

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HOUSING &
LIVABLE COMMUNITIES



Maura T. Healey, Governor ◆ Kimberley Driscoll, Lieutenant Governor ◆ Edward M. Augustus Jr., Secretary

To: Local Housing Authority Executive Directors **PHN 2026-06**
From: Jason Wright, Director, Bureau of Policy, Operations, and Performance
Subject: Creative Place Making Grant
Date: July 6, 2026

The purpose of this Public Housing Notice (PHN) is to inform Local Housing Authorities about the Creative Place Making Grant opportunity.

Need To Know:

- The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC), in partnership with the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC), is committed to supporting the efforts of Local Housing Authorities (LHAs) to reduce social isolation and improve community wellbeing by incorporating art into lived spaces in state public housing
- EOHLC intends to make awards to up to 10 Local Housing Authorities in a total amount not to exceed \$4,900,000. EOHLC will award between \$80,000 and \$490,000 per LHA
- Every project **must include a durable component that will change the lived environment**
- Preference will be given to LHAs that produce **strong yet feasible** resident engagement plans

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
**EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HOUSING
AND LIVABLE COMMUNITIES**

100 CAMBRIDGE STREET
BOSTON, MA 02108



**NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY (NOFA)
For EOHLC**

DOCUMENT TITLE: CREATIVE PLACE MAKING AWARD NOFA
DATE: COMMBUYS BID: # BD-26-1076-OCDD-EPH005-126796
AGENCY DOCUMENT #: EOHLC2026-64
DIVISION: PUBLIC HOUSING

Please Note: This is a single document associated with a complete Bid (also referred to as a "Notice of Funding Availability" ("NOFA"), Procurement, or Solicitation) that can be found on www.COMMBUYS.com. All Bidders (also referred to as Respondents or Applicants) are responsible for reviewing and adhering to all information, forms and requirements for the entire Bid, which are all incorporated into the Bid. Bidders may also contact the OSD Help Desk Helpdesk at OSDHelpDesk@mass.gov or the OSD Helpline at 1-888-MA-STATE. The Helpline is staffed from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday Eastern Standard or Daylight time, as applicable, except on federal, state and Suffolk County holidays.

The terms of [815 CMR 2.00](#), State Grants, Federal Grant Awards, Federal Subgrants and Subsidies are incorporated by reference into this NOFA. Contract and fiscal requirement terms used in this NOFA shall have the meanings defined in [815 CMR 2.00](#).

2026 Creative Place-making Award

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Introduction

The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC), in partnership with the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC), is committed to supporting the efforts of Local Housing Authorities (LHAs) to reduce social isolation and improve community wellbeing by incorporating art into lived spaces in state public housing. Capital funds are available to support creative place-making through temporary (e.g. workshops, art-making events, art festivals) and/or long-term art installations (e.g. murals, mosaics, creation of public art venues). While funds may be used for workshops and events, every project **must include a durable component that will change the lived environment**. A successful project will address the following:

1. A description of the population(s) most impacted by social isolation and/or lack of overall community wellbeing at your LHA and how this grant would serve those populations
2. An explanation of how the creative –place-making award will help reduce social-isolation and improve overall community well-being, including how this will be measured
3. A community engagement plan that includes both outreach to residents and the community/surrounding neighborhood. Preference will be given to projects that balance meaningful resident input with feasibility.
4. A description of how the project will change the lived environment, including buildings and grounds. These buildings and grounds must be part of a state-aided public housing development.
 - a. Temporary art installations are welcomed, but **preference will be given to projects that incorporate a more long-term change to buildings and/or grounds**.

Successful projects will also incorporate the creative place-making design principles described below. All projects will be administered in CapHub, LHAs are required to follow the relevant EOHLC project guidelines for a project of its size.

Creative Place-Making Design Principles

Creative place-making is a term used to describe the collaborative process through which community organizations, residents, artists and similar stakeholders use art as a vehicle to promote community-driven change¹. Creative place-making design principles include:

- Focus on community engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, including community residents and artists
- Use of art and cultural activities to rejuvenate spaces that benefit the community and address specific social issues
- Celebrations of unique characteristics of the local community

¹ American Planning Association. “Creative Place-making.” *Knowledgebase Collection*,

www.planning.org/knowledgebase/creativeplace-making/.

