

# How Cultural Institutions in NYC Are Becoming Age-friendly

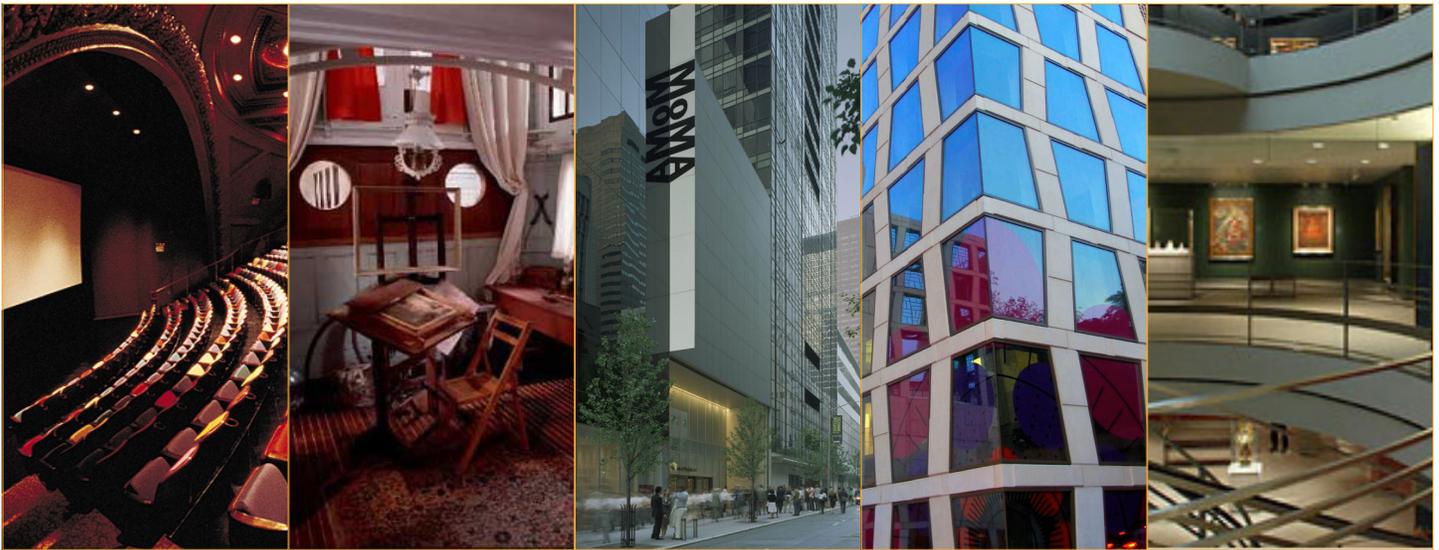


Age-friendly New York City is a collaborative effort led by the Office of the Mayor, the City Council, The New York Academy of Medicine, and older New Yorkers aiming to make New York City a better place to grow old.

## Facts



- There are currently **1.3 million New Yorkers over 60**, a number that is expected to increase by 500,000 by 2030.
- Many older New Yorkers say the city's rich cultural institutions are what drew them to New York and even more say they are a top reason why they love living here.
- Older adults say that some of the top factors that determine whether and where they patronize the arts are:
  - » **Type of Programming Cultural Institutions Offer**  
*Does it appeal to me?*
  - » **Availability of Transportation**  
*Can I get there?*
  - » **Timing of Events**  
*Can I get home before dark?*
  - » **Affordability**  
*Do I have enough disposable income to afford this?*
  - » **Physical Environment**  
*Do exhibits have seating?*  
*Can I easily find and get to a restroom?*
  - » **Access to Information**  
*Is signage large and clear?*  
*Do I need access to the Internet to learn about programs?*
  - » **Social Reasons**  
*Do I have someone to go with?*  
*Will I feel comfortable among the other people there?*



Cultural institutions around New York have taken notice, recognizing the mutual benefit of making age-friendly improvements for the institution and the community. Institutions are also increasingly tapping into the wealth of the city’s older adult artists, their own alumni and retired staff, and those interested in part-time work or volunteering.

## Programming

Programming expressly for older adults is becoming increasingly common at cultural institutions.



**BAM Rose Cinemas** in Brooklyn offers Senior Cinema screenings, giving seniors ages 65+ free transportation, admission to select classic films and complimentary popcorn and soda. More than 4,000 seniors have participated.



**Noble Maritime Collection** in Staten Island has intergenerational programming including a monthly sea shanty sing-along, a knitting circle, and an adult chorus with weekly rehearsals and member-optional performances.



