

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### ALBANY INSTITUTE BRINGS BACK FREE SUMMER ADMISSION PROGRAM

**Free admission for children and caregivers offered July and August, with expanded youth and family programming**



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ALBANY, NY— Building on the success of its 2025 pilot, the Albany Institute of History & Art (AIHA) is bringing back its Free Summer Admission program for 2026, offering free admission for children ages 12 and under and one accompanying adult caregiver from July 1 through August 31, 2026.

Generously supported by the Carl E. Touhey Foundation and Opalka Family Philanthropies, with additional support from Wallace Altes, Eileen Howe Bird, Mary Ellen and Anders Tomson, and Capital Bank, the

initiative helps expand access to the museum while offering a robust slate of programs designed to engage youth and families across the Capital Region and beyond. Last year's program resulted in a 37% increase in overall summer attendance, with significant growth among family audiences. In response to this demonstrated demand, AIHA will continue the program in 2026 with the goal of welcoming even more families to the museum.

“Last year's program showed us the impact of reducing barriers to access,” said Kayla Carlsen, Executive Director. “By continuing the Free Summer initiative, we hope to create more opportunities for families to make the museum part of their summer, whether for learning, creativity, or simply spending time together.”

In addition to free admission, the 2026 program will feature enhanced educational programs for youth and families, including a new Young Artists Lab that provides hands-on opportunities to explore artistic practice and creative expression. Returning favorites include Art Cart in-gallery activities, Explorer's Bags, and drop-in artmaking experiences designed to deepen engagement with the museum's exhibitions and collections. AIHA will continue to partner with local schools, camps, and community organizations to broaden participation, with transportation scholarships available to support group visits.

The Free Summer Admission program is part of a broader effort to expand equitable access to the Albany Institute's exhibitions, collections, and programs. Other initiatives include year-round programs for youth and families, schools, and the community at large, such as Family Free Days, partnerships with artists and organizations representing the diversity of the Capital Region, ASL and bilingual interpretation, as well as Museums on the Move, a new outreach program that brings collections-based learning directly into schools and community spaces.

"Art and history have the power to spark curiosity, creativity, and connection at every age," said Megan Brown, Director of Education at the Albany Institute. "By expanding access to the museum, we hope to create opportunities for our community to learn, explore, and make meaningful memories both in and beyond the classroom."

Free admission and programming will be available from July 1 through August 31, 2026, during regular museum hours.

Visit [albanyinstitute.org](http://albanyinstitute.org) for more information, including a full calendar of events and programs.

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### **ABOUT THE ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY & ART**

Founded in 1791, the Albany Institute of History & Art is New York's oldest museum. Its collections document the Hudson Valley as a crossroads of culture, influencing the art and history of the region, the state, and the nation. With more than 25,000 objects in the collection and one million documents in the research library, it is a resource for the region. Permanent exhibitions include one of the largest collections of Hudson River School paintings, a history of Ancient Egypt, and other fine art, ceramics, and furniture, as well as rotating temporary exhibitions.