

FAQ FY24 (2023) Boston Cultural Council (BCC) Organizational Grants

Welcome to our FY24 (2023) BCC Frequently Asked Questions document. You can find all information about the grant and the application on our [website](#). We recommend reviewing the website, application guidelines, and application to understand the BCC grant. If you still have questions, we hope you can find the answers here. We've also included instructions below for how to ask additional questions if you do not find the answer to your question here.

Do I have to apply as a nonprofit? Can individual artists apply?

For Boston Cultural Council grants, organizations must be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit or L3C entity, or applicants can apply with a fiscal sponsor if they do not have a 501(c)(3) designation. This grant is intended to support the work of organizations, but unincorporated groups can apply with a fiscal sponsor as long as they meet the rest of the eligibility criteria. This includes: artist collectives, volunteer groups, publications, and any other group jointly working toward common creative goals. We do have separate grant opportunities for individual artists that are available through our office. To learn more, please visit [our website](#) and sign up for the [Arts and City Newsletter](#) to get updates on grant and contracting opportunities for individuals.

Our budget shrank below the \$2M limit in the last fiscal year due to the pandemic, normally it is above \$2M. Does this make us eligible for BCC grants?

Yes, if your organization's budget is below \$2 million right now, you are eligible for BCC grants.

Are arts organizations with university affiliations eligible?

Arts organizations with university affiliations are only eligible for BCC grants if the organization has a total operating budget under \$2 million and they can demonstrate they have separate governance.

Is the funding going to be an upfront payment or reimbursement?

The funding will be disbursed as an upfront payment. The council anticipates disbursing the funding at some point in the spring of 2024.

I have a personal vendor ID, so does that create any issue creating one for my organization with my name?

A vendor ID for the organization you represent is required, so an individual's vendor ID will not be acceptable. You will be able to set up an additional Vendor profile for your organization. You can find instructions for how to create a vendor ID included in the application.

Are applicants required to use BCC's budget template, or are we free to use our own document & formatting?

You are not required to use the template, it is just meant to be a resource. Feel free to adapt it and change the formatting to whatever works best for you. There is a link to the budget template provided in the application.

Looking at the “organizational type” question, there is no category that matches my organization. What is advised in such a case?

Please pick the category type that most closely describes your organization.

I am part of an organization that serves the public in Boston and is responsible for all my own fundraising, but my organization is affiliated with a larger regional, national, or global organization. Can I apply for this grant?

We encourage applicants who meet all our other eligibility criteria and fall into this category to apply. In your application, please make the case for the ways in which your organization’s Boston-area site is independent from the larger organization you are affiliated with. Some examples of how to do this may be by discussing in your application how you are financially independent and/or responsible for all your own fundraising and expenses, how you have your own governing or advisory board, and how your programming focuses on benefiting the public in Boston.

What is a “score” and how is it determined?

Every question in the application informs the reviewers’ evaluation of the application. The reviewers will use a matrix to assess the scores depending on an applicant’s answer to each question. You can access the scoring matrix and full application guidelines [here](#).

Does the NTEE category have to match with what the IRS has now? We think our category is not really accurate now.

No, if you think there is a category that is more accurate and up to date, please select that category.

Our offices are in a different city (for example: Brookline, Cambridge, Dedham etc.) but the vast majority of our programming happens in Boston and benefits people who live in Boston. I assume this makes us eligible, but should our answers to the narrative question be constrained just to Boston service or can we talk about all our service?

Yes, your organizations are still eligible. You can explain all of your services but we encourage you to focus primarily on your Boston-based programming. We should note that while you are eligible for this grant if some of your programming happens in Boston, it is important to the council that the majority of your programming happens in the city of Boston and benefits people who live in the city of Boston. Please ensure that this is made clear in your application - applications that make this clear will be considered stronger applications. The council will prioritize supporting organizations that are in the city of Boston and have the highest impact on residents of the city of Boston.

Am I required to answer every question in the application?

Questions that are mandatory are marked with a red asterisk. There are some questions that are optional, and there is also an optional opportunity to attach additional documents and financial information.

Do all-volunteer organizations qualify for either grant?

Yes, we don't have a requirement for organizations having paid employees.

What is a fiscal sponsor?

A fiscal sponsor is an organization that accepts money on another organization's behalf, and then issues it to the grantee. For more information about fiscal sponsorship, visit [here](#).

I'd love to see my organization's application from last year. How do I do that?

You should be able to log into the Submittable account your organization used last year to submit their application to see last year's application. Just navigate to "Submissions" in your Submittable account to view all of your past submissions. If the person who submitted your application last year no longer works for your organization and you cannot access their account, let us know at BCC@Boston.gov and we can download a PDF of your submitted application from Submittable and email it to you. If your organization only drafted an application and did not submit it we will not be able to access it for you.

Do responses to questions on the application have a character or word limit?

No. The application has no character or word limits.

My organization has an initiative/program that has a budget size that is under \$2 million but its finances are housed within my organization that has a budget over over \$2 million. Can I apply just to support this program?

No. This grant is to support operational costs broadly for arts and cultural organizations, not specific programs. Therefore we look at the organization's entire operational budget when assessing eligibility.

What is the deadline?

The deadline to apply for this grant online is 11:59PM on Friday November 17. Our office closes at 5:00PM that day and we will not be able to help you with submission issues after that time. Please try to submit your application as early as you can to avoid last minute issues and technical difficulties. Print applications must be received in-person at our office or by mail no later than November 17 at 5PM.

Can I apply to the BCC grant through the Mass Cultural Council's Local Cultural Council Application?

No. The Boston Cultural Council has its own grant guidelines and application. If you visit our page on the Mass Cultural Council's website you will see that we do not take applications through their platform, and we have linked to our BCC website instead. Please apply using our guidelines and our application. You can find all the information [here](#).

I am having technical difficulties with Submittable, what should I do?

If you have any issues with Submittable, please review Submittable's [Submitter Help page](#). If you can't find the answer to your question there, you can reach out to their help team directly by sending a message.

It seems like some of the issues that come up for applicants more often are generally receiving error messages and having trouble uploading documents. Here is some advice from Submittable on those issues:

Error messages can be related to a wide variety of possible issues, most of which are local to the submitter. Typically the issue occurs when a user has left a browser tab with their application open for 24+ hours, their browser has timed out the page, and the user returns to the page to try and continue filling out their application.

Here are helpful tips and troubleshooting steps for problems uploading files to a form:

[File Upload Troubleshooting](#)

If you continue to have technical issues with Submittable and cannot mail in or drop off a print application, please contact BCC@Boston.gov with proof of the technical issue (ex. A screenshot of the error page you have received) and let us know about this technical issue **in advance of the application deadline (11/17 at or before 11:59PM)**. We cannot consider applications or proof of technical issues that arrive after this time and date.

Where is the address of your office if I want to drop off my application in person or mail my application?

We are located in room 802 of Boston City Hall. Our address is:

1 CITY HALL SQUARE
ROOM 802
BOSTON, MA 02201-2029
Attn: Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture

I didn't see my question answered here. What should I do?

If this FAQ didn't address your question, please email your questions to BCC@Boston.gov with the subject line "Question about BCC Grant Application." We will add your question and its answer to this FAQ in case anyone else has the same question.

My question has been answered but it would be helpful for me to talk to someone about the grant or the application. What should I do?

The Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture is going to host weekly drop-in office hours over Zoom for applicants to chat with a staff member about their questions. Office hours will start on October 3, 2023 and will be held weekly every Tuesday from 3PM-4PM until the grant closes. [Here is the Zoom link](#) to join weekly office hours.