

Wicked Cool Places grant applications available for creative placemaking

Beginning this week, anyone with an idea to make a public place in New Bedford 'wicked cool' can apply to the city's Wicked Cool Places (WCP) grant to help turn their vision into reality.

WCP is the City of New Bedford's grant program for creative placemaking. It is funded by the city of New Bedford's Arts, Culture and Tourism Fund, with additional funding by Bristol County Savings Bank, Mass Cultural Council, and MassDevelopment.

WCP seeks to enhance community development, arts entrepreneurship, and ongoing investment in the rich arts and culture of the city. New Bedford artists, cultural organizations and talented citizens are encouraged to apply for a WCP grant through August 16.

Applications can be found at NewBedfordCreative.org, the just-launched website for all things #NBcreative. For more information, email Margo Saulnier, New Bedford's Creative Strategist, at artsnewbedford@gmail.com.

"The goal of Wicked Cool Places is to unite property and business owners with artistic and cultural groups, using arts as a tool to help transform New Bedford's overlooked or undervalued places," said Saulnier.

Wicked Cool Places began as a pilot program in April 2018 when it distributed \$5,000 in grants as a test run to 3rd Eye Unlimited, SUPERFLAT NB, the New Bedford Art Museum/Artworks!, and Seaport Art Walk. This leveraged over \$12,000.

In December 2018, the pilot program scaled up to distribute \$50,000 in placemaking grants to 12 different artists or groups, investing in projects throughout the City of New Bedford, which leveraged an additional \$180,000. A few of those projects include Tracy Barbosa's Guatemalan Kite Festival Workshops, Brook Baptiste's Reggae on West Beach, New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center's Big Boat, Little Boat celebration of fishing culture, Southcoast Lessons' Open Season Series, and Community Economic Development Center's Vacant Storefront Gallery.

The official first round of Wicked Cool Places will invest up to \$80,000 in funds for city-wide placemaking projects beginning this Fall.

The deadline to submit an application is August 16, 2019. Grants will be announced in mid-October 2019. Once a project is approved, the applicant will receive a commitment letter from the New Bedford Economic Development Council. Grants will be distributed as a reimbursement in full once final approval from that office is granted.

Any project or program within the City of New Bedford is eligible. Individuals and organizations are both eligible. However, Wicked Cool Places cannot accept applications for work that has already been completed, and work for grant-funded tasks cannot begin until successful applicants are provided with written approval.

All applications will be evaluated by the selection committee of the New Bedford Creative Consortium and scored on the impact of the project based on these criteria: quality, originality and creativity, community benefit and partnership, planning and budget.

So, for those who have a wicked cool idea ready to unleash on the world in New Bedford, visit Wicked Cool Places at NewBedfordCreative.org and begin the journey.

About Wicked Cool Places:

Wicked Cool Places (WCP) is the city of New Bedford's grant program for creative placemaking, uniting willing property/business owners, artistic/cultural groups, design/preservation specialists, and business/development experts to help transform New Bedford's overlooked or undervalued places. Wicked Cool Places enhance community development, arts entrepreneurship, and ongoing investment in the rich arts and culture of the city, and is funded by the city of New Bedford's Arts, Culture and Tourism Fund, with additional funding by Bristol County Savings Bank, Mass Cultural Council, and MassDevelopment.