

# Culture creates



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Local Cultural Council Webinar:

# FY25 Member Training: Voting Meeting Prep



Mass  
Cultural  
Council

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# Communities Team



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# Agenda

- Grant Cycle Recap (October – January)
- Pre-LCC Deadline Action Items
  - Conflict of Interest Scenarios & Procedures
- Post-LCC deadline—Pre-Voting Meeting Action Items
- Evaluative Review Process
- During the Voting Meeting
- Post-Voting Meeting Action Items

# Grant Cycle Timeline

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## October

- Publicize the grant cycle
- Complete the Financial Report in GMS by 10/16/24.
- Schedule the voting meeting

## November - January

- Once annual reporting is completed in GMS (due by 1/16/25):
  - Mass Cultural Council transfers LCC allocations
  - Publicize grant awards.
  - Begin processing reimbursement requests or direct grants.

# Complete Before LCC Deadline

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1. Confirm there are at least five voting members, including a chair, secretary, and treasurer.
2. Confirm funds available for granting (see [Financial Reporting webinar](#)).
3. Complete the mandatory [Conflict of Interest Law Education Requirements](#) by creating an account on the SEC's learning management system ([FAQs](#)).
4. Confirm whether your LCC voting members have conflicts ([LCC Toolkit's Conflict of Interest](#)).
5. Schedule a voting meeting(s) virtually or in a physically accessible space (or both—hybrid) and submit a notice of the meeting(s) to the Town or City Hall at least two business days in advance.
6. (ongoing & optional) Initial Review: Confirm that all submitted applications are complete.

# Conflict of Interest Scenarios

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The [Conflict of Interest Law](#) ensures that public employees' private financial interests and personal relationships **do not conflict** with their public obligations. Public employees must also avoid conduct that creates an **appearance of conflict of interest** or conduct that creates a reasonable impression that they will act with bias.

## Common Conflicts include:

- An LCC member applies for a grant from the LCC on which they serve
- An LCC member applying for a grant on behalf of someone else
- An LCC member, their immediate (and non-immediate) family, or an affiliate of an LCC member has a financial interest in a grant
- Former members

# Conflict Procedures

What do we do if an LCC member has a conflict with a submitted application?

1. Assess the situation.
2. Decide whether [Exception](#) and/or [Disclosure](#) Forms are needed.
3. Complete the appropriate forms and file them through the instructed channels.
4. Make a verbal disclosure at the meeting.
5. Abstain by leaving the room during the discussion and not voting on the matter.
6. Record abstentions in the meeting minutes.

**DISCLOSURE OF APPEARANCE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST  
AS REQUIRED BY G. L. c. 268A, § 23(b)(3)**

PUBLIC EMPLOYEE INFORMATION	
Name of public employee:	
Title or Position:	
Agency/Department:	
Agency address:	
Office Phone:	
Office E-mail:	
	<p>In my capacity as a state, county or municipal employee, I am expected to take certain actions in the performance of my official duties. Under the circumstances, a reasonable person could conclude that a person or organization could unduly enjoy my favor or improperly influence me when I perform my official duties, or that I am likely to act or fail to act as a result of kinship, rank, position or undue influence of a party or person.</p> <p>I am filing this disclosure to disclose the facts about this relationship or affiliation and to dispel the appearance of a conflict of interest.</p>
APPEARANCE OF FAVORITISM OR INFLUENCE	
Describe the issue that is coming before you for action or decision.	
What responsibility do you have for taking action or making a decision?	
Explain your relationship or affiliation to the person or organization.	
How do your official actions or decision matter to the person or organization?	



# After LCC Deadline-Before Meeting

1. Discuss the LCC's grantmaking philosophy (whatever is not covered by local criteria)
  - E.g., Do we award more grants at smaller amounts or fewer grants at larger amounts?
2. Develop an **evaluative** review process (e.g., [sample rubric](#) and [sample score sheet](#))
  - To what degree does the application meet the criteria?
  - Check out the [LCC Toolkit's Evaluating Grants section](#) for additional guidance.
3. Distribute the PDF panel book of submitted applications and any related documents (e.g., scoring rubric) to LCC members.



## Sample Score Sheet for Evaluating Grants

This is a sample score sheet that can be tailored to use in reviewing grants at the voting meeting. Please note - the review criteria provided are based on a sample council's local priorities. The review criteria should be changed to reflect your council's definition of public benefit and any other local guidelines and priorities.

Applicant's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Project \_\_\_\_\_

How would you score this project in terms of:

### Quality, Originality, and Creativity:

Score: \_\_\_\_\_

- Are the applicant's and/or partner's credentials satisfactory?
- Do the qualifications of the artist, humanist, or interpretive scientist leading the activity suggest the project will be of high quality?
- Are there technical considerations that would impact quality (lighting design expertise, teaching materials, appropriate workshop space, etc)?
- Does the project seem interesting, innovative or particularly original?

### Community Benefit:

Score: \_\_\_\_\_

- Does the project serve and involve the community? Does it serve a particular segment of the community? Does it benefit an underserved population?
- Is the applicant a city/town resident?
- Does the project contribute to the cultural vitality and well-being of the community as a whole?
- Does the project address a community need?
- Does the project play a unique role specific to the community?
- How many residents will benefit from the project?

### Planning:

Score: \_\_\_\_\_

- Is there sufficient planning? Does the timeline make sense to ensure quality in project implementation?
- Have the participants or intended audience been identified?
- Have the date, time and venue been set for the project's completion? Are contact names listed for any performances or showings in the area?

### Budget:

Score: \_\_\_\_\_

- Is there a budget for marketing/publicity for any part of the project that is open to the public?
- Can the project be successful if partially funded?
- Has the applicant leveraged additional resources?
- Will the project be take place without council help? Have funds been requested from other sources?

TOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_/20

Rating Scale

# Evaluative Review

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1. Check your biases.
2. Review [state](#) guidelines and local criteria (only if they were published)
3. Review LCC's evaluative process, rubric, or score sheet.
4. Evaluate the degree to which apps meet the criteria.
  - 1st read to comprehend; 2nd read to evaluate.
5. Enter scores/remarks during your second read.
  - Add a few sentences explaining your rationale for each scored section.
6. Maintain objectivity and consistency.
7. Review your notes shortly before the voting meeting.

# During the Voting Meeting

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1. Ensure a quorum, especially when voting on applications w/ abstentions.
2. Give sufficient time to each application so that all LCC members can express their evaluations.
  - Evaluative comments should be clear, specific, and related to the criteria.
3. Tally final scores/remarks to produce a ranked list of applications that best meet the criteria.
  - Assign someone to track the grants you are voting on ([Grant Tracker Template](#)).
4. Decide funding amount, full vs. partial (avoid granting <\$250).
5. Set a reconsideration meeting date in case one is needed.

# Open Meeting & Public Records

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**Open Meeting Law:** Any meeting where public business is discussed must follow the directives of the [Open Meeting Law](#).



**Public Records Law:** All records of LCC actions are considered public information and are subject to the state's [Public Records Law](#).

Open Meeting & Public Records Homepages

# After the Voting Meeting

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## Grant Decisions

1. Review the [Grant Decisions Webinar](#) for a GMS walkthrough.
2. Move all apps to either denied or approved in GMS.
  - Disapproved apps are automatically sent denial letters through GMS, which include reconsideration instructions.
  - In addition to the GMS walkthrough, the webinar covers the 15-day reconsideration period LCCs must wait after voting.

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# Thank you!

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