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## An Introduction to Museums for All for Prospective Participants

Hello everyone! Welcome to “An Introduction to Museums for All for Prospective Participants.” My name is Sandra Narva, and I’m a Senior Program Officer in the Office of Museum Services at the Institute of Museum and Library Services. We would like to welcome you to an informational webinar about one of our national initiatives, the Museums for All program.

## Our Speakers Today

- Sandra Narva  
Senior Program Officer,  
Office of Museum Services  
Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)
- Brendan Cartwright  
Program Manager, Special Initiatives  
Association of Children's Museums (ACM)

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There are two speakers on today's webinar. In addition to myself, we will be hearing from Brendan Cartwright, the program manager at the Association for Children's Museums and the coordinator for this special initiative.



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## Introduction

To set the stage for more detailed information we will be sharing about the program, I would like to share some general introductory information about the program.

## What Is Museums for All?

- A joint partnership between the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the Association of Children's Museums
- A national, branded initiative to promote access to high quality museum experiences to those who might not otherwise be able to afford them
- Discounted admissions any time and any day during regular museum hours
- Launched in October 2014 – first year piloted with the children's museum community
- Open to all types of museums that wish to participate

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Museums for All is a cooperative venture with the Association of Children's Museums with a goal of expanding access to the nation's museums by offering free or reduced admission for EBT, or Electronic Benefit Transfer cardholders.

Over the past five year of this initiative, IMLS has been working closely with ACM to recruit museums as program participants. One of the strengths of this nationally branded program is the name recognition – member museums are united in the effort to provide increased access to those who might not otherwise be able to visit their sites. Additionally, the program is not limited to provide admissions on certain days or times. Museums for All participants are dedicated to providing access to all during their normal operating hours – every day of the week.

The first year consisted of a pilot program with the children's museum community but, since then, participation has been open to all museums around the country. We are happy that the program has grown and flourished but there is always room for more museums to participate in this wonderful program.

I will now hand it over to Brendan to present the initiative's guidelines.

## Guidelines for Museums for All

- Upon the display of a SNAP EBT card, an individual visitor or group of up to four persons will receive the Museums for All admissions rate
- Museums for All admission rate must be between \$0.00 and \$3.00 per person
  - Each museum can choose what admission price, if any, to offer
  - Museums for All discount is only required for general admission. Visitors can be charged full “add-on” prices for special exhibitions or events as determined by the participating museum
  - Museums are only required to accept SNAP EBT cards, but can also choose to accept other identification, like WIC or Medicaid

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Thanks Sandra. The goal of Museums for All is to be easy for all museums to adopt, and potentially to adapt. We have a set of broad, minimum guidelines that make it an easy to use program, “ready out of the box.”

Those guidelines include offering a general admission rate of no more than \$3 per person for up to four people when one individual displays a SNAP EBT card from any state. This is an easy way to identify a visitor who qualifies as having a financial need in a minimally intrusive way. Museums have the freedom to decide what their admission price will be (free, \$1, \$2, etc.), and are only obligated to offer that price for a basic general admission. If there are add-on attractions at your exhibits, you are not obligated to include them in your Museums for All offering. The Museums for All rate would be offered during all normal operating hours.

As I mentioned, museums can adapt their offerings as well. They can include WIC or Medicaid, or other forms of identification that they accept for Museums for All. They can include discounts on special exhibits or events, and some museums choose to offer a discounted membership.

## Who Is Participating?

- 400+ museums
- 48 states, DC, and the U.S. Virgin Islands
- 1,892,435 visitors so far!
- Children's museums, history museums, art museums, arboretums, zoos, aquariums, botanical gardens, science centers, planetariums, historical societies... every type of museum, all over the U.S.!



La Brea Tar Pits

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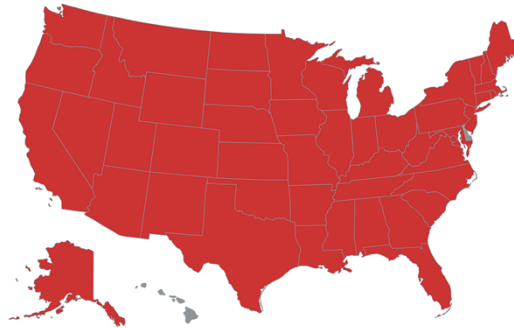


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We've seen massive success for this program so far. In just under five years, more than 400 museums have begun participating. This includes museums in 48 states (come on, Delaware and Hawaii!), the District of Columbia, and the Virgin Islands. We piloted the program in children's museums, but now every type of museum is represented. History museums, art museums, zoos, aquariums, multiple presidential libraries, and so on. Museums in cities, in rural areas, large museums and small.

