

Federal Funding for Arts & Culture Planning

Metropolitan Area Planning Council

June 29, 2023



Relevant Links Shared

NEA Our Town Program Overview and Requirements:

<https://www.arts.gov/grants/our-town>

Examples of arts and cultural planning projects at MAPC (not Our Town funded)

Watertown Public Arts Master Plan:

<https://www.mapc.org/resource-library/watertownpublicartmasterplan/>

Malden Center for Arts & Culture:

<https://www.mapc.org/resource-library/malden-center-arts-culture/>

Natick Center Creative Placemaking:

<https://www.mapc.org/resource-library/natick-center-creative-placemaking/>

Lynnstallation:

<https://www.mapc.org/resource-library/lynn-creative-placemaking/>

City of Boston Our Town funded projects

Boston's Latin Quarter Cultural District:

<https://www.boston.gov/departments/arts-and-culture/latin-quarter-cultural-district>

Boston's Little Saigon:

<https://www.boston.gov/departments/arts-and-culture/boston-little-saigon-cultural-district>

Boston Artist-in-Residence Program:

<https://www.boston.gov/departments/arts-and-culture/boston-artists-residence-air>

Community Music Center of Boston Music Workforce Program:

<https://cmcb.org/>

Frequently Asked Questions

Do individuals qualify for the NEA's Our Town grant, or is it geared toward organizations?

They are geared toward organizations and governmental entities. A 501 nonprofit organization or a governmental body must be the lead applicant.

What is the time frame that Our Town-funded programs can happen?

The NEA states in their program description:

"Our support of a project may start on or after July 1, 2024. Grants awarded under these guidelines generally may cover a period of performance of up to two years. The two-year period is intended to allow an applicant sufficient time to plan, execute, and close out its project, not to repeat a one-year project for a second year. Any planning costs that are included as part of the project budget must be incurred during your established period of performance. No pre-award costs are allowable in the Project Budget."

What other funding sources exist that could support public art projects?

The Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) and the New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA) both offer grant programs for individual artists:

<https://massculturalcouncil.org/artists-art/>

<https://www.nefa.org/grants-programs>

Additionally, MAPC hosts a training program with NEFA, *Making it Public for MA Municipalities*, to share best practices for public artmaking. This program comes with a \$15,000 grant from NEFA to support a temporary public art installation. Information on the 2024 cohort will be available in August here: <https://www.mapc.org/resource-library/making-it-public/>

Are there other Where did the City of Boston get matching funds for their Our Town-funded projects?

Through a mix of sources, including a departmental budget line item within the Mayor's Office; corporate sponsorships in the relevant cultural district; in-kind marketing efforts; and in-kind staffing/personnel within both the City of Boston and MassArt.

Do volunteers count as in-kind support?

MAPC advises to reach out to the NEA directly to clarify if and how volunteers can be counted as a match. Our experience is with paid staff who have a billable hourly rate.

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Is there a required timeline for achieving the 1:1 funding match?

The NEA FAQ includes this information:

“Q: Do all cost share/matching funds need to be committed in advance of the submission deadline?”

A: No, but we ask you to designate on the budget form funding that is committed versus funding that is being proposed or sought. Designate committed funding with a () after the source.”*

<https://www.arts.gov/grants/our-town/frequently-asked-questions>

Can we use ARPA funding as part of the 1:1 match?

MAPC advises to reach out to the NEA directly to confirm, but we don't see any specific reason that ARPA funding wouldn't be allowed as matching funds.

Are the Cultural Districts mentioned by the City of Boston incorporated nonprofits, or part of the city?

The cultural districts are administered by the nonprofit organization partners, e.g. Hyde Square Task Force in Boston's Latin Quarter.

Are Cape Cod projects eligible?

Please refer to the NEA eligibility requirements to assess your eligibility for the Our Town or other NEA grants: <https://www.arts.gov/grants/our-town/eligibility>

Eligibility for technical assistance from a regional planning agency like MAPC would depend on your region. To find your Regional Planning Agency, please visit <https://massmarpa.org/who-we-are/>. Cape Cod does not fall within MAPC's service area.

Is it more common for a municipality or a nonprofit organization to write these grants?

In our experience we have seen either the municipality or the nonprofit organization as the lead applicant writing the grant. In general, the team that will be leading execution of the project should be the lead applicant.

Is it a requirement to include a private entity in the partnership for these programs?

No. Required partnerships are between nonprofit organizations and government entities. Details of this requirement can be found on the NEA's eligibility requirements here:

<https://www.arts.gov/grants/our-town/eligibility>.

Do Our Town projects have to be new, or can the grant be for expansion or evolution of an existing program?

The City of Boston has had success with projects designed as pilot programs. The NEA emphasizes that Our Town projects should “lay the groundwork for long-term systems change” and does not specifically require projects to be entirely new.