

MassHousing

Housing Stability Department **Focus Grant: *Building Community through*** ***Arts and Culture***

Information Session
Tuesday, December 16, 2025
1-2pm

Agenda



Welcome & Introductions



Proposal Guidelines



Proposal Forms



Schedule



Statewide Resources



Q&A

Introductions



Libby Hayes- Director of Housing Stability

Kara Johnson- Senior Strategy and Program Manager,
Housing Stability Department

Carolyn Cole- Special Projects Manager for Advancement,
Mass Cultural Council

Britt Ruhe- Executive Director, Commonwealth Murals

Proposal Guidelines: General

Total amount of \$150,000 is available for the Focus Grants.

There are two tracks for this award:

Track 1: Activation and Expression (\$5,000–\$20,000)

Track 2: Transformative Placemaking (\$20,000–\$40,000)

Funds will be allowed for the period of Feb 2026- August 2027 (18 month period)

Program Requirements

Funding is available exclusively to properties that have received MassHousing financing.


For the purpose of this NOFA, “**properties that have received MassHousing financing**” may include housing developments with multiple phases where MassHousing is financing at least one of the phases, as long as the space is accessible to residents of the phase financed by MassHousing.

Projects should:	Funding cannot be used for:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve the physical environment and safety of shared spaces• Reflect and celebrate the diverse cultures and histories of residents• Foster resident collaboration and pride through co-designed or resident-led efforts• Advance social connection and a sense of belonging among residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• General operating costs or staff salaries• Duplication of existing resident engagement programming• Activities not located within a MassHousing-financed property• Projects that do not result in a visible or lasting impact on the housing environment

MassHousing Sites/Developments

To confirm MassHousing developments, please review the
MassHousing Multifamily Communities List:

<https://www.masshousing.com/en/programs-outreach/housing-stability/communities>



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Multifamily Communities

A reference for Housing and Social Service Providers

The searchable list below includes all multifamily rental properties financed by MassHousing or developments where the Agency manages affordable housing programs.

City, Town, Neighborhood

Development Name

Management Company

Information for Renters

If you are interested in renting an affordable apartment, please visit the Housing Navigator MA.

[VISIT THE HOUSING NAVIGATOR](#)

GREENFIELD ACRES

Web Site:
10 Congress Street

City:
Greenfield

Management:
PCE Management Co. Inc.

Mgt. Office Phone:
(978) 535-6700

Site Phone:
(413) 773-9410

Bedrooms	Types
1 Bed: 76	Family: 94
2 Beds: 18	

MassHousing Financed:

Yes

Workforce Housing:

No

Project-based Section 8 Subsidies:

No

Or confirm by emailing: Housingstabilitygrants@masshousing.com



Evaluation Criteria

- ✓ Alignment with grant goals- Creativity, feasibility, and clarity of proposed design concept
- ✓ Resident involvement and collaboration
- ✓ Potential for long-term community benefit
- ✓ Clear sustainability and evaluation plan

Reporting Requirements



Selected grantees must complete a grant agreement outlining deliverables and reporting expectations.

An interim report will be requested after 90 days of the award.

A final report summarizing outcomes, resident feedback, and project photos must be submitted within 30 days of project completion.

Projects must be completed within 18 months of the award.

1. One Application Form: Includes Site Information Narrative Questions
2. One Excel Budget Form

[illegible]



Application Questions

Please complete all question fields. Answers should be succinct.

- **Site Information** - *Please include MH ID number, management company, and owner name*
- **Funding Request**
- **Project Summary**
- **Resident Engagement Plan**
- **Community Description**
- **Authorization, Permits, and Compliance** - *Confirmation that you have authorization, or are prepared to take all necessary steps to get authorization if funded*
- **Program Partnerships** - *Sites are not required to formalize a partnership at the time of application. If a partnership is not yet secured, please provide a detailed outreach plan.*
- **Implementation Plan**
- **Budget Narrative**
- **Diverse Business Engagement**
- **Capacity and Experience**
- **Sustainability and Evaluation Plan**
- **Adverse Actions**
- **Conflicts of Interest**
- **Optional** – *pictures or other supporting materials*

Budget Outline

Contractor Costs

- include artist or art organization and/or other contracted work expenses.