The Mass Cultural Council will:

- Participate in a pre-award webinar on [4/07/2026]. This webinar will discuss creative place-making and working with artists and conducting a successful artist call in greater detail as well as the creative process related to this work.
- Provide post-award webinar to awardees. MCC will serve as a connector between LHAs and Local Cultural Councils and other cultural organizations in the community.
- Promote artist calls made by LHA awardees, and provide limited technical assistance related to creative process (e.g., advising on materials, how to make a call to artists).

EOHLC will generate and distribute program guidelines, determine LHA adherence with program guidelines, evaluate program progress and success, and approve award payments. The LHA is responsible for successful completion of the proposed project, including adhering to program guidelines and applicable laws and regulations, completing required reporting, and oversight of project personnel, including the artist and project partners.

Funding Availability and Eligibility

EOHLC intends to make awards to up to 10 Local Housing Authorities in a total amount not to exceed \$4,900,000.

Eligibility is restricted to state-aided public housing developments with 20 or more units. Developments that have been redeveloped through mixed-finance projects in the last 15 years and developments that have awards for comprehensive redevelopment/replacement are not eligible. If the LHA has more than one site for which they would like to apply, separate applications for each development should be submitted. However, only one award per LHA will be granted.

LHA awardees must not have more than one strike on the Performance Management Review (PMR) and must be in good standing with the Resident Service Coordinator (RSC) program if they have an RSC award.

Eligible Use of Funds

EOHLC will award between \$80,000 and \$490,000 per LHA for projects that utilize art to address social isolation and improve community wellbeing. Projects under \$80,000 will not be considered. Such projects include but are not limited to:

- Repurposing or rejuvenating an unused or under-utilized space into a space that benefits the community, such as the creation of public performance spaces, recreation areas and/or cultural hubs.
 - Efforts to repurpose or rejuvenate space *must* include an artistic component.
 - Spaces repurposed or rejuvenated under this program must be primarily used by residents of state-aided public housing at the LHA. Installations of permanent art fixtures, such as statues, murals, projections, and/or mosaics

- Workshops and/or classes that generate resident art. However, workshops or classes funded under this NOFA must produce at least one *durable* art product, including but not limited to statues, murals, mosaics, interactive exhibits, and exhibitions of resident artwork.

The awarded LHA is entitled to a 10% administrative fee on the original construction contract budget line. The awarded LHA shall use a portion of this administrative fee to support resident outreach and engagement and track the impact of the funded project. **Please account for how the resident outreach and engagement funds will be used in your proposed budget.** If you intend to hire a tenant to assist with resident outreach and engagement, this cost is in addition to the 10% and shall be funded under the Tenant Coordinator line.

Grant funding may be used for both design and/or construction. This grant funding is not meant to supplant other funding or replace regular maintenance and redevelopment work. The intent of this grant is to engage in creative place-making to enhance the lived environment for residents of state-aided public housing. In order for the funds to be used, the spaces do need to be LHA owned.

EOHLC will only approve and pay funds associated with projects that meet the requirements of this NOFA and associated program guidelines. EOHLC reserves the right to end program participation and withhold funding under this program if an awardee remains out of compliance with program guidelines or the terms of this NOFA.

Resident Engagement Plans

Preference will be given to LHAs that produce **strong yet feasible** resident engagement plans for **key milestones** throughout the project, including project planning. Strong means that residents are consulted about the scope and content of the project and are somehow involved in its rollout. It is up to LHAs to build out their engagement plans consistent with these guiding principles. Robust engagement plans will differ based on the type of project being considered, the target population, and the community in which the project is embedded. Examples of resident engagement may include but are not limited to:

- Coffee hours/information sessions
- Volunteer opportunities to assist with certain aspects of the project
- Call for resident artists to contribute to the project
- Newsletters or public bulletins explaining project progress
- Allowing residents to vote on specific aspects of the project
- Planning/Groundbreaking/Completion parties
- Resident surveys
- Resident interviews and/or focus groups
- A resident steering committee advises on project scope and completion

Metrics

Successful applications will **balance robust engagement with a feasible plan** to execute the project. Residents should have input into the project, but the resident engagement process should be manageable given the project scope and budget and the capacity of the Bidder.

