



*Power of culture*

**MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 2020**

**11:00 AM-NOON**

**ON-LINE MEETING**

(CALL-IN INSTRUCTIONS POSTED AT  
<https://massculturalcouncil.org/about/board/>  
UNDER "APRIL 29, 2020 SPECIAL MEETING")

<b>AGENDA</b>	<b>VOTE</b>
1. Open Meeting Law	
2. Allocation of FY 20 NEA CARES ACT Funds	<b>X</b>
3. Delegation of Authority to Executive Committee to Authorize Allocations of Future COVID-19 Emergency Funds	<b>X</b>

## **OPEN MEETING LAW STATEMENT**

Please note that this meeting is an open meeting of a public body subject to the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law. A notice of this meeting together with the agenda was posted on Mass Cultural Council's website 48 or more hours ago (excluding weekends and holidays).

This meeting shall be open and accessible to all members of the public except at such times when this body has voted to go into closed executive session under the Open Meeting Law.

Please note that this body has invited staff of Mass Cultural Council to be present at the meeting.

Mass Cultural Council welcomes members of the public to attend its public meetings. Under the Open Meeting Law, however, this is not a public hearing and public testimony will not be taken. Individuals may not address the meeting without permission of the Chair.

Any member of the public may record this meeting provided that they first notify the Chair and must not interfere with the meeting. The Chair will then inform the members of the meeting that they are being recorded.

This meeting is a virtual meeting held under the Open Meeting Law as modified by the Governor's recent emergency declaration. Only Committee members, Council members and invited staff will be able to address the meeting. All other persons will be muted. Please note that anyone attempting to disrupt the meeting may be muted, have their ability to project video images shut off or even removed from the meeting, at the discretion of the chair

Draft minutes of the open session of this meeting shall be kept and shall be posted on Mass Cultural Council's website no later than 30 days after the meeting provided that such minutes shall not be considered official until they have been approved by this body in open session. Individuals asserting a violation of the Open Meeting Law may file a complaint with this body within 30 days or with the Attorney General's office thereafter.

**TIPS FOR PARTICIPATING IN A VIRTUAL OPEN MEETING USING VIDEOCONFERENCING  
WHEN THERE ARE SEVERAL PARTICIPANTS  
(adapted from several sources)**

- In order to minimize background noise, please mute microphone when not speaking.
- Please raise hand in order to be recognized by the chair.
- In order for all members to have an opportunity to speak and be heard, please wait to speak until specifically recognized by the chair.
- If there are questions, please direct them to the chair and the chair will then recognize the appropriate person to respond.
- Please limit statements to three minutes.
- The chair will reserve the right to limit discussion in order to allow sufficient time for every member to be heard who wishes to speak.

To: Mass Cultural Council  
From: Anita Walker, David Slatery, Jen Lawless, Bethann Steiner  
Date: April 27, 2020  
Re: NEA CARES Act Funds

The day after the Council last met on April 7, Mass Cultural Council received notification from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), that Mass Cultural Council had been allocated \$475,300 from the NEA in connection with the federal response to the COVID-19 crisis known as the CARES Act. The NEA has moved with great speed and those funds are available for the Council to spend.

On April 15, Anita and David attended a telephone briefing from the Chair of the National Endowment for the Arts, Mary Anne Carter, regarding the use of CARES Act funds coming to the states through the NEA. We learned that funds must go to organizations, not individual artists, and can be used by organizations for operating expenses—specifically salary, fees for artists and contract personnel and facilities costs such as rent and utilities. States are also permitted to use up to \$50,000 of the CARES Act funds for operating expenses.

The CARES Act imposes very few restrictions on the money. States are highly encouraged to put this money to work soon, thus the swift delivery of the funds to the states. Quoting Chairman Carter, "The President and Congress ask that you get the money out the door as quickly as possible."

The most responsible and direct way the Council can do this is to put the funds in the hands of organizations with which we already have a relationship. (Note that the money the NEA will be granting directly will only go to its current and previous grantees.)

With this in mind, and in consideration of the Council's expressed interest in assuring we reach diverse and high-need constituents, described below is a plan that we feel will make the highest and best use of these funds fulfill the federal mandate to deploy the funds quickly.

