



New York City Council
Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations
Committee on Finance

Oversight Hearing: Fiscal Year 2025 DCLA Executive Budget

Tuesday, May 21, 2024, 11:00AM – Council Chambers, City Hall

Testimony Presented by NYC Department of Cultural Affairs Commissioner Laurie Cumbo

Good morning, Chairs Rivera and Brannan and members of the Finance and Cultural Affairs committees. I am Laurie Cumbo, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs. I am here today to testify in regards to the Mayor's FY25 executive budget proposal as it applies to my agency. I am joined today by a number of my staff.

I will begin today with a rundown of DCLA's proposed budget for FY25. The Mayor's executive budget allocates \$151 million for the agency in the coming fiscal year. This includes:

- \$27.4 million for the Cultural Development Fund;
- \$67.8 million for operating subsidies at the Cultural Institutions Group
- \$45.1 million for CIG energy costs;
- \$1.17 million for CreateNYC initiatives;
- \$8.16 million for agency operations; and
- \$1.75 million for other funding streams, such as energy subsidies.

Note that these figures do not include any funding, such as City Council member items or initiatives, that are typically added at adoption. By comparison, DCLA's budget at this same point in the process last year was just over \$157 million. That means there was more than \$80 million added to our budget at adoption last year, when DCLA's budget stood at \$241 million.

In spite of the fiscal challenges we've faced, our FY24 budget remains among the largest-ever for DCLA, and follows record-setting investments in culture by the Adams administration. The administration's support for DCLA also includes a number of PEG reductions in previous fiscal years that DCLA was exempted from – one of the few agencies to receive such exemptions. We're proud of this record of support, and we look forward to working toward adopting a budget for FY25 that builds on this strong foundation.

I'd also like to highlight that the FY25 figures include more than \$7.5 million in funding that was restored by Mayor Adams in his executive budget. This is part of more than \$22 million in restorations over three fiscal years that the Mayor and Speaker Adams announced last month. DCLA, along with all of our fellow agencies, was asked to tighten our belts and find savings amid the immense fiscal challenges facing our city. While it was difficult, we did our part. Now, this

strong fiscal management is paying off. It's what made this restoration possible, and we're thrilled to be able to invest this major sum back into our cultural community.

And the process of making that investment is already underway. Yesterday, we launched the application for the FY25 Cultural Development Fund. As you know, this is one of the primary ways that the city supports the non-profit cultural community that is such an important part of New York. For FY24, we invested over \$52 million in 1,031 groups through the CDF, in partnership with the Council. This funding goes to groups of all shapes and sizes, in every corner of all five boroughs. And this is thanks, in part, to Council's close collaboration. My team will be sending you toolkits to promote the FY25 CDF application, as well as the call for panelists to review applications. No one knows your districts like you do, and we appreciate your partnership in spreading the word about this critical source of support for the city's non-profit cultural community.

We're excited to roll out several changes to the CDF process this year. These are part of the ongoing reform efforts to make this funding stream as transparent and equitable as possible. We have always said this would be an ongoing, pilot process – one that we would continue to refine to find the fairest, most equitable ways to administer. We started with changes that included doubling the minimum grant size, and making currently-funded groups eligible for multi-year awards, regardless of their budget size. These are just a few of the reforms that we've already seen pay dividends.

Since rolling out the initial reforms, forums like these hearings have been critical ways for us to learn about how the reforms are working on the ground. I've stayed after delivering my own testimony to listen to dozens of groups testify from across the city. I've joined constituent-led conversations, like those that happen at Culture at 3, to listen to feedback. My team and I have been in constant dialogue with constituents from across the city – at events, at site visits, in one on one conversations - since we launched the reform efforts in FY23, and we're eager to adopt several new reforms this year as a result.

This year's changes include adding a new band for applicants with budget sizes of \$1.5 million up to \$3 million. Previously, this band included groups from \$500,000 up to \$3 million, with a minimum award size of \$30,000. However, in practice, we saw that this lumped together incredibly disparate groups, and prevented many mid-size organizations from receiving more significant awards reflective of the reach of their programming. Now, the minimum for this new budget band will be \$40,000 – an effort to give more city support to mid-size institutions which are community anchors for neighborhoods across the five boroughs.

Another reform I'm excited to roll out this year is the CDF safety net. One concern we've heard loud and clear in our dialogue with the field is that groups which had received long term support from CDF had been unexpectedly reduced or their applications denied funding entirely. This is funding they relied on to support their roles as longtime community-based institutions, and when they didn't receive it, the implications could often be dire. To avoid this situation, groups that have received CDF support for 6 years or more in a row will no longer be in this position. If eligible groups receive CDF panel scores low enough to mean they would not be funded in FY25, instead they'll now receive a "safety net" award of up to half the average of their total CDF baseline

awards from the prior six fiscal years. Many members of the Council and leaders in the cultural sector advocated for us to find a way to maintain support for such institutions. We think this will help reduce the uncertainty for CDF grantees who have long track records of doing great cultural programming in their communities.

