

Culture Bridges



Power of culture

LOCAL CULTURAL COUNCIL PROGRAM GUIDELINES

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- <http://massculturalcouncil.org/documents/lccguidelines.pdf>
- Due to the dynamic nature the COVID-19 pandemic in FY21, the Mass Cultural Council has provided additional guidance for Local Cultural Councils and their applicants/grantees at:
- <https://massculturalcouncil.org/covid-19-resources/guidance-for-local-cultural-councilsand-their-grantees-in-response-to-covid-19/>

Purpose of LCC Guidelines

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The purpose of this document is to:

- Provide guidance to local and regional cultural councils on the policies and procedures they must use when awarding and distributing revolving account dollars to grant recipients.
- Explain procedures LCCs must follow to ensure a thoughtful and transparent process for distributing public money.

Primary Responsibilities of LCCs

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- Awarding grants and organizing programs to address local cultural needs
- Soliciting community input and assessing local cultural needs
- Serving as resource for the local cultural community
- Advocating for arts and culture at local, regional, and state levels

LCC Grant Cycle

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October 1st

Councils update Council Priorities and contact information at www.mass-culture.org

Online application form opens

November 16th

Deadline for application submissions at 11:59 PM EST

November – December

LCCs hold voting meetings to review applications

End of February

LCCs send decision notifications to applicants

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

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- Between 5 and 22 members.
- Appointed by top appointing official
- Note: The chief appointing authority and members of the local appropriating authority cannot serve as council members.
- Most terms are three years.
- Members can be appointed for any length of time as long as they don't exceed six consecutive years.

MEMBERSHIP, cont.

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- A member with an expired term shall continue to “serve until the qualification of such member's **successor**,” if needed for the council to reach a quorum.
- Each council must annually elect a **chair, secretary, and treasurer**.
- Local councils may also elect to designate former officers or members as non-voting, **ex officio** council members. *Since they do not vote, they do not count toward the quorum or minimum of five members.*

MANAGEMENT OF LOCAL CULTURAL COUNCIL FUNDS

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Each local council must keep *all funds* (state funds from the MCC, interest earned and locally raised funds) in the [LCC's municipal account](#).

- Must be a revolving account.
- Separate from other monies.
- Councils are entitled to interest.
- Locally-raised funds can be spent outside of MCC guidelines for cultural purposes.
- Funds are distributed by Town Accountant or equivalent.

MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL FUNDS

V. LOCAL FUNDS

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MCC funds:

- **MUST** be spent in upcoming grant cycle
- MUST follow all **state guidelines** and reporting.

Local funds:

- No deadline for spending
- Do not have to follow state guidelines but must support a **cultural purpose**.
- Funds and financial activity must be reported.

FUNDRAISING

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Examples of fundraising:

- private contributions
- local government allocations
- program revenues
- interest from the LCC's municipal account

Donations are tax-deductible.

Donations are treated as locally-raised funds.

Administrative Funds

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LCCs may spend up to 5% of their state allocation each funding cycle for administrative expenses.

E.g.: paid staff, postage, stationery, and publicity

Note: Locally-raised funds can also be used for the same purposes.

Refreshments:

Can be covered at public events like grant receptions.

May not be covered at voting meetings.

Timeline:

Calculate and set aside funds at the beginning of the grant cycle, in the Annual Report by November 16th.

Any unused admin funds must not remain in the account, and must be regranted during the following grant cycle.

