



# BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

Committee on Arts, Culture, Entertainment, Tourism, and Special Events  
Edward M. Flynn, Chair

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One City Hall Square 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Boston, MA 02201 ♦ Phone: (617) 635-3040 ♦ [city.council@boston.gov](mailto:city.council@boston.gov)

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## REPORT OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

August 27, 2025

Dear Councilors,

The Committee on Arts, Culture, Entertainment, Tourism, and Special Events was referred the following dockets for consideration:

***Docket #0527, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of One Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$150,000.00) in the form of a grant, for the BPS Sunday's Phase 2 Grant, awarded by the Pilot House Philanthropy to be administered by the Office of Arts and Culture. The program will fund the learning and evaluation components of the BPS Sundays pilot program.***

This matter was sponsored by Mayor Michelle Wu, and was referred to the Committee on February 26, 2025.

***Docket #1262, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of One Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$150,000.00) in the form of a grant, for the Boston Family Day Grant, awarded by the Boston Foundation to be administered by the Office of Arts and Culture. The grant will fund the Boston Family Day program from 2025-2026, provided by the James M. and Cathleen D. Stone Foundation.***

This matter was sponsored by Mayor Michelle Wu, and was referred to the Committee on June 25, 2025.

### ***Summary of Legislation***

***Docket #0527*** authorizes the City to accept and expend \$150,000 in the form of a grant to fund the learning and evaluation components of the BPS Sundays pilot program. This grant was awarded by the Pilot House Philanthropy and will be administered by the Office of Arts and Culture.

***Docket #1262*** authorizes the City to accept and expend \$150,000 in the form of a grant to fund the Boston Family Day program from 2025-2026. This grant was awarded by the Boston Foundation and will be administered by the Office of Arts and Culture.

### ***Information Received at Hearing***

The Committee held a hearing on Wednesday, August 20, 2025 to discuss Dockets #0527 and #1262. Interim Chief of the Office of Arts and Culture, Kenny M. Mascary testified on behalf of the Administration.

The Administration testified in support of the two grants, stating that both would strengthen the Boston Family Days program and expand access to cultural institutions for children and families across the City. The Administration emphasized that more than 65,000 students and their families have participated since the program's launch in 2024, with many returning for multiple visits. The Administration highlighted that the grants will also be expended to support reliable data collection and evaluations, allowing the City to track participation by neighborhood, school, and demographic group, and to develop a communication



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infrastructure that fosters belonging and responsiveness among the partner institutions. Regarding the \$150,000 Pilot House Philanthropy grant, it was explained that the grant will specifically fund the learning and evaluation component of the BPS Sundays program, including the creation of metrics to measure participation, outreach, and learning outcomes across neighborhoods. The Administration further stated that evaluation findings will inform how the program can be sustained beyond the grant period, ensuring that cultural access remains equitable and long-lasting. Regarding the \$450,000 Boston Foundation grant, funded through the James M. and Cathleen D. Stone Foundation, it was explained that the grant will underwrite the direct costs of expanding Boston Family Days through 2026, supporting free admission, programming, and continued partnerships with museums and cultural institutions.

Councilors raised questions about the long-term sustainability of the program, the role of evaluations in making the program permanent, and the specifics of how data and metrics are being tracked to ensure equity. The Administration responded that the pilot period has allowed the City and partner institutions to test the model and establish commitments to sustaining a culture of welcoming beyond the grant cycle. It was stated that institutions have expressed interest in embedding this work into their long-term vision, and the Administration noted that evaluation results will guide the path forward. Councilors also asked about how outreach is being conducted, to which the Administration explained that program data is matched with BPS records and supplemented by surveys, targeted emails, and flyers to ensure equitable access across neighborhoods. The Administration underscored that outreach has been particularly focused on communities that have not fully utilized the program, and that a new program manager is being hired to oversee customer-facing issues that previously had been handled directly by senior staff in the Mayor's Office.

Councilors also questioned how the City is working with philanthropic partners to sustain initiatives like the BPS Sundays program, whether the program could be expanded to include performing arts and theater opportunities, and how logistical barriers such as transportation and meals could be addressed. The Administration emphasized the City's commitment to deepening philanthropic partnerships and stated that current partners have shown strong interest in continuing support. In response to questions about expansion, the Administration reported that conversations are underway with performing arts organizations to explore pilot programs. On transportation, the Administration acknowledged Councilors' interest in MBTA access for families on weekends and noted that institutions are also already considering ways to address food security during museum visits. Councilors thanked the Administration for their work in expanding the program, expressing support for permanent program funding that will allow Boston families to continue to access world-class cultural institutions.

### ***Committee Chair Recommended Action***

As Chair of the Committee on Arts, Culture, Entertainment, Tourism, and Special Events, I recommend moving the listed docket from the Committee to the full Council for discussion and formal action. At this time, my recommendation to the full Council will be that this matter **OUGHT TO PASS**.

Edward M. Flynn, Chair

Committee on Arts, Culture, Entertainment, Tourism, and Special Events