

Faculty and Staff Diversity Mini-Grant Final Report

Project Title:

Supporting Promotion and Community Outreach for the Socioeconomic Equity Program at the Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts (UICA)

Grant Recipients:

Megan Bylsma, Associate Director, UICA

Date Project Started:

4/1/19

Amount of Money Funded by the Mini-Grant:

\$3,500

How was the grant used to address a diversity or inclusion related goal? Describe the audience that was impacted by the grant's implementation. Provide quantitative data, if available.

The Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts instituted a six-month community outreach, staff training, and promotion and advertising program to increase community awareness and use of the Museums for All reduced-admission visitor program. In 2017, UICA partnered with Museums for All, a signature access program of the Association of Children's Museums and the Institute of Museum and Library Services to encourage families of all backgrounds to visit museums regularly and build lifelong museum habits. UICA charges reduced admission (\$1 vs. \$5 regular admission) to visitors who have an Electronic Benefits (EBT) card. UICA was the first art museum in West Michigan to join this program. Museums for All is a way to broaden a museum's visitor base and engage and serve previously underserved communities. UICA undertook community engagement work, internal training, and a promotional engagement campaign that was centered around *Composite*, a group exhibition that aimed to highlight the original artwork of talented high school-aged public school, private school, and homeschooled students residing in Kent, Ottawa, and Allegan counties. The exhibition ran July 12 – September 8, 2019. The project had the following elements:

- 1) Creating a campaign promoting Museums For All. This multi-channel campaign was the responsibility of Marketing and Communications Coordinator Chris Koens. It attempted to use income-level targeting to reach unaffiliated lower-income audiences on Facebook and Instagram. The campaign promoted Museums For All, but also introduced UICA and our

exhibitions, films, and educational programs, was targeted for likes and follows, and also promoted signing up for UICA’s weekly eNews.

Objective	Results	Cost per Result	Reach	Amount Spent
Traffic 15 Campaigns	—	—	79,546 ▼ 22.9%	\$1,225.21 ▼ 28.5%
Conversions 4 Campaigns	2 On-Facebook Purchases	\$47.15 Per Result	3,918	\$94.30
Event responses 21 Campaigns	1,978 ▼ 28.0% Event Responses	\$0.46 ▲ 20.7% Per Event Response	28,687 ▼ 21.8%	\$918.18 ▼ 13.1%

1. Reach and budget for Facebook advertising during the project.

During the campaign period, UICA reached 112,151 people on Facebook, and had 1,978 event responses. UICA’s Facebook likes stayed steady during the period at an average of 19,981. Notably, two weeks into the campaign, Facebook ended its ability to target viewers by income. This created a challenge for how to reach our intended audience. While we focused on our region and targeted interests that were related to the content being promoted, future campaigns may need to use zip-code targeting as a means of reaching potential visitors who live in neighborhoods that have average lower incomes in the region. During the campaign period, UICA’s Instagram followers increased by 1,134.

- 2) Continuing with current partnerships with local organizations that serve low-income community members and forge new ties with other partners. This work was implemented by Community Programs Coordinator Katherine Williams. UICA currently partners with the Grand Rapids Public Library, Dwelling Place, The Cook Arts Center and other organizations on projects and promotions. This continued, while also focusing specifically on the promotion of Museums for All and constituent involvement in the *Composite* and concurrent exhibitions.
- 3) Providing cultural sensitivity training for UICA staff. UICA hired an outside trainer to work with all UICA staff in an effort to improve cultural competence in order to ensure that patrons using the Museums for All program are treated with dignity and respect, and are welcomed as a valuable part of our community. The facilitator, Skot Welch of Global Bridgebuilders, an area organization that provides trainings in inclusive cultural competency, conducted a three-hour training session for 22 full and part-time staff members. This pilot project showed positive results from this training, with the majority of staff showing increased knowledge of unconscious / implicit biases, increased comfort explaining reduced-price admission programs, and an increase in feeling that our interactions with visitors can impact their experience.
- 4) Administering a demographic survey that includes a household income questions to all UICA visitors during the study period. Grand Rapids’ poverty rate is currently 11% higher than the national average¹ We know that exposure to arts experiences improves children’s lifelong

¹ Policy Link and The USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity (2017). *An Equity Profile of Grand Rapids*, p. 25.

outcomes², and that having access to art and cultural resources may also improve key aspects of social well-being in disadvantaged neighborhoods.³ Nationally, the percentage of visitors to art museums with family income <\$50K was 30% in 2012, while comprising 49.7% of the population⁴. In contrast, in this pilot demographic study at UICA conducted with 289 self-selected visitors over six months this year, 41% of our visitors had household incomes of \$43,429 or less. This suggests a closer match than nationally between the percentage of lower SES individuals who visit UICA and the available lower-income audience. However, during that time period, the utilization of the Museums for All program still accounted for <1% of all admissions. This suggests either unawareness of the program, hesitancy to use it for a presently unknown reason, or below-average usage of SNAP/EBT programs for UICA's eligible patrons.

