

## **Supporting Artists in Boston**

Lisa Jeanne Graf, Written May, 2019

I am working on creating a list of ideas on how to support artists in Boston.

For affordable housing (including for artists) here is a link to some possible directions:  
[http://ljgraf.com/City\\_Proposals/AffordableHousing.pdf](http://ljgraf.com/City_Proposals/AffordableHousing.pdf)

### **Removing Show fees for Artists**

Several galleries charge a fee when an artist applies to show in a gallery or is applying for membership in a gallery. I do not think this is a fair way for a gallery to gain income, but the reason for it I understand. Those fees often are a great help in adding income to a gallery- and galleries tend to have big fluctuations in sales so that additional can often keep a gallery running. The city budget has funding for the arts. I was thinking that a good use for some of that budget would be to give galleries a stipend that would be for a year's time, and it would be given if the gallery agreed to not charge fees to artists for that year, and possibly not charge application fees as well. I would start with artist run cooperatives. If this was successful I would recommend enlarging the scope.

I applied for a grant at the Awesome Foundation to do a pilot of this idea.  
<https://www.awesomefoundation.org/> Fingers crossed that the pilot will be funded.

### **More Promotion of Artists who work with the City of Boston**

When artists work with New Urban Mechanics, and other city groups individual artists names are not always mentioned in press releases. The main focus is often on the department or the project. When artists do work with the city names should always be mentioned as well as contact information like websites or Instagram names to help the artist in promotion of their work.

### **Helping with Health Insurance**

Many fine artists get out of art school and switch from working part time to full time. This is largely so that they can get health insurance. Yet the longer that an artist can at least create their work at least 20 hours a week, the more likely they will keep creating and have a chance to make some income from that work. I need to learn more about the health insurance options for artists in Massachusetts. (Please email links, etc where I can research this more) But one idea to start with is for some of the city arts budget to go to supplementing the costs for health insurance. This is a big road block for a lot of artists to have the time they need to create.

## Art Rentals

In buildings throughout the city, and in city government offices it would be great to have rental fees for artists to show works.

One possible idea would be for each elected official in the state to rent one painting a year for say \$1,000 from an individual artist. The artwork could hang in the politician's office. This could help a lot of artists and share culture with a lot of citizens.

In the Fenway there is a pilot that is starting called **The Fenway Landlord-Artist Linkage Program**.

The Fenway Education and Neighborhood Support Fund (FENSFund) is a volunteer-run nonprofit that supports all types of artists living or working in the Fenway. They also seek to provide Fenway residents with opportunities to enjoy art produced, created or performed by their neighbors.

FENSFund is proposing a pilot program that will provide income and exposure to Fenway based visual artists by providing the artists with exhibition opportunities in the public and common areas of new luxury/market rate residential buildings in the Fenway.

The goals of the program are

- To link the growing prosperity of a gentrifying neighborhood to the livelihood of some of the neighborhood's more economically insecure residents, its artists
- To build a culture of art ownership among residents and property owners in the Fenway
- To enlarge the reach and activities of the Fenway Cultural District.
- To model a new/different way that artists can earn income from their creative endeavors.

Under the Program FENSFund will coordinate a catalogue of work – painting, drawing watercolor, sculpture, ceramics textiles – by Fenway area artists. Owners of new residential buildings serving a high-end market in the Fenway area will lease items in the catalogue for a fixed period of time. Items would be displayed in the public and common areas of the residential buildings. Tenants of the buildings would be advised that the artwork would be available for purchase at the end of the lease period or sooner. The building owners could also purchase the artwork for permanent display (or for their personal ownership and enjoyment)

Fenway Artists can fill out the form to apply here:

[http://ljgraf.com/Fenway\\_Arts/Arts\\_Linkage.pdf](http://ljgraf.com/Fenway_Arts/Arts_Linkage.pdf)

This is just a start of ideas for artists. Please send suggestions and feedback. Lisa\_jeanne\_graf@msn.com