

Administrative/Facility –

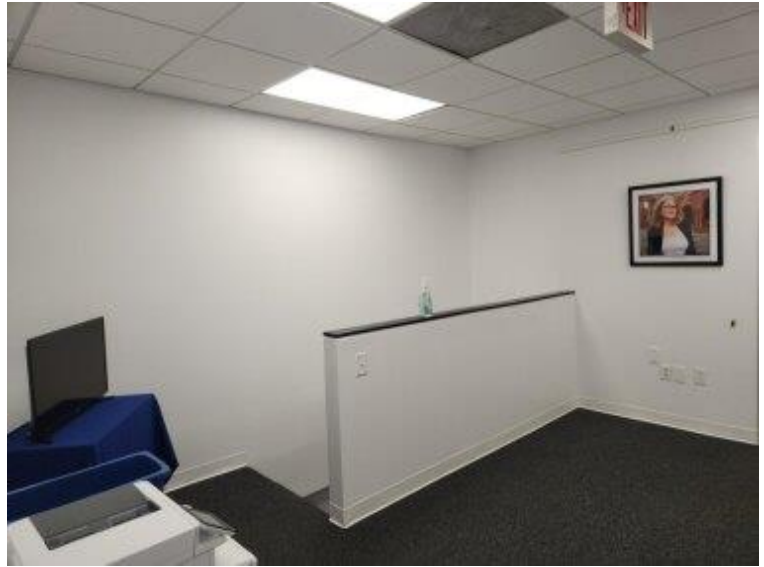
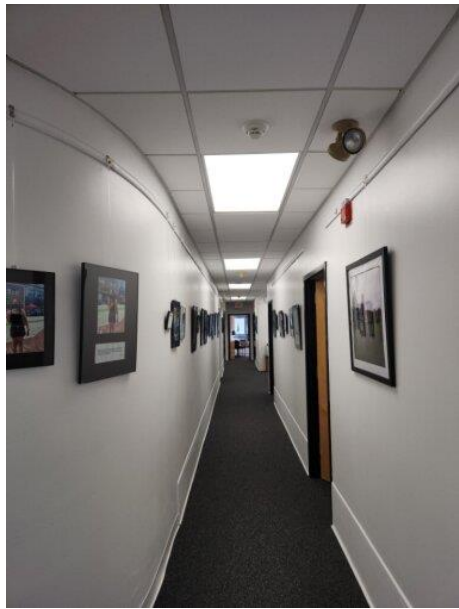
The first-floor renovation is complete! The facility was closed to the public from December 24, 2024 and its door reopened on time on January 13, 2025. During the renovation process, the ED was at the facility every day to ensure the contractors had access and stayed within the timeline for completion.

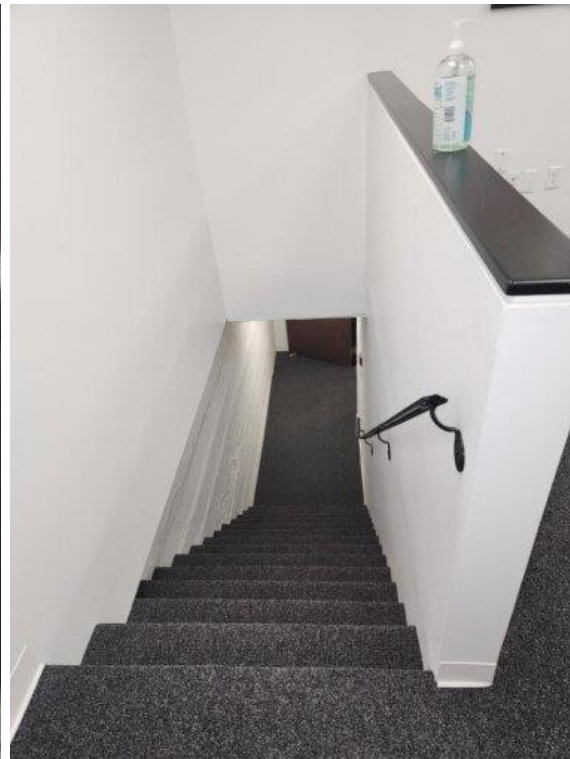
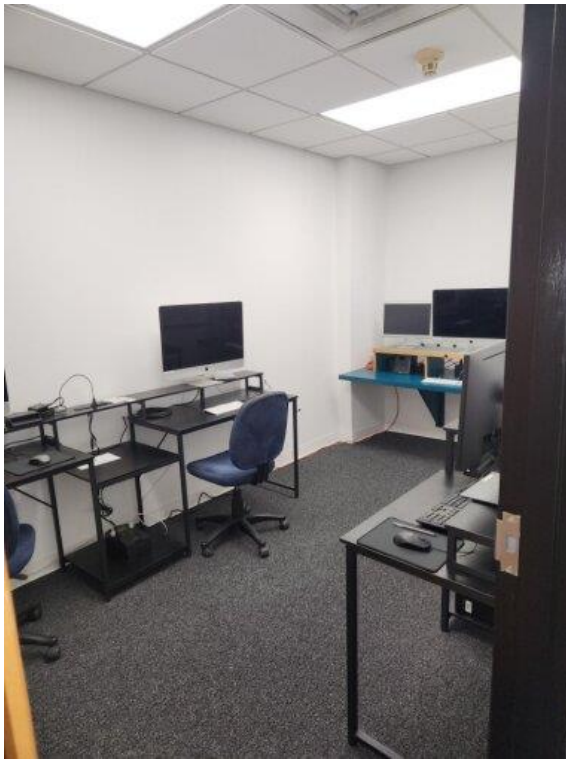
[Nolasco's Home Improvement](#) won the bid for the drop ceiling replacement and all other renovation work was done by J & F and Son Contracting, who has served as UMA's general contractor for decades. The scope of the project was extensive, starting with the complete removal of the old drop ceiling tiles and insulation, rehanging the grid system and replacing the old 4'X4' tiles with 2'X2' insulated tiles. The insulated tiles provide much more energy efficiency and less weight on the grid system, ensuring the new ceiling will last decades. As the bid for the replacement came in at just over \$35K, the ED was able to recognize the opportunity to use the additional funding we were awarded from Senator Lewis's earmark funds to renovate both bathrooms and the kitchen to ADA compliance! Both bathrooms and the kitchen were demoed, and an extensive support system was placed in the wall between the bathrooms to allow for the hanging sinks. The ED worked with [Home Outlet Malden](#) to design an ADA compliant kitchen cabinet and sink layout.

