A BOLD STEP FORWARD

Campaign for the Worcester Art Museum
A Bold Step Forward
“WHATEVER YOU DO, OR DREAM YOU CAN DO, JUST BEGIN IT. BOLDNESS HAS GENIUS, POWER, AND MAGIC IN IT.”

—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
It is with great pride that we commence the public phase of A Bold Step Forward, the most ambitious fundraising campaign in the Worcester Art Museum’s history. Intended to empower us to fulfill our mission to connect people, communities, and cultures through the experience of art, A Bold Step Forward addresses a broad range of priorities with bold new ideas designed to bring our strategic plan (FY22–28) to full fruition.

A world-renowned art museum deeply rooted in the community for over 125 years, the Worcester Art Museum is a key player in its city’s renaissance and the growing connectivity between Central Massachusetts and Greater Boston. Widely recognized for outstanding collections containing nearly 40,000 objects from around the globe and across eight millennia, we present groundbreaking exhibitions, innovative traveling shows, and dynamic educational and public programs that reach more than one million people annually in person and virtually, regionally and around the world.

With a goal to raise $125 million by 2028, we open this new phase of fundraising with 50 percent of our goal secured. We are humbled and energized by the generosity and support we have received already. Your support now will hasten improvements and modernize facilities, further strengthen programming and operations, and ensure we have a solid foundation to maintain ongoing excellence while deepening long-term financial health. It will also help us connect with new audiences, new voices, and broader points of view.

As a place of connection and inspiration, artmaking and creation, and learning and dialogue, the Museum serves as a proud community anchor and catalyst for positive social change. In partnership with local and regional schools, health and human service agencies, and organizational stakeholders, we continue to reach outward to expand and diversify audiences. This campaign will energize and sustain this work for years to come.

Thank you for your support and for joining us as we take A Bold Step Forward.

Matthias Waschek
The Jean and Myles McDonough Director

Dorothy Chen-Courtin
President, Board of Trustees
We are filled with excitement as we enter the public phase of A Bold Step Forward, the Campaign for the Worcester Art Museum.

There is ambition in our boldness but make no mistake: the greater risk lies in NOT embracing this vision. The Worcester Art Museum cannot afford to stand still—to put growth on hold. Now is our moment for boldness—for fully realizing changes and enhancements that will ensure our strength and relevance to future generations.

This campaign aims to achieve three essential goals. First, put the Museum’s house and campus in order with much-needed facility repairs and improvements. Second, strengthen finances through endowment and annual fund growth. Finally, ensure that the Museum’s renowned collection is preserved and presented for discovery yet again by new generations of learners and visitors. It is a pivotal moment, and the next step must be bold.

All museums are challenged by changing times. Visitors expect more inclusive storytelling. They crave innovative and honest interpretations of history that include the widest possible range of views and voices. This campaign will help the Museum adapt to fulfill the needs and expectations of a new generation of scholars, enthusiasts, and everyday visitors.

Philanthropy matters to the bottom line. Contributed revenue currently accounts for 35 percent of the operating budget. A Bold Step Forward will strengthen our base of support for the long term. Your gift is important, and all gifts count.

On behalf of the entire Board of Trustees and the Corporators, we sincerely thank those who have helped us reach this impressive milestone. To those who will be inspired to join us in this next phase, we welcome your vote of confidence in us as, together, we take A Bold Step Forward for the region and for the arts.

Cynthia Strauss
Trustee
Development Committee Co-Chair

Mark Fuller
Trustee
Development Committee Co-Chair

A Bold Step Forward
Modernizing and Enhancing the Campus
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS: $45 MILLION GOAL

Moving the Museum forward means transforming existing spaces, as well as adding and reimagining others. It also demands improvements and enhancement to critical infrastructure. Working with award-winning international architect Kulapat Yantrasast and his team at WHY Architecture, the Museum has developed a creative and financially sustainable vision for the physical campus. Retaining art and visitor experience as foundational principles, a major new multi-year master plan shows how the Museum will be transformed into an inclusive and easy-to-navigate experience with unexpected moments of awe and delight.

With a $45 million goal, the Campaign will fund this bold vision and essential upgrade. This is the Museum’s most significant capital improvement effort in generations, with key projects including the now-completed Lancaster Plaza and custom-built fine art library. Other important projects include a new central elevator, major systems upgrades, and an exciting new state-of-the-art gallery to showcase more than 1,500 pieces of the Museum’s important arms and armor collection.

NEW ARMS AND ARMOR GALLERY

The John Woodman Higgins Collection of Arms and Armor is the second largest and one of the most distinguished such collections in the Americas. The Campaign will support a cutting-edge, 5,000-square-foot gallery to display this astonishing collection, including recent acquisitions. Presenting a new global vision of arms and armor, the gallery will dramatically enhance the Museum’s national visibility while thrilling audiences with an immersive museum experience.

“MUSEUMS USED TO BE VERY CLOSED ... LIKE A TEMPLE. WE NEED TO REACH OUT. WE NEED TO INTERACT WITH COMMUNITIES IN DIFFERENT WAYS. OUR GALLERIES NEED TO BE ABLE TO ENGAGE WITH PEOPLE. OUR CAFÉ, OUR LIBRARY—THOSE ARE RESOURCES FOR PEOPLE IN THE CITY TO USE IN DIFFERENT WAYS THAT SUPPORT THEM IN THEIR LIVES AND IN THEIR CREATIVE PURSUITS.”