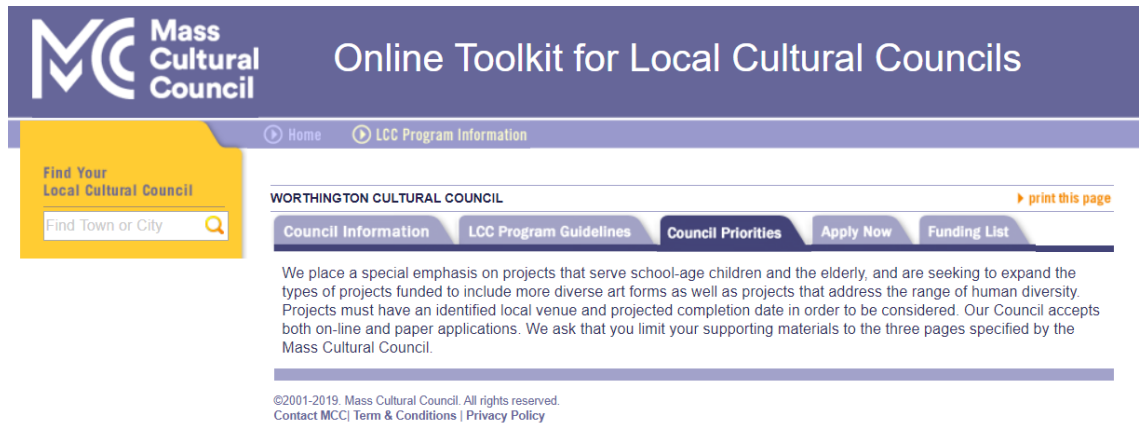
COMMUNITY Engagement

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- LCC's must gather some kind of community input each year in order to get feedback from their communities and inform their council priorities.
- [Community engagement](#) can be conducted in many ways: surveys, public meetings, any conversation with the public.

COUNCIL PRIORITIES

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Must be updated by October 1. You may not make funding decisions based on priorities not listed here.

All councils are strongly encouraged to develop funding priorities.

Autonomy is encouraged in the establishment of local funding priorities, as long as it is within the parameters of the guidelines established by the Mass Cultural Council.

Sections 1 and 2, Annual Report

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Meet with your municipal fiscal officer (usually the municipal treasurer, auditor, or accountant) in October.

The municipal fiscal officer must provide the LCC with a completed [LCC Account Form](#). This document is a summary of activity in your account during the last fiscal year (Section 1)

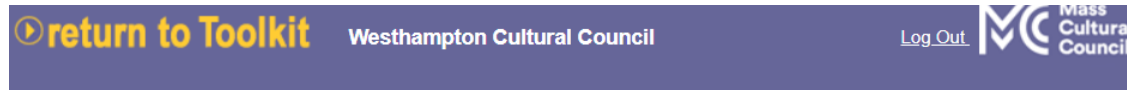
Any differences in the LCC's accounting and the municipality's accounting should be worked out at this time.

Both parties sign the document and the LCC retains the signed original for their use.

Submit Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Report to the Mass Cultural Council through mass-culture.org by November 16.

ANNUAL REPORT

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Annual Report

[Print View](#)

Fiscal Year 2020 ▼

The Annual Report must be submitted to Mass Cultural Council by January 15, 2020. Mass Cultural Council will not transfer your council's allocation until it has been successfully completed. Only after it has been completed can your council send approval letters to successful applicants.

Complete Sections 1 – 9 following the instructions at the top of each section. When you are done working on a section, click "Section Complete" at the bottom of each. Once complete, several sections require that you click "Modify" within the section in order to make changes.

If you have questions about submitting your Annual Report, call your Mass Cultural Council staff contact Mina Kim, at 800-232-0960.

> Section 1: LCC Account Form	COMPLETE
> Section 2: Calculate the amount available for granting	INCOMPLETE
> Section 3: Member List	COMPLETE
> Section 4: Voting Meetings	INCOMPLETE
> Section 5: Denial Letters	INCOMPLETE
> Section 6: Community Input	INCOMPLETE
> Section 7: Applications	INCOMPLETE
> Section 8: Decisions	INCOMPLETE
> Section 9: Submit	INCOMPLETE

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Summary of:

Account activity in past fiscal year

Amount available for granting

Voting meetings

Applications

Granting decisions and amounts

Must complete sections 1 & 2 by November 16.

Must be submitted by February 16.



RECONSIDERATION

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An applicant may request [reconsideration](#) of an LCC decision if the applicant can demonstrate that the LCC failed to follow published **state guidelines and council priorities**.