And since we had to hire movers to move the entire first floor into our studio area, the ED took the opportunity to replace the thirty plus year old carpet, fix the stairs to the basement where the leaking roof had damaged all the steps and replace the handrail with a compliant one. The entire upper level also received a new coat of paint that is on brand for UMA. Each office and multi-use room had old phonline ports and track lighting removed and network ports recessed into the walls and every room received modern office furniture. We converted the smaller edit room into a multi-use office space for our team members and set up the larger edit room as a multi-computer space that allows for training sessions.

Here is the best news; the entire project cost a little over **\$92K**, of that amount, \$60K was provided by the earmark funds and \$24K by the City's Cable Capital Fund, which means UMA's out of pocket cost were for the remaining **\$8K**! The ED was able to provide significant cost savings by purchasing much of the renovation project materials (bathroom sinks, kitchen cabinetry, office furniture, etc.).

The UMA team and members have been delighted with the facelift. We have seen a significant uptick in walking-in-traffic alone over the last month. The place feels fresh and fun!





In other facility news, it is disappointing that the ED must report that APM property management has advised the Arrow Condo Association that they will not be renewing their contract to provide property management services to the association. They have given us 90 days' notice and are assisting in the transition process, our current contract will end May 1st. ***If any board members have a recommendation for a local small management company, please let the ED know.***

City of Malden –

The ED spent some time focusing on the reporting requirements for the new agreement with the city this last month. By creating a bucket within the Microsoft Planner software, the ED has been able to establish what report is due when and whom on the team will need to assist in getting the required information. This will allow the organization to remain compliant as there are almost two dozen asks within the agreement.

Staffing –

Speaking of Microsoft Planner, the entire UMA team has been collaborating on how to best use our Office 365 tool set to create efficiency and transparency within our workflow; to an amazing level of success! We now use the Planner tool to keep track of tasks assigned to all team members, track community engagement and define areas of improvement. Team members are using the Task tool to create daily and weekly To Do lists and are able to check off items as they go, allowing them to generate reports on how they spend their time and on what. As we have a variety of programs and services going on at one time, this has been an extremely beneficial shift in our operations to keep us all up to date on what's happening and allow us to generate data.

We have also been focusing on our membership software system Rueshare. By evaluating features and reporting options that will enable us to manage members and assets; track member engagement, staff time; class engagement; asset use; and potential asset value we could leverage.

