

Boston Cultural Council + Reopen Creative Boston Grant & Application Guidelines

Fall 2021

This year, in addition to the **Boston Cultural Council** grants, the City of Boston is also offering grants for **Reopen Creative Boston** - funding available through the American Rescue Plan Act for arts and culture organizations that need financial relief as a result of COVID-19.

In order to streamline this process, the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture has ***one application form for all applicants***. Please review the information below before applying.

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 the mayor 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.

BCC 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 made a shift in its grant making strategy in 2019. Rather than grant to organizations within any budget range, the BCC will be more intentional in supporting small to mid-sized arts organizations in the Boston arts ecosystem by focusing on organizations with annual budgets under \$2 million. Click [here](#) to read more about the BCC's funding strategy.

Beginning in 2021, the BCC is further supporting small organizations by committing the majority of grant funds to those with the smallest budgets.

BCC Grant Categories and Eligibility

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 \$5,000
- 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 \$2,000

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.
- 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.

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.

- 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 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)
- Materials for the 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 September 1, 2021. Applications must be received on or before October 15, 2021 at 5 p.m. 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 BCC council members, and scored against an evaluation rubric. 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 December.

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 grant notification. No reconsideration may be requested regarding the amount or a decision made about artistic quality or programming priorities.

Grant Payment

During the 2021 grant cycle, all Boston Cultural Council grants will be made in full and up front. Due to COVID-19, grant reporting was waived in 2020. In 2021, we anticipate replacing the grant report with a survey to continue to understand the impact of COVID-19 on organizations. The Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture will reach out to grantees with more information about any reporting requirements in 2022.

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.

Reopen Creative Boston Guidelines

Reopen Creative Boston is a \$3M grant program to cover expenses related to reopening the arts and culture sector and resuming cultural programming and services.

Eligibility:

- Arts and cultural organizations of any budget size that can demonstrate that they have been negatively economically impacted by COVID-19, such as: performing arts facilities, music venues, creative youth development organizations, and presenting organizations.

Grant categories and amounts:

- Up to \$50,000 for non profit arts and cultural organizations to cover costs for reopening and restarting programs. Eligible costs include payroll, debt service, rent, and costs related to ongoing organizational shifts in response to the negative economic impact of COVID-19 such as consulting services and new technology costs.
- Arts and Cultural non profit and for profit organizations that operate and own cultural facilities will be eligible for an additional grant up to \$50,000.
- *Please note that while grants are up to \$50,000 grant amounts will be determined based on demonstrated financial need and number of applications.*

How to apply

All applicants for Reopen Creative Boston will complete the application questions for the Boston Cultural Council (BCC) grant.

In addition to the BCC application, Reopen Creative Boston applicants will be asked to submit the following additional information as required for the disbursement of American Rescue Plan Act funds :

- Your organization's DUNS number (If you have applied for funds from the federal government before, your organization already has a DUNS number. To look up your number or to register a new number, visit: [registration link](#))
- Explain your organization's current financial picture, including your current costs and financial challenges going into the calendar year 2022.
 - You need to be clear and specific in order to be considered for funding. Include information about how your organization has been financially impacted by COVID-19 and how this year's budget and staffing compares to pre-COVID revenue and expenses.
 - If you have received other relief and recovery funds (federal or local), please detail the dollar amounts you have received from each program and what role those funds play in your current financial picture for 2021-2022.
 - If you are applying for funds in order to service debt, please detail which loans you are servicing and how they are related to the impact of COVID-19 on your organization.
 - If you have a budget or itemized expenses that you can include to provide more detail, you can upload them at the end of this application.
- Do you operate a cultural facility? If yes, please provide the facility's address
- Optional: Upload additional financial information

- You can use this section to upload a reopening budget or any backup documents that help explain how your organization has been impacted by COVID-19.

Sharing your organization's financial information

The Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture appreciates your patience as we navigate this new federal funding opportunity. We know that many people who are applying have had to sustain their work and their organizations through many similar applications to the city, state, and federal government - and we are all very tired and facing many uncertainties!

To that end, please use the space in the application to detail your economic picture as clearly as possible. We are already with you and do not need to be convinced that you are doing worthy work. What we will need is a clear case for economic need based on your finances. If you are unsure of how best to present this information, please contact bcc@boston.gov for help.

Scoring Matrix for BCC Operating Grants 2021-22

1. Organizational & Financial Eligibility

The applicant is a 501c3 or is fiscally sponsored. Their budget size falls into the grant program categories.

Yes / No

Questions:

- **The Facts:** Uploads, IRS Letter, Total Operating Budget, Other funding from City of Boston.

2. Meaningful Arts Work

2a. Arts Discipline

The organization is doing meaningful work in an area of the arts that aligns with BCC funding priorities in the City of Boston.

Questions:

- **The Facts:** Org. Type
- **The Basics:** Who, what do you do, where, and why? How long?

0

(Fails to meet criteria)

1

(Meets some criteria)

2

(Meets criteria)

3

(Exceeds criteria)

2b. Authentic Community Roots

The organization has solid community roots, whether by being locally led (power and decision making are community-driven) and/or having authentic partnerships.