Materials and Supplies

Resident Engagement Expenses

- include any resident stipends, food, childcare, or other expenses to reduce barriers to participation.

Additional Expenses

10% may be used for Administrative and Overhead costs

Submission Information



- All responses should be sent via email to: housingstabilitygrants@masshousing.com **before 5:00 pm on Friday January 09, 2026.**
- Please write on the subject heading line "Building Community Through Arts and Culture Application" **Proposals received after the response deadline may not be considered.**
- Final Selections: **Monday, February 9th**

This timetable is for reference purposes only and is subject to change at MassHousing's sole discretion.

FOR MORE INFORMATION



Visit our Impact Initiatives webpage -
www.masshousing.com/programs-outreach/housing-stability/impact-initiatives



Download application forms through the Rental Portal or
email housingstabilitygrants@masshousing.com



Email questions to
housingstabilitygrants@masshousing.com



Culture builds



[Daniela Rivera's Tilted Heritage]

Mass Cultural Council

Mass Cultural Council is the Commonwealth's independent state arts agency.

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- Strengthening the cultural sector
- Driving economic vitality
- Supporting transformational change
- Celebrating and preserving creativity in every community

Our purpose:

To elevate cultural life across the Commonwealth for everyone who lives, works, visits, and creates here.

In the past year, Arts and Culture accounted for:

- **\$29.7 billion** economic impact
- **130,263 jobs**
- **4.04%** of the state's economy
- This is larger than construction, 3 times the size of the transportation sector, and the same size as retail.



Arts, Culture, and Community: Building Belonging Through Creativity

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- Arts and culture foster connection, identity, and belonging.
- Creative strategies turn spaces into places and projects into movements.
- Arts partnerships build trust, pride, and local prosperity.



[Casa De Abuela / North Shore CDC]



[Main South Community Art Installation / Allan Jung]



[Cummington Cultural District]

National Impact & State Innovation

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Cultural investment = stronger communities

- Increase in high-performing students
- Reduction in crime

Arts and culture are recognized as a catalyst for more stable, vibrant communities

- building healthier, more connected neighborhoods
- fostering equity, trust, and belonging
- stabilizing neighborhoods, preventing displacement
- National Association of Realtors celebrates creative placemaking through funding and resources

MassHousing

- Creative housing models; i.e. Fitchburg & Beverly
- Creative Placemaking Grants - build healing, belonging, and connection to place.



[New Bedford's Seaport Cultural District]



[Roxbury Cultural District]

The What, How, and Who

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Creative Placemaking

The practice of enhancing a neighborhood's quality of life through arts, culture, and intentional, inclusive community development to meet the visions of the people who live, work, and play in the space.

Choosing the Right Strategy

- **Start with community needs:** Talk to residents, partners, and your municipality.
- **Check existing efforts & constraints, consider requirements:** Public art policies, design guidelines, ordinances, studies, and overlapping initiatives, then insurance, skill sets, etc.
- **Use partners & proven resources:** MAPC Arts & Culture, Regional Planning Commissions, local CDCs, Public Art Commissions/Arts Councils.

NEA's '**How to Do Creative Placemaking**' - key lessons:

- Every project needs a champion
- Engage a broad, diverse group of collaborators
- Partners must be willing to think beyond traditional roles



[NEA's 'How to do Creative Placemaking']

Local Partnerships

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CardToCulture

- The nation's most comprehensive effort to expand cultural access for low-income and working families
- Over 500 participating organizations in this program

Local + Tribal Cultural Council Program

- Largest grassroots cultural funding network in the nation
- Award \$7.5 million every year
- Support 7,300 cultural projects and programs
- Supports Native American and Indigenous communities by providing funds for Tribal governments to grant to projects that provide community benefit.



