



Power of culture

March 27, 2023

The Honorable Karen Spilka
President of the Massachusetts Senate
Karen.Spilka@masenate.gov

The Honorable Ronald Mariano
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Ronald.Mariano@mahouse.gov

The Honorable Michael Rodrigues, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways & Means
Michael.Rodrigues@masenate.gov

The Honorable Aaron Michlewitz, Chair
House Committee on Ways & Means
Aaron.Michlewitz@mahouse.gov

The Honorable Paul Mark, Chair
Joint Committee on Tourism, Arts &
Cultural Development
Paul.Mark@masenate.gov

The Honorable Mindy Domb, Chair
Joint Committee on Tourism, Arts &
Cultural Development
Mindy.Domb@mahouse.gov

Re: H. 3545 – An Act making appropriations for fiscal year 2023 to provide for supplementing certain existing appropriations and for certain other activities and projects

Dear President Spilka, Chair Rodrigues, Chair Mark, Speaker Mariano, Chair Michlewitz, and Chair Domb:

On behalf of the governing Board and staff of Mass Cultural Council I am pleased to submit testimony in support of the Governor's FY23 supplemental budget, H. 3545, and in specific, line-item 1599-0640, which appropriates \$10 million to the Agency to supplement grants made from the Cultural Facilities Fund (CFF):

1599-0640 For the Massachusetts cultural council to supplement grants from the Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund established in section 42 of chapter 23G of the General Laws; provided, that grants shall promote access to the arts and cultural life in a geographically equitable manner, particularly among rural communities; provided further, that the amount appropriated in this item may not be expended for administrative purposes; and provided further, that the funds appropriated in this item

shall be made available through the fiscal year ending June 30,
2025.....\$10,000,000

Since 2006 Mass Cultural Council has managed the outreach and grantee review and selection process for the Cultural Facilities Fund. The program is administered in partnership with MassDevelopment, who administers the payment process and whose Board provides final approval of the awards. CFF grants support the planning, acquisition, rehabilitation, and construction of cultural facilities across the Commonwealth. Recognizing the profound impact cultural facilities make in communities statewide, CFF encourages sound growth, supports important development projects, plays a crucial role in the growth of local tourism, creates thousands of jobs, and drives millions of dollars in private investment.

In FY22, 127 grants totaling \$14.4 million were awarded to support projects in construction, restoration, and deferred maintenance, undertaken by nonprofit cultural organizations, municipalities, and colleges operating public cultural facilities statewide. We know the economic impact of these investments benefit more than just the recipient, as our 2022 comprehensive survey of 81 Cultural Facilities Fund grantees reported:

- 2,957 full-time jobs and \$341 million in wages and salaries at organizations in the current round of funding.
- 35,444 architects, engineers, contractors, and construction workers employed on Cultural Facilities Fund projects over all rounds of funding.
- 2,992 new permanent jobs projected in Massachusetts because of Cultural Facilities Fund projects over all rounds of funding.

Mass Cultural Council is deeply appreciative of the Governor's spending recommendation to supplement existing capital support of the CFF, because we know there is great interest and need throughout the sector. In fact, **314 cultural organizations have reported to the CFF program team the intention to proceed with \$1.2 billion in capital projects over the next two to three years.**

This \$10M will supplement the Fund and allow Mass Cultural Council to invest and support more capital projects, thereby spurring job creation and protecting these important cultural, historical, and creative assets in a state of good repair.

Over the past five fiscal years we have seen requests for capital assistance outpace available funds:

Fiscal Year	Capital Grants Amount Requested	Total Development Costs of all Projects
FY23	\$20.7 million	\$243 million
FY22	\$22.1 million	\$260 million
FY21	\$20 million	\$306 million
FY20	\$25.2 million	\$221 million
FY19	\$30 million	\$224 million

The application deadline for the FY23 CFF grant round was February 2, 2023. A quick review of the 195 applications received indicates our team is now reviewing 147 proposals for capital projects, 37 for feasibility and technical assistance grants, and 11 for systems replacement grants. We are enthused to note that 20% of these applications (37) were submitted by first-time applicants to Mass Cultural Council and 9% (16) of the applicants appear to be from BIPOC Centered organizations. We anticipate FY23 CFF award notifications will go out in May.

There is approximately \$9 million in capital funding available for the FY23 CFF grant round. Mass Cultural Council is very excited to note that with this supplemental appropriation of \$10 million, we would likely be able to provide financial support to nearly every eligible FY23 CFF grant application received. This would be a milestone moment for the program, which is immensely popular and has never had enough resources to support all eligible needs.

We hope you will agree that the Cultural Facilities Fund is a proven economic driver in Massachusetts – it creates jobs and improves valuable cultural infrastructure and is worthy of this one-time supplemental appropriation. For more information on the impact of the Cultural Facilities Fund, please review the [2022 Annual Report](#).

Please do not hesitate to contact me or Public Affairs Director [Bethann Steiner](#) if you require further information or would like to schedule a meeting.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Bobbitt
Executive Director

cc: Dan Rivera, MassDevelopment