

CITY OF BOSTON  
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Museum of Fine Arts Boston

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February 27, 2018

Mr. Matthew Englander  
Tax Policy Unit  
Assessing Department  
Boston City Hall Room 301  
Boston, MA 02201

Dear Mr. Englander:

Please realize the following in relation to the benefit of the Museum of Fine Arts to the City of Boston, its citizens and community.

The Museum of Fine Arts is a Massachusetts charitable corporation, whose mission is for the advancement of art and education. The City of Boston is one of the original incorporators of the Museum and the Mayor, Superintendent of Schools and a delegate from the Boston Public Library Foundation all are Trustees of the Museum.

The Museum outreaches on many levels to the people of the city of Boston through the following:

- The Museum is open on Wednesday nights to all free of charge in FY17, and a numbers of free days (Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day weekend and Columbus Day, etc.). There were approximately 71,000 visitors attended free Wednesday night, and approximately 63,000 visitors attended a variety of free days during FY17. If admission were to be charged, this would generate approximately \$2,680,000 of revenue for the year ended June 30, 2017.
- The Museum has had a multi-year free partnership with the Boston Public Schools, where school children visit the Museum during the academic year, free of charge. The Museum has established partnerships with several public schools in the City, through the *Thinking Through Art Partnership Program* working with these schools to engage students in a the Visual Thinking Strategies program, utilizing art as a tool to enhance critical thinking by students.

- The Museum supports Arts Educators in the Boston Public Schools including tuition to Teacher Workshops, student attendance at the MFA films, Boston Public School use of art studios, special exhibition tickets, etc., as well as our *MFA for Educators* website.
- The Museum provides a series of other continuing educational opportunities through free talks, tours and artist demonstrations. During fiscal year 2017 and into fiscal year 2018, the Museum has expanded its existing City Talks program, which is an open, public discussion with Boston area thinkers, entrepreneurs, activists and artists on current Museum exhibitions' prevalent themes that affect the City culturally, socially and politically.
- Beginning on July 1, 2017, the Museum introduced the MFA Citizens program. This program offers new US citizens living in Massachusetts a free one-year membership to the Museum and enables the Museum to become a place for new Americans to gather, make connections within their community and create bridges across cultures. This program, the first of its kind in the country, is in collaboration with New England: Project Citizenship, as well as the Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement and the Boston Public Library. To date, we have provided approximately 230 complimentary family memberships to new U.S. Citizens. There have been approximately 900 visits from these new member households.
- Beginning in the fall of 2017, the Museum began to offer free admission to all Massachusetts community college students, faculty and staff, including individuals from Bunker Hill and Roxbury Community Colleges. Approximately four-hundred individuals have participated in the program to date.
- The Museum provides a series of free accessibility programs including visitor centered, interactive tours designed for groups with physical or cognitive disabilities. These programs include:
  - *Access to Art: Second Saturdays*, a specialized program for individuals with memory loss or dementia, as well as their care partners,
  - *Feeling for Form*, a tour program designed for all ages of visitors who are blind or have low vision, providing an opportunity to tour the collection via tactile exploration of selected objects, verbal description and other tactile graphics, and

- *A Hand's Reach to Art*, a selection of gallery tours, performances and demonstrations presented in or interpreted through American Sign Language (ASL). Additionally, the Museum hosted ASL Night during Deaf Awareness Month in September 2017 featuring ASL tours, art making, performances and spotlight talks.
- The Museum has also hosted various cultural celebrations. Working with cultural groups in the City of Boston, such as the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center, VietAID and the Korean Cultural Society of Boston, the Museum and these organizations have created events to celebrate Lunar New Year. Additional annual cultural events have included Diwali, the Indian Festival of Light, Nowruz, the Persian New Year, Juneteenth, the commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States, and Hanukkah, the Jewish Festival of Lights.
- The Museum has several programs for teens in Boston. The Museum's Teen Arts Council, a leadership development program for Boston teens, offers participants the opportunity to learn about art, culture and history, develop workplace skills and provides a broad range of exposures to a variety of career paths. The Council participates in the creation of programs for their teen peers and the general public. In the spring of 2017, the Museum launched its STEAM Team program, based on the STEAM education platform (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) also for teen participants. Participants in the program have an opportunity for hands on learning in each discipline, both at the Museum and at local business and organizations.
- The Museum has an ongoing relationship with the Boys and Girls Club of Boston, Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center, Boys and Girl Club of Dorchester, United South End Settlement, the West End House, Boys & Girls Club of Allston-Brighton, etc. Through the *Community Arts Initiative* program, the Museum partners with numerous community sites, including many Boys and Girls Clubs in the City to engage individuals at after-school programs. These programs allow participants to access the Museum collection, as well as the art-making process through the creation of an original work of art displayed at the Museum.
- The Museum partners with several local hospitals in its *Artful Healing* program. The program brings art-making workshops to patients and their families, providing a fun and creative experience for patients undergoing medical treatment.

- The Museum maintains the landscaping, including tree maintenance, and snow removal of a variety of properties near the Museum, which are owned by the City of Boston. These properties include land between The Fenway and the Museum, the park on which the Endicott Memorial is located, Huntington Avenue. Additionally, the Museum has been donated annually to the Avenue of the Arts beautification projects to maintain the “greenscape” along the avenue.
- In addition, the Museum, under its agreement with the Boston Redevelopment Authority, contributes approximately \$42,000 each year over a twelve-year period to the Housing Exaction Program.

The Museum is woven into the fabric of the city. The above listed programs and efforts by the Museum demonstrate highlights of the efforts, which are taken to benefit the City of Boston and its citizens. The dollar value of these programs demonstrates the community effect and benefit which the Museum provides to the City.

Please call if you have any questions on the matter.

Sincerely yours,



Mark B. Kerwin, CPA  
Deputy Director and CFO