[Holyoke Puerto Rican Cultural District]


Cultural Districts Initiative


Cultural Districts support the arts, fostering engagement, and **celebrating the uniqueness of people and place** while supporting economic, community, and inclusive cultural development.












[Boston Latin Quarter Cultural District]

Mass Cultural Council Grants

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Programs At-a-Glance

FY26 Funding Opportunities (July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026)

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From Artist News, Community Initiative, and

YouthReach



Opens: February 5, 2026
Deadline: April 2, 2026
Grants to Creative Youth Development

Creative Experiences



Opens: March 3, 2026
Deadline: April 30, 2026

Grants for Creative Individuals



Opens: September 16, 2025
Deadline: October 28, 2025

Cultural Facilities Fund



Opens: October 9, 2025
Deadline: December 11, 2025
Grants to support the acquisition, design, repair, rehabilitation,

Local Cultural Council Program



Opens: September 2, 2025
Deadline: October 16, 2025
Every community in Massachusetts is

Tribal Cultural Council Program



Opens: September 2, 2025
Deadline: October 16, 2025

A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a vibrant floral dress, is reaching up with her right arm to touch a wooden lattice structure. She is looking upwards with a slight smile. The background shows some greenery and a building.

Thank You!

Carolyn Cole, Special Projects Manager for Advancement
Massachusetts Cultural Council
Carolyn.Cole@mass.gov





COMMON WEALTH MURALS

Common Wealth Murals partners with communities and organizations to create vibrant, resident-driven murals.

Each project pairs residents with professional muralists who guide the process from concept through installation, ensuring that the final artwork reflects local voices and meets high artistic standards.

We also provide start-to-finish project management for traditional murals, including managing art calls, project budgeting, contracts, insurance and logistical support.

