget in August
- The Agency plans its program budget which is approved by the [Governing Council](#)
- LCC allocations are based on the state's local aid formulas (based on population and equalized property values to provide low-income communities with relatively larger allocations).

Check out the [LCC Program's history](#) and [key milestones](#).

Cultural Districts and Their Economic Impact

A 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.

6

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



[Turners Falls Cultural District]

This year, our [58 cultural districts](#) will receive a total of \$870,000 in assistance to support development and sustainability efforts in their communities.

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 every division of SMU DataArts's Top 40 Arts-Vibrant Communities across the country in 2022, there existed at least one Massachusetts Cultural District.

Read our [recent blog](#) for more economic impact info!

Designated Cultural Districts in Rural and Small Towns

Shelburne Falls Cultural District

Buckland + Shelburne

Cummington Cultural District

Cummington

Essex River Cultural District

Essex

Great Barrington Cultural District

Great Barrington

Lenox Cultural District

Lenox

Turners Falls Cultural District

Montague

Nantucket Cultural District

Nantucket

Orleans Cultural District

Orleans

Provincetown Cultural District

Provincetown

Rockport Cultural District

Rockport

Glass Town Cultural District

Sandwich

Vineyard Haven Harbor Cultural District

Tisbury

Wellfleet Cultural District

Wellfleet

Williamstown Cultural District

Williamstown

Visit our website for a full list of our currently designated Cultural Districts:
[Designated Cultural Districts – Mass Cultural Council](#)

District Local Technical Assistance & Grant Assistance Program

Helping Cities and Towns Access Funding to Support More Creativity

8

State Opportunities

- Executive Office of Economic Development
 - Mass Downtown Initiative
 - Urban Agenda Grant Program
- Community Planning Grant Program (EOHLC)
- MassDevelopment
 - Underutilized Properties Program
 - Real Estate Services Technical Assistance
- Mass Gaming Commission
 - Community Planning Grants
 - Regional Agency Grant Program
 - Municipal Block Grant Program

Regional Planning Agencies: 13 across MA

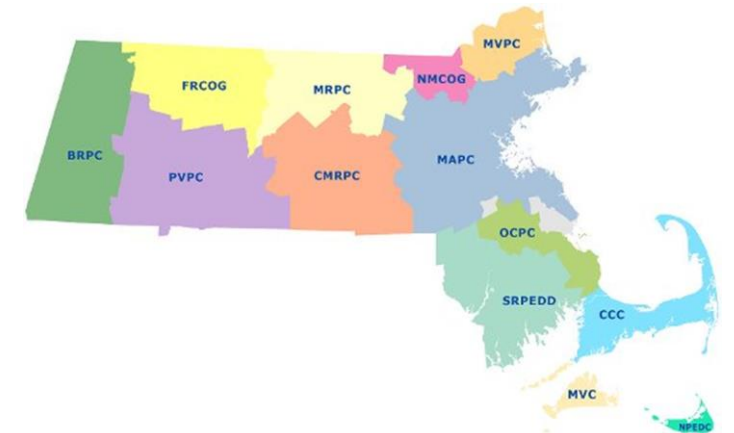
- Grant Assistance Program funds RPA staff to help municipalities apply for state and federal grants.
- Support municipalities with planning, data and mapping, and procurement
- Fund staff time through District Local Technical Assistance

Total Funding: \$2 Million across RPAs

Awarded in FY23 and Renewed for FY24 and FY25.

Federal Opportunities

- National Endowment for the Arts & Humanities Grants
 - Our Town
 - Grants for Arts Projects
 - Public Humanities Grants



Federal Support and Resources



Agenda

- Rural Development – Mission Area Overview
 - Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBCS)
 - Rural Housing Service (RHS)
- Rural Energy for America Program (REAP)
- Business & Industry (B&I) Guaranteed Loan Program
- Community Facilities (CF)
- OneRD Guaranteed Loan Initiative
- Rural Business Development Grants (RBDG)
- Pocket Guide
- Working with State Offices / Contact Information
- Q&A

Contact Information

Assistance under USDA Rural Development programs is available to applicants in areas designated as "rural." Under law, the definition of "rural area" is different for each program.

Contact your local USDA Rural Development office for more information.

