Creative County Initiative Partnership Grants
Collaboration grants to strengthen the creative ecosystem and catalyze community connection in Essex County

Overview
ECCF’s Creative County Initiative (CCI) is pleased to open its collaborative grant-making program that fosters public art, placemaking, and other creative projects to engage and build community across Essex County while strengthening the region’s creative ecosystem. We understand the power of partnerships in the creative sector and believe funding for community-focused public art, creative placemaking, and other special projects can engage and transform a neighborhood, a community, or a region.

In its 2020 grant cycle, CCI will provide funding in the range of $10,000 to $25,000 for projects to be completed by December 31, 2021. There is no match requirement, but grantees are strongly encouraged to seek additional funding as needed. Funding is limited and the grant program is highly competitive.

There will be a two-stage review process beginning with a Letter of Interest from which a selection of applicants will be invited to submit a Full Application.

Two categories of projects will be considered:
1) New projects that exemplify the funding goals, and
2) Existing projects, including prior CCI grantees, where funding will
   a. demonstrably grow, change, or elevate a successful existing project and will:
   b. help create conditions to advance the project’s sustainability through funding, staffing, or other pathways.

See here for descriptions and achievements of past grantees.

Funding Criteria
Funding will be provided to a lead 501c3 applicant (grantee partner or established nonprofit serving as fiscal sponsor) representing a partnership comprised of at least:
• One artist, designer, creative entrepreneur, creative economy business, arts or culture organization, or non-arts organization substantially engaged in arts and culture.
• One designated representative from a town or city administration, department, commission or agency; and
• One designated partner from the commercial business sector. This may be a for-profit business, corporation, or business group (Chamber of Commerce, Merchants Group, Main Streets).

All partners must commit time, talent, or resources to the project design, development, promotion, and implementation. A lead partner must be identified who will commit to:
• coordinate and lead the collaboration team, and
• ensure that project milestones are established and met.

Projects in all creative genres are encouraged including but not limited to visual art, theatre, dance, music, literary arts, humanities, public art, social practice and creative placemaking.

Project proposals from all Essex County subregions, communities, and organizations are encouraged.

The CCI grants review committee will look for proposals designed to meet some of these goals:

- Foster collaboration across and within communities
- Build relationships among arts, culture, business, municipal, and philanthropic stakeholders
- Support the creative economy
- Create opportunities in the creative workforce
- Broaden the understanding of the role of arts in society
- Inspire pride of place
- Promote social justice through arts and culture
- Prioritize and advance diversity, equity, inclusion and access to culture
- Elevate shared history or heritage
- Activate space for public discourse
- Invest in next generation of creative youth
- Demonstrate new, innovative paradigms of creativity or design
- Ignite community engagement
- Bring an existing project or program to a new level of community engagement or sustainability
- Build nonprofit capacity and sustainability
- Potentially create replicable models, best practices, tools and templates
- Address urgent community issues (see Animating Democracy Aesthetic Attributes of Art for Social Change)

CCI grantees will receive technical, promotional, and partnership support from ECCF/CCI throughout the course of the project.

CCI grantee partners will be expected to:
• Participate in a learning cohort through which they share expertise and learn with co-grantees from across the county
• Demonstrate a commitment to dedicated collaborative work among all partners
• Participate in periodic site visits and regular communications with CCI Program Director
• Collect and report on measurements of success in an interim and a final report.
• Secure and include in full application all necessary approvals for project implementation from all relevant stakeholders
• Create a comprehensive plan to communicate project milestones
• Utilize the EssexCountyCreates.org communications portal, social media, and other media outlets to promote the project’s events and content.
• Include ECCF/CCI in public communications when promoting the grant-funded project.
• Submit a final report, outlining project achievements, lessons learned, next steps toward organizational capacity, and visual documentation of the project.

CCI grantees will be strongly encouraged to:
• Participate in CCI-sponsored trainings and convenings as relevant to grantee partners. Such trainings and convenings are provided by CCI as a resource intended to build grantee capacity for self-sustainability.

Application and Review Process
1. 1.1.20: Grant portal open
2. 1.1.20: Informational Webinar posted on ECCF website
3. 2.15.20, 5PM: Letter of Interest due online
4. ECCF staff, together with ECCF's CCI Grants Committee, will review all Letters of Interest and invite a selection of the projects for site visits and to submit full applications.
5. 4.1.20, 5PM: Full application due online
6. ECCF staff, together with ECCF's CCI Grants Committee, will review all full applications, conduct site visits, and make grant recommendations to the ECCF Board of Trustees for approval.
7. 6.1.20: Funding announcements and initial grant payment (half of grant award)

Project Timeline and Reporting Requirements
1.1.21: Interim Report due
2.1.21: Second grant payment (remaining half of grant award) upon receipt of satisfactory Interim Report
12.31.21: Projects to be completed
1.30.22: Final Report due

Proposals for CCI grants must be submitted through ECCF’s Application Portal

Applicants needing a login for ECCF’s application portal, please read our Grant Application Process page for information and access to the application portal.

For more information or to discuss a program idea, please contact:
Karen Ristuben
Program Director, Creative County Initiative
Essex County Community Foundation
175 Andover Street, Suite 101 Danvers, MA 01923
Tel: 978-758-1210
Email: k.ristuben@eccf.org