EOHLC will provide specific reporting instructions to each LHA upon award. By accepting funding, LHA grant recipients agree to track the impact of the creative place-making grant in the following manner:

- **Submitting monthly project completion updates until the project is complete**
 - EOHLC will provide an update form that details what information is required
- **Submitting impact reports to EOHLC on a quarterly basis that include the following data (EOHLC may amend this list of data elements, with notice to successful Bidders):**
 - Project Start Date
 - Project End Date (updated at each submission if necessary)
 - Project Cost (updated at each submission if necessary)
 - Short-Term or Long-Term? (updated if scope changes)
 - Type of Project (updated if scope changes)
 - Target Population(s)
 - Engagement Reporting (**must report each activity**)
 - Events/Meetings
 - Population in attendance*
 - Attendance type
 - Brief description of project or event
 - EOHLC reserves the right to request additional data
 - If the project consists of multiple events, a report will be required for each event
 - Other Outreach Types (e.g., survey, interview)
 - Type of engagement (e.g., survey, interview)
 - Number of residents engaged
 - Number of residents participating
 -
 - **Administering a pre and post project survey of residents:**
 - EOHLC will provide the survey to LHAs along with instructions and guidance on survey administration.
 - LHAs agree to administer the survey to target residents. The target population should be identified in the application. The size of the survey will depend on project scope and target population and will be determined jointly between EOHLC and the Bidder.
 - Pre-project completion surveys must take place within 3 months of accepting the award.
 - Post-project completion surveys must be completed after the program is complete. After 1 month of completion for short term projects and after 3 months of completion for long term projects.

Application Process

Grant Application Requirements

Please submit an application with the following information:

- **A one-page cover letter** transmitting the application, signed by the LHA or RAA Executive Director.
- **A board vote** of application approval, as evidenced by a certified extract from the minutes of the board meeting.
- **A narrative** of no more than 8 single spaced pages. The narrative should include the following:
 - A description of the population(s) most impacted by social isolation and/or lack of overall community wellbeing at your LHA.
 - An explanation of how the creative-place making award will help reduce social-isolation and improve overall community well-being, including how you will measure impact of this grant award on residents and the community.
 - A community engagement plan that includes both outreach to residents and the community/surrounding neighborhood. This portion of the narrative should lay out a concrete engagement strategy and speak to the depth of engagement with residents.
 - If the LHA applicant currently has a Resident Service Coordinator (RSC) award, the narrative should speak to how the RSC might be engaged in this project. As a reminder, any RSC involvement must remain in compliance with the RSC program guidelines.
 - A description of how the project will change the lived environment, including buildings and grounds. These buildings and grounds must be part of a state-aided public housing development.
- **Completion of Appendix A** excel chart that asks for number of state-aided public housing units.
- **A draft budget**
 - Please also include a brief description of estimated maintenance costs and how the LHA will cover ongoing those costs once the project is complete
- **A draft project timeline**
- **A description of capacity to measure** the metrics outlined in the Metrics section of this NOFA. Please explain how you will use the data and reports from the EOHLC web-based system to drive performance.
- **A list of staff and qualifications**
- **Photos of spaces to be addressed by the project and plan showing proposed project location**
- **Evidence that residents have been given the opportunity to comment on this project proposal** (e.g. meeting minutes, list of attendees, vote or letters of support). Demonstration of compliance with tenant participation regulations, particularly if there is a recognized Local Tenant Organization at the affected development (760 CMR 6.09).

Scoring Criteria

Applications will be reviewed to determine overall consistency with the goals of the program and with EOHLC goals and objectives. Only complete applications will be reviewed.

Applications will be evaluated to determine how well positioned the LHA is to implement the program in state-aided public housing. Points will be given based on how well the application meets the criteria below. An application can score a **maximum of 100 points. The minimum score needed by an applicant is 51 points.**

Scoring Guide:

