



# CPA Funding Application Form

City of Worcester

**Submitted On:**

May 7, 2025, 12:11PM EDT

<b>Project Name</b>	Portraits Preservation Project
<b>Project Location and/or Address</b>	Mechanics Hall, 321 Main Street, Worcester MA
<b>Project Lead Organization (or Individual if Applicable)</b>	Worcester County Mechanics Association, aka Mechanics Hall
<b>Legal Status of the Organization</b>	501(c)3
<b>Current Property Owner (if Different from the Applicant)</b>	
<b>Brief Project Description</b>	Clean and conserve 21 works of art comprising the portraits collection at Mechanics Hall. The portraits depict 19th century industrialists, social reformers, statesmen, and Civil War heroes, all of whom were influential in the City of Worcester.
<b>Project Contact Information</b>	Kelsey Miller [REDACTED]
<b>What CPA category does this project fall under? (Check All that Apply)</b>	Historic Resources
<b>What activity are you proposing to do in this category? (Check All that Apply)</b>	Preserve
<b>What is the project budget?</b>	\$139,095
<b>How much are you requesting in CPA funding?</b>	\$45,000
<b>Historical Resource Projects: Have you received a Positive Determination of Local Historic Significance from the Worcester Historical Commission?</b>	This project does not require a Determination of Local Historic Significance
<b>Are you requesting an expedited review process for your project? The CPC shall consider an expedited timeline for review (i.e., a Special Application) only under certain circumstances. See the Application Guidance document (linked below) for more</b>	No

<b>information.</b>	
<b>Please briefly describe your project.</b>	Clean and conserve 21 portraits (and frames) of historically significant individuals from the 19th century installed in the Great Hall and Washburn Lobby of Mechanics Hall. 17 portraits were installed between 1868 and the early 20th century and 4 were installed in 1999. All individuals are important to the history of Worcester.
<b>What permissions, permits and plans will be necessary to carry out this project, and what is the status of their acquisition?</b>	The project does not require special permissions or permits. We have contracted the conservator, the fine art handler, and the wall repair and painter who will prep and repair wall spaces as the portraits are removed for conservation.
<b>Do you foresee any delays in acquiring these permissions within the next 6 months? If yes, please explain, otherwise, type N/A.</b>	N/A
<b>What is the desired start and end date of this project?</b>	Scope assessment took place in 2023. Project work began in 2024 and target completion is 2027.
<b>Please attach a Timeline for the project.</b>	Timeline.pdf
<b>Please upload a complete project budget (.xlsx or .pdf) that includes the source of the funding for each line item. CPA funds can ONLY be used on CPA eligible project elements. Please make sure to be specific about the use of all CPA monies requested.</b>	Portraits Preservation Budget.pdf
<b>Please upload any renderings and/or estimates for this project.</b>	Preservation Work Required per Portrait.pdf
<b>What is the status of the match funding identified in the budget?</b>	Mechanics Hall has the match funding amount of \$45,000 in hand, which was raised as part of the entire Portraits Project in 2022-2024. That project included commissioning 3 new portraits of 19th century Black Americans, preserving the older portraits, and creating programming. Additionally, the IMLS has committed \$22,900 for one year of the project.
<b>Please upload commitment letters and/or funding agreements demonstrating that match funding is in place.</b>	IMLS Commitment.pdf
<b>Please explain why CPA funding is needed for this project. If CPA is the only proposed funding</b>	CPA funding is needed because it provides a source of community dollars and supports other fundraising and our own matching funds. An IMLS grant was awarded and then rescinded! Since then, it was