## 48 States (plus DC and U.S. Virgin Islands)



Only states without a participating museum:

- Delaware
- Hawaii

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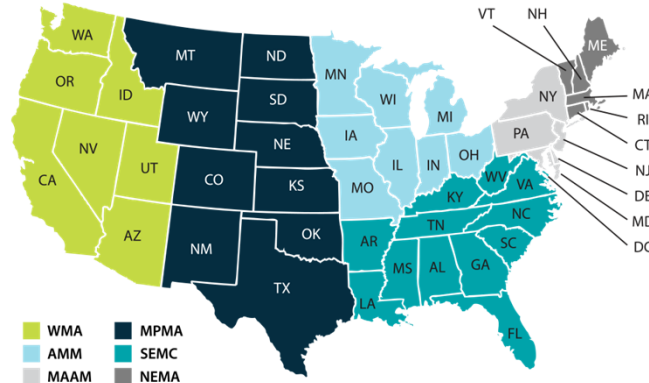


Here's a visual representation of where there are museums participating in Museums for All. Again, just waiting for a museum from Delaware and Hawaii so we can color the map in completely!

## Geographic Distribution – Current Participants

WMA MPMA AMM SEMC MAAM NEMA

88 50 96 68 71 29



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In case you're wondering how your particular region is doing. California, Illinois, and Pennsylvania are the three states with the most participants, so it's no surprise to see their regions are the top three.



## Breakdown by Type of Museum

- Aquarium – 4
- Arboretum/Botanical Garden – 13
- Art – 65
- Children’s Museum – 143
- General – 15
- History – 97
- Natural History – 16
- Planetarium – 1
- Science & Technology – 36
- Specialized – 7
- Zoo – 7



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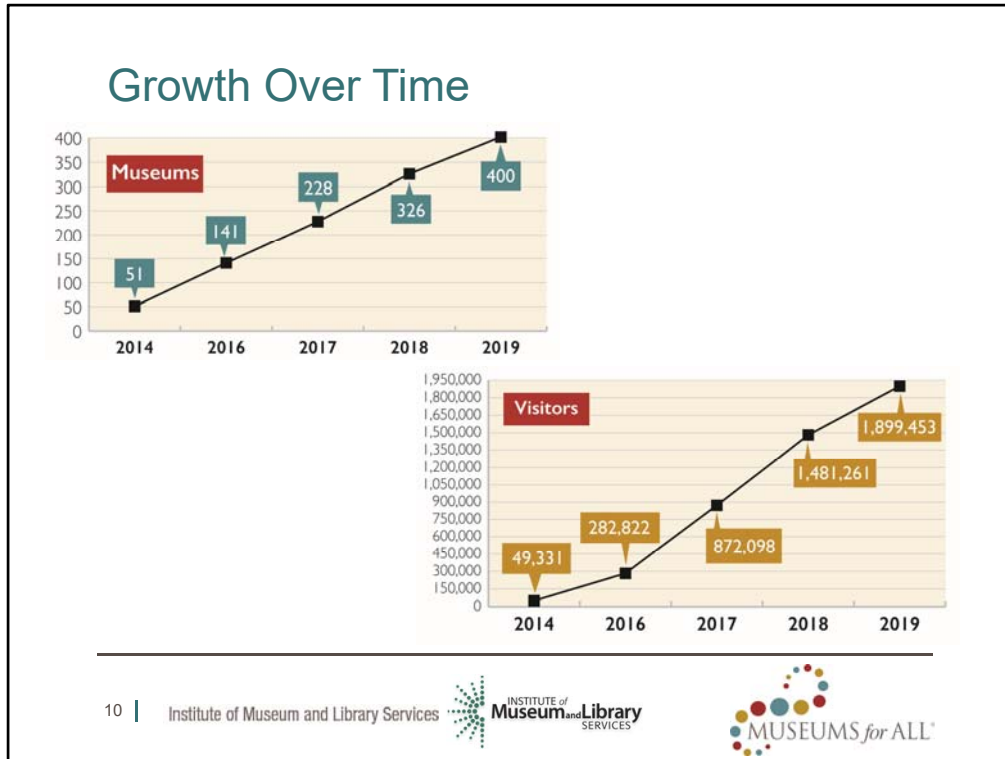
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As I mentioned, the Museums for All program was piloted in children’s museums, which is one reason we see the large number of children’s museums that participate. We’ve seen quite a lot of enthusiasm in history museums and art museums lately. Some of these museums are free admission anyway, but choose to participate to really drive home their commitment to extending the invitation to every member of their communities.



