

Through six years of strategic investments,

Greater Worcester Community Foundation has demonstrated the unique role we can play in strengthening a diverse, well-resourced arts sector. Our support has helped create a unified vision for arts and culture in the City of Worcester, assisted community-rooted arts nonprofits as they made bold strides to expand their impact, aided artists of color in growing their art forms and revenues, and sparked cross-sector collaborations that infuse art in solutions to local issues.

Together with donors, we can increase the scale and results of this work in coming years—building on tested practices as well as our knowledge and networks to advance vibrant arts and thriving communities throughout Worcester County.



Greater Worcester Community Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in Worcester County through philanthropy and community leadership. Since 1975, the Foundation has worked to connect donors with causes they care about and support initiatives that address critical needs and opportunities in the community.

[Learn more at greaterworcester.org.](https://greaterworcester.org)



Greater Worcester Community Foundation

One Mercantile Street, Suite 010

Worcester, MA 01608

Tel 508.755.0980



Creative Worcester County

Vibrant arts. Thriving communities.



**GREATER
WORCESTER
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**



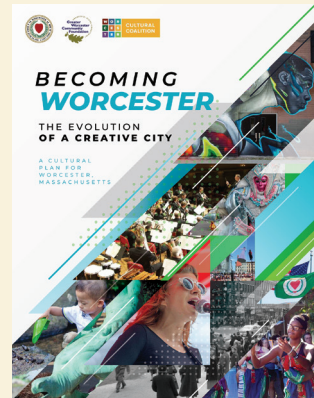
We believe arts and creativity can build community in a changing world—helping bridge divides, boost healing and recovery, and enable all to find their voice and home in Worcester County.

This belief led to the *Creative Worcester* initiative, launched in 2018 with a focus on centering arts in civic life across the city. The initiative is now going county-wide—and demonstrates Greater Worcester Community Foundation's commitment to fostering a region where artists and arts nonprofits are valued and diverse cultures are celebrated.

The initiative's first six years brought major progress. Together with donors, we:

- Joined with the City of Worcester and Worcester Cultural Coalition to generate the City's first-ever **Cultural Plan**, titled *Becoming Worcester*, and activate plan implementation.
- Provided nearly \$700,000 to 30 local nonprofits via **Creative Engagement Grants**, awarding up to \$70,000 for pilot projects that increase community involvement and access to arts, and **Creative Spark Grants**, smaller awards for new art works and programs.
- Responded to urgent needs and inspired hope during the pandemic through more than \$200,000 in **Covid Relief Grants**, including emergency funds for artists and support for arts and culture nonprofits.
- Catalyzed 38 inventive collaborations via \$410,000 in **Creative Intersections Grants**, connecting arts nonprofits with schools, hospitals, senior centers, and other community organizations to incorporate art and improve services to individuals and families.
- Engaged artists in **The Business of Art**, a six-month program of workshops, coaching, and networking to elevate their creative and business practices. Two cohorts, totaling 31 artists (including those pictured atop this page), have completed the program to date.
- Funded 14 nonprofits to participate in the **Worcester Tercentennial**.

In tandem with this initiative, the Foundation has increased investment in arts and culture year over year by directing Community Grant funds to the sector.



A meaningful difference

We contracted an independent firm, MXM Research Group, to evaluate *Creative Worcester* impacts to date. Their analysis, based on inputs from arts grantees and other local leaders, cited significant results. Our grant dollars directly support the creation and presentation of new art. Evaluators highlighted five additional ways our strategies contribute to an equitable, resilient arts sector.

By compensating artists and arts organizations for their work...

We helped change expectations for how artists should be valued—and bolstered the sector's ability to respond to community needs, retain diverse talent, and provide artists with more freedom to create.

By helping artists and arts organizations form or deepen connections...

We spurred collaborations and new works combining multiple art forms, closed generational gaps between artists, and broke down stereotypes that stood in the way of collective projects.

By providing artists and arts organizations with training to strengthen their business practices...

We helped them enhance their ability to create new art works, improve their financial sustainability, and increase their commitment to mentoring and sharing knowledge with others.

By introducing artists and arts organizations to new funding opportunities...

We helped them earn greater recognition and visibility, attract new revenues, and grow their involvement in cross-sector projects that benefit local communities.

By building a cultural blueprint with the City of Worcester and Worcester Cultural Coalition...

We helped the City and the Coalition fortify their public/private partnership, enabling the Coalition to expand its programming and increase its investment in the Jean McDonough Arts Center.

Outcomes from the first years of Creative Worcester have extended beyond arts, prompting community conversations on race, cultural representation, and equity in our region.



Greater Worcester Community Foundation is the region's largest funder of arts programs. With your help, we can amplify six years of impact and learning in Worcester to grow vibrant arts county-wide.

Arts and culture organizations look to Greater Worcester Community Foundation to increase our leadership role, building on our most successful practices, addressing persistent needs in the sector, and expanding resources for artists and nonprofits across the county. Our priorities for 2024 and 2025 feature:

Strategic partnerships, including ongoing activation and refinement of the City of Worcester Cultural Plan, support for the Worcester Cultural Coalition's new strategic plan, and forming alliances with funders and groups supporting arts in cities and towns outside Worcester.

Grantmaking and capacity building, including new funding and learning opportunities for artists and arts nonprofits across Worcester County, with continued emphasis on projects that involve multiple arts organizations and/or cross-sector parties to address community issues.

Convenings that involve all voices to shape the future of the arts sector, including events that bring diverse artists and arts nonprofits together with our donors, prospective new funders, and other local leaders to explore ways to enhance arts' contribution to community well-being.

Please join us, and the Barr Foundation, in supporting the people and organizations that create beauty, inspiration, and connection in our communities.

Your contribution helps propel *Creative Worcester County*—and brings major new resources to our region. The Barr Foundation is multiplying 2024 and 2025 gifts from our donors nearly six-fold, awarding us \$1,000,000 if our fundraising goal of \$170,000 is met.



There has never been a better moment to invest in community through arts and creativity.

Give online: bit.ly/46zPrTE

Contact: Kelly A. Stimson
Vice President of
Philanthropic Services
kstimson@greaterworcester.org