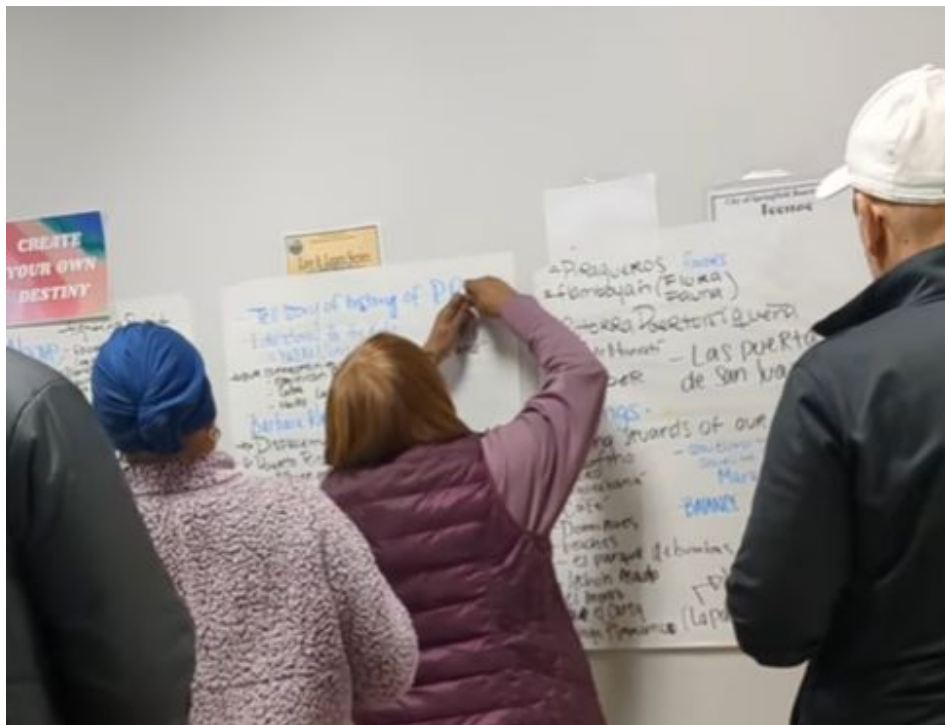


Initial Thoughts About Mural Planning

- A mural is both an artwork and a process. The finished image matters, but so does how it is made, who is involved, and what it represents for the people who see it every day. Thinking about goals early helps shape every decision that follows.
- Murals are not just big paintings. Just because someone is an amazing painter on canvas, does not mean they will be an amazing muralist.
- When choosing a muralist, find someone who has prior experience doing murals on walls similar to your wall.
- Most murals are made without community painting, but every muralist should be willing to engage your residents in a conversation about the mural design.
- Pick a muralist before you ask for a design.

Mural Design Workshops

It starts with design workshops where residents share stories and imagery that inform the artist's design.



Community Painting

Once finalized, the artwork becomes a large-scale paint-by-numbers transferred onto panels of mural fabric. Residents of all ages paint these panels during fun, accessible events in courtyards, parks, or community rooms. No experience is needed.



Technical Painting and Installation

After community painting, professional muralists complete the detailed painting in our studio and then permanently install the mural on site, inside or outside. The finished mural looks as if it were painted directly on the wall.





Love Always Finds Its Way Home

by Youme Nguyen Ly



Ôttanalawigek sôbosaiwi Sôkhoikok

*That which is ever-expanding, everywhere, all around,
passing through the whirlpools by Charlie Adams*



The Journey By SELF. with the YMCA Youth Center







Estimating the Cost of a Mural

- The cost of a mural depends on several factors, including the experience of the muralist and design complexity, whether the community is involved in the painting of the mural and the size and location of the wall location.
- **MURALIST EXPERIENCE:** Experienced muralists are capable of tackling larger design challenges and executing more complex or nuanced designs. They are also likely to need to travel to the mural location so will incur travel and lodging expenses.
- **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** Murals made in collaboration with the community are more expensive because they require additional planning, time and crew, and materials. Well done community engagement in both the design and painting of the mural creates multiple opportunities for meaningful, hands-on participation by hundreds of people without compromising the artistic quality of the mural.

Wall Size

500 SF (17 ft x 30 ft)



1,250 SF (18 ft x 70 ft)



Murals Created WITHOUT Community-Engaged Design and Painting

- If working with an emerging muralist (less than 8 previous murals), the typical cost will range from \$12 to \$16 per SF.
- If working with a more experienced muralist (more than 8 previous murals), the typical cost will range from \$24 to \$40 per SF.

Murals Created WITH Community-Engaged Design and Painting

- If working with an emerging muralist (less than 8 previous murals), the typical cost will range from \$20 to \$25 per SF.
- If working with a more experienced muralist (more than 8 previous murals), the typical cost will range from \$30 to \$50 per SF.

Ballpark Cost

500 SF (17 ft x 30 ft)



WITHOUT community-engagement:

- Emerging muralist: \$6 – 8,000
- Experienced muralist: \$12 – 20,000

WITH community-engagement:

- Emerging muralist: \$10 - \$12,500
- Experienced muralist: \$15 - \$25,000

Ballpark Cost

1,250 SF (18 ft x 70 ft)



WITHOUT community-engagement:

- Emerging muralist: \$15 - 20,000
- Experienced muralist: \$30 - 50,000

WITH community-engagement:

- Emerging muralist: \$25 - 31,000
- Experienced muralist: \$37 - 62,000

If you want to consider a mural for your property, and have questions - reach out to me!

- Britt Ruhe, Executive Director of Common Wealth Murals
- britt@commonwealthmurals.org
- A picture of your wall and rough measurements of at least one of the dimensions are a good place to start!



Q&A

<https://www.masshousing.com/programs-outreach/housing-stability/impact-initiatives/housing-stability-grants>