<https://rd.usda.gov/about-rd/state-offices>

Or go to: www.rd.usda.gov



Or call 1 (800) 670-6553 (toll free)

Robert Lyons – Acting Chief of Staff
Rural Business Cooperative Service
Robert.lyons@usda.gov (until Jan. 13)

Brian Wiles – Director of Guaranteed Lending
Rural Business Cooperative Service
Brian.Wiles@usda.gov

Jamie Davenport – Deputy Administrator
Rural Housing Service, Community Facilities
Jamie.Davenport@usda.gov

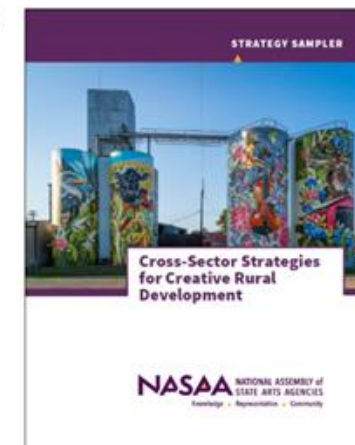
USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

USDA Rural Development U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE		Theater and Performing Arts Venue Resources									
 USDA Rural Development Program (See Appendix for full names)		Applicant and Qualifying Entity Type									
		Lenders	Agricultural Producers	Rural Small Business	Nonprofit Organizations	Public Bodies	Tribes	Individuals	For Profit Organizations	Cooperatives	We
Rural Business-Cooperative Service	B&I Loan Guarantees*	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	tinyurl.com/RBCSB
	REAP Loan Guaranteed*	x	x	x					x	x	tinyurl.com/RBCSB
	REAP Grants		x	x					x	x	tinyurl.com/RBCSB
	RBDG				x	x	x			x	tinyurl.com/RBCSB
Rural Housing Service	CF Direct			x	x	x					tinyurl.com/CFDire
	CF Loan Guaranteed*	x			x	x	x				tinyurl.com/CFGLoans
	CF Grants				x	x	x				tinyurl.com/CFDirectLoansandGrants
	CF TAT			x	x	x					tinyurl.com/CFTechAssist
Contacts	This Guide is brought to you by USDA Rural Development's Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBCS)										
	For more information see the RBCS Website					tinyurl.com/3uv4eta3					
	To contact your RD State Office see this Website					tinyurl.com/RDStateOffices					
*	Included under the OneRD Guarantee Program					www.rd.usda.gov/onerdguarantee					

Cross-Sector Strategies for Creative Rural Development

In collaboration with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) is pleased to release a new Strategy Sampler exemplifying successful state programs and policies investing in rural development.

Cross-Sector Strategies for Creative Rural Development spotlights strategies at state arts agencies and regional arts organizations with innovative partnerships developing and strengthening rural places through the arts. The research provides insights into mechanisms for establishing such partnerships, tips for initiating engagement and knowledge resources available to advance rural strategies.



MassCulturalCouncil.org

- **Agency Dates** — Key dates for all Mass Cultural Council grant programs and events.
- **Blogs** — Our Power of Culture blog is your source for Agency and sector news and information, including **Opportunities & Resources for Cultural Organizations**. Visit **ArtSake** to check out our weekly **Artist Opportunities** roundup.
- **E-Newsletters** — Sign up to receive one – or all three! – of the Agency’s monthly newsletters: **Power of Culture**, **Artist News**, and **Community Initiative News**.
- **Grants Management System**— Register once, apply for funding all year.
- **HireCulture.org**— A free, online listing of employment opportunities in Massachusetts

NEW Rural Municipalities Toolkit

massculturalcouncil.org/rural_toolkit

Rural communities across America received nearly \$60 million in state arts agency funding in a most recent fiscal years, the extent of which is even broader among those states with regranting or decentralization programs (*like Massachusetts's [Local Cultural Council program](#)*!).

Developed with support from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Economic Development – Rural Affairs (and crafted especially for Municipal users) you can find more information regarding these facts and figures, as well as:

- Local, State, Regional and National Resources
- Examples & Case Studies
- Toolkits & Publications

Follow the link above for creative resources and inspiration to support rural communities by harnessing the *Power of Culture!*



Thank you!

Carolyn.Cole@mass.gov

Engage with us @MassCultural

