



Background

Originally built in 1925 as the “Repertory Theatre of Boston,” the Huntington Theatre was one of the country’s first nonprofit playhouses. It was built to be a permanent home for the Henry Jewett Players, a Boston-based repertory theatre company. In choosing to locate the theatre across from Symphony Hall and near the Museum of Fine Arts and the old Boston Opera House, the theatre’s creators intended to signify its character as a major cultural institution of Boston and its difference from the commercial playhouses in the Boylston, Washington, Tremont streets area of the city.

Huntington Theatre Company, Inc., the organization spearheading the rehabilitation of the space, has been operating out of the theatre since its founding in 1982 as part of a partnership with Boston University (“BU”). Over the years the Huntington has received over 150 Elliot Norton and Independent Reviewers of New England Awards, as well as the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre. In the past 36 years, the Huntington has played to an audience of 3.5 million, presented over 200 plays (18 of which went on to Broadway or Off-Broadway), and served over 500,000 students, community members, and other cultural organizations, becoming Boston’s leading professional theatre and one of the region’s premier cultural assets. Boston Magazine named the Huntington the 2019 “Best Theatre Company, Large” in the city.

THE PROJECT

The redevelopment will consist of restoring the 44,000 SF theatre and the attached service building that houses dressing rooms, rehearsal space, offices, and brand new all-gender restrooms that will serve all theatergoers. The renovated theatre space will have additional accessible seating locations, improved sightlines, and new acoustic systems, ensuring high quality and comfortable audience experience. These improvements to the theatre complex will increase the Huntington’s capacity for meaningful people-to-people engagement, educational programming, and vibrant exchange of ideas through



Total Development Cost:
\$50 Million



NTCIC Financing:
\$7 Million NMTC Allocation
\$9.5 Million Federal HTC



Project Partner:
Huntington Theatre Company, Inc.



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performance and collaboration.

Due to significant deferred maintenance by its former owners, the theatre requires renovation and upgrades in order to safely and successfully provide world-class theatre performances and educational programs to the community. This includes an all-new elevator serving all floors, HVAC and sprinkler systems, and electrical wiring. Once renovated, the theatre intends to increase its annual performances from 150 to 180 and expand its educational programs. The completion of the proposed overhaul to the building will enable the owners to provide more programs in a much more modern theatre with larger seats and better equipment and back-of-the-house facilities. The new theatre space will have additional accessible seating locations, improved sightlines, and new acoustic systems which will ensure high quality and comfortable audience experience.

Economic and Community Impact

The Huntington is a community-centered theatre with strong, proactive goals to expand community participation and inclusion. Once renovated, it intends to increase its annual performances from 150 to 180 at the conclusion of the historic theatre restoration. This increase will also allow for expansion and staff increases in the Huntington's education, community, and workforce development programs, including an increase to the Huntington Community Membership Initiative (HCMI), a program designed to reduce economic barriers to attending live theatre for those with limited income. By partnering with 245+ organizations in underserved neighborhoods, the program provides more than 3,400 low-income patrons with affordable tickets to the best available seats; a multi-departmental theatre apprenticeship program; career pathways partnership program; and award-winning youth arts education initiatives. This project will increase the program's overall capabilities by 40%. It will also allow for an additional 1,087 youth to be served through one of three annual spoken word programs hosted by Huntington Theatre.

In addition to a large capital campaign spearheaded by the Huntington, the project was financed by over \$9.5 million in federal Historic Tax Credits, as well as a \$7 million New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) allocation, both of which were supported by NTCIC. The theatre will reopen in mid-2022.