Financials/Fund Development –

For tracking purposes, this is where the organization stands at the time of this report with its current financial goal sets broken down by area:

FY24/25

Fund	Budget	Actual	Percentage
Annual Operating Grant from cable providers	\$610,000	\$364,377	60%
General Operating Grants	\$30,000	\$5,000	17%
Workshops	\$200	\$300	150%
Fundraising	\$15,000	\$0	0%
Sponsorships	\$5,000	\$0	0%
Membership Fees	\$5,000	\$4,140	83%
Production Services/Rentals	\$6,000	\$3,450	58%
Interest	\$2,800	\$1,510	54%
General Donations and In-Kind Donations	\$6,000	\$725	12%
Other Income (closeout of 3 CD's, AMEX points)		\$38,473	
Total FYTD	\$680,000	\$417,975	61%

As the chart above indicates, we are on target with our income generation. UMA received Comcast's cable funds check from the City last week. The ED anticipates the check from Verizon (roughly \$50K) within the next few weeks, which would put the organization over what was initially budgeted for cable fees, but not by much. The ED asked the city to provide numbers from the start of 2022 to current breaking down what each cable company has provided on a quarterly basis. These numbers were provided in a timely manner, and the ED has started generating accurate spreadsheets detailing the average decline of **3%** per year in cable funding over the last three years. This is consistent with what other community access centers in MA are reporting through [MassAccess](#). While the decline in our major funding source is not news, having the actual numbers is very beneficial to future planning.

Speaking of future planning, the ED is starting next year's budget planning process now and hopes to present a draft of the budget at either the March or April BOD meeting.

The ED is also working with Brookline Bank to establish a line of credit (LOC) to use in case of an emergency. The ED met with the representative from the bank on Monday, February 24th to discuss details and will need to provide additional information to the bank before any solutions are offered.

In Grant news, Felicia Ryan submitted two to the Malden Cultural Council, one for UMA's Art Salon's and one for our Community Calendar initiative, Maldenevents.com. The total asks for both projects was for \$15,500 (\$7,500 for Art Salon, \$8K for calendar) and UMA received grants for both projects! Not for the full ask, but **significantly higher** than in any years past, \$3,500 for the salons and \$1,750 for the calendar. This is a big win for the organization as the grant for the calendar will cover all the costs associated with its current operation and UMA will have administrative costs covered for continuing our art salons.

As we continue to search out grant opportunities, we are gathering data and creating ROI's (Return on Investment) reports that truly are quantifying the cost of the additional programs UMA is running (or looking to run). Factoring in staff time, utility costs, marketing material, vs. new memberships, donations, community engagement, etc. are just a few areas we are putting into these reports. These reports will help the organization continue to not only build out services and identify funding but allow us to focus on the biggest ROI's.

Lastly, Felicia Ryan also submitted for the Adelaide Breed Bayrd Foundation grant once again in February. This year as in last year, we asked for \$25K to assist with operating costs. They have historically given a standard \$10K to UMA for many years. We are hoping we can increase that. Felicia is working with the ED on gathering information for the Massachusetts Cultural Council [Operating Grants for Organizations](#), a multi-year, unrestricted operating grant. We applied last year and were not chosen. We continue to hope we can strengthen our submission and be awarded the grant in the near future.

Strategic Plan Update –

Goal 1: Enhance Partnership with City of Malden and School District – As mentioned earlier in the report, the ED's first step was to identify all areas and a timeline of required reporting and assign tasks to various team members for completion.

Goal 2: Youth Engagement – The ED, James and Anne meet to discuss a summer program of Youth Workshops utilizing feedback from BOD Treasurer Brian Boswell and a MassAccess discussion thread on the same topic. Details are below in the Workshops update.

Goal 3: Community Engagement – UMA’s first Media Mixer has been scheduled, details are below in the Events section. The UMA team has also been working on streamlining the membership process and working to ensure policies are clear and accessible and defining specific targets for increasing member involvement and satisfaction.

Goal 4: Board Development – BOD work session in January. Lissette has set up a Microsoft Planner for the BOD tasks list. The Nominations Committee has met twice since the start of the year.

Goal 5: UMA Team Reorganization – No update at this time.

Goal 6: Long Term Strategic Planning – No update at this time. This is next on the ED’s priority list.

Goal 7: Fund Development – As mentioned in the financial section of this report, we’ve had success in increasing our grant funding and the ED is working on establishing a line of credit with Brookline Bank.

Workshops/Events/Programs –

As the BOD knows, UMA has reprised our [“Humans of Malden”](#) exhibit in the UMA Gallery. New pieces have been added by Susan Margot Ecker and we are holding an Art Salon on Thursday, February 27, 2025, from 6 to 8 p.m. and hope that board members are able to attend.

On February 10th, Malden Reads held a very well attended kickoff event for this year's book choice, [The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind](#) by [William Kamkwamba](#) at the new Bread of Life building. At the event, local groups showcased how they’re using resources to foster sustainability and innovation within our community. These efforts align with the themes of The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind, including water conservation, gardening for food security, and teaching science to the next generation. The event also included live music, poetry, a variety of refreshments, and a short presentation. For more information and events on this year's program, visit the Malden Reads [website](#).

In workshop news, one of UMA’s members have generously offered to hold an [Intro to Photography: A FREE Hands-on Workshop](#) on March 8th. This is a beta test for UMA to serve as a template to figure out quality control and evaluation for workshops we offer as well as instructor selection, pricing, and processing. The current market rate for a photography class is 90 min for two hours. 9 have registered so far.

