

CAMBRIDGE ARTS | GRANTS

Local Cultural Council Grant Guidelines

Individuals and organizations may apply to the LCC Grant for projects, ticket subsidy programs, cultural field trips for children, public art, or other activities. Individuals or organizations can apply for grants up to \$5,000 to support arts programs or field trips.

Table of Contents

LCC Grants Application Process Overview	1
LCC Grant Descriptions	1
Grant Amounts	2
LCC Grant Eligibility	2
Funding Restrictions	4
LCC Project Grant Review Criteria	4
LCC Grant Application Instructions:	6
Grant Program Timeline	9
General Tips and Advice for Applicants	10
About Cambridge Arts	10

LCC Grants Application Process Overview

1. Read more about the LCC Grant ([Application Process – Mass Cultural Council](#)).
2. Review state application guidelines ([FY27 Local Cultural Council Guidelines \(massculturalcouncil.org\)](#)) and application process ([Application Process – Mass Cultural Council](#)).
3. Check out the Cambridge Arts Council’s Priorities and complete the online application ([How To Apply For Cambridge Arts Grants - Cambridge Arts - City of Cambridge, Massachusetts \(cambridgema.gov\)](#)) via the Mass Cultural Council portal.

LCC Grant Descriptions

- Project Grants support the development and presentation of new arts programs or public art that benefit Cambridge communities.
- Field Trip Grants are used to purchase tickets for Cambridge youth, grades pre-K through 12, to attend professional arts and cultural events, in or outside of Cambridge.

Note: Projects and field trips must be completed within the allotted 18 months from July 1st of the submission year to December 31st of the following year. Recipients who fail to complete their project or submit the required final report documentation will be ineligible for future grants for a term of two years, will have their final payment withheld, and may be required to reimburse Cambridge Arts the initial granted amount. All programs and field trips should be designed with public health precautions in mind, and if any projects or field trips cannot move forward as planned, grantees can work with Cambridge Arts to make appropriate accommodations.

Grant Amounts

Project Grants

LCC Grant amounts will vary depending on the amount requested and available funding. Applicants can apply for up to \$5,000 for projects. Funding will be awarded to individuals or organizations to carry out cultural programs that benefit people who live or work in Cambridge.

Field Trip Grants

Up to five Field Trip Grants will be awarded to organizations or individuals to fund field trips for Cambridge school students for cultural experiences. The amount of these awards will vary depending on the amount requested.

LCC Grant Eligibility

Applicants must be based in Cambridge (as a resident, an employee, or partnered with a Cambridge organization). For applicants who are not based in Cambridge, a letter of collaboration and support from a Cambridge-based partner is required. All projects must be based in Cambridge and benefit Cambridge residents. The location of the project must be at a Cambridge venue or site.

Individual artists, artist groups, arts organizations, community organizations, and municipal agencies working in all genres and media are all eligible to apply for LCC Grant funds. Funding supports projects, workshops, residencies, public art initiatives and other such activities in the fields of arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences.

- Individuals
Individual applicants must show that the project will benefit the community. (Although funds cannot be used to support activities that benefit only the individual applicant, a public presentation of an individual's work may provide the needed public benefit.)
- Private nonprofit organizations
This includes organizations with tax-exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- Associations that can establish a nonprofit objective
This includes organizations that can establish a nonprofit objective— that is, groups of

individuals with a common purpose (e.g., local community band, theater group) that do not have nonprofit 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status.

- Schools, libraries, or other public agencies
Public agencies are eligible to apply for funding, but funds may not be used to replace municipal funding for the arts, humanities, or interpretive sciences.
- Religious organizations
Religious organizations or groups with a religious affiliation are eligible to apply for the same funding of cultural programming available to the general public. However, Cambridge Arts cannot approve applications that are not primarily cultural in their intent, have the effect of advancing religion, or substantially benefit religious organizations or schools.

Project Eligibility

- Program Eligibility
All approved projects and field trips must be completed within an 18-month window of eligibility, between the July 1st preceding the application deadline in November, and December 31st of the following year.
- Arts, Humanities and Interpretive Sciences
The funds may only be used to support programs in the arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences in Cambridge. This definition includes the study, pursuit, performance, exhibition, and appreciation of cultural activities.
- Public Benefit
Projects must demonstrate a community benefit. Funds support activities that contribute to the cultural vitality of the community as a whole, rather than benefiting any one private individual or group. This does not mean that a large audience needs to participate in order to satisfy the requirement of community benefit.
- Non-Discrimination
Cambridge Arts will not fund projects that discriminate on the basis of race, gender, religion, creed, color, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or age.
- No Substitution
LCC funds are neither intended to replace nor supplement existing public funds for programs in the arts, humanities, or interpretive sciences, nor to be used as the sole source of project funding. Any item or activity that is generally considered the financial responsibility of the City will not be approved, even if funding did not previously exist for that item or activity. Expenses related to classroom or other school-sponsored programs or extracurricular activities are not eligible for funding. Funding for standard extracurricular activities (e.g., school plays, musicals, bands, newspapers, art supplies, library books or audiovisual materials, or salaries for teachers or librarians) will not be approved. Schools and libraries may only request funding for cultural enrichment

