

CAMBRIDGE ARTS | GRANTS

Organizational Investment Grant Guidelines

Organizational Investment grants provide operating support grants for organizations and programs with public cultural programming that benefits Cambridge residents. Organizations can apply for grants of \$9,000 to support operational costs, sustainability, and resiliency.

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Organizational Investment Grant Eligibility

Cultural Nonprofit Organizations and **Cultural Affiliates** may apply for organization grants. Each entity must meet the eligibility requirements, and all criteria according to the entity's organization type described below.

Cultural Nonprofit Organizations must be a Massachusetts recognized 501(c)3 organization. The organization's primary mission must be to promote access, excellence, diversity, or education in the arts, humanities, or sciences.

OR

Cultural Affiliates are semi-independent programs that operate under a parent organization. The primary mission of a Cultural Affiliate must be to promote access, excellence, diversity, or education in the arts, humanities, or interpretive sciences. The Cultural Affiliate must meet all eligibility requirements, plus additional requirements that apply exclusively to the Cultural Affiliates.

The parent organization for the Cultural Affiliate must be one of the following:

- A Massachusetts recognized non-fully cultural 501(c)3 organization. For example, a literary magazine or art museum at a college, or an arts program in a social service organization.

- A department of a federal, state, or local/municipal government. For example, a Local Cultural Council that provides cultural programming.

To be eligible to apply, all applicants must meet all the following requirements:

- Be legally recognized as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization in good standing in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
- Be a nonprofit organization or a Cultural Affiliate that has provided public cultural programming for the past two consecutive years.
- Offer public cultural programming in Cambridge and maintain year-round operations in Cambridge.
- Have minimum cash expenses of \$50,000 for each of the two years before the application.
- For Media organizations (such as community access television stations): Over 50% of programming time must be arts, humanities, or sciences programming produced by or for the applicant. This includes original creative content, original documentary content, original arts, and culture programming. Calculation of eligibility should only count the original broadcast, not re-broadcast.

Cultural Affiliate Requirements

These requirements only apply to programs with a parent organization.

Cultural Affiliates also must:

- Manage your own budget.
- Have at least one full-time (min. 30 hours per week) compensated administrative staff position dedicated solely to the operation of the cultural entity. Having several employees whose cumulative time totals 30 hours per week does not meet this requirement.
- Have your own advisory board that meets regularly to discuss policy, strategic direction, and resource development plans to ensure long-term sustainability.

[Organizational Investment Grant Award Amounts](#)

Grants of \$9,000 will be awarded to Cambridge non-profit organizations that provide cultural programming for Cambridge communities.

[Organizational Investment Grant Review Criteria](#)

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Core programming and relevance to the mission 2. Involvement from and significance to diverse communities* 3. Financial health 4. Success in planning and evaluation 5. Key personnel |
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* 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. Core Programming and Relevance to Mission

- How does the core programming support the execution of the organization's mission?
- Is the mission of this organization relevant to Cambridge communities?
- How does this organization serve the needs of Cambridge communities?
- Do the core programs of this organization provide arts and culture experiences for Cambridge audiences?

2. Involvement from and significance to diverse communities

- How does this organization benefit Cambridge communities?
- Does this organization create programs that are relevant to and address the needs of the surrounding community?
- 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 for this organization; how does this audience reflect the dimensions of diversity stated above?
- Does this organization have a successful record of engagement with its target audiences?
- How will this grant further the organization's work to support diverse audiences?
- How does this organization create opportunities for artists/creatives who have not had access to traditional platforms and support mechanisms?

3. Financial health

- Do the budgets presented demonstrate a fiscally responsible organization?
- How would this grant support growth or sustainability for this organization?
- Does this organization have a demonstrated need for the Cultural Investment Grant?

4. Success in planning and evaluation

- Does this organization present an organized and clear application?
- Does this organization have a record of quality, well-executed programs?
- Does this organization have evaluation data to demonstrate the success of their programs?
- Does this organization present goals and quality evaluation plans to assess the success of future projects?

5. Key Personnel

- Are the qualifications of the staff and board sufficient to fulfill the organization's mission?
- Does the organization work with Cambridge artists to present their programs?

- Does the organization have appropriate program staff to develop and implement programming?
- Is the applicant a recently founded organization (in the past 5 years)?
- Do the key personnel represent diverse audiences as defined in the dimensions of diversity above?

Organizational Investment Grant Application Instructions

The Organizational Investment Grant application link: [Organizational Investment Grant Applications](#)

- The Cambridge Arts Organizational Investment Grant application must be submitted by 11:59pm on Thursday, October 15, 2026, via the Cambridge Arts online application portal.
- **Applicants can submit only one application to the Cambridge Arts Grant Program.**
- Hard copy applications will not be accepted.
- The Cambridge Arts Organizational Investment Grant online application consists of three sections:
 1. Applicant Information
 2. Organizational Investment Grant Questions
 3. Supplemental Materials

Application Steps

1. Answer the Applicant Information questions.
 - a. Organization Name
 - b. Organization Legal Name
 - c. Date of 501(c)3 incorporation
 - d. Organization discipline
 - e. FEIN/Tax ID #
 - f. Duns Number
 - g. Organization website
2. Answer the following questions related to the Organizational Investment Grant Application
 - a. Organizational Investment Grant Application Questions
 - i. Organization overview
 - ii. Core programs
 - iii. Community engagement
 - iv. Efforts and success working with diverse populations
 - v. Involvement of Cambridge artists in programming
 - vi. Financial circumstances
 - vii. Key participants leading programming
 - viii. Letter(s) of support (upload)

- ix. Organizational Investment Grant applicant Board of Directors chart (upload)
 - x. Organizational Investment Grant applicant Organization chart (upload)
An Organization chart is a diagram that shows the structure of an organization and the relationships and relative ranks of its parts and positions/jobs. You can find templates in Microsoft Word, or on the internet.
 - xi. Current year budget and most recent fiscal year preliminary financial report (upload)
3. Upload up to 10 additional media, in a single pdf format, that would support your application, including video, images, audio clips, news articles, etc.

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 All applications & support materials must be submitted online by 11:59pm.
December 2026 - January 2027	Community-based 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. We want to help! Sign up for our grant info sessions, Sept. 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.