Another change I'm excited for is bringing direct Council representation back to the CDF panel process. This will make sure your unique, on-the-ground understanding of your communities is included in the application review process. Chair Rivera, I know my staff has briefed your team on these changes. We're happy to offer briefings to anyone else who wants to learn more and provide feedback into the process as we continue to work toward fostering a more transparent, equitable CDF.

I want to turn now to a few other recent developments and highlights from the agency. DCLA's capital program – which is a partnership between the Mayor, Council, and Borough Presidents – continues to deliver incredible cultural assets for all New Yorkers. At the end of March, I was delighted to join Chair Rivera to break ground on the renovation of the home of the Nuyorican Poet's Cafe on the Lower East Side. The city has provided more than \$24 million for a complete renovation of this important institution – an investment in its future as an anchor of Puerto Rican and Latinx heritage in this rapidly changing community.

I was also recently at the Aperture Foundation's future home on the Upper West Side, where I joined Council Member Brewer to break ground on this exciting project. The city has invested \$1 million in Aperture's permanent home, which will become a hub of public engagement built around the work of this storied photography organization and its iconic publication.

The only thing more exciting than picking up a shovel to get a project started, is when you grab a pair of scissors to cut the ribbon on a completed project. We recently joined our partners at the Parks Department to cut the ribbon on an incredible new building at Socrates Sculpture Park. While this was a Parks Department capital project, we are proud supporters of programming at Socrates, and thrilled for this amazing support for a cultural institution from our partners at Parks. And these new buildings – former shipping containers which are the FIRST permanent structure at the park – will be transformative for the organization's programming, giving them a weather-proof space to engage New Yorkers year round.

It's been great seeing a number of you at events celebrating other important cultural milestones across the city. I joined Council Member Salamanca to mark the Bronx Zoo's 125th anniversary – a great example of how long term public-private partnerships can foster incredible cultural assets that attract visitors and uplift residents. (The Bronx Zoo – I'm proud to note – is the largest youth employer in the Bronx). I also saw Council Member Hanks at the celebration marking the 25th anniversary of New York Chinese Scholar's Garden, located on the grounds of the Snug Harbor cultural campus on Staten Island. This stunning outdoor space brings the beauty of Ming Dynasty gardens and Chinese culture right to Staten Island's north shore. And Chair Rivera, I was proud to join you to officially co-name East 23rd Street "SVA Way," in recognition of the incredible impact that the School of the Visual Arts has had on New York since its founding over 75 years ago. And I had a blast at this past weekend's Dance Parade, which transformed the streets of

your district into New York's hottest dance party. Kidding aside, dance and the performing arts are such important parts of what make our city great.

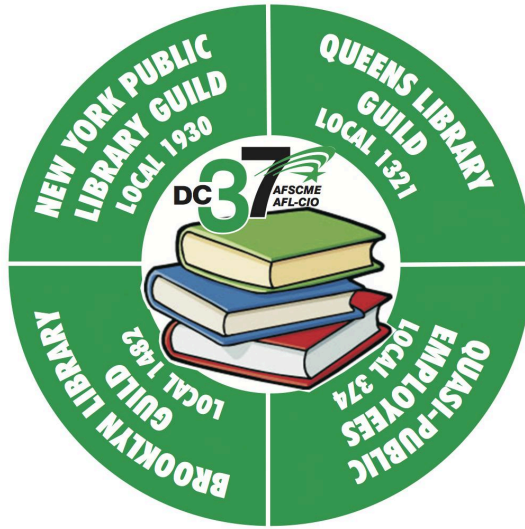
Dance is one thing that makes New York City great. Public art is another. Earlier this year, we had an amazing celebration at Gracie Mansion, where we marked the 40th anniversary of the city's Percent for Art program. Since it was established in the early 1980s, Percent for Art has transformed schools, libraries, plazas, parks, and other civic spaces through the commissioning of over 400 works of site-specific, permanent artwork. To celebrate, we launched a new, interactive map and website highlighting Percent commissions in all five boroughs. Many of the artworks featured on the new map include audio interviews with artists and arts administrators who were involved in the project's creation. I encourage you to check it out at on.nyc.gov/percent40.

When it comes to public art, we're not resting on our laurels. Shortly after we celebrated its 40th anniversary at The People's House, we joined Mayor Adams to announce the revival of the She Built NYC program, honoring great women from New York City history with monuments in all five boroughs. The first of these projects to be announced – a monument honoring the great Shirley Chisholm in Prospect Park – is already well underway. The PDC unanimously approved its visionary design last year, and we continue to work with the artists and community to create something that pays tribute to Chisholm's legacy. Now, with our recent announcement, we're ready to build monuments to four other incredible women: Dr. Helen Rodriguez Trias in the Bronx; Billie Holiday in Queens; Katherine Walker in Staten Island; and Elizabeth Jennings Graham in Manhattan. We currently have an open call for artists to design these monuments – learn more at nyc.gov/culture.