<b>source for this project, please explain why.</b>	re-instated. Fundraising is a roller-coaster!
<b>Please describe the experience of the project manager or project management team in completing a project like this one. Please include examples of similar projects pursued in the past, and why they are relevant.</b>	Kelsey Miller, Deputy Director of Mechanics Hall is responsible for financial reporting and budgeting. He is a CPA and has been with MH since 2017. Tricia Shea, Facilities Director, has more than 35 years of facilities management and was project manager of the new portraits installation in 2024. Birgit Straehle, Conservator, was Conservator on staff at Worcester Art Museum for 20+ years and now has a private practice.
<b>Please describe the financial position of the organization and its ability to cover the upfront costs of this project. CPA funding is provided on a reimbursement basis.</b>	Mechanics Hall annual budget is \$2.3 million. In recent years, we have raised \$570,000 for the entire Portraits Project, including \$100,000 from the Commonwealth of MA. \$45,000 of that funding is targeted for portraits preservation. Additionally, we raised \$848,455 for phases I and II of the four-phase theatrical sound and lighting upgrades. Attached bank statement supports the available dollars we currently have for portraits preservation and programming.
<b>Please upload any reports that may be helpful in establishing a capable financial position.</b>	Portraits Funds - April 2025.pdf
<b>How will this resource/property/building be maintained in the future?</b>	Mechanics Hall was built in 1857. Major restoration/renovation took place in 1976-1978, 1982, 1991, 2000, 2013, 2016, 2019, 2024, and now 2025. The Conservator is using modern techniques and materials that promise decades of portraits' integrity. Ongoing portraits preservation is assured: Conservator Straehle will instruct staff how to keep portraits clean of dust and dirt, which will mitigate the need for major restoration in the future.
<b>Please describe how this project/program will benefit Worcester residents in general, as well as specific groups that will benefit from the project.</b>	All residents of the City of Worcester will benefit from the project, which preserves, in our world-class concert hall, an impressive visual art representation of Worcester's 19th century history that depicts industrialists, statesmen, social reformers, and Civil War heroes. The gallery offers a more complete Worcester history now that paintings of Black Americans of that time period were commissioned/installed in 2024, following the addition of women's portraits in 1999.
<b>Please identify which of the Community Priorities identified in the Community Preservation Plan align with this project (check all that apply).</b>	PRIORITY 1: Increase accessibility to historic resources, open space, parks, and in community housing.
<b>Please describe how this project aligns with the above Community Priorities.</b>	Mechanics Hall has been a beloved community gathering space for 168 years. All are welcome to attend and host events and that spirit of accessibility is evident in the wide variety of experiences that take place. Social, arts & culture, education, business, and community events all have a home in our Hall. As a result, more than 150,000 people patronize or perform in the Hall each year. Mechanics Hall is a testament to the skills and aspirations of the people of Worcester

	in the past and presently. Further, its beauty, history, and world-renown combine to offer inspiration for Worcester’s future. The portraits are dominant visuals in the Great Hall and on the second level of building – seen by all who visit.
<b>Historic Resource Category Goals</b>	GOAL 3: Preserve, digitize, and archive historic records. GOAL 4: Preserve underrepresented stories.
<b>Open Space and Recreation Category Goals</b>	This project does not align with any of these Category Goals.
<b>Community Housing Category Goals</b>	This project does not align with any of these Category Goals.
<b>Please describe how this project aligns with the above Category Goals.</b>	Alignment with Historic Resources Goal 3: Preserve historic records. The paintings being preserved range in age from 157 years to 25 years. The oldest paintings were last cleaned and repaired in 1977 and all are in serious need of conservation. While some of the paintings could be considered fine art, all the paintings are “documentary” depictions of 19th century individuals who represent the values of the Worcester County Mechanics Association: industriousness, human well-being, justice, innovation, and patriotism. The portraits of women and other Black Americans align with Goal 4: Preserving underrepresented stories. The histories of American women and Blacks are not easily discovered yet are prominently honored in Mechanics Hall.
<b>Does your project align with any other City or Regional Plans? Please be specific. See the City of Worcester website to view local plans.</b>	Aligns with the Worcester Cultural Plan. I: Projects the story of Worcester past and present. II: Emphasizes cultural and creative expression by conserving historic paintings. III: Embraces and fosters cultural equity, access, and inclusion by honoring important examples of men, women, and people of color. IV: Emboldens future generations of leaders by conserving images of exceptional men and women who came before us. V: It raises up 19th, 20th, and 21st century artists.
<b>Does your project have community support? Please describe outreach efforts for this project.</b>	The entire Portraits Project had several parts: Commission and install portraits of Black Americans; conserve the historic portraits; create cultural and educational programming using the portraits as catalysts. We raised \$570,000 for the project, which included \$100,000 from the Commonwealth of MA. The rest was donated by individuals and businesses. We still require about \$71,000 – including this request of \$45,000 - to complete the preservation aspect of the project.
<b>Is there anything else you want the CPC to know about your project?</b>	The complete Portraits Project description can be found at: <a href="https://mechanicshall.org/portraits-project/">https://mechanicshall.org/portraits-project/</a> The Mechanics Hall portrait gallery must be conserved just as well as we preserve and maintain other aspects of the building, Worcester’s treasured National Historic Landmark. It is a 4-year process. The work conducted to date is fully funded.