

Eric D. Batista
City Manager



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Worcester Arts Council Awards \$235K in Grants for Local Arts and Cultural Programs

WORCESTER, Mass. – The Worcester Arts Council (WAC) and the City of Worcester announced Wednesday the awarding of 51 grants totaling \$235,030 for arts and cultural programs in Worcester for 2025.

For its 2025 grant cycle, WAC received 164 applications, including 23 fellowship and 141 project applications. Between October and December 2024, WAC evaluated all submissions based on criteria including public benefit, creative and artistic merit, organizational capacity, budget feasibility, impact, and innovation. The Council also considered how well applications aligned with its annual funding priorities, which are established based on community input.

“The arts and creativity are the heartbeat of Worcester, enriching our community, driving economic vitality, and inspiring us all,” said City Manager Eric D. Batista. “I am deeply grateful to our city’s artists, creatives, and cultural organizations for their dedication to sustaining a vibrant and inclusive Worcester. As we navigate unprecedented challenges, we must ensure that all voices—especially those from underrepresented communities—have the resources and opportunities to create, express, and thrive. Our collective commitment to the arts is not just about preserving culture; it is about shaping a more equitable and resilient future for all.”

WAC received \$236,500 in funding from the Mass Cultural Council (MCC) this year, with an additional \$10,000 from the Greater Worcester Community Foundation (GWCF) to support artist fellowships. The remaining funds will be put toward marketing, survey administration, and an annual reception for awardees.

“MCC and GWCF consistently advocate for increased state and private funding to support local cultural councils. Their dedication ensures that arts and culture continue to thrive in our communities,” said Cultural Development Officer Fabian Barracks. “We are especially thankful for the volunteer council members and staff who work tirelessly to uphold equity

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in grants administration, prioritizing underrepresented creatives in Worcester. Their efforts help create a more inclusive and dynamic cultural landscape, where all artists have the resources and opportunities to share their talents and tell their stories.”

The 2025 WAC project awardees represent a diverse range of Worcester-based programs and organizations, including the Día de los Muertos celebration by Casita Cultura Latina, The Poet’s Cauldron, Worcester Youth Speak Honestly (WYSH). In addition, four Worcester artists—Brandon Esteves, Claudio Eshun, Caitlyn Marsh, and Fanta Sessay—were awarded \$5,000 fellowships.

The current Worcester Arts Council members are:

- Chris Michelotti (Chair)
- Amy Sciannameo (Secretary)
- Osaghale “Sage” Aisagbonhi (Treasurer)
- Victor Rivera
- Amanda Dye
- Jennifer Griffin Gaul
- Angelique Webster
- Cassie Tortorici
- Meg O’Rourke (Staff Liaison)

There is currently one open seat on the Council.

The complete list of 2025 grant recipients and award amounts can be found below.

The 2025 Worcester Arts Council Grant Recipients

Applicant	Project/Fellowship	Grant Amount
Eshun, Claudio	WAC Fellowship	5000
Esteves, Brandon	WAC Fellowship	5000
Marsh, Caitlyn	WAC Fellowship	5000
Sessay, Fanta	WAC Fellowship	5000
4th Wall Stage Company, Inc.	Shakespeare History Plays Seen Through a Disability Lens	5000
African Community Education Program, Inc	Crocodile River Music	5000

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Amuguni, Sharon	The Poet's Cauldron	5000
ArtsWorcester, Inc.	Future Arts Workers of Worcester: Inaugural Exhibition	5000
Baker, Nicholas	The Dog Days are Now	5000
Building Futures, Inc.	Rhythms of the World	3500
Casita Cultura Latina, Inc	Día de los Muertos in the Woo	5000
Crocodile River Music, Inc	2025 African Music Series	5000
DIBARA, SUELY	Brazilian Festival of Worcester	5000
Dominguez, David	Salvadoran Festival	5000
Downtown Worcester Business Improvement District	Downtown Worcester Winter Festival 2025	5000
Edward Street Child Services, INC	Tell Me About It' - Trauma Informed Art Activities for Young Children	5000
First Unitarian Church	Totally Organ-ic! Concert Series	4800
Flagg Street School	Youth-led Library Mural	2500
Friendly House, Inc.	Refugee Arts Showcase	5000
Goris, Yasmin	Latino Art Fusion- Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration	5000
Hamilton, Gregory	Worcester Portrait Exchange	1600
Joy of Music Program, Inc.	JOMP Culture Connects	5000
King, Patricia	Tax Returns for Artists, Entrepreneurs and Craftspeople	5000
Korde, Shirish K.	Aikya	5000
L'Esperance, Ashley P.	Songwriters at the Hub 2025	5000
MacInnis, Anna	The Worcester Draglesque Festival	5000
Mass Audubon Central Region	Broad Meadow Brook Visitor Mural	2000

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Massachusetts Symphony Orchestra, Inc.	Massachusetts Symphony In Concert With Manolo Mairena	5000
No Evil Project, Inc.	No Evil Project: Art & Conversations	5000
Open Door Arts	Open Door Gallery at the Worcester Art Museum	5000
OpporTUNEity Community Connections Inc.	OpporTUNEity Youth Programs	5000
Ortiz, Elis	Unveil: Art of A Puerto Rican Tale	5000
Pernet Family Health Service of Worcester, Inc.	Food for Thought: Youth Program & Food Pantry Collaboration	4000
Refugees & Immigrants Cultural Empowerment Massachusetts Inc	RICEMA Cultural Programs and Lunar Festival	5000
Severance, Brittany	The Guy, the Girl, and the Gilded Goat (short film)/Hunky Dory (art exhibition)	4980
Shaner, Bill	The Unhoused Herald	5000
Southeast Asian Coalition of Central Massachusetts, Inc.	Annual Asian Festival	5000
The Worcester Center for Crafts, Inc.	Annual Arts Festival	5000
Urquhart, Doug	Arizona Doug's Music through the decades	900
Urquhart, Doug	Ed-Sullivans' Band 60's Music	750
WICN Public Radio, Inc.	Emerging Artist Series	5000
Worcester Art Museum	Pride Community Day	5000
Worcester Caribbean American Carnival Association, Inc.	Worcester Caribbean American Carnival	5000
Worcester Center for Performing Arts, Inc.	WYSH (Worcester Youth Speak Honestly)	5000
Worcester Chamber Music Society, Inc.	Animal Adventures: Worcester Chamber Music Society's Annual Free Family Concert	5000
Worcester County Mechanics Association	Free community concerts	5000

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Worcester Hip Hop Congress, Inc.	Worcester Generations	5000
Worcester Historical Museum	Worcester Women's History Project at Worcester Historical Museum – 175th Anniversary of the National Women's Rights Convention in 1850	5000
Worcester Refugee Assistance Project, Inc.	Beats, Brushes and Books	5000
Worcester Roots Project, Inc.	Therapeutic Garden Mural to support mental health	5000
Worcester Youth Orchestras, Inc.	Intergenerational Side by Side Concert	5000

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