activities (field trips, artist-in-residency programs, lectures, performances, etc.) that are led by outside artists, humanists, or interpretive scientists. The cultural professional cannot be a current employee of the school system.

- Access

The Mass Cultural Council and its grantees are contractually committed to abide by state and federal regulations which bar discrimination on the basis of race, gender, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, disability, age, gender identity, or sexual orientation, and which require accessibility for persons with disabilities. The Mass Cultural Council and its grantees are expected to be in compliance with:

- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504)
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Other applicable state and local laws

The Mass Cultural Council aims to help grantees understand their obligations and recognize the opportunities that increasing access can provide for both the public and the grantee. Cultural organizations funded by Cambridge Arts that present public programs or offer services to the public must make reasonable accommodations to ensure that people with disabilities have equal physical and communications access, as defined by federal law.

Funding Restrictions

- **Repeat Funding:** In order to ensure broad distribution of funds and to encourage new applicants and new programs, projects may not receive funding for more than two consecutive years. Applicants who received funding for two consecutive years must wait one year before applying again for the *same project*. However, applicants may receive funding for more than two consecutive years for *new projects*.

We highly recommend that you contact us as soon as you have an idea for a grant proposal so that we can give you feedback and help frame your concept for this grant.

Deena Anderson at danderson@cambridgema.gov

LCC Project Grant Review Criteria

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Quality and creativity of the project's design2. Involvement from and significance to diverse communities*3. Key personnel4. Clarity and feasibility of budget, timeline, and evaluation plans |
|--|

* We define diverse communities as groups that have strong representation from people who identify with dimensions of diversity including race, ethnicity, age, physical and mental ability, income, sexual orientation, and language, among other factors.

1. Quality and Creativity of the Projects' Design
 - What are the motivations behind the project, how well outlined is the project's approach?
 - Does this project represent a particularly innovative or creative viewpoint?
 - How does this project contribute to a larger discourse within its medium?
 - Will this project make a strong impression on its viewership or the artist that is creating it?
2. Involvement from and significance to diverse communities
 - How readily available will this project be to the community?
 - What can community members take away from this project?
 - Does this project explore any themes that are relevant to the surrounding community?
 - Does this project address specific needs/interests of the community it is intended to serve?
 - Are there letters of support from members of the community?
 - Is there significant representation of BIPOC in the key personnel?
 - What is the target audience; how does this audience reflect the dimensions of diversity stated above?
 - How will the target audience gain access to this project?
 - How well will this project engage a diverse audience?
3. Key Personnel
 - Are their qualifications sufficient to complete project in the manner outlined by the proposal?
 - What roles will key personnel play and how do these roles reflect their background?
 - Are there any areas of expertise?
 - Have there been any significant awards or distinctions given?
 - Is the applicant an emerging artist or professional?
 - How would this project elevate the applicant's professional status?
 - Do the key personnel represent diverse audiences as defined in the dimensions of diversity above?
4. Clarity & Feasibility of Budget, Timeline, and Evaluation Plans
 - Does the applicant demonstrate an understanding of the project's scope & scale?
 - Does the budget clearly state how all funds will be utilized?
 - Does the timeline adequately address the nature of the project?
 - Do the evaluation plans consist of a comprehensive approach?
 - Overall, how detailed are the budget, timeline, and evaluation plans?

LCC Grant Application Instructions:

All Applications must be submitted online via the Mass Cultural Council Grant Application web portal: [Application Process – Mass Cultural Council](#)

- **The Mass Cultural Council Application must be submitted by 11:59pm on Thursday, October 15, 2026 via the MCC online application portal.**
- **Applicants may submit only one Project Grant application.**
- Hard copies applications will NOT be accepted.
- The Mass Cultural Council online application consists of four sections:
 1. Applicant Information
 2. Project Information
 3. Budget Section
 4. Supplemental Materials

You can submit supplemental materials up to 3 pdf pages via the Mass Cultural Council Application portal.

