

Forward Fund Overview

Purpose and Goals

The CRA hopes to offer awards to a diverse set of entities whose proposals are both feasible and supportive of economic vitality, livability, and sustainability in Cambridge. The CRA's Forward Fund is a micro-grant program intended to support specific physical improvement projects that better Cambridge's built environment for the benefit of all the City's residents, workers, and visitors. The Fund's goals are to:

- Advance the CRA's mission to implement creative initiatives that promote social equity and a balanced economic system.
- Support innovative proposals that craft resourceful projects to take advantage of local knowledge in order to maximize potential benefits.

For 2018, the theme of the Forward Fund grant program is to support projects that create, maintain, or enhance **Community Resilience** within Cambridge.

Available Funding

The CRA budget authorized the distribution of up to \$125,000 for 2018. The CRA reserved the right to allocate funding flexibly depending on the quality of applications received, and to request project modifications or other conditions before disbursement of funds.

Two Award Types

Applicants may apply for one of two award types.

- Community Infrastructure Capital Grants: Awards of up to \$25,000. Offered to applicants seeking to fund a physical improvement project that serves a civic facility that provides public services and facilitates community resilience or meets a neighborhood need regardless of innovativeness. This may include a building or infrastructure project for a non-profit or a Cambridge-based independent small business with a neighborhood function that touches a significant amount of the population.
- Civic Experimentation Capital Grants: Awards of up to \$25,000. Offered to applicants piloting innovative specific physical improvement projects. Something that encourages, enables, or executes a physical innovation, avant-garde placemaking, or tactical urbanism in a public and civic space, whether publicly or privately owned.

Both award types require a 1:1 organizational match - which could include another outside funding source or in-kind/volunteer matching resource. Grants are to be paid 50% at the time of award, and 50% at the completion of the project. Funds are to be used primarily for specific physical improvements, but up to 5% may be used for associated programming and up to 10% may be used for the project design phase.

Eligibility Criteria

Projects must meet all of the following yes/no criteria in order to be eligible:

1. Located within Cambridge.
2. Achieves a physical improvement that does not require any additional ongoing funding from the CRA or the City to operate or maintain
3. Request does not exceed award maximums.
4. All applicants must explain how the project relates to the CRA mission and operating principles.
5. The applicant must have control over proposed installation site or have a letter of support from the property owner.

Evaluation Criteria

Project proposals will be evaluated and scored based on the following criteria by an advisory group to consist of a combination of CRA and City of Cambridge staff from various departments:

Project Related Scoring Criteria:

1. Alignment with the purpose and goals of the Fund and the CRA mission and operating principles
2. Increase the quality of the built environment / public realm, tackle a public need, or provide an amenity
3. Demonstrate a tangible public benefit in an under-resourced area of Cambridge designated by the City of Cambridge [Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Areas](#)
4. Alignment with and support of current Cambridge planning and development efforts
5. Level of public access and visibility of the project
6. Ability to inspire or inform other community investments
7. Promote the Forward Fund goals for an inclusive, collaborative, and resourceful process

Applicant Related Scoring Criteria:

