



Museums for America

Sample Application MA-256299-OMS-24
Project Category: Lifelong Learning

Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$130,000
Amount of cost share:	\$484,382

The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston will implement an array of out-of-school programs for teens that engage young people with art and artists, support their well-being, foster creativity and critical thinking skills, provide professional training, and, for the teens in extended programs, offer pay for participation to reduce financial barriers to participation in arts experiences. These programs respond directly to the growing youth mental health crisis in the United States. The project enlists the assistance of a variety of consultants including a social worker, teaching artists, and third-party program evaluators. The project also includes professional development for museum education staff working with youth. This project will result in quality arts experiences for 2,000 Boston-area teens that support social and emotional development, build social competencies, facilitate leadership development, and provide career pathways in the arts.

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion
- Digital Product Plan
- Performance Measurement Plan

When preparing an application for the next deadline, be sure to follow the instructions in the most recent Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program to which you are applying.

THE INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART/Boston – Project Narrative

1. PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

Goals of this Program – *Which program goal/project category and associated objective(s) will your project address?*

This proposal asks and responds to a critical inquiry and crisis: what are the disruptors to mental health and wellness for teens that the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston (ICA) can address in the context of a contemporary art museum? Our project advances the Museums for America goal of “Lifelong Learning: Empower people of all ages and backgrounds through experiential and cross-disciplinary learning and discovery,” and its objective to “Support in-school and out-of-school programs.” In line with these, IMLS agency goals of learning for audiences as well as the museum workforce, and internal strategic priorities, the ICA requests a grant of \$130,000 to address four specific needs: paid out-of-school opportunities for teens; career pathways and skills for the future; wellness-centered activities; and professional development for education staff. Specifically, this grant will enable the ICA to:

- 1) Implement more extensive programs to pay over 80 young people for their participation in out-of-school programs, as well as their efforts to engage their communities and nearly 2,000 of their peers. The ICA will work with Boston-area teens in these programs during the 2024–2025 school year and summer 2025 to develop their skills as creatives, leaders, and individuals. This work will build from a model the ICA is currently piloting in which all extended programs pay young people for 20 to as many as 150 hours based on each program’s format and duration. Programs will place teens (often from under-resourced schools and neighborhoods) at the center of the museum experience. They will use resources such as access to contemporary art and artists, creative youth development expertise, and a dedicated teen space (Seaport Studio), to support young people’s strengthened sense of self and their social and emotional well-being; develop their creative, critical thinking, and transferable skills; and cultivate community engagement, collaboration, and belonging.
- 2) Provide professional development for the ICA’s core teen education staff, particularly those of color and younger staff, focused on how to better support teens, while also strengthening their abilities to avoid or alleviate professional, mental, and emotional burnout. This is even more important following years of turmoil and trauma related to the pandemic, global conflict, financial crises, and endemic racism that adversely affect youth and the adult mentors upon whom they rely.

Role at the ICA – *How will your project advance your institution’s strategic plan?* The ICA’s strategic plan *A Radical Welcome* centers the museum’s role at the intersection of contemporary art and civic life. Continued service to Boston area teens—a core audience and a diverse constituency that motivates, informs, and strengthens work throughout the museum—and their social-emotional learning are key elements of the plan, both its original iteration covering 2016–2021 and its four-year extension, approved in May 2021. (See Strategic Plan Summary). This project will advance a number of key objectives from the plan, including: 1) Expanding opportunities for teens and the community, with one example the activation of the Teen Gallery to present the work of teens, as part of the ICA’s Teen Exhibitions Program; 2) Investing in pay equity and career pathways and skills for staff and teens; and 3) Deepening teen and community partnerships, including with Boston Public Schools (BPS) and others that collaborate with youth programs, such as Boston Caribbean Fashion Week, Boston Public Libraries, and ZUMIX in East Boston, among others.

Need/Problem/Challenge – *What need, problem, or challenge will your project address, and how was it identified?*

TEENS: There is an urgent, significant national **youth mental health crisis**.¹ Following the disruption, isolation, and trauma of the pandemic and the racial reckoning of 2020 and beyond, we witness the exacerbation of a long-rising crisis. The CDC’s most recent Youth Risk Behavior Survey (released in 2023, covering 2011–2021) revealed increasing rates of persistent sadness, hopelessness, and suicidal ideation among young people over a ten-year analysis. In 2021, 10% of high school students attempted suicide and 22% have seriously considered it. 42% reported feeling so sad or hopeless that they could not engage in their regular activities for at least two weeks during the previous year (up from 28% in 2011 and 31% in 2017). Almost 60% of girls and 70% of LGBTQ+ youth had persistent feelings of sadness in 2021. This increased across all racial/ethnic groups, but Latino teens consistently reported feeling sad at higher rates compared to other races.

In Boston, CDC data specific to BPS showed steeper than average increases in rates of sadness generally (9% from 2019 to 2021, compared with a 5% national average). Among BPS racial/ethnic groups, rates were highest for Latino and Black students (48% and 44% respectively, up from 28% and 24% in 2011 and 41% and 31% in 2019).²

This survey, and sources such as TIME—which spoke with teens around the country—the McKinsey Health Institute, and more, note social media and time on smart phones, bullying, gun violence, political division, the climate crisis, and more

¹ In October 2021 the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Children’s Hospital Association declared it a [national emergency](#).