Application Steps

1. Go to the above website and click “Applicant” to open applicant portal.
2. Type “Cambridge” in the search box at the top left corner, then select Cambridge Arts Council as the Local Cultural Council (LCC) to which you are applying.
3. Click the “Council Priorities” tab to review our guidelines and ensure you are aware of and meet all local Cambridge Arts Council requirements.
4. Disable ALL Popup blockers and when ready to proceed, click the “Apply Now” tab.
5. Click the orange “Register here” button to complete a onetime registration process.
6. Once submitted, log in to your personal e-mail account and follow the instructions in the e-mail sent to you to complete your registration.
7. Using your newly created log-in information, log on to the Mass Cultural Council’s web application portal at the above URL.
8. Click “Apply Now” and take the short eligibility quiz to determine if you and your project meet the state qualifications.
9. Follow the on-screen instructions to complete and submit your application.

Mass Cultural Council Online Application Form Details:

- **Applicant Information**

Enter the applicant name or contact person. If you are an individual, enter your name under Applicant Name and also as Contact Person. In the case of collaborations, choose one organization or individual to represent the group.

Keep in mind that the applicant is responsible for receiving and disbursing grant funds. If applicant is not a non-profit organization, grant funds are considered taxable income.

- Project Information
 - Under “Project Title,” enter a brief title for your project (e.g. Youth Concert Series, Film Festival, Poetry Series, etc.)
 - Under “Amount Requested from LCC,” fill in the amount you are requesting for your project.
 - Answer questions as clearly and specifically as possible. Remember that the panel may not be familiar with your project or organization. Use short sentences and avoid jargon.
- Budget Section
 - a. Projected Expenses

List the cash expenses for your project, breaking them down into the most appropriate categories. Include general estimated costs. Possible budget items include: artist fees, materials, staff time, documentation, accessibility services such as ASL interpretation or open captioning, equipment rentals, space rental, transportation, marketing or outreach, printing, technology, installation, maintenance, etc. Clearly note which item(s) of the budget this grant would support.
 - Projected Income

List out any funding sources in the section provided.
 - Matching Funds

Matching Funds are strongly encouraged but not required for standard projects costs.
 - Under “In-Kind Donations” list any donated materials, facilities, and/or services (i.e. those which you do not need to pay for such as free performance or rehearsal space, donated art supplies, volunteer labor, pro-bono consulting work, etc.) Monetary estimations of in-kind support are not required and are not calculated in the budget section of the application form. However, applicants are encouraged to list approximate “fair market value” to the best of their ability and include these items and estimations in the break-out/detailed budget submitted with the required supplementary materials.
- Supplemental Materials
 - The MCC Application has a “Supplemental Materials” tab where applicants can submit a pdf document up to three pages long with additional information.
 - Your Supplemental Materials can include the following content depending on what would best support your application:
 1. *Letter of Support/Venue Confirmation*

Letters of support should confirm the commitment of collaborators to the project. Applicants are highly encouraged to include letters from community members showing support for their project.

Provide written confirmation that your project will take place at the proposed venue. This can be submitted as a letter from the venue, an email confirmation, a rental agreement, an official schedule of events including your project, or any other written confirmation that your project is scheduled to take place at your proposed venue. Organizations hosting the proposed project at their own venue are not required to submit this confirmation.

2. *Estimated Timeline*

Provide a timeline for the project. The timeline should be a detailed overview of when the elements of the project will be carried out.

3. *Evaluation Plan*

Provide an explanation for how you intend to evaluate the success of your project and describe any follow-up/evaluation activities you have planned.

4. *Artistic Support Materials*

Submit a set of support materials that best represent the artists involved in the project. There should be a clear relationship between the support materials and the proposed project.

5. *Cambridge Public School Related Projects:*

Letter of Eligibility from the Cambridge Public Schools Visual and Performing Arts Division

For projects involving the Cambridge Public Schools, you must get a letter of support from the Director of Visual & Performing Arts for the Cambridge Public School District, Andrea Zuniga. Before Ms. Zuniga can provide a letter of support, applicants must complete the following steps:

- a) Email Ms. Zuniga directly at azuniga@cpsd.us with a brief description of your program/project so that she is aware of what is being proposed. You should also indicate which school, age groups, and teachers/administrators you are interested in working with. If you need assistance making those connections, you can ask Ms. Zuniga for advice based on the program you are proposing. However, it is the responsibility of the applicant to identify and secure a partner to work with within the school system. Ms. Zuniga will call with questions if further clarification is needed.
- b) Contact the school(s) you plan to involve and ask the principal, assistant principal, or teacher you will be working with to make all appropriate plans and arrangements. Once connections have been made, the person within the school system that you are partnering with must email Ms. Zuniga a

brief letter indicating that they are indeed interested in the proposal and will work with you if you are funded. This does not need to be long; a simple sentence or two indicating their interest and willingness to partner is enough.