Questions:

- **The Basics:** Where are you? Which neighborhoods? Who do you partner with?
- **Equity in Boston:** Serves historically excluded communities?

0

(Fails to meet criteria)

1

(Meets some criteria)

2

(Meets criteria)

3

(Exceeds criteria)

Meaningful Artwork Subtotal
(up to 6 points)

3. Unique Value to Boston Arts Ecosystem

	0	1	2	3
<p>3a. Serves Unique Gap/Need</p> <p>The organization fills an important gap in the Boston arts ecosystem.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Equity In Boston: Present a unique artistic or cultural perspective? ● The Basics: Who are you? Where? ● The Basics: What do you do & Why? ● The Basics: How long? ● The Basics: How much does it cost? Percentage of expenses for artists. ● Your Mission & Values: Mission ● How do you know you will be successful? 	<p>0</p> <p>(Fails to meet criteria)</p>	<p>1</p> <p>(Meets some criteria)</p>	<p>2</p> <p>(Meets criteria)</p>	<p>3</p> <p>(Exceeds criteria)</p>
<p>3b. Innovating Programming</p> <p>The organization offers interesting, creative and innovative programming in Boston that is arts-centered.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Equity In Boston: Present a unique artistic or cultural perspective? ● The Basics: Who are you? Where? ● The Basics: What do you do & Why? ● The Basics: How long? ● The Basics: How much does it cost? Percentage of expenses for artists. ● Your Mission & Values: Mission ● How do you know you will be successful? 	<p>0</p> <p>(Fails to meet criteria)</p>	<p>1</p> <p>(Meets some criteria)</p>	<p>2</p> <p>(Meets criteria)</p>	<p>3</p> <p>(Exceeds criteria)</p>
<p>2c. Program Alignment with Need</p> <p>The programming is aligned with the gap in the ecosystem (they are doing good important work that meets the need in Boston).</p> <p>Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Equity In Boston: Present a unique artistic or cultural perspective? ● The Basics: Who are you? Where? 	<p>0</p> <p>(Fails to meet criteria)</p>	<p>1</p> <p>(Meets some criteria)</p>	<p>2</p> <p>(Meets criteria)</p>	<p>3</p> <p>(Exceeds criteria)</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Basics: What do you do & Why? ● The Basics: How long? ● The Basics: How much does it cost? Percentage of expenses for artists. ● Your Mission & Values: Mission ● How do you know you will be successful? 				
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<p><u>Unique Value to Boston Arts Ecosystem Subtotal</u> (up to 9 points)</p>				
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4. Equity Alignment

4a. Diverse & Equitable Employer	0	1	2	3
<p>The organization is an equitable employer, and has intentional plans and actions in regards to diversity.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Basics: Who are you (how do you reflect Boston’s diverse communities)? ● Your Mission & Values: Mission Statement. Describe your values. Tell us about your Equity commitment. 	(Fails to meet criteria)	(Meets some criteria)	(Meets criteria)	(Exceeds criteria)

4b. Inclusive Policies	0	1	2	3
<p>The organization has an authentic commitment to inclusive organizational policies. They are on a journey and may have aspirational plans or have concrete examples and experience that they articulate in a meaningful way.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Equity in Boston: What relevant experience, hiring, promotion practices and learning has your leadership committed to that enables you to serve Boston’s historically excluded communities? ● Your Mission & Values: Mission Statement. Describe your values. Tell us about your Equity commitment. 	(Fails to meet criteria)	(Meets some criteria)	(Meets criteria)	(Exceeds criteria)

<p>4c. Removing Barriers</p> <p>The organization is intentional about removing barriers to the arts.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Equity in Boston: In what ways does your organization expand access? Serve different abilities? Reach historically excluded communities? 	<p>0</p> <p>(Fails to meet criteria)</p>	<p>1</p> <p>(Meets some criteria)</p>	<p>2</p> <p>(Meets criteria)</p>	<p>3</p> <p>(Exceeds criteria)</p>
<p>4d. Values</p> <p>The work they do is aligned with the BCC’s vision of equity.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Your Mission & Values: Mission Statement. Describe your values. Tell us about your Equity commitment. ● The Basics. Who are you? 	<p>0</p> <p>(Fails to meet criteria)</p>	<p>1</p> <p>(Meets some criteria)</p>	<p>2</p> <p>(Meets criteria)</p>	<p>3</p> <p>(Exceeds criteria)</p>
<p>4e. Reviewer’s Cut</p> <p>This is an opportunity for the reviewer to rate the overall application in case the questions have missed an important component the applicant shared. Please rate the organization and their work on a scale of 0 to 3 based on your overall equity impression. If reflective of information not captured by this matrix, please note in comments.</p>	<p>0</p> <p>(Fails to meet criteria)</p>	<p>1</p> <p>(Meets some criteria)</p>	<p>2</p> <p>(Meets criteria)</p>	<p>3</p> <p>(Exceeds criteria)</p>
<p>Equity Alignment Subtotal (up to 15 points)</p>	<input type="text"/>			
<p>Total (out of 30 points)</p>	<input type="text"/>			