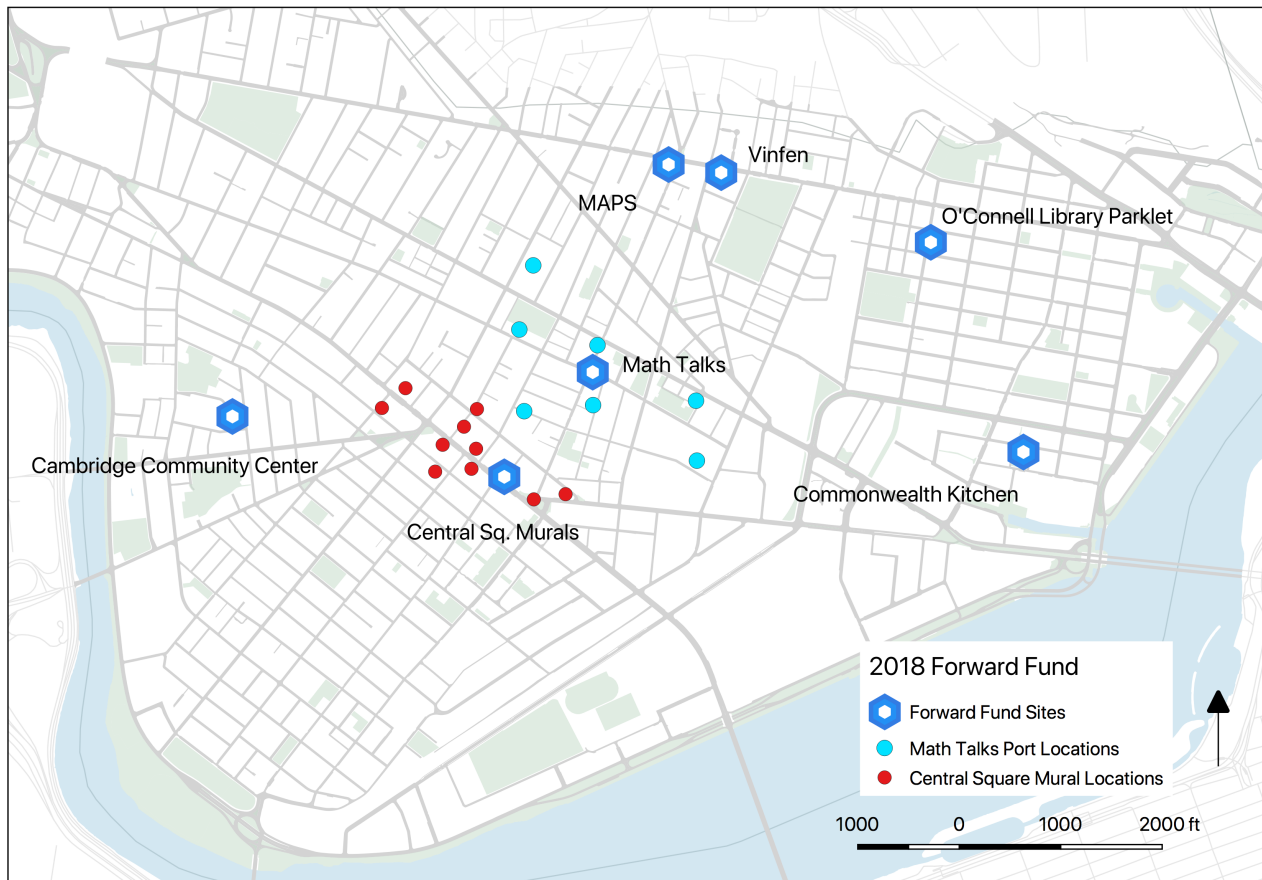
1. Demonstrated capacity of applicant to successfully implement the project
2. Realistic financial feasibility of the project
3. Financial need of applicant

Governance Structure

An advisory group consisting of CRA and City of Cambridge staff from various departments were appointed to evaluate proposals and recommend selections. The 2018 advisory group consists of the following members:

- Pardis Saffari, Economic Development (Community Development Department)
- Gary Chan, Community Planning (Community Development Department)
- John Nardone, Department of Public Works
- Lillian Hsu, Cambridge Arts Council
- Anthony Tuccinardi, Inspectional Services Department
- John Ziniewicz, Cambridge Housing Authority
- Nancy Tauber, Kids Council (Human Services Department)
- Carlos Peralta, Cambridge Redevelopment Authority

Forward Fund 2018 Awarded Projects



Infrastructure Grants (\$98,000)

- Building Modernization (*Cambridge Comm. Center*)
- CW Kendall (*CommonWealth Kitchen*)
- O'Connell Library (*East Cambridge Open Trust*)
- MAPS Sr./Comm. Elevator Improvement Project (*Mass. Alliance of Portuguese Speakers*)
- 950 Cambridge Street Façade Improvements (*Vinfen*)