² https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/yrbs_data_summary_and_trends.htm and <https://www.bostonindicators.org/article-pages/2023/march/yrbs-briefing>

as contributing factors.³ The pandemic worsened these, as it disrupted social systems, stressed families, and led to a lack of connection and access to help. WGBH reported these compounding problems locally: “Young people in Boston’s communities of color were struggling with mental health issues before the pandemic sparked a crisis that increased the need for services, which were already in short supply.”⁴ Boston Medical Center (BMC) noted how the pandemic “chipped away at the critical yet fragile foundation of youths’ lives,” and that, “The loss of [school] social connections—which are critical to who we all are as individuals—was profound.”⁵ BPS results from the CDC survey showed that in 2021 nearly half of high school students reported not feeling close to people at school, with statistically significant higher rates for LGBTQ+, female, Black, and Latino students, among whom racism and prejudice contributed to poor mental health.⁶

Major sources of stress for teens, revealed through conversations with young people at the ICA and beyond and with program alumni, are **financial insecurity, finding career pathways and developing skills for the future, and the unwelcome choice many teens face between art in their lives and after-school jobs.** The ICA has experienced recruitment and retention challenges, as many teens have to choose between earning money and participating in an arts program, particularly if it requires a major time commitment. In a recent focus group, an ICA alum said, “I was only 15, but I had to make money. So I had to make the hard decision to leave teen programs so I could get a job where I made money. I couldn’t afford to not get paid. By paying students, you will get them to stay longer—and maybe even out the playing field.” (Supporting Doc 2, Alumni Survey/Focus Group Summary). With a sharp decline in BPS students attending (or completing) college, teens also need exposure to/tools for other valuable avenues of success.⁷

A UNC Health Equity Research study (specific to the public health sector, but speaking to wider issues), highlighted how wage gaps can begin early, particularly if teen development programs are unpaid. Per the lead researcher, “Youth from racialized and marginalized communities have often been excluded from internship and career-like work experience opportunities. Especially opportunities that build from their community’s assets and strengths.”⁸

Beyond this inequity, labor and education research demonstrates the importance of experiential learning, jobs, and paid internships for future earnings and career potential. Experiential learning fosters both academic, transferable, and social-emotional skills such as responsibility and collaboration, can help teens connect and communicate, and supports mental health. From the study above, “Teenage work experience is linked to personal growth. It helps resume building and leads to higher-paying future jobs. In appropriate jobs, teens learn valuable skills, time management and develop confidence in their abilities.” Teens speaking to the New York Times on this topic noted many of the same benefits, as well as those of extracurricular activities, which may conflict given teens’ limited non-school time.⁹ How might these advantages be combined?

To meet this moment, the ICA will **pay students in all extended out-of-school-time offerings**, piloting the first full cycle in 2023–2024 and solidifying this with the grant. In this way, it will meet the need for paid work and introduce the transferable skills, future opportunities (whether in the workforce or higher education), and responsibilities that come with it, while providing the academic and extracurricular benefits of arts programs. The ICA already sees the positive impact of paying teens in its leadership programs. Recruitment for 2023–2024 extended media classes in film and photography—that are now being piloted as paid also—has resulted in notable increases in applications overall and from BPS. Learnings from the pilot year will help determine the best formats, curricula, and strategies for the final transition in the grant year.

Paying students also can provide them with a greater sense of purpose and belonging, as they work toward individual goals and collective ones that benefit their peers and their communities. A teen interviewed in the New York Times noted, “Having a job that I enjoy and that I’m good at really helps keep my mental health intact and makes me feel like I accomplish more and gives me more motivation to improve my daily life and be the best person I can be.”¹⁰ In this vein, staff are exploring new models for the extended media programs (e.g. more hours, an outward role (also increasingly present in the TAC and TEP)) to deepen the experience and skill-development for primary participants, and increase the numbers reached and served in new ways. Outward focused, teen-generated offerings do/may include Teen Nights that bring hundreds to the ICA, many for the first time; exhibition activations centered on fashion, the environment, or other topics of interest to teens; and experimentations in sharing community-based stories through media, teen-led trainings for

³ October 2023: <https://time.com/6320195/us-teen-mental-health-photos/>; September 2023: <https://www.mckinsey.com/mhi/our-insights/getting-to-the-bottom-of-the-teen-mental-health-crisis>

⁴ <https://www.wgbh.org/news/local-news/2022/06/30/teens-of-color-in-boston-struggle-to-find-help-in-a-mental-health-crisis>

⁵ <https://development.bmc.org/why-give/stories/boston-medical-center-tackling-the-childhood-and-adolescent-mental-health-crisis/>

⁶ <https://www.bostonindicators.org/article-pages/2023/march/yrbbs-briefing>

⁷ <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/03/23/metro/fewer-boston-high-school-graduates-are-enrolling-college-while-completion-rates-stagnate/?event=event12>

⁸ <https://www.med.unc.edu/cher/2023/02/the-benefits-of-experience-new-study-finds-more-work-experience-benefits-for-youth/>

⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/29/learning/what-students-are-saying-about-having-a-part-time-job-while-in-school.html>

¹⁰ <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/29/learning/what-students-are-saying-about-having-a-part-time-job-while-in-school.html>

other youth, and more. Lessons from this experimentation will inform the grant-funded activities.

This new approach is designed to build on the ICA's strong foundation in teen arts education to restore a lost sense of direction, promote the importance of community, give the assurance of agency, provide tools to process trauma, and amplify voices specifically at this moment of crisis. With assistance from a consulting social worker (who has supported the ICA's work with young people for many years), education staff also are leveraging experience to incorporate wellness-centered creative activities, mindfulness, and reflection into their work with youth, and adding more one-on-one time with teens. This recognizes the responsibility and flexibility they have to meet students' needs, working outside the performance pressures that classroom teachers face. Connections with other organizations such as Boston GLASS, which provides services to LGBTQ+ youth of color and their allies, help staff navigate some students' mental health challenges that may extend beyond their own expertise.

