



Chicago Park District

Legislation Text

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AUTHORIZATION TO CHANGE THE GENERAL ADMISSION FEE FOR THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

To: The Honorable Board of Commissioners of the Chicago Park District

I. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Commissioners adopt an order authorizing an increase in the general admission fees of the Art Institute of Chicago effective June 15, 2015. The proposed increase is \$2 for Chicago residents (new rate of \$20), Illinois residents (new rate of \$22) and out-of-state visitors (new rate of \$25). The Art Institute will continue to offer discounts for seniors and students with a proposed new price of \$14 for Chicago residents and \$16 for Illinois residents. It has been more than 2 years since the Institute's last request for an increase to its admission ticket.

II. Explanation

The Art Institute of Chicago is a premier cultural institution that brings an internationally renowned collection to life for over 1.4 million visitors each year. The Art Institute presents a vibrant program of approximately 38 special exhibitions and offers a strong educational program that touches individuals both inside and outside the Institute and out in the community.

The requested rate increase allows the Institute to cover inflationary increases in wages and supports its ongoing commitment to serve the public through access to its world class collection and a strong educational program for children, families, teachers, and adults.

Even with strong expense controls, the Institute has inflationary pressures associated with any other organization. With almost 50% of its costs related to wages and benefits, a small salary increase can result in increased costs of almost \$1 million. Accordingly, periodic increases in the price of admission are necessary and appropriate to maintain a high level of excellence and service.

The Art Institute is free during 52 days each year, thus the Institute ensures that all Illinois residents regardless of means have an ability to visit and see the various collections. Approximately 25% of their visitors, including school tours, every year enter without charge.

In addition, the Art Institute defines a child for admission that is free as under the age of 14 as compared to the other major museums as the age of 3. After the proposed increases the Art Institute will have the lowest all in price of the five largest cultural institutions in Chicago.

Lastly, the new out-of-state admission of \$25 will be comparable to other major art museums in the United States such as New York and Boston.