Experimentation Grants (\$55,000)

- Central Square Mural Project (*Central Square Business Assoc.*)
- MathScapes: Activating Public Spaces for Early Math Learning (*Math Talk*)
- Genius of 700 Main (*Innovators for Purpose*)

INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS

BUILDING MODERNIZATION (COMMERCIAL KITCHEN)

CAMBRIDGE COMMUNITY CENTER

\$25,000

Non-Profit Organization 501(c)(3)
Darrin Korte; Executive Director

Project Location: 5 Callender Street

Quoted from the Forward Fund Application Form:

“Relocating our kitchen is a necessary component of our large-scale renovation plans. It will allow us to make necessary improvements to our kitchen space to support our expanding food-related programs. Plans include a ventilated 6-burner gas stove, with two ovens, a double-sized refrigerator and freezer, a 3-bay sink, dishwasher, a warming cabinet, ample prep-space, and cabinet space. The space also needs new flooring, some minor repairs to walls, and a fresh coat of paint.

Currently, our kitchen is not approved for commercial use and sits where we plan to install an elevator to increase accessibility to all four floors of our building. Our new kitchen will be built for commercial use, allowing us to prepare fresh meals for children and families in our community and rent it to people who need commercial kitchen space - a request we frequently get. The space that our kitchen will be relocated to is currently being used as a conference room on the opposite side of our building. This space, which is approximately the same size as our current kitchen, has been underutilized for several years. The new location for the kitchen will also prove to be more convenient, with doors to both our Gymnasium and our Common Room - the two rooms we serve food in.

In addition to being a necessary component of a large-scale renovation project that will provide a great deal of public benefit, our kitchen project will provide tangible public benefit in itself.”

GENERAL PROJECT SCHEDULE

December 2018	Start Demolition of current kitchen (following Annual Thanksgiving Luncheon)
January 2019	Begin construction of new kitchen
March 2019	Ribbon cutting event for new commercial kitchen

CWKENDALL

COMMONWEALTH KITCHEN

\$18,000

Non-Profit Organization 501(c)(3)
Jen Faigel; Executive Director

Project Location: 300 Athenaeum Street

Quoted from the Forward Fund Application Form:

“CommonWealth Kitchen (CWK) is on a mission to break down the barriers for low-income women, immigrants, and people of color to establish viable food businesses as a means to generate assets and wealth, create jobs with few barriers to entry, and build a just, equitable regional food economy. To accomplish this mission, CWK operates Greater Boston’s only nonprofit food business incubator and integrated food manufacturing social enterprise. CWK currently serves approximately 50-member businesses, over 75% of which are owned by low-income women and/or people of color. CWK’s member businesses employ more than 140 individuals in one of Boston’s lowest-income neighborhoods.

More than just a shared kitchen, CWK provides a comprehensive array of business and technical training services, connections to a powerful network of industry partners, and on-site manufacturing services as part of its unique, vertically integrated approach to small business development. From the outset, CWK helps aspiring entrepreneurs navigate the complex permitting and licensing process, and assists with business planning, and food safety protocols.”

GENERAL PROJECT SCHEDULE

April 2018	Complete assessment of space and existing utilities constraints for final design of kitchen flow plan and to identify equipment needed
May 2018	Install preliminary equipment necessary for launch
June 2018	Formal launch event

O'CONNELL LIBRARY PARKLET

EAST CAMBRIDGE OPEN SPACE TRUST (ECOST)

\$25,000

Non-Profit Organization 501(c)(4)
Rhonda Massie; Trustee

Project Location: 48 Sixth Street

Quoted from the Forward Fund Application Form:

“In partnership with the City of Cambridge, ECOST will transform the O’Connell Library’s uninviting and under-utilized outdoor space into a welcoming public “pocket park.” This project was chosen due to the Library’s heavy use by patrons.