<p>Project Scope</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A description of the population(s) most impacted by social isolation and/or lack of overall community wellbeing at your LHA. ○ An explanation of how the creative-place making award will help reduce social-isolation and improve overall community well-being, including how you will measure impact of this grant award on residents and the community. ○ A description of how the project will change the lived environment, including buildings and grounds. These buildings and grounds must be part of a state-aided public housing development. 	<p>Possible: 30 (required minimum score of 15)</p>	
<p>Resident Engagement Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An explanation of how you plan to engage with residents throughout the project, consistent with the engagement principles laid out above. ○ Residents should have input into the project, but the resident engagement process should be manageable given the project scope and budget and the capacity of the Bidder. 	<p>Possible: 20 (required minimum score of 10)</p>	
<p>LHA Management Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Performance Management Review (PMR) Findings ● Agreed Upon Procedures (AUP) Findings ● Compliance with EOHLC reporting requirements not covered by PMR: 	<p>Possible: 15 (required minimum score of 7)</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Budget Submissions and Certification ● Board Attendance 		
<p>Timeline, Cost Effectiveness, and Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reasonableness of proposed timeline for project ● Cost of project in consideration of impact, in terms of resident and surrounding community benefits. ● Funds leveraged from non-EOHLC sources, including municipal or non-profit funding (preferred, but not required). ● Explanation of how LHA will cover ongoing maintenance costs once the project is complete 	Possible:15 (required minimum score of 7)	
Explanation of how LHA will gather data and information to report performance and comply with grant reporting requirements.	Possible: 10	
List of staff (current or to be hired) who will be assigned to this project, their roles in developing and implementing the project and their relevant experience with providing coaching and services.	Possible: 10	
TOTAL	Possible: 100	

EOHLC reserves the right to request additional information from LHAs during the review process and to use other available information as may be necessary in order to complete its review. Please see the General section of the NOFA below for more information. The number of awards is subject to funding availability.

Estimated Calendar

NOFA Activity	Date	Time
NOFA CB's Post Date:	3/25/2026	
Q&A submittal deadline (est.):	4/10/2026	4:00 pm
Q&A response deadline (est.):	4/16/2026	
Deadline for responses:	6/4/2026	4:00 pm
Contract/s Award (est.):	6/19/2026	

All times that are included in the Estimated Calendar are prevailing Eastern Time. Questions and responses must be received no later than the due date and time indicated, or they may not be evaluated. The dates and times listed may change and are not binding on EOHLC. Any change in the date and time of the submission deadline indicated will be posted on COMMBUYS. If there is a conflict between the dates in this Estimated Calendar and dates on COMMBUYS, the dates on COMMBUYS shall prevail. Any changes in this Estimated Calendar that are made after the NOFA has

been published may not result in amendments to the NOFA. Such changes may appear only on COMMBUYS.

Please submit any questions about the application to EOHLCPUBLICHOUSING@Mass.gov by 4 pm on April 10, 2026. Answers will be posted as addendum to this NOFA by April 16, 2026.

Application Process

Electronic applications for this grant are due to EOHLC by Thursday June 4, 2026 at 4 pm.

Applicant LHAs should e-mail their applications as **one pdf document** to EOHLCPUBLICHOUSING@Mass.gov. Applications submitted as multiple documents will not be considered. EOHLC staff will review the applications and anticipates granting awards by June 17, 2026. This date, and the contract award date listed in the Estimated Calendar, are the anticipated estimated dates only. EOHLC may elect to establish an alternative contract award date and contract start date, as needed.

EOHLC reserves the right at any time and without penalty to cancel or recommence this NOFA, narrow or amend its scope, or reject any and all responses if EOHLC determines that a fair and open competitive procurement has been compromised or that doing so is in the best interest of the Commonwealth.

General

EOHLC reserves the right to use other available information regarding an LHA applicant's history, experience and past performance as a EOHLC grantee or borrower (as applicable) when evaluating applications, which may include whether the applicant has:

- Met prior work plan objectives in a timely and proper manner in accordance with an approved budget, and otherwise performed effectively;
- Complied with the terms and conditions of previous contracts;
- Conducted due diligence, closed loans and constructed program/projects in accordance with applicable requirements;
- Maintained compliance with applicable programmatic and legal requirements for any required period of affordability, and;
- Has a significant balance of unutilized credits.

All responses and information submitted in response to this NOFA are subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law. All written correspondence and materials submitted to EOHLC during this process, including as part of the response to this NOFA, become the property of EOHLC upon their receipt and will not be returned to the submitting parties. Except as provided in the Public Records Law, all materials submitted to EOHLC are subject to release as public records. In no event shall EOHLC, or any of their agents, representatives, consultants, directors, officers, or

employees, be liable to an LHA for the disclosure of all or a portion of a response or related information submitted in connection with this NOFA.

