



# BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

Committee on Arts, Culture and Special Events

Lydia Edwards, Chair

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One City Hall Square ♦ 5<sup>th</sup> Floor ♦ Boston, MA 02201 ♦ Phone: (617) 635-3040 ♦ Fax: (617) 635-4203

## REPORT OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

April 22, 2022

Dear Councilors,

*Docket #0347, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Two Hundred Sixty-Six Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$266,500.00) in the form of a grant for the FY22 Local Cultural Council Program, awarded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council to be administered by the Mayor's Office of Arts & Culture. The grant will fund innovation arts, humanities and interpretive sciences programming that enhance the quality of life in our city.*

This matter was sponsored by the Administration, and referred to the Committee on March 9, 2022. The Committee held a public hearing on April 21, 2022. Kara Elliot-Ortega, Chief of Arts and Culture and Jennifer Falk, Chair, Boston Cultural Council testified in support of this matter.

**Summary of Legislation:** Ms. Elliot-Ortega provided an overview of the grant program, explaining that this FY22 grant is an annual allocation from the Local Cultural Council Program that was awarded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council to be administered by the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture. She explained that for the third year, the City works with the Boston Cultural Council (BCC) to distribute grants for general operating support to organizations with budgets under \$2 million.

Ms. Elliot-Ortega noted that in response to the disparities highlighted by the pandemic, the BCC made the decision to change the funding structure so that organizations with the lowest budget receive the highest amount as this strategy aims to better support emerging to medium size organizations who do not typically have funding available to support their programming and to ensure equitable distribution funding to the Boston's arts and culture communities. She talked about the Arts and Culture funding sources including the \$2.78 million that was awarded this year through Reopen Creative Boston Funding which is a one-time funding source, allocated through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to support the recovery of art and culture organizations from the economic impacts of COVID-19. It was reported that 192 applicants were awarded funding out of 241 applicants received. Ms. Elliot-Ortega explained that the majority of the applicants are receiving a combination of BCC and ARPA funds. She explained

that the most represented categories of work were in music and art education. She further noted that 23% were first time applicants.

Grant size was overviewed and it was explained that the grant ranges from \$2,000 to \$63,000 which was based on the criteria from the BCC and the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture. Ms. Elliot-Ortega said that they are always reaching out to new people so that these funds are not going to the same people year after year. The Committee discussed language access and outreach strategies to increase awareness of the program. Ms. Elliot-Ortega said that they are looking to recruit multilingual staff to represent all neighborhoods across the city.

**Recommended Action:**

The Chair of the Committee on Arts, Culture and Special Events, to which the following was referred:

*Docket #0347, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Two Hundred Sixty-Six Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$266,500.00) in the form of a grant for the FY22 Local Cultural Council Program, awarded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council to be administered by the Mayor's Office of Arts & Culture. The grant will fund innovation arts, humanities and interpretive sciences programming that enhance the quality of life in our city,*

submits a report recommending that this docket **ought to pass**.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Lydia Edwards". The ink is dark and the signature is written on a light-colored background.

Lydia Edwards, Chair  
Committee on Arts, Culture and Special Events