Finally, these adjustments will live alongside a steadfast commitment to core elements of Teen Programs: providing avenues for self-expression through art-making, curating, leadership, and programming; deep examination and discussion of contemporary art and engagement with artists (many of whom engage with topics also on the mind of teens, such as identity, social consciousness, and climate change); and community building. This recognizes the foundational need that all young people deserve and require high quality arts education programs and the persistent inequity of access to the arts and extra-curricular learning: by sixth grade, middle-class children have spent 6,000 hours more learning than those born into poverty.¹¹ In BPS, 69.8% of students are low income, and, while the figure more than doubled from 2009 to 2020, 28% of high school students still have no arts access, despite an arts graduation requirement that only 68% are able to meet.¹² Government, foundation, and museum studies and the ICA's evaluations show that arts programs can help correct some of this inequity.¹³ They demonstrate that high levels of arts engagement often correlate with positive, long-term outcomes for economically and socially disadvantaged teens. Arts education develops motivation, habits of mind (like problem solving and critical and creative thinking), and social competencies (like valuing diversity, collaboration, and self-confidence), and inspires a "lifelong relationship to museums and culture." It can positively affect school attendance.¹⁴ ICA out-of-school Teen Programs fulfill these studies' promise, providing inclusive spaces for learning and belonging. (Supporting Doc 1 – Letters of Support (students, alum, teacher, administrator) and Supporting Doc 2 – Evaluation Findings.)

STAFF: In 2022, the U.S. Surgeon General's office made workplace well-being a priority. The Boston-based Institute for Nonprofit Practice hosted a Well-being Summit in early November 2023 and is launching a related initiative.¹⁵ Beyond layoffs (which the ICA was able to avoid for all staff and with only brief cessation of some teaching artist contracts), the American Alliance of Museums' 2021 survey of workers noted that one of the greatest shared concerns was the well-being of colleagues. 57% saw burnout as a barrier to the future success of museums, with the pandemic a major factor.¹⁶ ICA staff also have raised these as priorities, an impetus for an institution-wide Wellness, Equity, and Belonging framework emphasizing work-life harmony, connectivity, mattering at work, safety and preparedness, and opportunities for growth. Forums such as the Museum Education Roundtable and the Thinking Museum have raised related concerns specific to museum educators.¹⁷

The youth educators on the ICA's staff and teaching artists share a deep commitment to meeting the complex artistic and social and emotional needs of ICA participants and to one another. However, this can take a personal toll, for all, but particularly for staff of color and younger team members, who can carry an extra burden as teens often gravitate toward them, feeling that these educators may best relate to their own experiences, communities, and the systemic challenges they face. Supervisors—through open dialogue with current and former staff, some of whom have left for new opportunities burned out by the magnitude and difficulty of this work—have come to understand their needs as well as those of the teens they serve. This grant will support their time working with youth, but importantly also professional development.

Who is the Target – Who is the target group for your project and how have they been involved in the planning?

This project has two target groups: more than 2,000 Boston-area teens during out-of-school time (more than 80 whom will

¹¹ Data referenced by <https://www.wbur.org/cognoscenti/2015/06/22/summer-learning-gap-arthur-pearson-jennifer-davis>. Higher-earning parents spend nearly 7x as much on enrichment as parents challenged by poverty.

¹² See Boston district profile (2022–23) at <https://profiles.doe.mass.edu>, specifically [here](#), and [related definition of terms](#). "Low income" includes youth in one or more of the following state-administered programs: SNAP, TAFDC, DCF foster care, and expanded MassHealth up to 185% of the federal poverty level, as well as students identified by districts as homeless. Data on arts participation from EdVestors, working with BPS is [here](#).

¹³ NEA "The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth;" President's Committee "Reinvesting in Arts Education;" Wallace Foundation "Something to Say" and Whitney Museum of American Art "Room to Rise".

¹⁴ EdVestors The Arts Advantage Impacts of Arts Education on Boston Students. When enrolled in an arts course, chronically absent students attend school for one additional day compared to when they are not in one.

¹⁵ U.S. Surgeon General Priorities: [Workplace Well-being](#) and Institute for Nonprofit Practice [Well-being Summit and Initiative](#).

¹⁶ <https://www.aam-us.org/2021/04/13/measuring-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-people-in-the-museum-field/>

¹⁷ <https://www.museumedu.org/vsi/i-quit-acknowledging-burnout-and-the-need-for-empathy-and-self-care-in-museum-education/> and <https://thinkingmuseum.com/captive-podcast/radical-rest-with-kate-oliver/>

be paid) and approximately 10 education staff working with those young people, both in- and out-of-school-time, and through them, ICA teaching artists.

Teens (particularly in the Teen Arts Council and Teen Exhibitions Program (see below), but increasingly in media programs) are involved in planning programs for their peers, and participants across all programs provide/will provide feedback, centering their voices and choices in the ICA's work with this constituency. (This is something ICA staff, teens, and alumni note as essential in annual evaluations and the ICA's national initiatives that involved dialogue with/between young people). Activities are open and free for all teens, and now teens will receive payment for all extended programs, recognizing the value of connecting young people from diverse backgrounds and neighborhoods, and the financial need described above. To maximize impact, however, the ICA focuses outreach on BPS, where 81.1% of students have high needs (in Massachusetts this includes low-income students, English Learners (current and former), or students with disabilities) and the racial/ethnic breakdown is 43.8% Hispanic, 28.4% Black, 15.1% White, 8.7% Asian, and 4.1% Other/Multi-Racial.¹⁸ The ICA aims for at least 70% of participants in out-of-school programs to be from BPS. Staff is working to maintain (and grow) this level of participation through recruitment and deep work with teachers, district arts leaders, and partners. The ICA also conducts targeted outreach to those that live or go to school in the under-resourced neighborhoods of Dorchester, East Boston, South Boston, and Roxbury, and aims for classes to be diverse in gender as well as race/ethnicity and background. Current teens are involved in recruitment and interviews of program applicants.

The education staff who are the other target of this project engage deeply in planning and implementing programs and work with young people on a near daily basis. They have a wide array of expertise, including with various artistic media, teaching, museum learning, contemporary art, creative youth development, and more. They also have varied backgrounds and lived experiences, including for some formative participation in an ICA program as a teen, as the museum consistently works to create professional opportunities for alumni as creators, assistants, and staff. Their thoughts will inform the professional development.

Who Will Benefit – *Who are the ultimate beneficiaries for this project?* The beneficiaries to are the 2,000 teens served through out-of-school offerings over one year and the core ICA youth education staff (and through them, teaching artists and future participants). This model also will serve the art education and museum studies fields. With stronger programs for teens and educators, the ICA, too, is strengthened, aligning with the museum's Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEAIB) goals for audiences and its internal community, where wellness is a DEAIB priority.