- c) Once these two steps have been completed, Ms. Zuniga will then send a signed form letter to you, the applicant, indicating that you have spoken to the people with whom you propose to work and that the proposal is feasible. Please allow 3-5 days for processing. You must include this letter with the rest of your proposal materials when submitting your grant application to Cambridge Arts. Letters will not be accepted separately. Once secured, the letter should be uploaded as part of the PDF in the Supplemental Materials section of the online application.

6. *Public Art Projects:*

Letter of Eligibility from Cambridge Arts Public Art Division, email Lillian Hsu, lhsu@cambridgema.gov and Hilary Zelson, hzelson@cambridgema.gov to schedule a meeting.

For projects that involve temporary or permanent installation of artwork in public space, applicants must meet with the Cambridge Arts Public Art Division and secure a Statement of Eligibility. Please see our Public Art Guidelines document on the Cambridge Arts Grant Program website for more information.

Grant Program Timeline

Tuesday, September 1, 2026

Applications Open

Monday, September 21, 2026

Public Art & School Proposals Eligibility Due Date
Applications for public art or school related projects must have met with the appropriate approval parties by this time.

Thursday, October 15, 2026 @ 11:59pm

Application Submission Due Date
All applications & support materials must be submitted online by 11:59pm.

December 2026 - January 2027

Community – led Review Panels Convene

February - March 2027

Applicants Notified of Decisions

July 1, 2026 – December 31, 2027

Projects in Progress

December 31, 2027

Final Reports Due, **All projects must be completed and final reports submitted.**

General Tips and Advice for Applicants

- Keep in mind that panelists read and review multiple applications. Be as clear and concise as possible.
- Late applications and supplementary materials will not be accepted for review.
- We're happy to help you work through questions and concerns you may have as you're preparing your application. If you're having trouble figuring things out, we'd like to help. Never applied before and need help decoding the application? We want to help! Sign up for our grant info sessions, September 14, 21, 28, and Oct. 5, 5 – 6 pm; reach out to Maura Mendoza at mmendoza@cambridgema.gov to register.
- **Applicants can submit only one application to the Cambridge Arts Grant Program for the 2026/2027 cycle.** If you need help deciding which grant opportunity to pursue, please reach out to us and we can talk through the options.
- The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) provides useful tools for ensuring accessibility for your planned program or event, including the Accessibility Planning and Resource Guide for Cultural Administrators.
<https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/AccessibilityPlanningAll.pdf>

About Cambridge Arts

The Cambridge Arts Council is a city agency that funds, promotes, and presents high-quality, community-based arts programming for the benefit of artists, residents, and visitors to Cambridge, MA. Established in 1974, Cambridge Arts is one of the oldest and most dynamic arts agencies in the country. As a public nonprofit, Cambridge Arts operates with funding from local government, private foundations, corporate sponsors, and individual donors and delivers on its mission by fulfilling three primary roles:

- **Connector:** Through partnerships with artists, presenters, donors, and audiences, the agency operates as a vital cultural presence in the region. From connecting local youth with professional teaching artists to securing performance space for both emerging and established ensembles and introducing residents to local artists through Cambridge Open Studios, Cambridge Arts links people and resources from across the artistic spectrum to spark innovative collaboration.
- **Presenter:** In addition to exhibitions and educational programming presented in Gallery 344, Cambridge Arts stages high-profile events such as the Cambridge River Festival, a signature city celebration and regional event. The festival features a wide array of music, dance, theater and visual art and attracts a robust audience of close to 200,000 visitors annually.
- **Funder:** Through the Cambridge Arts Grant Program, Cambridge Arts awards dozens of financial grants each year in support of high-quality, community-based art projects representing all artistic disciplines.

Cambridge Arts embraces a vision that welcomes and supports everyone. Believing that a multiplicity of perspectives is essential to a strong society, we are committed, both in our policies and practices, to building participation in and awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the arts and all cultures. In our ongoing work to address cultural and historical inequities, we strive to be a community anchor that reflects the entire Cambridge community and expands access, opportunities, and inclusion in every form of creative expression. We value diverse voices and people of all ages, backgrounds, ethnicities, abilities, gender identities, sexual orientations, socioeconomic situations, religions, citizenship statuses, and family configurations.

The Cambridge Arts Council is supported in part by the City of Cambridge, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.