



City of New Bedford
Scott W. Lang, Mayor

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P R E S S R E L E A S E

AHA! Receives \$32,000 Adams Art Grant

New Bedford, Massachusetts - The city's Art History Architecture! (AHA!) project has been granted \$32,000 from the Adams Art Program by the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

The Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) today announced the release of \$765,500 to help revitalize communities and generate new economic activity through arts, science, and history projects across the state. AHA!, a collaborative project of the Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts, was one of 20 projects chosen for funding by the state-wide grant program.

The \$32,000 marks level funding from last year—which in this economy, is a “real coup,” said Lee Heald, director of AHA! “In a season of budget cuts, we understand this award is a real vote of confidence and recognition of the work going on in New Bedford on many levels. New Bedford's ability to be creative in place-making around arts and culture has been recognized once again. The immediate task remaining for us is to engage the business and corporate community in continued support to match and leverage the MCC money.”

Business and government leaders agree that Massachusetts' future prosperity is closely tied to the creative economy, the MCC said in a statement. Industries such as the arts, architecture, publishing, advertising, and design employ 109,000 workers and generate \$4.2 billion in annual economic impact in the Commonwealth. Arts, culture, and tourism are among the Commonwealth's top economic engines, said Rep. Sarah Peake of Provincetown, the newly named Co-Chair of the Joint Committee on Tourism, Arts, and Cultural Development, in a recent interview with the Cape Cod *Times*. "But the engine needs fuel."

The MCC has been supporting creative economy initiatives throughout Massachusetts for a decade, beginning in the 1990s. In 2004, the Legislature created the Adams Arts Program, which funds projects that create jobs and income, revitalize downtowns, and draw cultural tourists. Adams-funded projects leverage the assets of the creative sector—artists, cultural organizations, and arts-related businesses—inherent in Massachusetts' communities to generate real income. Communities such as New Bedford have used these funds to more fully realize these assets for the benefit of residents and visitors alike.

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"From Haverhill to Hancock, arts and culture are a vital force for community vitality," said Anita Walker, MCC's executive director. "Our arts, history, and science organizations are also a source of jobs and a key element of our tourism economy in Massachusetts. MCC's Adams Grants help this dynamic sector grow and thrive."

"The MCC has been a key partner in promoting the creative economy in the City of New Bedford," said Mayor Scott W. Lang. "In working with AHA! and all of our artistic stakeholders, MCC funding and expertise enhances the quality of life of all of our residents."

According to a 2010 study conducted by Center for Policy Analysis at UMass-Dartmouth, the estimated total economic impact of AHA! has increased by 137.6 percent in the last decade. AHA! also created an additional eight full-time equivalent positions in that period. These results are made even more crucial than they may first appear because there was almost no economic activity in downtown New Bedford on Thursday nights before AHA!, according to the study.

AHA! (Art, History & Architecture) is New Bedford's free Downtown Cultural Night and collaborative cultural organization. It takes place the second Thursday of each month from 5 to 9 p.m. in downtown New Bedford and involves over 60 downtown museums, galleries, arts organizations, merchants, and restaurants. For more information, visit www.ahanewbedford.org or call (508) 996-8253 ext. 205.

About the Massachusetts Cultural Council

The Massachusetts Cultural Council promotes excellence, access, education and diversity in the arts, humanities and interpretive sciences, in order to improve the quality of life for all Massachusetts residents and contribute to the economic vitality of our communities.

MCC is a state agency committed to building a central place for arts and culture in the everyday lives of communities across the Commonwealth. It pursues this mission through a combination of grants, services and advocacy for cultural organizations, schools, communities and artists. MCC receives an annual appropriation from the state Legislature and funds from the National Endowment for the Arts and other sources.

About the Community Foundation

Since 1995, area residents have been turning to the Community Foundation to make their philanthropic giving as effective as possible. CFSEMA is a public charity serving thousands of people who share a common concern - improving the quality of life in Southeastern Massachusetts.

While the Foundation's primary grant making focus is on the SouthCoast communities of Greater New Bedford, Greater Fall River, and Southern Plymouth County, CFSEMA is a regional foundation serving 41 cities and towns. Over the past five years, the Community Foundation has distributed more than \$8 million in grants and program support from 130 funds to humanitarian, educational and cultural organizations in the region. To learn more about the Foundation, visit www.cfsema.org.

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