As you can see, there's been steady growth over time. With our latest round of reporting, we've surpassed two million visitors that have used the Museums for All program to visit a museum. A similar program to Museums for All is Blue Star Museums, which gives free admission to military members and their families during the summer. Around 2,000 museums participate in that, and Museums for All – which runs year-round and is aimed at helping families with financial need – is already over 20% of that total.

## How to Register for Museums for All

- Visit [www.Museums4All.org](http://www.Museums4All.org), or send an email to [Info@Museums4All.org](mailto:Info@Museums4All.org)
- No cost to register
- Access to branded collateral, a collaborative Groupsite, and virtual hangouts
- All registered museums listed on [www.Museums4All.org](http://www.Museums4All.org), including the searchable map

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Registering for Museums for All is very easy. We have a dedicated website – [www.Museums4All.org](http://www.Museums4All.org) – with the number 4, and there’s a button to register there. The actual process should take less than five minutes, and it’s free! We provide support materials, like access to branded collateral, a Groupsite, virtual hangouts, webinars like these, and more. We’ll also send you a window cling to use at your site. There’s a searchable map on the website, and all the participating museums are listed there.

## Resources for Museums for All

- Archived webinars
- Infographics
- Press release templates
- Examples of every state EBT card
- Staff training recommendations



Wenham Museum

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Some of the other resources that we provide include previous webinars that have been archived, infographics that you can use on social media, press release templates, examples of every state EBT card, and staff training recommendations. We periodically create and add more resources, so don't be shy in telling us what you'd like to have.

So now that you've seen some of the background of Museums for All, gotten an idea of who's participating, and what kind of support is offered, Sandra will let you know about why participating in this program can be valuable to your museum.



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## The Value of Participation

## Why Join Museums for All?

- Fits with museum mission, vision, and inclusion plans
- Opportunity to increase community access
- Appeal of a national initiative
- Alignment with existing program(s) or local collaboration platform

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Now that we've told you all about the guidelines and who is participating in the initiative, you are probably wondering "Why should we join Museums for All?"

There are many reasons to participate, but most importantly it affirms that museums are meant for all members of their community and that participants are committed to expanding their community outreach. You will see that this effort fits with your museum's mission, vision, and inclusion plans. Also, Museums for All is yet another way to increase community access to your research, collections, programs, and exhibitions, as it reduces all barriers to access. Additionally, you will be part of a national branded initiative where participants have access to free customizable collateral, press release templates, and branding opportunities to make it even more successful.

## Visitors, In Their Own Words

- “Museums for All is the reason we are able to have educational family fun days/weekends. Losing my job and getting back on my feet has been tough, but thanks to programs like these we’ve been able to enjoy this amazing educational institution that otherwise we wouldn’t be able to afford at the moment.”  
*-International Museum of Art & Science, McAllen, TX*
- “I love that you have the Museums for All program. All children should the opportunity to discover and explore.”  
*-Grand Rapids Children’s Museum, Grand Rapids, MI*

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The main goal of the initiative is to increase the public’s accessibility to America’s museums. This slide illustrates some feedback from a few of the almost two million people benefiting from Museums for All. The initiative has impact for everyone involved. I would say it’s a “win-win” scenario where everyone comes out on ahead!



