

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE FRANKLIN CULTURAL COUNCIL

FRANKLIN



Cultural Council

The mission of the Franklin Cultural Council (FCC) is to encourage participation and enhance opportunities for enrichment in the cultural arts and sciences throughout our community. Composed of committed residents, the FCC meets monthly with the purpose of supporting events and programs through grants from the Town of Franklin and the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Local Cultural Councils are administered by volunteers from the community who have an interest in supporting the arts, humanities, and sciences. The more diverse its membership, the better an LCC can serve their community.

“The Massachusetts Cultural Council is the largest grassroots cultural funding network in the nation, the Local Cultural Council (LCC) Program enriches the cultural life of all cities and towns in Massachusetts. Led by municipally appointed volunteers, LCCs award \$7.5 million every year, supporting 7,600 cultural programs that include everything from field trips to lectures, festivals, and dance performances. Contact your LCC to apply for a grant.” For more information visit the Massachusetts Cultural Council Website, massculturalcouncil.org.

The Franklin Cultural Council (FCC) is a grant-making body that allocates funds for projects and programs in the arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences. The FCC has also chosen to conduct a number of arts-related programs and events throughout the year to support and encourage arts and culture within Franklin.

The FY25 Franklin Cultural Council was led by a group of committed volunteers.

JOHN M RISTAINO, CHAIR - 06/30/2025
JEAN M WOLF, MEMBER- 06/30/2025
SWATI RAO, MEMBER - 06/30/2026
SARAH E CRONIN, TREASURER -06/30/2025
PUSHPA LATHA JANGAREDDI,
MEMBER 06/30/2026

Committee Updates

In FY25 FCC welcomed new members:

- Heather Carroll
- MD Rakibul Hasan
- Nicole Horseman (FY26 Treasurer)
- Benjamin Levy
- Kayla Nisbet
- Lisa Oxford (FY26 Clerk)

As we move into FY26 - We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Franklin Cultural Council members Jean Wolf and Treasurer Sarah Cronin for their many years of service and dedication to the Council.

In particular, we recognize Sarah Cronin’s outstanding leadership as Treasurer, where she carefully steered the FCC’s finances through many iterations of state funding formulas, changing community needs, and evolving grant processes. Her work has left a lasting impact—strengthening the council’s ability to grow, adapt, and serve as a reliable cultural resource for the community.

As both Jean and Sarah step into their next community adventures, we celebrate their accomplishments and thank them for the invaluable role they’ve played in supporting Franklin’s cultural life.



**“IN ALL ITS FORMS, CULTURE IS
ESSENTIAL
TO THE HEALTH AND VITALITY
OF THE COMMONWEALTH.”**



FRANKLIN CULTURAL COUNCIL
A PROGRAM OF THE MASSACHUSETTS
CULTURAL COUNCIL



The Council Priorities of FY25 were as following:

- Engaging Our Community: Held in the Town of Franklin or actively involves Franklin residents.
- Occurs within the boundaries of the Franklin Cultural District, the vibrant, walkable area that surrounds Downtown Franklin.
- Uplifting our Neighbors: Links the arts to the emotional well-being of Franklinites and contributes to personal and community resiliency and joy.
- Promoting Cultural Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Elevates the voices and experiences of historically marginalized groups to create a more inclusive culture sector in Franklin.
- Preserving Cultural Heritage: Commemorates Franklin's local history and celebrates our new traditions.
- Removing Barriers: Makes cultural experiences accessible to all, regardless of physical or economic constraints.
- Supporting the Next Generation of Artists: Educates and/or supports school age children (grades K-12) in music, theatre or art programs.

The Council Guidelines for FY25 were as following:

- The applicant's project should elevate the rich cultural life of our community by expanding access, improving education, promoting diversity and encouraging excellence in the arts, humanities, civics, history or social sciences.
- The applicant's project must provide adequate public access. Explanation of handicap accessibility of the venue, if applicable, must be included in the application.
- Applicants must have a clear, written commitment of the venue from the sponsoring organization or venue.
- Franklin Cultural Council funds are not intended to be used as the sole source of funding for projects.
- ticket prices for events will be taken into consideration during the grant approval process and must be included in your application.
- Applicants must take into consideration local and state public health guidelines in place at the time of their event. The Franklin Cultural Council acknowledges that public health crisis disproportionately impact Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) and encourages applications that take this into consideration.