—Kulapat Yantrasast, designer, architect, and founder of WHY Architecture
Fred Press, Mrs. Seaman, 1940s, tempera on composition board. Gift of the Boston Society of Independent Artists, 1950.254
“BECOMING THE MUSEUM WE ENVISION DEMANDS A SECURE FINANCIAL FOUNDATION—FOR MEETING IMMEDIATE NEEDS AND FUTURE STABILITY THROUGH GIFTS OF UNRESTRICTED OPERATING FUNDS AND ENDOWMENT SUPPORT. EVERY GIFT IS A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE IN OUR MISSION.”

—Dr. Sohail Masood, Trustee

Strengthening Financial Stability

Flexibility to Thrive in Changing Times

UNRESTRICTED: $30 MILLION GOAL

Unrestricted support is the single most important factor in the Museum’s ability to open its doors every day, develop and present programs, care for the collection and the campus, and reach the many communities we serve. Unrestricted giving also provides us with flexibility to manage unexpected developments and agility to pivot quickly in a changing environment.

During the Campaign, we will raise $30 million in unrestricted gifts by sustaining and growing the Membership, Salisbury Giving Society, Business Partners, and Benefactor giving programs—all critical to the Museum’s financial health. Multi-year pledges are encouraged, and donors will be recognized for their cumulative giving during the campaign period.

Financial Sustainability for the Future

ENDOWMENT: $30 MILLION GOAL

Growing the endowment by $30 million over the course of the Campaign is vital to ensuring the long-term financial strength of the Museum. Currently, the endowment is valued at approximately $110 million, generating $5.5 million in annual operating funds. Anticipating rising operational costs in coming years, we seek to increase the endowment to sustain and enhance day-to-day operations.

Endowment gifts may be made unrestricted or restricted to a specific use, such as special exhibitions, facilities maintenance, conservation and collections care, or key staff positions.
REIMAGINING EARLY AMERICAN ART

Our pre-1900 American galleries of fine and decorative arts include a renowned collection of early American portraiture. Campaign support will fund an ambitious effort to reimagine this collection and the stories it tells through new interpretations—programs, installations, object labels, and wall texts—designed to provide a more inclusive historical context for this world-class collection.

“THE WORCESTER ART MUSEUM VALIDATED WHO I WAS AS A PERSON, CONNECTING ME TO THE THERAPEUTIC ACTS OF MAKING ART, LOOKING AT ART, AND GIVING ME THE CONFIDENCE TO BELIEVE THAT EVERYTHING I HOPED FOR COULD BE A REALITY.”

—Jarrett J. Krosoczka, New York Times bestselling author, illustrator, and past Museum art student

Enabling a Transformative Presentation of a Global Collection

EXHIBITIONS, COLLECTIONS CARE, AND PUBLIC PROGRAMMING: $20 MILLION GOAL

Since opening its doors in 1898, the Museum has built an internationally acclaimed collection respected and admired by museums, collectors, art lovers, and scholars from around the world. Through thoughtfully acquired artwork, changing gallery presentations, adult and school programs, and special exhibitions, the Museum responds to shifts in the cultural landscape, inspiring visitors of all ages to learn, enjoy, and come back for more.

Special exhibitions dive deep into the collection and expand historical scholarship about objects, artists, and contexts. They give the public a chance to see artworks otherwise not on view or perhaps never shown, such as works on paper, which can only be exhibited temporarily and infrequently. The collection’s stewards include a talented team of curators, conservators, and educators who continuously reinterpret the collection in new ways while ensuring preservation and care of objects on and off display.

School and community programs—including studio classes—are also central to our mission. One-third of the Museum’s campus is designated for educational purposes. The Higgins Education Wing consists of ten studio classrooms, a research library with 60,000 publications free and open to the public, and spacious student and community galleries. Public programs provide inspiration for artists and art lovers of all ages, through self-directed and facilitated learning.
Winslow Homer, The Bathers, 1873, wood engraving, Gift of Charles Sawyer, 1941.62

A Bold Step Forward
Funding Priorities and Ways of Giving

Campaign funding focuses specifically on programs and projects that will position the Museum for continued and expanded leadership in art for the region and for Greater Boston. A Bold Step Forward for the Worcester Art Museum represents a major step forward for the arts in Massachusetts and beyond—now and into the future.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS—CURRENT USE</th>
<th>GOAL: $45 MILLION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Critical Capital Improvements Fund</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• New Arms and Armor Gallery</td>
<td></td>
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<td>• Reimagination of Early American Galleries</td>
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<td>• Central Elevator</td>
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<td>• Building Improvements</td>
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<tr>
<th>ENDOWMENT FUNDS AND NAMED POSITIONS</th>
<th>GOAL: $30 MILLION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Unrestricted Endowment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Facilities Endowment Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Endowed Positions (Curatorships and Other)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Collections Care and Conservation Fund</td>
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<td>• Special Exhibition Endowment Fund</td>
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<td>• Salisbury Giving Society</td>
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<td>• Benefactor Program</td>
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<td>• Business Partners</td>
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<td>• Gallery Installations and Interpretation Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Special Exhibition Fund</td>
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<td>• Learning and Community Partnership Fund</td>
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While Planned Gifts are not counted toward campaign goals, they are welcome and encouraged.
TAKE A **BOLD STEP WITH US**

There are many ways to participate in **A Bold Step Forward**, and gifts of all sizes are welcome. What matters most to you about the Museum? With many ways to give, you know your support helps to secure a vibrant present and exciting future.

**LEARN MORE**

For more information about supporting **A Bold Step Forward**, Campaign for the Worcester Art Museum, including priorities for endowed positions, options for donor recognition, and more details about ways to participate, please contact Marilyn Earley, Chief Advancement Officer at MarilynEarley@worcesterart.org

Please also visit our campaign web page at worcesterart.org/bold-step-forward.
Worcester Art Museum

A Bold Step Forward
Campaign for the Worcester Art Museum

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worcesterart.org/bold-step-forward