



City of New Bedford
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CITY OF NEW BEDFORD
Jonathan F. Mitchell, Mayor

Date: July 18, 2019
For Immediate Release

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

New Bedford launches NewBedfordCreative.org

New Bedford, Massachusetts– Arts and Culture in New Bedford has a new address. It can be found at NewBedfordCreative.org.

Both purveyors of creativity and patrons of the arts are encouraged to log on to NewBedfordCreative.org. It is designed to be active and dynamic – a reflection of the fact that New Bedford is a hub of arts and culture in Massachusetts, boasting a wide array of artists, artisans, attractions and venues that showcase the history, art, and cultural fabric of this seaport city. NewBedfordCreative.org is the guide to discovering that heritage.

The website was created as part of the city's first ever Arts and Culture Plan, funded by New Bedford's Arts, Culture and Tourism Fund, with additional support from Bristol County Savings Bank and the Mass Cultural Council.

It was designed by the city's premier downtown graphic design firm, mediumstudio, under the guidance of the members of the New Bedford Creative Consortium, the all-volunteer body tasked with carrying out the vision expressed by the City's Arts and Culture Plan *New Bedford Creative: our Art, our Culture, our Future*.

A key feature of NewBedfordCreative.org is a Creative Directory of the people who have helped turn New Bedford into one of the most creative cities in the nation, as designated by *The Atlantic* magazine. The city is home to hundreds of artists and performers who contribute to its distinctive identity, economic development, and authentic quality of life. The Creative Directory is a resource to connect to these talented people and learn what and why they are compelled to create.

Another feature is a partnership with the city's daily newspaper, known online as Southcoasttoday.com. Both sites will share a participatory Calendar of Events to find – and share – events of cultural significance in the city. An online directory of the many cultural events happening throughout the city was a key request for many people when drafting the Arts and Culture Plan.

The website also offers guides to New Bedford's Cultural Districts, which deliver the arts to every neighborhood. In partnership with the Massachusetts Cultural Council, downtown's Seaport Cultural District is home to many culturally and historically significant venues, such as the New Bedford Whaling Museum and New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park, among others. The Ave celebrates the diversity of cultures in the city's North End, while The Point pays homage to the marine sciences and beach culture in the South End.

NewBedfordCreative.org is a portal by which the city's artists and artisans can discover public funding for their creative placemaking aspirations on the Wicked Cool Places grant page. Apply now through August 16 to be considered for a 2019-2020 grant.

Further, a Tool Box of resources and opportunities to make a mark on New Bedford's visual appeal is also featured on the site. It links users to local, state and national resources such as spaces, funding, promotion and best business practices for creative persons.

The website also features the City's first-ever Arts and Culture Plan, drafted by the City of New Bedford which has made NewBedfordCreative.org possible. *New Bedford Creative: our Art, our Culture, our Future*, was published in December, 2018 with a vision for the city as follows: "In New Bedford, the creative community is an engaged and powerful partner, inspiring social, economic, and cultural growth. In this authentic seaport city, each and every person enjoys an opportunity to experience a diversity of cultures. Art is everywhere, encouraging fun, provoking thought, and nurturing the soul."

Like the diverse city it serves and represents, NewBedfordCreative.org is meant to be a transformative online experience that will adapt and grow as its features are mobilized for maximum potential.

About:

The New Bedford Arts, Culture and Tourism Fund was proposed by Mayor Jon Mitchell in the spring of 2016 and approved by the City Council in June 2016, and consists of revenue generated from the city's lodging tax, capped at a total of \$100,000. Creation of the fund also required the passage of a home rule petition by the state legislature and the petition's passage, led by state Senator Mark Montigny and signed into law by Governor Baker in January 2017. The purpose of the fund is to create a dedicated revenue stream to provide for additional planning, programmatic, and administrative capacity to allow the City of New Bedford to take full advantage of its cultural and tourism assets, and to catalyze and manage the growth of the cultural and tourism sectors in the years ahead. The New Bedford Economic Development Council (NBEDC) has a three-year agreement to manage the fund for the City. This work is led

by the NBEDC's Creative Strategist. Additional funding is provided by Bristol County Savings Bank, Mass Cultural Council, and MassDevelopment.

New Bedford Creative Consortium is the leadership group whose purpose is overseeing the execution of the citywide strategic Arts and Culture Plan entitled *New Bedford Creative: our art, our culture, our future*. The Arts and Culture Plan is a huge step forward in building a thriving creative ecosystem in our city, and these are the people dedicated to implementing it. This volunteer group is facilitated by the Creative Strategist, meets quarterly, holds 1-3 year terms, and is divided into three task forces: Public Art and Facilities; Placemaking and Community; and Fundraising and Distribution.

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