2. PROJECT WORK PLAN

Specific Activities – *What specific activities will you carry out and in what sequence?*

TEEN PROGRAMS: The ICA will offer an array of programs that engage young people with the art and artists at the museum, support their well-being and creative and critical skill development, and, for extended programs, offer them paid work and professional training. Programs will build on the connections between themes often explored by contemporary artists and the challenges teens face in adolescence, such as definitions of identity, gender, and social consciousness and responsibility. In addition to the galleries, programs will utilize the ICA's **Seaport Studio**, a space minutes from the main building that is almost entirely dedicated to teens, strengthens community, and houses a sophisticated Paul and Phyllis Fireman Family Digital Studio, meeting spaces, and a Teen Gallery, open to the public at select times. Specifically:

- **Teen New Media (TNM)** courses led by staff and professional teaching artists will introduce teens to technology-based creative skills, including for film, photography, music production, and more. The ICA emphasizes digital media, recognizing its importance to many ICA artists, teens' keen interest in new technologies, and the transferability of digital skills to school and myriad professions. During the grant period, courses will range in duration (vacation week, summer, school year) to accommodate different levels of investment. The newly paid **Photography Collective** will meet regularly and frequently throughout the school year, informed by the 2023–2024 pilot period. Teaching artists and staff will design the program to equip 12 teens with photography, editing, design, and storytelling skills. They will learn the principles of photography in order to create unique, well-composed images, and gain skills to analyze, discuss, and critique works of art, photographic works, and media. They also will learn how to effectively use industry standard equipment and editing software (provided by the ICA) and create a story via the images they capture within their respective neighborhoods, in independent and collaborative projects. They will exhibit work in the community (e.g., at Boston City Hall, the Harvard School of

¹⁸ See Boston district profile information at <https://profiles.doe.mass.edu>, specifically [here](#) and [here](#), as well as [related definition of terms](#).

Education, and/or other sites). In summer 2025, the ICA will offer the 50-hour **Teen Digital Cooperative (TDC)**, during which another paid group of 12 teens will be tasked with finding creative ways to honor, amplify, and share meaningful stories from the communities they belong to and connect with, learning and using the tools of digital media to do so. The program may tie to an exhibition on view or upcoming in the ICA's galleries, with the teens' work shared with the public at the museum or online. The ICA also will offer at least two newly paid 20-hour vacation-week media programs, one in music production, and one to be determined, guided by teen interests.

- **Fast Forward**, a long-standing school-year-long TNM program, will serve 12 newly paid students. With a professional teaching artist, teens will learn the pre- to post-production filmmaking process and related technical skills, using ICA provided equipment and drawing on their unique interests and experiences to tell compelling stories on film. Sessions will include instruction, discussions, guest artist/media professional visits, independent work and advising time, and collaborative activities. (Supporting Doc 3 – Sample Session Outlines.) They will have chances to share work with their peers, communities, and field professionals, learning about possible careers and to speak critically about their work. An ICA **Spring Showcase** will focus on their and their Photo Collective and vacation-week peers' work, and the ICA will share films online and encourage festival entries. With the transition to two meetings per week and a paid model, in 2023–2024 the ICA is exploring ways to expand Fast Forward students' work beyond their own films. Learnings from the pilot year will inform the most effective ways to do this during the grant period, be it through designing media workshops for other young people, connecting with local organizations to create supportive media, and/or exploring themes and social issues important to young people through film.
- The **Teen Arts Council (TAC)** consists of 12 members who will meet weekly throughout the year to engage with timely issues, contemporary art, and community impact through long paid leadership roles. There also is now an intensive (~50 hour), paid summer iteration. The TAC will work with staff, peers, and artists to organize three **Teen Nights** a year (each attended by hundreds of teens, totaling 1,000–1,500) and **the Current** (an annual community building event), and conduct 2–3 interviews with artists exhibiting and/or performing at the ICA, among other community-oriented activities across ICA Teen Programs and around Boston.
- In the **Teen Exhibitions Program (TEP)**, 12 paid participants will meet weekly throughout the year to curate exhibitions in Seaport Studio. Teens will learn about all aspects of exhibition making, from curatorial vision, to execution, promotion, interpretation, and more with guidance from ICA staff across departments. Their major exhibition for the Teen Gallery will involve a partnership with another youth arts organization(s), which they will select following an open call. They also will curate a presentation of work by ICA teens and develop programs related to exhibition themes. These may include art-making, performance, and other interactive activities. There also is now an intensive (~50 hour), paid summer iteration. (Supporting Doc 3 – Sample Session Outlines)
- Finally, the ICA works with BPS/EdVestors to offer **school credit** for teens in extended after-school programs. The ICA has taken part since the 2012–2013 pilot to help teens meet their arts requirement (often waived because schools lack arts resources). The ICA projects 15-plus credits during the grant year. Supporting Doc 1 includes related teacher and administrator letters.

STAFF: The ICA will engage outside expertise to lead/support professional development for education staff working with youth, to amplify their own knowledge and expertise and collectively explore new resources and protocols to help their work. The early grant period will involve researching possible trainers, as well as refining what questions it should address and the most effective format to do so. What training and collaborative work is best done with the entire group? What is most useful one-on-one or in small peer groups? If/how can youth feedback inform planning for the training? Potential vendors include: Boston-based [Arts Connect International](#)—which focuses on the “cultural equity gap” in the U.S. and works in leadership nurturing, among other areas; and [Partnerships in Education and Resilience](#), a Cambridge, MA-based organization that partners with schools and youth-serving organizations to drive positive youth development by improving mental health and program quality. The training will take place in spring or summer, and will be assessed and incorporated into ongoing meetings and conversations in the fall. Staff will support teaching artists' work with young people by creating or updating resources and protocols for centering positive youth development and mental health in curriculum planning, group facilitation, and individual interactions with young people, based on staff's own learnings from the professional development.