Currently, the Library yard is surrounded by a wrought iron fence that discourages visitors from entering, and the brick pavers that wind through the yard are in disrepair and difficult to use for those with strollers or limited mobility. As the lighting is very poor on the site, people often choose to sit on the library steps after hours to take advantage of the Library’s Wi-Fi. The few benches are typically unoccupied.

The new O’Connell Library Pocket Park will function as both a park and an educational landscape. Features will include charging stations for visitors’ electronic devices, durable and ergonomic seating for the comfort of older visitors, and native plants that will require minimal irrigation. A special space will be created at the front of the library for outdoor story hours, with additional benches bordering the park and tucked into quieter alcoves created by the landscaping along the sides of the building. A new sidewalk will have expanded tree pits with plantings to extend the garden space into the street, helping with traffic calming. New off-street bike parking will also allow library patrons other modes of transport and easily connect to the nearby bike routes planned and existing.”

GENERAL PROJECT SCHEDULE

Phase I 2018	Finalizing Drawings and Spec
Phase II 2019	Installation of the O’Connell Library Pocket Park
Phase III 2019 / 2020	Sidewalk improvement project

MAPS SENIOR/COMMUNITY ELEVATOR IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

MASSACHUSETTS ALLIANCE OF PORTUGUESE SPEAKERS (MAPS)

\$25,000

Non-Profit Organization 501(c)(3)
Paulo Pinto; Executive Director

Project Location: 1046 Cambridge Street

Quoted from the Forward Fund Application Form:

“The only one of MAPS' six offices owned by the private, nonprofit health and social service organization, the Cambridge office has served the Portuguese-speaking community of the city and surrounding areas since opening in 1970. The elevator from the first to second floor is very old and, though MAPS spent significant funds on renovating its hydraulics two years ago, we recently learned that its electronics now need upgrading.

The 2nd floor houses staff offices, the Board/conference room and a kitchen. The elevator is the only way for a good majority of the more than 100 MAPS Senior Center visitors with varying levels of disability to access the Center, which provides nutritious, culturally competent meals, services, social and cultural activities and more, four days per week throughout the year. When the elevator breaks down, which it does often, disabled visitors stay home and miss out on the many activities and socialization that keep them healthy, active and connected to the outside world. When out of service, it disrupts evening/weekend community meetings, classes and gatherings scheduled by internal programs as well as community partners.”

GENERAL PROJECT SCHEDULE

June 2018

Work will be completed in June of this year

950 CAMBRIDGE STREET FACADE IMPROVEMENTS

VINFEN

\$5,000

Non-Profit Organization 501(c)(3)
Ann Bausman; Development and Special Events Manager

Project Location: 950 Cambridge Street

Quoted from the Forward Fund Application Form:

“Vinfen’s administrative offices occupy a four-story building at 950 Cambridge Street located on the edge of a commercial district and in close proximity to the future King Open School. We are proposing two major enhancements to the building façade, which is currently anonymous and rather bland. The ground floor façade includes six large windows and four substantial openings with views of our parking garage and lot. We propose covering the windows with six large-scale decals describing our services coupled with photos of staff and people we serve. We would also like to propose hanging four banners to mask the view into the building’s parking area in front of the series of vertical metal bars currently displayed. The banners will include original artwork created by people in our services who attend Vinfen’s vocational art programs.

The proposed project will visually enhance both the immediate neighborhood and a building, which can be described as anonymous, imposing, and uninspiring. The combination of decals and banners will enliven and animate the building and will be appreciated by pedestrians and drivers on Cambridge Street. The proposed items which are in scale with the commercial store fronts in the area, will help to bring cohesion to this part of the neighborhood, and will similarly help to reduce the overall scale of the building. The somewhat imposing nature of the building will also benefit from the introduction of bright and friendly images especially in a facility which is largely uninhabited during evening hours.”