Disapproval letters must provide applicants with clear reasons for denial based on published state guidelines or council priorities.

“Insufficient funds” does not provide applicants with adequate rationale for disapproval.

The request must be sent in writing to the MCC within 15 days of the notification date on the disapproval letter.

If the MCC determines that the applicant has grounds for reconsideration, the local council must convene a quorum and review the application, as if for the first time.

A decision on any requests for reconsideration should be made before LCCs finalize funding decisions and complete the Annual Report to the MCC. Only after the Annual Report to the MCC has been completed can successful applicants be notified of their approval.

REIMBURSEMENT-BASED

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If approved for a grant, the grantee **expends their own money** on the project.

Once the project is complete, the grantee submits paperwork for [reimbursement](#) to the LCC.

Two LCC Members must sign the Reimbursement Form for approval

Grantees have **one year** from acceptance letter to accept reimbursement.

A grantee can submit an **extension request** to the LCC for approval if more time is needed.

DIRECT GRANT

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Award Letter and Grant Acceptance Form

- Once the LCC has sent denial letters, the reconsideration period has passed, and the LCC has successfully submitted its Annual Report to the Mass Cultural Council, it can notify selected grantees.
- LCCs who are providing direct grants must attach a copy of the Grant Agreement Form to their approval letter. Using the Grant Agreement Form, the grantee will provide payment information and accept the terms and conditions of the grant.

DIRECT GRANT

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Grant Payment Requirements

- In order to receive grant funds, the recipient must submit a completed Grant Agreement Form, which is provided by the council. The form serves the dual purpose of stating performance terms and conditions as well as a payment authorization.
- Payment may be made either directly to the applicant or to third party vendors who will provide goods, materials or services to the applicant. In either case, the LCC must retain a copy of the documentation provided by the applicant as part of the council's records. The grantee will also be asked to complete a W-9 Form which will be attached to the Agreement Form. It is a step necessary to receive a municipal payment.

https://massculturalcouncil.org/documents/lccguidelines_direct_grant.pdf

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

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- Applicants may apply for grants for programs that take place during an 18-month window of eligibility from July 1.
- Applicants may apply for projects that have already happened, with the knowledge that funding is not guaranteed.
- Local councils are authorized to establish a smaller window of eligibility; if they do so, they must publish the eligible dates in their Council Priorities by October 1.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

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Applicants must reside or be located in Massachusetts.

Local councils may accept applications from anyone included in the list below:

Individuals

Incorporated private nonprofit organizations

Unincorporated associations that can establish a nonprofit objective

Public schools, libraries, other municipal agencies, and the local cultural council itself

Religious organizations

FUNDING CRITERIA

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Arts, Humanities, and Science

Public Benefit

Non-Discrimination

Local Criteria - councils have the option of developing local review [criteria](#) and may decide how to weigh their importance. Must be listed in Council Priorities.

Local council funds must be used to support activities that contribute to the cultural vitality of the community as a whole, rather than benefiting any private individual or group.

A large crowd of people does not need to participate in order to satisfy the public benefit requirement. For example, an artist working with a small group of seniors is a valid public benefit.

When possible, activities funded by LCCs should be available to the general public by exhibit, performance, demonstration, reading, or other means.

PUBLIC BENEFIT (CHANGES)

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Programs do not need to be in-person to provide public benefit. Virtual and remote programming are also effective ways to make programming available to the public while supporting efforts to maintain and promote public health.

NON-DISCRIMINATION (CHANGES)

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Therefore, all events and programs funded by the LCCs must consider access for persons with disabilities, including the facility or event location as well as the content of the program. To ensure equitable access, an applicant's first step is a candid assessment and identification of barriers (physical, virtual, cultural, communication) followed by a bold and innovative plan for improvement.

If an applicant puts forward a proposal for a project with strong potential for public benefit, but the Local Cultural Council has concerns about access for persons with disabilities, the council may choose to award a conditional approval (see page 12). This would allow the applicant the opportunity to address the concerns and improve access as a condition of receiving the grant.

