

Massachusetts Cultural Council

Strategic Plan 2013 - 2018

Mission

The Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) is a state agency that promotes excellence, access, education and diversity in the arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences to improve the quality of life for all Massachusetts residents and contribute to the economic vitality of our communities. The Council pursues this mission through a combination of grant programs, partnerships and services for nonprofit cultural organizations, schools, communities and artists.

Vision

The Massachusetts Cultural Council is committed to building a central place for the arts, sciences and humanities in the everyday lives of communities across the Commonwealth.

The arts, sciences and humanities have the power to build healthier, more livable, more vital communities. They enrich, exalt and provoke. They are an essential part of a strong educational system. They contribute enormously to our economy. They build bridges across cultures. They can be used to address - or better yet, prevent - some of our most stubborn social problems. They help us interpret our past and shape our future. They help us understand what it means to be human.

Goals

- To increase the pool of financial resources—public and private—available for the arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences across the Commonwealth.
- To invest state dollars in cultural organizations, local cultural councils, schools and artists.
- To help cultural organizations, local cultural councils, schools, municipalities, and artists develop tools, skills, and relationships to survive and thrive in the 21st century.
- To advocate as effectively as possible, and to help others do the same, about the power of the arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences to build healthy, livable communities.

To increase the pool of financial resources—public and private—available for the arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences across the Commonwealth.

- Redouble collective efforts to restore the Massachusetts Cultural Council's annual state appropriation, following cuts of recent years.
- Work to maximize state funding for the Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund, and work to ensure that such funding is provided on a predictable annual basis.
- Work to protect and defend mitigation funding for nonprofit presenting organizations and other nonprofit cultural organizations in the state's recently-passed casino gambling legislation.
- Identify and work to secure tangible new state incentives and resources for new Massachusetts Cultural Districts.
- Encourage efforts by other public agencies, private grantmakers, municipalities and individuals to increase their own support for the arts, sciences and humanities in the state.
- Promote efforts by schools, districts, and communities to make deeper financial commitments to arts education.

To invest state dollars in cultural organizations, local cultural councils, schools and artists through increased funding for the following grant programs:

- The **Cultural Investment Portfolio**, to support public programs of not-for-profit cultural organizations with track records of excellence and community service.
- The **Local Cultural Council Program**, to promote efforts to make the arts, sciences, and humanities part of everyday life in every city and town in the state.
- The **Artist Fellowships Program**, to support Massachusetts artists of excellence - the individuals at the core of our cultural community.
- The **STARS Residencies Program** and **Big Yellow School Bus**, to provide inspiring experiences in the arts, sciences, and humanities for as many schoolchildren as possible in as many schools as possible.
- The **YouthReach Initiative** and **Creative Minds Out-of-School**, to support out-of-school activities that use the arts, sciences and humanities to promote education and youth development.
- The **John and Abigail Adams Arts Program**, to promote economic development, job creation, and downtown revitalization through the arts, sciences, and humanities.
- The **Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund** and the **ArtistLink Initiative**, to support thoughtful planning and public-private investment in the bricks-and-mortar infrastructure of the non-profit cultural sector.
- The **Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program**, and other activities to sustain and celebrate public appreciation of the cultural traditions of the many diverse populations in Massachusetts.
- A new cultural mitigation fund, that will become operational after casino revenues begin to flow, as called for in the state's recently passed casino gaming legislation.

To help cultural organizations, local cultural councils, schools, municipalities, and artists develop tools, skills, and relationships to survive and thrive in the 21st century.

- Strive to provide the highest level of personalized customer service to all of the organizations and individuals we serve.
- Use continuous improvement strategies to maximize the MCC's own efficiency and eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy for our constituents in any way possible.
- Do everything in our power to promote relationships of mutual trust and confidence with all of our constituents.
- Provide one-on-one technical assistance and other learning opportunities for cultural organizations, local cultural councils, artists, and educators, to enhance their effectiveness and sustainability in a rapidly changing world.
- Maintain and develop practical web-based tools (e.g., HireCulture, the LCC Online Office, ArtSake, Gallery@MCC, MatchBook, ArtSpace Finder) to support the work of artists, cultural organizations, local cultural councils, and schools.
- Help non-profit cultural organizations understand and make full use of the diagnostic and reporting tools available to them through their participation in the Cultural Data Project.
- Help cities and towns build visibility, stimulate economic activity and promote visitorship through the development of state-designated cultural districts (the MCC's new Cultural Districts Initiative).
- Provide tools and resources to promote universal design and accessibility of cultural facilities and programs for people with disabilities.

To advocate as effectively as possible, and to help others do the same, about the power of the arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences to build healthy, livable communities.

- Work closely with community leaders across the state to support and promote the successful launch of the new statewide advocacy organization, MassCreative.
- Coordinate closely with MassCreative and other advocacy partners (ArtsLearning, Massachusetts Arts Leaders Coalition, Massachusetts Nonprofit Network, MassINC, others) to build the broadest possible coalition of advocates for the arts, sciences, and humanities in Massachusetts.
- Effectively deploy the MCC's own board members in state advocacy efforts.
- Provide practical information and communication tools to local cultural councils, cultural organizations, arts educators, and artists to help them tell the story of the public benefits of their work.
- Promote efforts to integrate the arts into education in science, technology, engineering and math ("STEM to STEAM").

Did You Know?

- Nonprofit arts, humanities, and science organizations in Massachusetts generate more than 45,000 jobs, spend \$2.1 billion annually, and generate another \$2.5 billion of economic activity. ¹
- A five-year, \$50 million state investment in the Mass. Cultural Facilities Fund (CFF) leveraged more than \$800 million in construction spending, provided more than 11,000 building jobs, and helped cultural organizations attract an estimated 14 million annual visitors – many from out of state. ²
- Nonprofit arts, science, and history organizations in Massachusetts provided more than 18 million free admissions, and served 3.6 million children through education programs, in one recent year. ³
- Seven in ten voters in a recent MassINC poll consider community arts and culture very important, eighty percent support government funding for such events, and nearly eighty percent support public funding to renovate arts and cultural buildings. ⁴
- Arts education has proven to be “an effective tool for school-wide reform and fixing some of our biggest educational challenges” in schools across America. ⁵
- At-risk students who have access to the arts in or out of school also have better academic results, better workforce opportunities, and are more engaged in their community. ⁶

1. 2011 Report commissioned by Boston-based New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA).
2. Surveys of nonprofits by Mass. Cultural Facilities Fund, 2011
3. Massachusetts Cultural Data Project, 2009
4. “Creative Places: Public Perceptions of Arts, Culture and Economic Development in the Gateway Cities.” MassINC Polling Group, 2012
5. “Reinvesting in Arts Education: Winning America’s Future through Creative Schools,” U.S. President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities, 2011
6. The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth: Findings from Four Longitudinal Studies, National Endowment for the Arts, 2012



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For more information on the Massachusetts Cultural Council, or to view more details on the strategic plan, please go to:

www.massculturalcouncil.org

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