We propose making flat \$7,000 grants to all<sup>1</sup> 74 of our Creative Youth Development (CYD) programs (YouthReach and Ser Hacer). This plan best meets the three criteria of need, speed and diversity.

**Diversity:**

- *Ethnic Diversity:* 80% of the constituents served in these programs are people of color. The coronavirus is disproportionately affecting people of color.
- *Geographic Diversity:* We fund CYD programs in all six CFF geographic regions, the same regional breakdown we are using to determine regional equity with our COVID-19 Relief Fund for Individuals.

**Need:**

- More than half of the 9,400 young people served by current CYD programs live in economically depressed rural and urban areas.
- 19% of these youth live in public housing.
- 23% live in homes where English is not spoken and 11% of the youth are foreign born.
- 19% of these youth have disabilities
- CYD programs provide safe spaces for youth with trauma coming from hostile homes and neighborhoods.
- The stipends youth in these programs earn help pay for food and rent for their families.
- The Mass Cultural Council is just about the only major funder for these programs as other foundations have stopped investing in youth arts.

**Speed:**

- All 74 CYD programs have been vetted by the Mass Cultural Council. Delivering crucial funding to these programs would not require new program design. All currently receive flat funding so no new formula would be required.

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<sup>1</sup> Of our 74 CYD programs, 36 are also in the Cultural Investment Portfolio and have received a \$2,250 Safe Harbors Grant and under this proposal would receive an additional \$4,750 from NEA CARES Act funds. The 38 other programs would receive \$7,000 from NEA CARES Act funds.

From New Bedford to Holyoke to East Boston, we have been inundated with stories from our CYD programs that underscore the urgent need for help now, and the critical role these programs will play in recovery from the crisis.

- "The hardest part is just not having social connection. It's not easy to be in a household where mental health is not recognized," writes a Zumix participant.
- "The house is very crowded and it's hard to find alone-space," writes another.
- The New Bedford Whaling Museum describes the impact of the pandemic on students missing consistency and normalcy.
- Foster care youth in Enchanted Circle Theater's program are trying desperately to stay connected with the theater "because we are family."
- The majority of CYD youth entered our programs with trauma. They will need our programs more than ever on the other side of this crisis.

Therefore, staff is requesting the Executive Committee to recommend allocating the NEA CARES Act funds to our existing CYD as follows:

38 CYD programs @\$7,000	= \$266,000
<u>36 CYD/CIP programs @ \$4,750</u>	<u>= \$171,000</u>
TOTAL	\$437,000

We also requesting that the remaining \$38,300 of the NEA CARES Act funds be allocated to expenses of the Council. The NEA specifically recognized that the COVID-19 crisis would likely have a negative financial effect on state arts agencies and allowed each state regardless of size to use up to \$50,000 of the CARES Act funds for administrative costs. Per the NEA guidelines, we propose using less than the full amount of permitted expenses (so that the CYD grantees could each receive \$7,000 grants) and, in accordance with the NEA guidelines, to spend these funds on rent obligations, thus freeing up other resources to spend on other Council grants and services.

Also, in light of the fact that there may well be further federal COVID-19 response legislation which may provide emergency funding to the Council, we also request that the Council delegate the authority to the Executive Committee to authorize allocations of any such funds received by Mass Cultural Council to existing programs, subject to subsequent ratification by the Council. This will help ensure that when Mass Cultural Council receives funding related to the COVID-19 crisis, it can move to quickly and efficiently deploy them in response to the current emergency.

The Executive Committee reviewed these proposals on April 27 and voted to recommend approval to the Council.

## RESOLUTIONS

**RESOLVED:** that the Council approve the allocation of NEA CARES Act funds to its Creative Youth Development programs in accordance with the memo provided to it at its April 29, 2020 Meeting.

**RESOLVED:** That the Council delegate to the Executive Committee the power to authorize the allocation of any additional emergency funding, received for purposes of response to the current COVID-19 crisis from the National Endowment for the Arts or other source, to any existing grant program of Mass Cultural Council provided, that 1) the Committee notifies the Council that it is taking such action and 2) such action is brought to the Council for ratification at the next occurring Council Meeting.