Grant recipients are required to provide a short narrative that details the specific efforts each of the collaborators made to the implementation of the grant.

Megan Bylsma

Role on team: Team Leader

Bylsma planned, coordinated, and implemented the staff training with Skot Welch from Global Bridgebuilders. She also worked closely with the Museums for All national team to discuss promotions, best practices, and outreach techniques. Bylsma is also in charge of collecting and tabulating attendance data.

Chris Koens

Role on team: Marketing and Promotions Lead

Koens created all of the advertisements and promotional materials for Museums for All and targeted Facebook and Instagram advertising around the Composite exhibition. He was also responsible for spending the advertising budget provided by the grant.

Kristen Taylor

Role on team: Data and Analysis Lead

Taylor wrote and implemented the demographic survey and analyzed the resulting data.

Katherine Williams

Role on team: Community Programs Coordinator

Williams worked with the named community organizations to extend outreach and promote UICA's participation in the Museums for All program throughout the region.

² Renton, A., Phillips, G., Daykin, N., Yu, G., Taylor, K., and Petticrew, M. (2012). Think of Your Arteries: Arts Participation, Behavioural Cardiovascular Risk Factors and Mental Well-being in Deprived Communities in London. *Public Health*, Vol 126(1), pp S57-S64.

³ University of Pennsylvania Social Impact of the Art Project Reinvestment Fund (2016). *Culture's Contribution to Social Wellbeing and Neighborhood Vitality*.

⁴ NEA Research Report #58, (January 2015). *Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, 2002–2012*.

- What is your overall assessment of the project’s impact on the Ferris community? How did this impact compare to what you expected?

- We measured program participation via the number of Museums for All visitors during the test period, which is the time period that the *Composite* exhibition runs (July – September 2019), as compared to the three-month period before the start of the project, January – March 2019. Approximately 11% of Kent County residents are SNAP beneficiaries and therefore eligible for the Museums for All Program. Success in this pilot program was proposed as Museums for All visitors comprising 5% or more of UICA’s visitors. Unfortunately, we were not able to lift the Museums for All usage during the pilot study, contrary to expectations. We did see, however, that a large percentage of UICA visitors reported a household income of \$43,429 or less. This suggests that we are reaching and engaging successfully with lower-income community members on a larger basis than national numbers for art museums (41% vs. 30%). Strikingly, this 11% difference matches the 11% higher-than-national-average poverty rate for Grand Rapids.

- UICA measured household income of visitors via a self-administered demographic questionnaire that also includes questions on race/ethnicity, age, zip code, and gender. The household income of UICA visitors had never been measured previously, so this is a valuable measure of the program’s outcomes, and will also serve as a baseline for future diversity, inclusion, and equity work. This includes a 2019-2020 project with a research team from Steelcase to further this work as part of a \$25,000 gift from the corporation, and a proposed 2020-2022 project for which we’ve applied for support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

- We measured staff training outcomes via a questionnaire administered before training and at the end of the program. We showed positive results from this training, with the majority of staff showing increased knowledge of unconscious / implicit biases, increased comfort explaining reduced-price admission programs, and an increase in feeling that our interactions with visitors can impact their experience. We are hopeful that support from the IMLS in 2020-22 will allow us to continue this training on an ongoing basis.

1. Present a final budget including all funds received and spent related to the project, with special focus on the funds received via the Diversity Mini-grant.

Budget Overview			
	Awarded Grant Funds	Funding from other sources	TOTAL BUDGET
STIPEND - Guest Services staff training by Skot Welch from Global Bridgebuilder	1,200.00		1200.00
PROMOTION – Targeted advertising on Facebook and Instagram	1982.00		1982.00
SUPPLIES – Kiosk stand for second iPad survey	218.81		
ASSESSMENT TOOLS- Survey software license for six months	99.00		99.00
TOTAL	\$3,500	\$0	\$3,500

Primary Grant Recipient's Signature Megan B. [Signature]

Date Dec 2, 2019