



# The Met Begins Charging Mandatory Admission for Visitors Outside of New York State

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by Pat Rogers

The Metropolitan Museum of Art will be changing its admission policy from “pay-as-you-wish” to a formalized fee policy with visitors from outside of New York State paying a set admission and New York State Residents and CT and NJ students continuing to pay the admission amount they see fit, announced the New York art museum today. In addition, full-price admission tickets will be honored for three days at all three of the Met’s museums ([The Met Fifth Avenue](#); [The Met Breuer](#); [The Met Cloisters](#)).

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Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

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The admission policy change will take place on March 1, 2018. Admission for out-of-state visitors will be \$25 for adults; \$17 for seniors and \$12 for students, which matches the current suggested admission. Admission for all children under 12 will remain free. Special exhibitions, guided tours, and gallery talks will also continue to be included with museum admission.

The change was prompted by a downturn in revenue and an uptick in visitors, according to the museum. They estimate it will impact 31 percent of all museum visitors.

“Most important, today’s announcement ensures that we keep The Met open and accessible for all New Yorkers and their families, while guaranteeing that one of our cornerstone cultural institutions is financially sound for the foreseeable future,” stated New York City Council Cultural Affairs and Libraries Committee Chair Jimmy Van Bramer in the announcement.

Since The Met instituted the “pay-as-you-wish” policy in 1970, the museum has grown to become the largest art museum in the world and the most visited tourist attraction in New York City, according to the museum. In the last eight years, attendance increased by 40 percent—representing over 7 million visitors—to all three of the museum’s locations, according to The MET.

“The Metropolitan Museum of Art is an essential part of the fabric of New York City, and its mission

to connect people to creativity, knowledge, and ideas is more important today than ever before,” stated New York City Department of Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl. “This updated admissions policy will give the Museum a solid foundation to continue to grow its programming and engage New Yorkers from all corners of the city and visitors from around the world, while providing a unique opportunity to direct public resources to underserved communities throughout the five boroughs.”

The Met’s admission policy is overseen by New York City’s Department of Cultural Affairs since The Met Fifth Avenue is located on city land. The “pay-as-you-wish” policy for CT and NJ students will remain in place for one year and will be subsidized by The Met’s board of trustees. Funding will be sought to continue the program, according to The Met.

In recent years, the Museum has experienced a significant decline in revenue generated per visitor under the pay-as-you-wish policy, reported the museum. In 2004, 63 percent of visitors contributed the full suggested admission. Today, only 17 percent of adults pay the full amount, representing a 73 percent decline. In addition, the average per-person contribution fell to \$9 per visit. In 2017, The Met generated roughly 14 percent of its operating budget from admissions revenue, among the lowest of its New York City peers (which ranged up to 31 percent in 2016), according to The Met. The new admission policy is estimated to increase admission revenue by 2 to 3 percent of its overall budget.

“First and foremost, NYC & Company believes in a strong cultural community,” offered Fred Dixon, President and CEO of NYC & Co. “As such, we feel that visitation to the City will continue to thrive despite a move to charge admission to tourists at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. This pricing approach is also not uncommon. Given that there is already reduced admission at The Met for seniors, students, and children, by any measure, the \$25 admission fee is still an extraordinary value to access the world’s greatest encyclopedic collection of art.”

The Met’s revised admissions policy is similar to plans held by other major museums in the United States that offer discounts to local visitors with proof of residence. They include the [Los Angeles County Museum of Art](#), the [Art Institute of Chicago](#), and the [Detroit Institute of Arts](#). [Mass MOCA](#) in North Adams, MA announced it was holding its second annual Free Berkshire County Program and offered free admission from January 3 to 19, 2018 for residents of its local county with proof of residency.

On Long Island, the [Heckscher Museum of Art](#) in Huntington, NY offers reduced admission for township residents and free admission for employees of the Town of Huntington. Typically, art museums in the New York Metropolitan Area offer free admission to its members and a nominal cost for non-members. One exception is [Guild Hall](#) in East Hampton, NY whose admission is underwritten by corporate sponsors so admission is free.