



March 30, 2021

Mr. Nicholas Ariniello
Commissioner, Assessing Department
Boston City Hall Room 301
Boston, MA 02201

Dear Mr. Ariniello:

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.

The following programs listed below are available to all residents of the Boston city-wide providing cultural access, educational opportunities, built environment and direct monetary. Many of the cultural access and educational opportunities have characteristics of each category.

Note: This narrative relates to programs when the Museum of Fine Arts is open. The Museum was closed due to the pandemic in March 2020 and reopened in late September and was closed again in December to reopen on February 3, 2021.

Cultural Access:

- The Museum had been open pre-pandemic on Wednesday nights to all free of charge in FY20, and a number of free days (Martin Luther King Day, Indigenous Peoples' Day, etc.). There were approximately 44,000 visitors attended free Wednesday night, and approximately 47,000 visitors attended a variety of free days during FY20. If admission were to be charged, this would have generated approximately \$2,058,000 of revenue for the year ended June 30, 2020. Engagement through community days has continued even during the pandemic is in FY 20 and 21 through virtual programming.



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- The Museum began its celebration of its milestone 150th anniversary year during Fiscal Year 2020. Prior to and after the Museum's closure due to COVID in FY 20, a variety of programs were offered to the public during the Museum's anniversary year. Visitors who have not been MFA members previously were invited to sign up for one year of free membership when attending various Community Celebrations or MFA Late Nites hosted prior to March 2020. These membership terms were extended through the six month period that the Museum was closed to allow recipients to utilize the membership benefits for additional time.
- The Museum has continued its MFA Citizens program, which began in July 2017. 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. The first of its kind in the country, MFA Citizens, is in collaboration with: Project Citizenship, as well as the Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement as well as the Boston Public Library.
- 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 2019 featuring ASL tours, art making, performances and spotlight talks.
- The Museum has also hosted various cultural celebrations on-site throughout fiscal year 2020 prior to closure and on-line subsequent to closure. Working with a variety of cultural groups in the City of Boston, the Museum and these groups have created events to celebrate Lunar New Year, Diwali, the Indian Festival of



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Light, Nowruz, the Persian New Year, Juneteenth and Hanukkah, the Jewish Festival of Lights.

- The Museum offers free admission to all Massachusetts community college students, faculty and staff, including individuals from Bunker Hill and Roxbury Community Colleges, as well as other community colleges throughout the state.
- The Museum participates in the Card to Culture program offering any Boston or Massachusetts residents who present Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards at a ticket desk may receive up to four \$3 tickets. During fiscal year 2020, approximately 2,100 visitors received this special offer. If full admission were to be charged, this would generate over \$47,000 of revenue for the year ended June 30, 2020.
- Under MFA Military Access Program, all active-duty military and veterans and five family members receive free admission year-round. For all military (active duty and veterans) who wish to become MFA members, there is a \$30 discount on MFA membership.

Education:

- 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. The Museum has continued to expand its existing City Talks program, 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.



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- 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. The Council has been in place for more than twenty years. Additionally, the Museum's STEAM Team program, based on the STEAM education platform (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) was developed for teen participants. Participants in the program have an opportunity for hands on learning in each of the five disciplines, both at the Museum and at local businesses and organizations.
- The Museum maintains the Curatorial Study Hall program, as specialized project based internship allowing students to explore and delve into exhibition creation, interpretation and design. This program is in partnership with local youth empowerment organizations Becoming a Man (BAM) and The BASE. This program is comprised of residents of Boston.
- Currently on view "Black Histories, Black Futures" exhibition is focused on works by 20th – century artists of color. More importantly it is curated by young scholars as part of the MFA's Curatorial Study Hall program. The young scholars work highlights areas of excellence within the museum's collection and lays foundations for the future.
- The Museum has an ongoing relationship with the Boys and Girls Club of Boston, Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center, Boys and Girls 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.



Built Environment:

- 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 and the White Memorial at the Public Gardens. Additionally, the Museum has been donated annually to the Avenue of the Arts beautification projects to maintain the “greenscape” along the avenue.

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 demonstrate the community effect and benefit which the Museum provides to the City.

Please call if you have any questions on the matter.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark B. Kerwin".

Mark B. Kerwin, CPA
Deputy Director and CFO