By submitting their NOFA application, the applicant LHA agrees to the terms of the NOFA, and affirms that they are not subject to any state or federal debarment order.

This NOFA does not commit EOHLC to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of an LHA's response to this NOFA or to enter into a contract for services. EOHLC may (i) accept or reject any and all proposals received as a result of this NOFA; (ii) contract for some, all or none of the services offered by LHAs in response to this NOFA; (iii) negotiate with one or more of the qualified LHAs; or (iv) cancel, in part or in its entirety, this NOFA if it is in the best interest of the Commonwealth to do so.

EOHLC reserves the right to make amendments to the NOFA after initial publication. Any such amendment will be posted to COMMBUYS. It is each LHA's responsibility to check COMMBUYS for any amendments, addenda or modifications to this NOFA, and any Q&A records related to this NOFA. EOHLC accepts no responsibility and will provide no accommodation to LHAs who submit a response based on an out-of-date NOFA or on information received from a source other than COMMBUYS.

Applicant LHAs may not alter the NOFA language. Modifications to the NOFA are prohibited and will be disregarded.

Selected LHAs must ensure that all client/participant data is held in accordance with applicable state and federal requirements, including but not limited to, M.G.L. c. 66A, M.G.L. c. 93H, M.G.L. c. 93I, 760 CMR 8.00, the applicable Commonwealth Terms and Conditions, and the Enterprise Information Security Policies and Standards published by the Executive Office for Technology, Services and Security (EOTSS), such that the confidentiality and security of the Commonwealth program data is protected.

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EOHLC shall maintain sole and exclusive ownership rights to the Commonwealth Data and Commonwealth Personal Data to be provided under any contract award resulting from this NOFA, including but not limited to all of its state-aided public housing participant files and data that may be assembled, created, or used by the selected applicant(s) in the performance of work under the contract award(s). For the avoidance of doubt, the selected applicant(s) shall serve as a "holder" of the data under M.G.L. c. 66A, M.G.L. c. 93H, M.G.L. c. 93I, and the applicable Commonwealth Terms and Conditions, but shall have no rights in or to the Commonwealth Data or Commonwealth Personal Data other than the limited, revocable, and non-transferrable right to use such files and data solely as required for the selected applicant(s) to meet their obligations under contract award with EOHLC.

The selected LHAs must provide all contracted services in a non-discriminatory manner, and in conformance with applicable state and federal regulations, and with any administrative guidance,

policies, and other requirements provided by EOHLC, including but not limited to the applicable sections of 760 CMR 49.00, the MRVP Administrative Plan, applicable Public Housing Notices, M.G.L. c. 121B, 760 CMR 4.00, et al., 760 CMR 5.00, et al., 760 CMR 6.00 et al., and 760 CMR 8.00 et al.

Massachusetts shall have exclusive and sole jurisdiction and venue for any state or federal actions arising from, relating to, or in connection with the NOFA.

Applicants with disabilities or hardships that seek reasonable accommodation, which may include the receipt of NOFA information in an alternative format, must communicate such requests in writing to the contact person. Requests for accommodation will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. An LHA requesting accommodation must submit a written statement which describes the respondent's disability and the requested accommodation to the contact person for the NOFA.

Creative Place-Making Resources

EOHLC encourages applicant LHAs to learn more about the theory behind creative place-making as well as best practices for implementing creative place-making projects. Below, you'll find some resources which explain creative place-making in greater detail:

- [Creative Place-making - A White Paper for The Mayors' Institute on City Design, a leadership initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with the United States Conference of Mayors and American Architectural Foundation](#)
- [Understanding the Impact of Arts and Culture on Communities through Local Data](#)
- [Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Creative Place-making](#)
- [American Planning Association: Creative Place-making](#)

Applicants should also view some examples of creative place-making when crafting their applications. Such examples include but are not limited to:

- [Center for Community Progress: Creative Place-making Examples](#)
- [The Importance of Third Places in Combating Loneliness and Building Community](#)
- [Project for Public Spaces: Creative Place-making](#)
- [National Endowment for the Arts: Case Studies of Creative Place-making Projects](#)

Please note, the presence of a program group or organization on these lists does not represent an endorsement of any activities, services or policy positions by EOHLC or the Commonwealth. EOHLC is not liable for any assistance or advice of any of the groups on these lists.