UMA’s calendar initiative, [maldenevents.com](#) is really picking up steam with our community! A UMA team workgroup has organized an outreach plan for key stakeholders, that includes a [web page](#) overview, [presentation](#), and agreement for partnership. We have presented the initiative to the Chamber, City, and Creative Malden. All are on board – and these presentations garnered great excitement and vision for what Malden could be – with the right event management tools, team, and processes. UMA will continue a phased rollout of the calendar initiative over the next year.

To highlight our newly renovated first floor and to publicly thank Senator Lewis for his support, UMA will hold a [Media Mixer Networking Event](#) on **Tuesday, March 25, 2025 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.** The first of which we hope will eventually be a series of gatherings along various themes, this two-hour networking event will attract local aspiring and practicing media makers and other creatives, businesses, and organizations. This event positions UMA as an important media arts hub and will increase our pool of potential members, sponsors, board members, and media-related freelancers and future partners. ***The ED encourages all board members to attend this event, and we have planned to have a table setup for board engagement that we will need board members to volunteer to attend to.***

The ED, James and Anne met to discuss options for a multi-week youth workshop series to be held this summer. Using feedback from parents in the community, (thank you to Brian Boswell for posting a social media video to gather feedback) and a recent thread on MassAccess's listserv, the team was able to outline the following:

- Two separate workshop series, one for ages 10-13 and one for ages 14-17.
- Offer two rounds of the same workshop to each age group starting July 14th. (Breakdown: Ages 10-13, Week 1, Ages 14-17, Week 2, Ages 10-13, Week 3, Ages 14-17, Week 4.)
- Workshop would be Monday through Thursday, 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- The Workshop would be multi-media, offering instruction on a variety of formats of media including video, podcasting, script writing, etc.
- Workshop minimum would be 3-4, maximum would be 8-10.

There were a multitude of questions that arose during the discussion process, they are as follows:

- How do we process signups? Through Eventbrite or our website? If through the website, this will take time to design and implement correctly.
- How much do we charge for each student per week? \$200-\$400? More or less?
- We feel it would be beneficial to offer a parent event at the end of the workshop to showcase the students' work, but what does that look like? Do we hold it on the Thursday evening of the week or offer a Friday lunch event?
- Speaking of lunch, are we required to offer snacks or lunch to the participants? If so, this opens issues of food allergies.

As we know, this is a beta test for programs we can offer in the future. We are already discussing offering something similar but modified during next year's February break.

Partnerships –

Anne and Ose have been leading a strategy and rationale for a focus group and plan as a starting point to improving our accessibility of media, marketing, programming and facility. Utilizing our annual grant allotment of \$5,000 from the UP Initiative through the Mass Cultural Council, they have been tasked with finding a facilitator to hold multiple focus groups in our community and assist in developing a comprehensive accessibility plan. After researching pricing, focus group processes, and disability resources/professionals, they crafted a well-rounded RFP and received a number of applications. The interview process has recently concluded, and they selected an amazing local facilitator, [Christopher Robinson](#). He has worked with Follow your art, Arts Boston to make calendar accessible, and adding asl to local theater productions.

UMA was recently represented at a Community Coalition event, and they were impressed at UMA's offerings and could feasibly partner with or be an organizational member at UMA. Another meeting/tabling event is forthcoming.

Recognizing the exceptional service UMA provided in the [Climate Action Plan](#) rollout, the [Metropolitan Area Planning Council](#) (MAPC) has inquired about once again contracting with UMA to provide media services for the forthcoming heat resilience project happening over the next year. The thing to note about this ask is for the Climate Action Plan, they were able to provide \$1,200 in funding to UMA for our services. With the new ask, the funding offered is **\$30,000!** Our strategy of offering exceptional services to other organizations with grant funding is already showing success!

We have had similar success with Creative Malden hiring UMA to do artist focused videos for their social media. Creative Malden receives the grant to highlight marginalized artists and hires UMA to produce the videos. It's a win for both organizations. James Mudge is currently working on his third round of videos with the organization, focusing on women artists for Women's History Month in March.

And a final note to highlight a happy accident, Ose recently took advantage of a wrong number which led to three ten-year-olds coming into the studio to help us record a phone greeting and create some fun Canva social media posts in our newly condensed edit room. Ose took the time to meet with the youth and asked them to inform us on what kind of youth program they think we should offer. Program, format and recommended details forthcoming.



Legislative Update –

As we look into the new year, both the [House Bill 326](#) (40+ Co-Sponsors) and [Senate Bill 399](#), (15 Co-Sponsors) **An Act to modernize funding for community media programming** are gathering support! The ED is keeping a close eye on the process and staying informed through MassAccess on how these two bills do this legislative session. Having been introduced six years ago, it's very encouraging that the support continues to grow.