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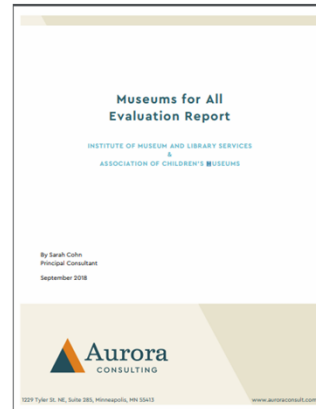
## Leveraging Participation

Thanks Sandra. Sometimes museums, or their Boards, can be wary of joining Museums for All. They see that it calls for very deep admission discounts in some cases, and worry that it will be a hit to their budget. We took a look to see if that would be the case.



## Museums for All Evaluation Report

- Released in September 2018
- <https://www.ims.gov/publications/museums-all-evaluation>



In 2018, we engaged Aurora Consulting to do an evaluation of Museums for All, and the experiences that participating museums were having with the program. The complete results of the evaluation are available at this website, but here are some pertinent findings.

## Lessons from Evaluation

- 34 percent of polled museums saw increases in their ticket sales and attendance
- 25 percent of polled museums saw increases in their development revenue and participation in membership and program sales



*Denver Museum of Nature & Science*

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Only one of the museums that responded to the evaluation reported a decline in their revenue since implementing the program. Most reported no change, but over a third of the respondents said they saw increases in ticket sales and attendance, and 25% saw increases in development revenue and membership and program sales. Museums for All is a great opportunity to add new development streams, either soliciting funding that directly pays for the program, or finding grants and sponsorships that will help. It's a great program that helps the entire community, and there are often foundations or banks or other funders that want to be a part of it. This is encouraged! But perhaps most importantly, we can see that there's no overall deficit to being a part of Museums for All, and oftentimes it can be a revenue generator!

## Hub City Convening

- Held in December 2018
- Convened leaders from Akron, Chattanooga, Chicago, Grand Rapids, Missoula, San Diego, and Worcester



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One of the other things that we try to do with participants in Museums for All is connect them with other museums in their city or area that also participate in Museums for All. We've found that museums can do really great things with a collaborative effort to promote this program within their community. We've started calling cities with three or more participants "hub cities." In December 2018, we invited representatives from seven of these cities – San Diego, Chicago, Akron, Missoula, Chattanooga, Worcester, and Grand Rapids – to attend a convening so we could determine how museums can work together to get the most out of Museums for All.

## Lessons from Hub City Convening

- Opportunities exist for participating museums in the same city to cooperate
- Allows for outside the box partnerships, and builds win-win partnerships that deeply benefit the community (food banks, transit authorities, etc. to help overcome barriers)
- Museums for All leads to trust building within a community, especially with demographics not typically seen in museums
- Museums for All provides safe spaces that contribute to a sense of belonging

We found that several opportunities for cooperation exist, and not just between museums. They can use Museums for All as an entry point to establish or deepen connections with local food banks or transit authorities in ways that can overcome other barriers potential visitors face in making it to a museum. These actions build trust within the organizations of a community, but also with the people. It shows that the museums are serious about their commitment to having everyone visit. The invitation that's being extended is real and genuine, and the museums are willing to put in the work on their end to make it happen. The museums are spaces for everyone, truly.

## Register Today!

- Visit [www.Museums4All.org](http://www.Museums4All.org)

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If all of this sounds enticing to you, just a reminder that it's very easy (and free!) to register for Museums for All over at [www.Museums4All.org](http://www.Museums4All.org). Or if you have any other questions, Sandra will tell you how to ask those.

## Contact Information

- Sandra Narva – [SNarva@IMLS.gov](mailto:SNarva@IMLS.gov)
- Brendan Cartwright – [Brendan.Cartwright@ChildrensMuseums.org](mailto:Brendan.Cartwright@ChildrensMuseums.org)
- General – [Info@Museums4All.org](mailto:Info@Museums4All.org)
  
- On Twitter - @MuseumsForAll

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We certainly hope the information shared today has interested you in becoming part of the Museums for All participant family.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us – we are happy to help. Listed here are the names and email addresses for Brendan and myself – we are more than happy to answer any questions you have about the program. You can also connect with the latest Museums for All news via twitter @MuseumsForAll.

Thank you again and we look forward to hearing from you!