

# **New Bedford awarded major Travel & Tourism recovery grant to fund “Summer in the Seaport” campaign**

*Mass. Office of Travel and Tourism Grant to Fund Summer in the Seaport Campaign.*

A partnership of local arts and culture organizations has been awarded a major grant by the Mass. Office of Travel and Tourism for an effort to promote tourism in the city's downtown this summer and foster recovery in the wake of the Coronavirus pandemic.

"New Bedford has a resilient spirit at its core," said AHA! Director Lee Heald. "We are excited to reopen the city after the pandemic and are grateful to the Mass. Office of Travel and Tourism for funding our partnership of arts and culture organizations to develop this marketing campaign, Summer in the Seaport. We welcome community members and visitors alike to a summer of new exhibitions and enhanced outdoor activities."

The \$45,531 Travel and Tourism Recovery Grant was awarded to AHA! (Art, History, Architecture) for Summer in the Seaport, a marketing campaign to promote New Bedford as an arts, culture and maritime heritage destination through a combination of website redesign, advertising, lamppost banners, and social media promotion. The campaign will encourage visitors from 50-plus miles away to explore the city's vibrant culture for an afternoon, a "daycation", or an overnight or long weekend stay this summer.

Other partners in the effort are DATMA (Design Art Technology Massachusetts) and the New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center.

“New Bedford’s arts, culture, and maritime heritage are rich resources, and we look forward to sharing them with visitors this summer,” said Laura Orleans, Executive Director of the New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center. “We are thankful to the Mass. Office of Travel and Tourism for funding this effort and helping us spread the word.”

Additional tourism and marketing collaborators include the Southeastern Massachusetts Convention & Visitors Bureau, One SouthCoast Chamber of Commerce, the Seaport Cultural District, New Bedford Creative, and Destination New Bedford.

“On behalf of One SouthCoast Chamber and Southeastern Massachusetts Visitors Bureau, we are so very pleased that AHA! and its many partners are recipients of the grant from Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism,” said Rick Kidder, Co-CEO of One SouthCoast Chamber. “This award reflects the great professionalism of the partners to help bring our region back from the economic devastation of the pandemic.”

The grants were announced recently by Lt. Governor Karyn Polito, Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy, and Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism Executive Director Keiko Orrall during a virtual press conference. The program aims to strengthen the economy of Massachusetts through the development and enhancement of the state’s tourism industry. The grant will be administered by AHA!, a fiscal agent project of the SouthCoast Community Foundation; additional support has been provided by the Southeastern Mass. Convention & Visitors Bureau, One SouthCoast Chamber of Commerce, and the New Bedford Seaport Cultural District.

“Summer in the Seaport is the perfect campaign to celebrate the reopening of safe, in-person arts and cultural events, shopping and retail, restaurants and tours in the Seaport Cultural District downtown and throughout the City of New Bedford,” added Margo Saulnier, Creative Strategist with New

Bedford Creative. "Kudos to AHA! New Bedford, DATMA, and NB Fishing Heritage Center for stepping up to represent the best of what our city has to offer visitors and tourists."