EVALUATION: The ICA will track demographics, skill development, and attitudinal and behavioral changes of ICA teens via surveys originally designed by ICA staff with the evaluation firm Mendelson Gittleman & Associates. Staff, using the expertise they gained working with these and other evaluators, will update tools as needed to ensure that questions remain relevant and generate useful feedback, and to assess the success of the pilot and the ICA's efforts to support emotional health during a time of crises. (See Project Results for more). Either prior to, or in the early days of the grant period, the ICA also will utilize free resources available through its participation in the [Youth Arts Impact Network](#) (a public private partnership organized with the Mass Cultural Council, Boston-based EdVestors, and Barr Foundation). This may include coaching/office hours from evaluator Julia Gittleman on possible updates to its logic model or tools (Supporting Docs 2 and 3) resulting from its shift to more paid programs. Evaluation of the professional development—and its efficacy—will occur internally, through open dialogue on the education team and between supervisors and reports.

Risks – What are the risks to the project and how will you mitigate them? A consistent Teen Programs challenge is recruitment/retention, as the ICA aims to work with youth who face obstacles for success, especially in extended programs. The pandemic and mental health and economic challenges described above exacerbated this. This *also* is representative of the ICA's mission to support youth facing such challenges. Experimenting with more paid options, increasing/diversifying program staff, the BPS credit program and resulting connections with teachers, and involving alumni in recruitment are a few strategies employed/to be initiated to meet this risk. Likewise, guidance from our social worker expands the ICA staff's capacity to help teens successfully navigate challenges and build long-lasting, supportive relationships with them. By the beginning of the grant, the ICA also will have a better understanding of any risks related to increased expectations (time, activities etc.) that come with newly paid media programs, and will adjust to meet them during 2024–2025. At the staff level, the risks the project seeks to address—staff capacity and wellness (and potentially burnout/related turnover)—will be ongoing. While turnover is a normal part of operations as people grow out of their roles or look for new experiences, we do not want that to be a result of lack of support or professional tools, as that does not well serve the ICA, teens, or future organizations that staff may move to next. The proposed training will address this directly for 2025 staff, but the ICA will preserve related resources to benefit future employees/ teaching artists.

Project Team – Who will plan, implement, and manage your project? Betsy Gibbons, *Director of Teen Programs*, who oversees ICA work with youth, will provide direct leadership for funded programs. She has over 15 years' experience working with young people at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New-York Historical Society, and (since 2018) the ICA. Madi Mühlberg, *Teen New Media Program Manager*, oversees media programs. She has experience in digital media production, an MA in Arts Teaching, and previously worked with youth at Boston's Castle Square Tenants Organization. Aric Crowe-Pina, *Teen Programs Manager*, works with Gibbons on creative leadership programs. He participated in ICA programs as teen and previously was TAC Alumni Assistant. Imani Walker, *Teen New Media Program Assistant*, supports media programs. Two part-time Alumni Assistants (in creative leadership and media) also assist. Monica Garza, *Charlotte Wagner Director of Education*, will provide senior oversight. Staff across the ICA may serve as mentors. Melissa Rocklen formerly of Boston Children's Hospital is contract social worker. Staff select teaching artists/assistants based on relevant expertise, including at the ICA. The ICA will contract a partner(s) to lead or engage in staff training.

Project Timeline – What time, financial, personnel, and other resources will you need to carry out the activities?

Pre-Grant: Pilot year of fully paid extended programs, with preliminary assessment of success/impact and determination of possible revised evaluation metrics/tools. **Pre-Grant and Throughout:** Work with social worker. **Grant Period, Teen Programs:** **Oct/Nov 2024–May 2025:** Offer Photo Collective, Fast Forward, Teen Arts Council, and Teen Exhibitions Program each week after school; Edit evaluation tools as needed. **Oct/Nov 2024:** Teen Night (and post-event survey). **Jan–Feb 2025:** Conduct mid-year surveys/one-on-one staff/teacher/teen meetings. **Feb/Mar 2025:** Teen Night (and post-event survey); The Current; Vacation-week media course (and post-course survey); Open TEP exhibition of ICA Teen artwork. **April/May 2025:** Vacation-week media course (and post-course survey); Showcase; Conduct year-end program evaluations. **July 2025:** Open TEP exhibition with partner organization. **July/Aug 2025:** Offer summer intensive TAC and TEP options and Teen Digital Cooperative. **Aug 2025:** Teen Night (and post-event survey); Conduct summer program evaluations. **Grant Period, Staff Training:** **Fall/Winter 2024/2025:** Research necessary expertise and possible options; Select trainer/training model. **Spring/Summer 2025:** Offer staff training. **Summer/Fall 2025:** Apply training; Assess impact; Compile resources to share with future staff and all teaching artists.

Tracking – How will you track your progress toward achieving your intended results? To track Teen Program progress and monitor results, the ICA relies on qualitative and quantitative metrics, For school-year or year-long programs, staff

observe and record students' progress, meeting with each member at least twice a year for discussions of achievements and challenges, with major input from teens themselves about personal goals. The ICA adjusts programs as needed based on teen feedback; regular staff assessment; and from data collected via surveys. Long-term programs have mid-year surveys and year-end ones, so that staff can revise as programs are ongoing. The ICA Boards' Education Committee provides advice and oversight. The ICA will assess training effectiveness via surveys and/or dialogue with supervisors.

3. PROJECT RESULTS

Intended Results – *What are your project's intended results and how will they address the need you have identified?*

Intended results for teens are: 1) Strengthened Identity; 2) Creative Skill Development; and 3) Community Engagement. (Supporting Doc 3 – Logic Model) By offering quality arts experiences, supporting teen social and emotional well-being, and providing paid experiences and career pathways, the ICA will facilitate leadership development, increased motivation and engagement, habits of mind, social competencies, and other changed attitudes and behaviors (below) that are signs of improved wellness. These intended results are for ongoing programs and newly expanded paid models, which address the inequity of unpaid programs. The ICA also seeks to reach target numbers and have strong BPS participation. Intended results for staff are to build capacity (individually and as an education team) to best meet the needs of young people while sustaining personal wellness. The federal investment will serve teens and amplify their voices and participation in society now and in the future, and provide educators tools that will benefit them throughout their careers (and thus the field).