GENERAL PROJECT SCHEDULE

Early June 2018	Installation of window decals
Late June 2018	Installation of banners

EXPERIMENTATION GRANTS

CENTRAL SQUARE MURAL PROJECT

CENTRAL SQUARE BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

\$25,000

Non-Profit Organization 501(c)(3)
Michael Monestime; Executive Director

Project Location: Central Square

Quoted from the Forward Fund Application Form:

“Central Square is a neighborhood in flux. Once a bustling commercial district and now filled with vibrant culture, gentrification is putting the neighborhood’s own residents at risk. We believe celebrating the arts and the rich culture of this area is important. This mural campaign pays homage to the past, present, and future of the square by supporting equity and inclusion. The mural campaign will spread this message throughout the neighborhood with features on iconic and easily-spotted buildings, including the gas and light building, the dance complex, the Barron building, and the Central Square Library. As a constant reminder of where the neighborhood has been and it’s promising and inclusive future, the mural campaign has far-reaching potential.

We want to use this mural project as a chance to celebrate Central Square. We believe that highlighting local artists and reflecting on the history and future supports an equitable and sustainable community.”

GENERAL PROJECT SCHEDULE

June 2018

Launch website for Mural festival

Summer 2018

Artists begin painting murals

Mid-September 2018

Mural revealing takes place with block party at the Central Flea

MATHSCAPES: ACTIVATING PUBLIC SPACES FOR EARLY MATH LEARNING

MATH TALK

\$20,000

Community Organization
Omo Moses; Artist
The Algebra Project, Inc.; 501(c)(3) Fiscal Agent

Project Location: 700 Main Street

Quoted from the Forward Fund Application Form:

“Research indicates that early mathematics is one of the best predictors of kindergarten readiness and future academic success and that physical environments have a significant impact on children’s development and can easily and inexpensively transformed into creative early learning environments. Math Talk turns everyday public places like waiting rooms, barbershops, bodegas, parks, bus stops, eateries and streetscapes into resources for fun and engaging early math learning opportunities.

We do this by creating MathScapes – artistic, culturally relevant, easily accessible, physical installations - and pairing them with our free MathTalk APP to enable adults and children to utilize their immediate environment to playfully explore key early math concepts.

Through the creation of MathScapes we are strengthening connections and finding shared goals between families, schools, and local businesses that have been demonstrated to support community health, economic development, and civic participation.”

GENERAL PROJECT SCHEDULE

Summer / Fall 2018	Research and design phase
Winter / Spring 2019	Fabricate
September 2019	Installation throughout the Port

GENIUS OF 700 MAIN STREET

INNOVATORS FOR PURPOSE

\$10,000

Non-Profit Organization 501(c)(3)
Michael Dawson; Executive Director

Project Location: 700 Main Street

Quoted from the Forward Fund Application Form:

“While the building-boom that is ongoing in Cambridge may be improving the city’s landscape, we have found that youth, especially in Cambridge’s most economically challenged neighborhoods, feel invisible and disconnected to this progress. Our WayFinders projects have emerged as an excellent method of intentionally connecting students to the stories that are developing around them, while simultaneously showcasing their hopes, dreams, and aspirations to the story makers.

Genius of 700 Main Street will be the second in a series of interconnected Design + Tech installations. From the first center-aisle train car to Thomas Watson and Alexander Graham Bell completing the first phone call, to invention of the Polaroid camera and now home to several innovative biotech startups - the 700 Main Street site has been a hub of innovation. Students under the guidance of mentors will use the design process to learn about these stories directly from 700 Main’s current and past tenants of 700 Main as well as others knowledgeable about the genius. Secondary sources found in Cambridge’s archives will be used as well. After numerous ideation sessions and reviews with interested parties, students will design a public installation symbolizing the sources of 700 Main Street’s genius realized over the years through Design, Science, Technology and Entrepreneurship.”

GENERAL PROJECT SCHEDULE

Summer 2018	Research and design phase
Fall 2018	Complete fabrication drawings and solicit bids
Winter 2018	Install and celebrate