LOCAL CRITERIA (CHANGES)

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Because of the impact COVID-19 has had and continues to have on the cultural sector, in FY21 LCCs are strongly encouraged to review their Council Priorities to ensure that they are responsive to the ongoing crisis and uncertainty artists and organizations face and best support the current needs of their community. Based on community input and community need Local Cultural Councils could consider:

- Shifting from project-based support to operating support to allow organizations more responsive, flexible support.
- Loosening local requirements for a set date and set venue at the time of application given the uncertainty applicants face in planning at this time.
- Encouraging applicants to apply for costs associated with moving to virtual programming.
- Describing what your council will be looking for in online/virtual programming to ensure it benefits your community.
- Prioritizing funding for communities most severely impacted by COVID-19 including BIPOC (Black, indigenous, and People of Color) communities, individuals with disabilities, and low-income communities, and individual artists.
- Developing criteria and a process for awarding COVID-19 relief grants to organizations and/or individuals.

FY21 Supplemental Guidelines for Local Cultural Councils in Response to COVID-19

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<https://massculturalcouncil.org/covid-19-resources/guidance-for-local-cultural-councils-and-their-grantees-in-response-to-covid-19>

GRANT RESTRICTIONS: REFRESHMENTS + SCHOLARSHIPS

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Grant funds received from a local council may not be used to purchase food or beverages.

The ONLY acceptable use of MCC funds for refreshments is for a public event (ex: grant reception) hosted by the LCC. Voting meetings are not included.

Individual students are not eligible to apply for scholarships.

An organization may apply to an LCC to sponsor a scholarship provided the Local Council feels the scholarship program provides sufficient public benefit, and if it meets all other state and local criteria.

TECHNICAL DISAPPROVALS

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Do not use “technical disapprovals” (typographic errors, transposing of two fields, etc.) as the sole basis for disapproving applications.

Meeting November 16th deadline is NOT a technicality. Applicants must submit by November 16, 11:59PM EST.

OPEN MEETING LAW

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[Governor Baker has temporarily changed Open Meeting Law](#) requirements to allow remote participation. This means that your council does not need a quorum of members **physically** present to hold a decision meeting.

However, the public must still have access to the virtual meetings. As a result, **do not hold any virtual meetings until you seek and receive permission and guidance from your city or town**. The municipality will determine the process by which municipal boards and commissions can hold virtual meetings, and/or if they can hold them at all.

All meetings must be open to the public.

[Meetings](#) must be posted with the municipality at least 2 business days in advance.

A quorum (more than half) of appointed LCC members is required in order to vote.

PUBLIC RECORDS LAW

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- All records of the actions of local councils are considered public information and are subject to the state's public records law.
- You should take **minutes** at every meeting. LCCs must respond to requests to view these materials "without unreasonable delay."
- Records must be stored in a public place for **6 years**. Your **Town Clerk** can tell you where they prefer to store records.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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In cases where there is a real or perceived conflict of interest, the member should abstain from both the discussion and vote.

Visit our [Conflict of Interest](#) page for examples.

Contact the [Attorney-of-the-Day](#) for specific questions.

COUNCIL PROGRAMS

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An LCC may spend up to **15% of its state allocation** to support programs initiated by the local council itself.

The project should respond to cultural needs that are **not otherwise being addressed** in the community.

Use your **community input process** to ask for specific suggestions or to elicit feedback.

A **final report** is due on February 16 of the following grant year.

COUNCIL PROGRAMS: PROGRAM RESTRICTIONS

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- Council Program funds cannot be spent on administrative expenses.
- Funds raised locally from local council programs must be kept in the LCC's municipal account.
- Each member of the council must carefully follow the conflict of interest procedures.

CREDIT AND PUBLICITY

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Power of culture

All grant recipients are required to [acknowledge](#) the financial support of the LCC that approved their grant and the MCC in published materials and announcements about their project.

"This program has applied for support from the [City/Town] Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency."

Community Initiative

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