Knowledge, Skills, Behaviors, Attitudes – *How will the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or attitudes of the target group change as a result of your project?* The knowledge/skills/behaviors/attitudes the ICA seeks to change for teens (to varying degrees based on program length etc.)—all of which improve well-being—are: 1) *Strengthened Identity*: Teens feel personal agency and faith in their own abilities; develop self-awareness, self-regulation, self-reflection; and build confidence and a positive view of the future. A recent teen said of their participation, “I have been able to step into the world with a newfound confidence...I have opened up to people I never thought I could and have changed how I view myself and the world around me.” Nearly all students in recent surveys reported feeling more confident giving and receiving feedback. One noted, “I’ve learned to be sensitive without having that hold back my creative projects.” 2) *Creative Skill Development*: Teens build transferable skills such as resiliency and drive; organization and focus; medium-specific skills; the ability to defend choices; problem solving and critical thinking; and how to present themselves professionally. All Photo Collective survey respondents in 2023 reported development of skills with framing and composition and all Fast Forward respondents reported improved skills at all stages of pre-production and scriptwriting to the technical aspects of shooting, lighting, and audio to the editing and mixing processes. A Fast Forward student spoke of gaining “A clear more precise visual of film making as a future career.” 3) *Community Engagement*: Teens gain comfort in a museum and see themselves as an active part of the ICA community; collaborate; develop empathy and respect for others and an ability to communicate with a spectrum of people; and more. Throughout evaluations, teens speak of feeling at home at the ICA, with new people, and with staff. A TAC member wrote, “I felt important and loved by everyone even when I thought I didn’t deserve it,” and another teen noted being surprised by “How friendly and understanding of a place this can be, I guess compared to the imagined intimidating, uptight, adult fine arts community I might have imagined.”

Staff who participate in training will have expanded skills and knowledge to work with young people—including deepening their one-on-one engagement with students—while also caring for themselves. An aspiration is for employees to have tools to manage related stress or possible burnout, which promotes long-term personal and professional wellness.

Products – *What products will result from your project?* 1) 2–3 artist interviews; 2) Teen artwork; 3) 2 teen exhibitions and related activations; 4) Resources/protocols to share with new employees/teaching artists; 5) Evaluation findings.

Sustaining Benefits – *How will you sustain the benefit(s) of your project beyond the conclusion of the grant period?*

The impact of the ICA's work with young people in its community will generate public attention, participation, and funding to sustain offerings and benefits for teens moving forward. The ICA aims to convert successful pilots into annual work. Learnings and resources from the staff professional development will be passed on to (or replicated for) future ICA team members, and those who directly participated will apply those skills at the ICA and, if/when they move on, to other workplaces and young people in different communities. ICA staff also have a deep network of local and national colleagues grappling with similar issues among young people and staff. The supported work will inform ongoing dialogue within this network, in ways informal (e.g. one-on-one conversations) and formal (e.g. creative youth development cohort meetings in Boston and beyond and/or a conference presentation on activities/learnings funded by the grant).

THE INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART/Boston - Schedule of Completion
Year 1: September 1, 2024 - August 31, 2025

	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>Jun</i>	<i>Jul</i>	<i>Aug</i>
	2024	2024	2024	2024	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025
<u>Consultation with Social Worker (ongoing)</u>												
<u>Teen Programs Activities</u>												
Recruitment/Outreach (ongoing, but primary periods are fall for school-year media programs, January/February for vacation weeks, May/June for Teen Digital Cooperative and Teen Arts Council and Teen Exhibitions Program)												
Teen New Media classes (with Photo Collective during the school year, Teen Digital Cooperative summer, and two vacation week programs February and April)												
Fast Forward (weekly during school year, possible additional short film workshops at other times e.g. summer)												
Teen Arts Council (weekly during school year + a summer intensive)												
Teen Nights (and May Teen Showcase); fall and winter dates may vary (Oct or Nov, Feb or March)												
Teen Exhibitions Program (weekly during school year + a summer intensive)												
Teen Gallery exhibitions (ongoing but with February and July openings for new exhibitions)												
<u>Evaluation</u>												
Photo Collective, Fast Forward, Teen Arts Council, Teen Exhibitions Program surveys												
Teen Night surveys												
Vacation Week program surveys												
School-year review												
<u>Staff Professional Development</u>												
Research necessary expertise and possible options												
Select trainer/training model (by March 2025)												
Offer training (training will not last all of these months, but precise dates to be determined, to navigate around Teen Programs' schedules)												

THE INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART/Boston - Schedule of Completion
Year 2: September 1, 2025 - December 31, 2025

	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
	<i>2025</i>	<i>2025</i>	<i>2025</i>	<i>2025</i>
<u>Consultation with Social Worker (ongoing)</u>				
<u>Teen Programs Activities (out-of-school)</u>				
Recruitment/Outreach (ongoing)				
All programs likely continue in similar or improved formats, but not included in this project/related budget.				
<u>Staff Professional Development</u>				
Apply training				
Staff assess impact through regular group and supervisor/reportee meetings				
Compile resources to share with future staff and all teaching artists.				

