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**Just A Start Receives \$4,500 Grant to Support Community
Mural at Financial Empowerment Collaborative**
Funding from the Cambridge Arts Council Brightens Public Walkway

Cambridge, MA — Just A Start was awarded a \$4,500 grant through the Mass Cultural Council's grant program, administered by the Cambridge Arts Council. The funding supported a mural project, which was painted by Just A Start residents at the newly renovated Financial Empowerment Collaborative, located at 55 Norfolk Street near Central Square. This 920-square-foot space now serves as the hub for Just A Start's financial opportunity programs.

The mural was designed to brighten the public-facing 10x30 brick side of the building, which faces one of Just A Start's residential walkways. Input from community members, including residents and program participants, was sought to inspire the mural's design, and they were invited to contribute during painting sessions led by artist Emelia Misail.

"This mural showcases the creativity and vision within our community," said **Carl Nagy-Koechlin, Executive Director of Just A Start**. "It reflects the collaborative spirit of our residents and participants, who worked together to create a welcoming hub for financial empowerment. With support from the Cambridge Arts Council and the Mass Cultural Council, we've transformed this storefront into a symbol of opportunity and community engagement."

The Financial Empowerment Collaborative offers a range of financial services, including free tax assistance, financial coaching, and resources on benefits and employment, serving approximately 300 individuals annually. Its location in Central Square enhances accessibility for local residents and complements Just A Start's headquarters at Rindge Commons in Alewife.

The Cambridge Arts Council's grant program is funded by the City of Cambridge and an allocation from the Mass Cultural Council. The Mass Cultural Council's mission is to promote excellence, inclusion, education, and diversity in the arts, humanities, and sciences, to foster a rich cultural life for all Massachusetts residents and contribute to the vitality of our communities and economy. The not-for-profit cultural sector in Massachusetts has a \$2.56 billion economic impact and generates \$24.4 billion in federal, state, and local tax revenue annually.





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About Just A Start:

Just A Start believes that access to stable housing and sustainable careers are the essential building blocks of equitable communities. For more than 50 years, we have focused on meeting the fundamental needs of individuals and families who have been systematically denied opportunities to realize their full potential. Our programs include affordable housing, education and job training, and comprehensive support services, spanning Cambridge and beyond. We have developed and currently maintain 600 affordable apartments. To keep community members housed, we also offer financial and technical assistance to prevent evictions, and support low- and moderate-income homeowners. Finally, we prepare individuals of all ages and circumstances with the skills and knowledge they need to secure fulfilling careers, leveraging their talents to achieve economic mobility and strengthen the region's workforce.