

BOSTON **Boston Cultural Council**
CULTURAL **Grant & Application Guidelines**
COUNCIL *Fall 2020*

About the Boston Cultural Council

The Boston Cultural Council (BCC), under the umbrella of the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture, helps to ensure that grant making responds to the needs of the cultural community and that best practices for grant solicitation, review and disbursement are followed. The BCC annually distributes funds allocated by the City of Boston and the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency, to support innovative arts, humanities, and interpretive science programming that enhances the quality of life in our city.

The council members are Boston residents appointed by Mayor Martin J. Walsh for up to two consecutive three year terms. Council members are selected on the basis of their demonstrated commitment to Boston's cultural community and their knowledge of various arts disciplines. The BCC reviews applications to evaluate the quality of proposed programming and potential benefit to diverse audiences in Boston.

Boston Cultural Council Equity Statement

To truly thrive, Boston must be an equitable city. For the Boston Cultural Council, equity means equal access to resources and equal value of all cultural traditions and expressions. Equity operates as an out-loud process of actively reflecting, including, and rewarding cultural, economic, and racial diversity in the arts.

The BCC actively encourages the creativity and engagement of all. We do this through our grantmaking guided by the Boston Creates cultural plan. Our grants emphasize fair opportunity, accessibility and understanding of Boston's arts and cultural communities. Our programmatic, financial, and informational resources also pro-actively encourage equity and inclusion within the organizations¹ we support.

A Shift in the BCC's Grant Strategy

Ensuring BCC grants contribute towards the goals above requires intentional effort to fund organizations that promote cultural equity in the Boston arts ecosystem. It is for this reason that the BCC has recently made a shift in its grant making strategy. Rather than grant to organizations within any budget range, going forward, the BCC will be more intentional in supporting small to mid-sized arts organizations in the Boston arts ecosystem. [Click here to read more about the BCC's new funding strategy.](#)

¹ The BCC uses the term "organizations" broadly in this document to refer to all eligible applicants to the BCC, which include non-profit organizations and groups using a fiscal agent including unincorporated entities or artist collectives.

Grant Categories and Eligibility

Under the revised grant making approach, the BCC offers general operating support grants to organizations with budgets of less than \$2 million.

Grant Categories

Organizations may apply for grants up to a set limit, based on their organizational size (total expenses from the most recently completed fiscal year). If an organization is selected as a recipient, they will receive the total amount they are eligible in their budget category. The categories are:

- Organizations with budgets less than \$100,000 may apply for a grant of \$2,000
- Organizations with budgets between \$100,000 and \$500,000 may apply for a grant of \$3,500
- Organizations with budgets between \$500,000 and \$2,000,000 may apply for a grant of \$5,000

Eligibility - *Who is Eligible to Apply?*

- Non-profit cultural organizations with budgets under \$2 million whose mission and programming is focused in the following disciplines: Music, Film and Video, Traditional and Folk Art, Visual Art, Theater, Dance, Humanities, Literary Arts, Performing Arts, Social/Civic Practice, Multidisciplinary Arts.
- Non-profits whose mission is not primarily arts and culture based, but who are looking to fund arts and culture programs are welcome to apply.
- Organizations not based in the City of Boston, but whose primary programming takes place in Boston, are eligible.
- Unincorporated groups can apply with a fiscal sponsor as long as they meet the rest of the eligibility criteria. This includes: artist collectives, volunteer groups, publications, and any other group jointly working toward common goals.
- Organizations can submit only one proposal per funding cycle.
- Non-profits with L3C designations are eligible to apply.

Grant Fund Restrictions

Grant funding may not be used for the following items:

- To pay salaries or stipends for employees of the school system, library, parks department, or municipality.
- On capital expenditures for schools, libraries, other municipal agencies.
- On programming that discriminates or discourages participation on the basis of race, gender, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, disability, sexual orientation, or age.