1. TYPE - *What digital products will you create?*

Digital content primarily includes:

- Student artwork/projects, generally including: Video - QuickTime Movies and MP4s (approximately 15–25/school year), posted on ICA website/Teen microsite and/or YouTube; Digital Photographs - JPEGs/RAW image files (approximately 400/school year); Digital Audio - Audio Interchange File Format (AIFF) and mp3s (approximately 10–20/school year); Digital Zine/Book – approximately 1–5 JPEGs/Adobe PDFs hosted on ICA website/Teen microsite. Primary equipment includes: Video - Canon DSLR (Digital Single-Lens Reflex) Cameras and mobile devices (iPhone/iPod and Android devices); Photographs - Canon DSLRs (Digital Single-Lens Reflex) Cameras and mobile devices (iPhone/iPod and Android devices); Audio - Zoom H4N and Zoom H6 Digital Recorders, built-in and Audio Technica Shotgun Mics, and mobile devices (iPhone/iPod and Android devices). Software used is: Video - Adobe Creative Cloud, including Premiere, After Effects, and Rush, DaVinci Resolve, and other built-in mobile editing software; Photographs - Adobe Creative Cloud, including Photoshop and Adobe Lightroom, and other built-in mobile editing software; Audio - Ableton Live, Logic Pro, Serato DJ Pro, and Spire Studio for Mobile. Note: Formats may change as resources and tools evolve.

For video, the ICA aims to maintain original quality of the exported files (representative of the variety of devices used to capture/edit videos), typically exported using the H.264 codec with an .MP4 wrapper and a minimum bitrate of 1000kbps. Other formats may include MOV, WEBM, or OGV. For images, the focus is also on the original quality of the file, typically RAW or Hi Resolution JPGs, and in the case of edited files PSD; lower resolution JPGs and PNGs used for web distribution. For audio files, the ICA will create archive quality AIFF or WAV stereo file at 48kHz-16 bit, and a stereo MP3 file for web distribution with a minimum bitrate 192 kbps. (For virtual programs (which could take place were pandemic restrictions to be reinstated), file formats/quality standards may have inconsistency due to greater device variety, range of access etc. Preservation in original quality is still a priority.)

- Content on activities posted on the ICA’s general website and/or the Teen microsite within it: as many as an estimated 100–200 items (events, direct post(s), portfolio items, PDFs, with text and images, and/or video, audio, links etc.) This content will be facilitated by ICA staff, and generated by staff and contractors and/or teens. The ICA’s website was designed by Pentagram and Digital Loom and built by Digital Loom, using Drupal 7 and other PHP/Javascript/HTML tools. It has since been migrated to Wordpress by Kudos Design Collaboratory, which has begun to design original pages, including the aforementioned Teens microsite that the ICA will launch by 2024. (This is a migration of the current www.icateens.org to www.icaboston.org/teens, although former address will still function/redirect and the content will be similar.) ICA staff can update/create pages as well. The ICA tends to use JPG for images (generally at standard web resolution of 72 dpi and sized to optimize viewer experience) and PDF for documents. Videos are nearly always hosted on YouTube or Vimeo, according to best practices there.

The ICA will not develop software as part of this project.

The metadata needs for this content are relatively simple, so the ICA has not adopted an existing standard. However, it does gather/maintain key pieces of information about work, like title, authors, format, duration, date, any copyright specifications etc. The website includes custom site-wide search and a results page that can be filtered by type of content and search engine optimization tools. These generate behind-the-scenes metadata maintained/structured according to those tools’ standards. This is mostly invisible to administrators and users.

2. AVAILABILITY - *How will you make your digital products openly available (as appropriate)?*

Most digital content will be publicly available free of charge on the ICA’s Teens microsite at www.icaboston.org/icateens (or redirected from www.icateens.org), or educator hub, www.icaboston.org/teen-hub for downloading, viewing, or embedding as links in other web locations. Content may also be available at the ICA’s main website address: www.icaboston.org. The ICA widely promotes sites and related content to its audiences and other museums, arts and youth organizations, and more to share learnings/opportunities, and will encourage wider sharing of information with accreditation (and possible restrictions on editing of content). The sites also include accredited links to relevant field material.

The ICA currently hosts videos using YouTube; the ICA also uses Vimeo for limited purposes. With student work, availability of content may be restricted by student/parental/guardian/teacher request for those under age 18 (see below). Curriculum tools/resources the ICA determines to have a wide public value will likely be downloadable PDFs. The ICA’s

sites themselves are translatable for non-English speakers, via links at the bottom of each page (noting that automatic translations are provided by a third party and may contain inaccuracies). In 2017, the ICA's websites for teens/educators underwent quality assurance and usability testing, and testing on a wide variety of browsers and devices. Curriculum documents created by ICA staff/teaching artists/alumni that are relevant to a wide public versus individual teachers will vary. Decisions about what to place on websites will be made as content is in development, with the aim of making materials with broad use available. Materials not placed online will be shared with participating teachers/schools, and with others (e.g., museum educators) if/as useful for their teaching, as models etc.

3. ACCESS - *What rights will you assert over your digital products, and what limitations, if any, will you place on their use? Will your products implicate privacy concerns or cultural sensitivities, and if so, how will you address them?*

The digital content would include ICA student, staff, and contractor-produced work and/or postings on the ICA's websites, and therefore the ICA has permission to present it. Youth and parents/guardians in out-of-school programs sign a non-exclusive contract with the ICA for work the students create. They are responsible for obtaining permission for all materials within their work. (Treating copyrighted materials/work of others appropriately is a component of learning.) Students are empowered/encouraged to declare any copyright restrictions on their artwork using the Creative Commons standards they feel appropriate to their work. Should any digital content include images of professional artwork, the ICA will act in accordance with rights restrictions related to the individual work (some rights held by the ICA for collection works, but some are retained by artists/others, in which case the ICA is subject to added layers of permission) and include image credits. Should the ICA record any activities (e.g., Zoom gatherings), these will be for internal documentation and sharing only, due to the participation of minor students, unless the ICA secures additional permissions.

The ICA will provide open access to view and embed as links in other web locations content for as long as it is available on the public-facing side of the ICA's website/Teen microsite. Depending on students' permissions and artwork copyright, products may be provided for download and reuse. Beyond the initial scope, the ICA may retain the right to use student work for archiving, showcasing, and promoting the ICA to further its mission. Terms related to student work will be in the non-exclusive license they sign as a condition of joining ICA Teen Programs. As above, curriculum documents will be a mix of those relevant to a wide public audience and not; when content is shared on websites, rights will follow the same process.

