

# ArtWeek Festival Presents Opportunities This Spring

*From combined sources*

**FRANKLIN COUNTY** – A statewide arts festival called ArtWeek will be coming this spring to Franklin County, and the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce has just announced they are official collaborators on this venture. The Chamber writes that ArtWeek is an “award-winning innovative festival featuring hundreds of unique and creative experiences that are hands-on, interactive or offer behind-the-scenes access to arts, culture, and the creative process.” The festival is slated for ten days, from April 27 to May 7.

“One of Franklin County’s greatest economic drivers is our creative economy. ArtWeek provides an excellent opportunity for our creative communities to shine,” said Natalie Blais, executive director of the Chamber. “With three official cultural districts and scores of artists and creative organizations in our area, we are looking forward to a concentrated week of festivities that highlight the creative industry that helps to fuel the quality of life in our region.”

Applications for the festival are now available at [artweekma.org](http://artweekma.org). The “early bird” deadline to submit an ArtWeek event is January 8, and the final deadline is February 28. Individuals or groups may apply to offer free, or for-a-fee, experiences that visitors may enjoy. The Chamber and ArtWeek work to promote all events.

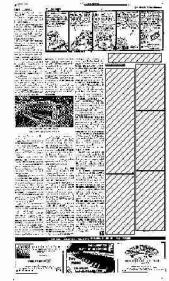
ArtWeek was created in Boston in 2013 by the Boch Center, one of the nation’s leading nonprofit performing arts institutions, and a guardian of the historic Wang and Shubert Theaters in Boston. This year marks the first expansion across the Commonwealth.

Josiah A. Spaulding, Jr., president & CEO of the Boch Center, claims “ArtWeek is an innovative festival that works to spotlight how the creative economy is thriving in Massachusetts. Each year ArtWeek showcases unique experiences spanning dance, fashion, media arts, spoken-word, poetry, writing, culinary, visual arts, music, opera, theater, design, film, and more. And the best part is that many of the events are free, making it affordable and accessible to everyone!”

Experience tourism has become the “new thing” sending people to destinations. Prime examples of this is the “experiences” that are now available through the giant hosting site Airbnb. These “experiences,” as yet only available in a handful of major cities worldwide through Airbnb, offer a glimpse of the future. Experts and not-so-experts share their knowledge in a wide variety of fields, including cheese making, wine tasting, niche shopping, art making, music, dancing, hiking and outdoor sports, local history, etc.

Certainly Franklin County has many experiences that visitors could immerse themselves in with a talented population that is active creatively in agriculture, fine arts, crafts, dance, music, theater and other cultural activities.

ArtWeek received several awards already including “Best of the New” from the *Boston Globe* and “Fifty on Fire” by BostInno. ArtWeek was also a finalist for the Massachusetts Nonprofit Network 2016 Excellence Award in Collaboration. It has been spotlighted in airline magazines, as well as Expedia, Forbes and USA Today’s “Go Escape” magazines.



A look at previous events hosted during ArtWeek in Boston reveal a wide variety of offerings: groups making public art; open mic events; hip-hop lessons on Boston Common; jazz scene immersions; a Jedi Lego tournament; exclusive museum tours; tiny home tours; etc. Most were offered for free or under \$25.

A peek at the application: it seems relatively easy to apply, with a short description and a few pictures.

Time to put on the collective brainstorming session and see how to jump on this very large bandwagon. Tie-ins and partnerships within individuals, organizations and villages, or between artists working in complementary media, or between artists/musicians and chefs/bnb's, could make Franklin County a very popular destination.

Lisa Davol, marketing and membership manager at the Chamber, says that they are planning a session on how Western Mass can tie in to

this event on January 11 at noon at the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst. It will be a webinar with Sue Sullivan, chief of staff at Citi Performing Arts Center, the producer of ArtWeek. "People who can't make it down there can join the webinar. I will have details on that soon," Lisa promised. To check up on details, call her at the Chamber: (413) 773-5463.

Apply through the *artweekma.org* website before February 28 for inclusion in the ArtWeek 2018 festival, which takes place April 27 through May 7.

Statewide partners for ArtWeek include the Mass Cultural Council, Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism as well as Mass Center for the Book, MASSCreative, MassHumanities, MassPoetry, New England Foundation for the Arts, New England Museum Association, Young Audiences of Massachusetts, and VSA Massachusetts.