The BCC does not award grants to*:

- K-12 schools or K-12 school foundations
- Main Streets organizations
- Colleges or universities
- "Friends of..." organizations whose primary purpose is to support government entities

**While these entities are not currently eligible for BCC grants, they are eligible for the Opportunity Fund, Project Partnership grant, and other MOAC support.*

How to Apply

Application Checklist

- Account registration with Submittable.com
- Most recent financial information like a board approved budget or a budget completed using the BCC budget template
- Financial documents such as Forms 990 or 1023 that contain your organization's EIN, year of formation, and NTEE code (if applicable)
- Online application including your organization's mission statement
- Up to three support materials such as brochures, flyers, images, or other collateral that demonstrates your programming and mission

Application Forms and Submission

BCC uses Submittable.com for all grant applications. If you are a first time applicant, you will need to create an account with Submittable. Grant updates and final reports will be made through this account, so we recommend using an email address that is generic for your organization - something that multiple people have access to. While we prefer to have all proposals submitted online, we also accept hand-written hard copies. Hard copies can be picked up in 1 City Hall Square, eighth floor room 802.

Application Deadline

The BCC grant application opens on October 1 2020. Applications must be received on or before November 16, 2020 at 5 p.m. EST (ONLINE only). Paper applications must be received by November 13, 2020 5:00 pm EST. No late applications will be accepted.

Review Process

Once received, grant applications are initially reviewed for eligibility and completeness. If eligible and complete, they are then read and evaluated by MOAC staff as well as members of the BCC, and scored against an evaluation rubric. Applications will be divided first by budget tier, second by neighborhood, and third by discipline, with an eye toward city-wide representation. Scores are then tallied, averaged, and applications are then discussed in meetings during the fall and winter. Awardees will be notified of BCC funding decisions in January.

Evaluation Criteria

Once basic eligibility is met, proposals will be evaluated based on a set criteria. Please see the rubric on page 5 to view the evaluation criteria.

Reconsideration

An applicant may request reconsideration of a decision on its application if the applicant can demonstrate that the BCC failed to follow published application and review procedures. Such requests must be submitted in writing to the Boston Cultural Council within fifteen (15) days of notification. No reconsideration may be requested regarding the amount or a decision made about artistic quality or programming priorities.

Grant Payment

During the 2019 grant cycle, all Boston Cultural Council grants will be made in full and up front. Applicants must demonstrate at least a 1:1 match. The match can include in-kind (non-monetary gifts of goods and services) or donated contributions. Awardees have one calendar year from notice of award to submit a final report or be ineligible for funding in the next year.

Conflict of Interest

The Boston Cultural Council observes the Mass Cultural Council's Conflict of Interest Policy regarding review panels. To ensure that all review panels are free from conflicts of interests, panelists are required to disclose any current or prospective affiliations they or their immediate family members have with an actual or potential applicant. "Affiliation" applies to employment, board memberships, independent contractual relationships, advisory or policy relationships, substantial contributor relationships, or other financial relationships. In addition, panelists are required to disclose any past or current adversarial relationships with actual or potential applicants. Panelists will not be permitted to participate in discussions or votes relating to applicants with whom they have an affiliation or relationship.

BCC Evaluation Criteria

CATEGORY	POINTS	SCORING CRITERIA	APPLICATION QUESTIONS
Eligibility (Yes or No)	Yes / No	The organization is a nonprofit organization or has a fiscal sponsor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your organization type? • What is your organization’s EIN? • If applicable, what year did your organization receive IRS tax exemption status?
	Yes / No	The applicant or its programming is located in the City of Boston.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is your organization located in the city of Boston?
	Yes / No	The applicant has a budget size under \$2 million.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total Grant Amount Requesting?
Artistic Impact (5 points)	/ 5	The organization provides public benefit and contributes to the cultural vitality of the community as a whole.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please state the mission of your organization. • Do you pay artists directly? • Please specify the total dollar amount of your operating budget that goes toward artists. • In what ways does your organization present an improved or unique perspective on arts and culture to Boston’s increasingly diverse audiences?
Ability to Implement Programs (5 points)	/ 5	The applicant demonstrates strong fiscal and administrative capacity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please upload your organization’s operating budget for your current fiscal year. • What was your organization’s total operating expense for the most recent fiscal year (FY20)?
Alignment with BCC equity statement (10 points)	/ 5	The organization demonstrates meaningful representation of Boston's diverse communities or meaningfully serves a historically under-supported constituency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your organization primarily serve a particular ethnic group? If yes, which? • Does your organization serve a specific age group? If yes, which? • What other distinct groups do you define as primary constituents?
	/ 5	The organization meaningfully addresses diversity, equity, and inclusion in their leadership, board, staff, and programming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways does your organization expand access to arts and culture for Boston's diverse audiences? • In what ways does your organization address a community need or empower the community through arts and culture? • What relevant experience and qualifications do your leadership and staff have for working in the communities you serve?