

TO: Peter Lombardi

FROM: Brewster Cultural Council

RE: Request for additional financial support in FY25

Date: November 14, 2024

Introduction

The Brewster Cultural Council (BCC), founded on the principles of celebrating diversity, fostering creativity, and enhancing cultural experiences in the town of Brewster, Massachusetts, is presenting this request asking the Town to match the annual grant it receives from the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC)*.

The BCC's mission is to promote and support projects that embrace Brewster's rich cultural heritage, encourage creative expression, and provide opportunities for residents and visitors to engage with the arts and culture. This proposal provides an overview of the BCC's request for matching funding.

Our Community

Culture is the lifeblood of Brewster, enriching the lives of its residents and helping to drive economic growth. The town's unique charm and appeal draw individuals to a diverse cultural landscape. From local art exhibitions to historical preservation projects to music festivals, dance, theater performances, and interpretive science, culture plays a fundamental role in shaping Brewster's identity. In 2022, we made 13 grants, supported programs for over 250 artists. We delighted over 2,500 citizens with a diverse range of cultural programming. In 2023, we made 18 grants, supported programs for over 250 artists and enchanted over 3,500 citizens with engaging, interactive cultural programming. By design, every grant we make supports a Brewster artist or supports an event that takes place in or near Brewster. We fund programming that fosters a sense of pride and belonging among residents, making Brewster an attractive place to live, work, and visit. To make sure we are being good stewards of taxpayer funds, we will soon conduct a survey of Brewster citizens and artists to make sure we are delivering programs that are of interest and will inspire them.

Brewster's cultural sector contributes significantly to the local economy and needs more support. The Council works to create ideas that generate positive impact for the Town's financial and artistic wellbeing. Based on the data from the US Bureau of Economic Analysis and the National Endowment for the Arts, we estimate that the cultural community contributes approximately \$8,000,000 to Brewster's economy. Six percent of the workforce identifies as artists. The interest in cultural activities is not one merely of making a living but one cemented by a community interested in the arts.

Brewster is a community with abundant cultural depth. The Cultural Council, given the financial opportunity, could provide the necessary guidance and support in helping artists realize and blend their vision to answer Brewster's desire for more cultural opportunities.

**The MCC defines culture as Arts that involve the creation and presentation of work in visual, musical, media and literary programs. Humanities include history, social studies, philosophy and art appreciation. Interpretive science includes educational activities engaging all ages and learning about nature, science and technology in ways that connect to our lives.*

Funding Request

Each Fall institutions and individuals apply to their local cultural councils for funding for cultural projects and activities planned for the following year. Criteria is established by the Massachusetts Cultural Council and each of the 329 local councils. We are respectfully requesting a total Town match of \$5,500, the anticipated yearly grant amount from the MCC. The last increase in funding from the Town was five years ago.

Annually, the BCC directly runs or sponsors events in Brewster including the April art show at the Brewster Ladies Library for Brewster Artists. The BCC obtained additional State Covid grants in FY23, totaling \$7,000 and was able to increase offerings, with a booth at 2 Conservation Days (FY23, FY24), an Arts in the Afternoon event at the Sea Camps that combined wreath making with crafts for children (Dec 23, 2022, combined with Brewster for the Holidays), a Paint a Pollinator party, with families coming to the Arts Center and telling us how much they enjoyed doing the project together, painting flowers with 75 NYA students that were displayed around the arts center during the time the pool was open, and an expanded Movement Arts festival held at the Sea Camps Boat House. We also wrote and received 2 festival grants (\$2500 each, FY23, 24) for a performance of Beyond the Bounds at Drummer Boy Park and a classical music concert in late October at the United Universalist Church. Our council members actively look for partners and funds to expand offerings in Brewster.

The additional state funding we applied for and received outside our regular grant (\$7,000) is no longer available. We have a small amount of that money set aside to support the Juneteenth events and are now working with the recreation department to offer an arts week during a school break, as well as repeating the wreath making as part of Brewster for the Holidays.

Even with limited public space for events, Brewster receives many more proposals than it can fund. In FY 22 we received 23 applications, totaling \$15,025. FY 23 we received 41 grants requesting \$47,758, and this year we received 34 requests for \$23,730. Our primary criteria are

1. Applicants who are Brewster residents;
2. Projects to be done in the Town of Brewster; and
3. Projects that are innovative and will engage and inspire Brewster residents and visitors.
4. Applicants with a confirmed date and venue for their project;

The BCC had previously decided to hold back about \$1,000 from the FY 24 State grant for its own projects, leaving \$4,500 to distribute, but the high quality and dire need of the 34 applicants convinced us to distribute all of the \$5,500 from the State but also \$330 from the Town's contribution. Thus, our ability to add additional offerings will be more limited.

Summarizing the 2024 Brewster Cultural Council Grants:

The BCC was able to fully fund only 7 applicants, averaging \$383.

The BCC was able to partially fund 11 applicants, averaging \$286.

The BCC had to deny funding 16 applicants.

If the BCC receives additional funds from the Town, it will be able to fund more projects in the future as well as being positioned to generate programs with partners after the determination of interim use of the Sea Camps property.

Benchmarking

The Town of Brewster currently lags behind other Cape Cod towns in matching state funding for cultural initiatives. For Cape Cod towns that match the MCC grant, the average town match is 97%. Brewster also lags other when compared to similarly sized municipalities across Massachusetts in terms of matching the MCC grants. Towns of similar size to Brewster that match the MCC grant provide, on average, 70% of the MCC Grant. Brewster currently matches 18% of the MCC grant. Here is a partial list of what Towns on Cape Cod contribute to their Councils:

	MCC grant	Town Contribution
Provincetown	\$5,500	\$10,000
Falmouth	\$8,400	\$10,000
Chatham	\$5,500	\$ 5,000
Harwich	\$5,600	\$ 3,800
Wellfleet	\$5,500	\$ 2,000
Orleans	\$5,500	\$ 2,000
Brewster	\$5,500	\$ 1,000

Conclusion

The Brewster Cultural Council is dedicated to enhancing the town's cultural vibrancy and showcasing the profound impact that culture can have on our community. It brings people together.

We appreciate your consideration of our request for matching funding. We are eager to engage in further discussions and provide additional information to address any questions or concerns you may have. Please feel free to contact Clare O'Connor Rice at capeduo@comcast.net to arrange a meeting or request more details.

Together, we can make a lasting impact on the cultural landscape of Brewster, ensuring that our town remains a cultural haven and a shining example of the power of the arts to enrich and enliven communities.

Submitted by Clare O'Connor-Rice, Richard Perry, Girard Healy, Jan Crocker, Dave Iannetelli, Marla Ker