The format to which FY25 grantees were given funding was through a reimbursement system. Once the event/program had taken place, grantees submitted receipts/invoices to the FCC and were reimbursed accordingly.

The Cultural Council Funding

For FY25, the FCC received steady and level funding from the Town of Franklin to support additional grant awards as well as many community programs and events.

This funding was combined with state-allocated Mass Cultural Council funds allowing the FCC to award a total of \$40,000 in grants supporting 20 arts and cultural events for Franklin residents.



Franklin Cultural Council Grants | LCC Grants

- Franklin Senior Center | Ariel Doggett
- Temple Beth Torah | Christine Brumbach
- Southeastern Massachusetts Community Wind Symphony | John Crowley
- MUSIC Dance.edu | Rondae Drafts
- LiveARTS | David Burnham
- Horace Mann Middle School | Erin O'Leary
- Homebrewed Theatre Company | Courtney Botelho
- Kimberlee O'Brien
- Swati Rao
- Janet Applefield
- Robert Zammarchi
- Franklin Historical Museum | Alan Earls
- Empty Bowls | Brenna Johnson
- Franklin Public Library | Mitzi Gousie
- Franklin Public Library | Caleigh Keating
- Franklin Performing Arts Company | Raye Lynn Mercer
- Franklin July 4th Coalition Inc. | Joseph Carmignani

- Franklin Farmers Market | Lauren Kloos
- Franklin Art Association, Inc. | Hannah Close

Congratulations to all of the FY25 Grantees! This was also an exciting year for the continuity of FCC collaborative programming within the community. In March the cultural council, alongside FCDC and the Department of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy, coordinated a joint volunteer/grant reception celebrating and honoring the FY25 Grantees at Dean College.

Community Partnerships Expanding Across Franklin

- *Joint Grant Recipient Reception* with the Cultural District Committee and the Department of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy
- *Franklin Downtown Partnership Harvest Festival.* The FCC hosted a booth with the FCDC, distributing information about all things Arts and Culture in Franklin.
- *Franklin Downtown Partnership Strawberry Stroll.* Collaborated with the Department of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy and the FCDC in the first, “Cultural Hub Tent” with a free-drop in community art making activity.



Stop by 12 Main Street from 12-7pm during Sip, Shop, Stroll & Roll to discover talented local artists showcasing and selling their handmade goods and unique creations.

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- Coordinated the first, “A-Wreath-of-Franklin” Programs to activate downtown Franklin for the holiday months. “Celebrate community, creativity, and the spirit of Franklin with the inaugural “A-Wreath-of-Franklin” program, brought to you by the Franklin Cultural Council, Franklin Cultural District, The Franklin Downtown Partnership; local businesses, and the Town of Franklin Department of Arts, Culture, and the CreativeEconomy. This unique wreath

display program invites community members to decorate wreaths that reflect their interpretation of "Stories of the Season," showcasing the traditions, memories, and values that make Franklin special. The beautifully crafted wreaths will be displayed throughout town, creating a festive and heartwarming celebration of our shared stories.” John Ristaino, FCC Chair

In Closing

The support of a local cultural council is the heartbeat of a thriving community. In Franklin, this support goes far beyond awarding grants—it is about opening doors, nurturing opportunity, and building meaningful partnerships that allow creativity to flourish.

Respectfully submitted,

Franklin Cultural Council members for FY25
John Ristaino, Chair
Lisa Oxford, Clerk
Sarah Cronin, FY25 Treasurer

Heather Carroll, Council Member
MD Rakibul Hasan, Council Member
Nicole Horseman, Council Member
Pushpa Latha Jangareddi, Council Member
Benjamin Levy, Council Member
Kayla Nisbet, Council Member
Swati Rao, Council Member
Jean Wolf, Council Member