**The Museum of Modern Art** has a number of innovative programs for people with dementia. The monthly “Meet Me at MoMA” program allows people with dementia and their families and/or caregivers to discuss art with specially trained art educators covering themes, artists and exhibits. Attendees look at art in the galleries and then make art themselves. The program has been replicated in museums around the country.



**The Museum for African Art** also has a program for seniors called “Active Body, Active Mind” that encompasses a variety of activities, from art-making and dance workshops to guided tours of art exhibitions. The program is funded by the Aetna Foundation and provides these services free of charge.



**The Rubin Museum of Art** welcomes older adults on the first Monday of each month with free admission to the galleries, guided visits, tickets to special film screenings, and a 10% discount on selected items in the shop & café.

## Discounts



Senior discounts and special “senior days” encourage older adults to take advantage of what cultural institutions have to offer and make them feel valued.

**Brooklyn Museum** has a suggested contribution of \$8 for seniors and \$12 for the general public

**Brooklyn Botanic Garden** discounts admission from \$10 to \$5 for seniors over age 65, and offers free admission for seniors on Fridays. Brooklyn Museum and Botanic Garden combination tickets are \$11 for seniors and \$20 for the general public.

**Metropolitan Opera** sets aside 50 “Weekday Rush” tickets for seniors each Monday through Thursday, allowing seniors to purchase day-of-show orchestra seats for \$20.

**The Film Society of Lincoln Center** prioritizes giving unsold tickets to senior-serving organizations in their immediate neighborhood on the Upper West Side.

**The Kaufman Music Center** has a special bimonthly e-newsletter for seniors, advertising upcoming concerts that are free or discounted for older adults.

## Accessibility



Many cultural institutions are taking steps to ensure that everyone can access their facilities and services. Along with implementing ADA requirements, many institutions adjust lighting, design exhibits with seating, increase the size and clarity of signage, train staff to be more communicative and proactively helpful, prioritize restroom access, and provide promotional information in a variety of formats.

**Brooklyn Museum** offers listening devices, sign language interpreted gallery talks, and infrared hearing devices in the Cantor Auditorium. Audio guides and Braille materials are also available for the vision impaired, and touch tours are available by appointment.

**Ellis Island Immigration Museum** offers hearing devices for ranger-led tours and on-site movies. They also offer American Sign Language tours, large print brochures, and tactile models of the island behind the information desk for vision-impaired visitors.

**The Kingsland Homestead at Queens Historical Society** allows guides, teachers, aides and caretakers free admission when accompanied.

**El Museo del Barrio** hosted an Age-friendly NYC training for staff from every department.

**Carnegie Hall** provides a flyer for seniors that highlights accessibility, discounts, programs, concerts, and volunteer opportunities.

## Resources to Help Your Institution Become More Age-friendly

### **NYC-ARTS Cultural Guides for Seniors**

In conjunction with Age-friendly NYC, NYC-ARTS developed cultural guides for seniors to help connect older adults to their local theaters and museums and to encourage these cultural institutions to see older adults as important patrons to be catered to. The guides are organized by borough – they offer brief descriptions of organizations and detail more than 85 senior-specific programs and discounts. They also include information about accessibility for those with sight, hearing, or mobility challenges.

<http://nyc-arts.org/seniors>

### **National Center for Creative Aging**

The National Center for Creative Aging (NCCA) has created a national database on Arts Programs Involving Older Americans. It is posted on their Web site and is updated regularly. The database profiles a wide variety of arts programs across the country with contact information to encourage networking among the arts and aging fields. The National Center for Creative Aging is located in New York City.

<http://www.creativeaging.org>

### **Museum Access Consortium**

The Museum Access Consortium (MAC) strives to enable people with disabilities to access cultural facilities of all types. MAC defines accessibility broadly, to include architectural, physical, programmatic, communication, attitudinal and other forms of access. Museum Access Consortium members include about 100 cultural institutions from the metropolitan NYC area that are diverse in size and type as well as service organizations, educational institutions, design firms, and consultants.

<http://www.cityaccessny.org/mac.php>

### **National Endowment for the Arts Office for AccessAbility**

The National Endowment for the Arts' Office for AccessAbility is the advocacy-technical assistance arm of the Arts Endowment to make the arts accessible for people with disabilities, older adults, veterans, and people living in institutions. Their website has information about best practices at different institutions across the country.

<http://www.nea.gov/resources/accessibility/office.html>

### **Museums, Libraries & Archives Council**

“Access on a Shoestring,” a part of the Museum, Libraries & Archives Council's larger Access Project, helps museums think about no- and low-cost solutions to making their museums more accessible and welcoming to older adults and people with disabilities.

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