Although ICA students and parents/guardians sign a contract up front, they all have the liberty to not show work if at any point during the process any related party (student, parent, individual in a film etc.) no longer wants that work to be shown. If/when teens communicate with mentors or field professionals via email, ICA staff are copied on all correspondence to address privacy concerns. In cases where teens present work that may raise concerns, sensitivities, etc., staff and mentors workshop with the teen and in some cases a panel of teens to address/resolve the issues. The goal is never to censor the students or their work, but to have a dialogue with them on how others may perceive or feel hurt by their work, and to collaborate to ameliorate concerns. In very rare instances, the work may not be presented as representative of the ICA, if a resolution cannot be reached.

4. SUSTAINABILITY - *How will you address the sustainability of your digital products?*

The ICA will ensure that its sites preserve/protect digital assets during the grant period and beyond. The ICA's sites are/will be regularly backed up, helping to maintain the content and metadata. The ICA uses redundant onsite/offsite/cloud storage to safeguard, backup and archive all of its data assets. All final out-of-school teen work is saved locally in a Synology NAS that is continually synchronized with Google shared storage. Teens may choose to present final work on ICA Teens social media or YouTube channels. <http://www.icateens.org/> (There is no further quality-based process to determine what is stored and presented beyond that the work must be complete, as determined by the student and ICA staff). During active use, student digital content is stored locally in a Synology NAS that is continually synchronized with Google shared storage. The Teen microsite, cloud storage, and video host, which themselves maintain regular backups, provide added offsite backup of final work. The archive copies of the content include information about the works. The ICA currently has a customized Salesforce database that captures information about participants (contact information, programs, attendance etc.). Should the ICA change databases, it would work to maintain this functionality.

Applicant Name: The Institute of Contemporary Art, Inc.

Project Title: ICA Out-of-School Teen Programs

Performance Measure	Data We Will Collect (e.g., counts, costs, weights, volumes, temperatures, percentages, hours, observations, opinions, feelings)	Source of Our Data (e.g., members of the target group, project staff, stakeholders, internal/external documents, recording devices, databases)	Method We Will Use (e.g., survey, questionnaire, interview, focus group, informal discussion, observation, assessment, document analysis)	Schedule (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually, beginning/end)
<p>Effectiveness: The extent to which activities contribute to achieving the intended results</p>	<p><i>Example:</i> At the end of each month, using a report prepared by the registrar, we will compare the cumulative count of rehoused objects against the total number proposed for the project. <i>Example:</i> At the end of each project year, our external consultant will present results of the ongoing observation-based evaluation and compare them against our intended project results.</p>			
	<p>The ICA will collect quantitative and qualitative data from Teen Program participants through surveys with questions designed to assess progress toward goals for students of 1) Strengthened Identity; 2) Creative Skill Development; and 3) Community Engagement, with varying expectations based on program nature/duration. Other questions will address intended results unique to a program (e.g. Fast Forward students developing creative skills tied to filmmaking). Long-term programs have mid-year surveys and year-end ones. Surveys for shorter offerings like Teen Nights and vacation week programs will be implemented immediately following the event/program. (Note: Prior to or in the early stage of the grant, staff will use a free opportunity available through the Youth Arts Impact Network (a public private partnership organized with the Mass Cultural Council, Boston-based EdVestors, and Barr Foundation) for coaching/office hours from evaluator Julia Gittleman on possible updates to its logic model or tools (including around the importance of paid offerings). Gittleman was involved in their original creation.</p> <p>Staff will also consistently track numbers served through Teen Programs (see below).</p> <p>The ICA will assess training effectiveness via surveys and/or dialogue between education team members and with supervisors/direct reports.</p>			
<p>Efficiency: How well resources (e.g., funds, expertise, time) are</p>	<p><i>Example:</i> Twice per year, we will assess our expenditures for program supplies on a per-person-served basis. <i>Example:</i> Each quarter, we will calculate the dollar value of volunteer hours contributed to the project as recorded in our online volunteer management system.</p>			

The Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston - Performance Measurements

<p>used and costs are minimized while generating maximum value for the target group</p>	<p>Quarterly, the Project Director, other staff, and/or grant manager will assess actual program costs against budgeted costs (and for those whose time is not 100% tied to funded programs, staff time).</p> <p>Teen Program staff also will monitor participation numbers seasonally, increasing focus on recruitment/retention/individualized attention if program numbers decline far below capacity, in order to maximize impact/resource usage. (Recruitment also includes efforts of the Teen Arts Council, who help design programs that are exciting for other young people; part of their post-event assessment involves attendance, satisfaction, and resource allocation to help them think about what works best for future events. The Teen Exhibitions Program members also review similar metrics.)</p> <p>For the training, the ICA will seek a provider that best meets its expectations and requirements (including subject matter and timeframe), while not exceeding reasonable costs.</p>
<p>Quality: How well the activities meet the requirements and expectations of the target group</p>	<p><i>Example:</i> At the beginning, the mid-point, and end of the project, we will administer a satisfaction survey to staff who have participated in the training. <i>Example:</i> We will gather opinions about our online services through questionnaires provided to every 20th user.</p> <p>The surveys collected from Teen Programs students mid-year, yearend, and/or upon program conclusion will include quantitative and qualitative questions about satisfaction, likes/dislikes, skills acquired, and other benefits (or challenges).</p> <p>Staff will report learning skills applicable to their work.</p>
<p>Timeliness: The extent to which each task/activity is completed within the proposed timeframe</p>	<p><i>Example:</i> Every six months, our Project Director will assess the fit between our proposed Schedule of Completion and actual activity completion dates. <i>Example:</i> Each quarter, each project partner will submit to our Project Director a templated report showing their progress on meeting project milestones.</p> <p>Every four months, the Project Director, in concert with staff for each program, will assess the fit between the proposed Schedule of Completion and actual activity completion dates and develop plans for correction if/as needed.</p>