The She Built NYC projects are just the tip of the iceberg. Our Public Art team is moving forward on exciting commissions all over the city. We're working on a new artwork for Medgar Evers High School in Brooklyn – one of more than 20 schools projects we expect to install this year – and on new commissions for libraries across the city. I'm also very excited to announce that, just yesterday, artist Kenseth Armstead's proposal for Abolitionist Place in Brooklyn was unanimously approved by the Public Design Commission. This artwork will honor the legacy of the movement to abolish slavery, which had deep roots in the area around this incredible new open space.

And last but not least – our Materials for the Arts program continues to collect donated items that fuels arts programming across the city. It's been particularly gratifying to join the amazing MFTA team for their new initiative to deliver supplies to arts educators at drop-off sites across the five boroughs. In addition to delivering much needed supplies, the MFTA education team runs workshops for participating educators to introduce new ways of working with the unique materials you encounter in the warehouse. I saw them in action at Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning in Queens and Snug Harbor on Staten Island. I encourage arts educators and arts groups to visit nyc.gov/mfta to see how they can get in on the action.

I could go on about all the amazing work happening at DCLA, and the incredible programming we're proud to support across the city. But in the interest of time, I'll stop here. I thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I'm happy to answer any questions you might have.



**Executive Budget Hearing Fiscal Year 2025
Committee on Finance, New York City Council
Joint Testimony of**

**President George Sarah Olken, Brooklyn Public Library Guild, Local 1482
President Deborah Allman, New York Public Library Guild, Local 1930
President Leonard Paul, New York Public Library Quasi-Public Employees,
Local 374
President John Hyslop, Queens Public Library Guild, Local 1321
May 21, 2024**

Chairperson Rivera and fellow committee members, thank you for giving us an opportunity to submit this testimony on behalf of all the union workers of Brooklyn, Queens, and New York Public Libraries. We are united in our appeal for our elected officials to save our public libraries. Everyone in this city knows how valuable their Libraries are to their community. All the material, services, programs, computers, and WiFi provided in clean and safe library locations by dedicated and hard-working union members. Your constituents know that their libraries are free, open, and accepting of everyone six days per week.

Our members have been feeling the strain of seven day a week service because the Mayor never allowed the libraries to recover the staff we lost since the pandemic. In February 2020 Local 374

had 260 NYPL members, in February 2024 they had 250 members. In February 2020 Local 1321 had 921 members, in February 2024 they had 829. In February 2020 Local 1482 had 806 members, in February 2024 they had 797. In February 2020 Local 1930 had 1,300 members, in February 2024 they had 1,177.

That is over 230 less librarians, clerks, custodians, drivers, IT workers, catalog staff, maintainers, and more to do the same amount of work over the same number of days as we did in 2020.

Now, the Mayor has forced our libraries to keep branches closed. Next year, the library systems will cut service to five days per week because we do not have enough members to provide just the basic level of services. We do not have children's librarians to provide the programs every neighborhood child needs. We do not have enough custodians to keep our branches as clean as they need to be. We do not have enough public safety workers to ensure our patrons can enjoy our branches in peace and comfort.

The Mayor's budget is a travesty to our Libraries. My fellow presidents will be providing first hand members' testimonies from all over the library systems explaining how much of a negative impact his cuts are having.

Respectfully submitted by

Deborah Allman, President, Local 1930, DC 37, AFSCME, AFL-CIO

John Hyslop, President, Local 1321, DC 37, AFSCME, AFL-CIO

George Sarah Olken, President, Local 1482, DC 37, AFSCME, AFL-CIO

Leonard Paul, President, Local 374, DC 37, AFSCME, AFL-CIO



The New York Public Library Guild Local 1930



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We at the New York Public Library Guild, Local 1930 are extremely annoyed with the Mayor's Budget cuts which are forcing the library to operate and provide Library services without adequate staffing levels. The role libraries play within the city's ecosystem should spare its officials from making its budgetary case every year. Thinning staff increasingly means that programming, including children's story time, tutoring and class visits, is either being cut back or, when even a single librarian is absent, even canceled. These are educational programs that we're cutting," Local 1930 membership was 2208 as of September 2023. We were already down by 100 members as of 2020. As of today, our membership numbers are 1177.

The following are testimonies from Library staff on the everyday issues confronting them and their colleagues.

"Our sole Children librarian single-handedly provides 7 programs every week, our bi-weekly story time generates about 70-80 participants each session. When the Children librarian is absent, we have to cancel all the programs. The community is saddened that we only rely on one Children specialist. We also can't offer any outreach since our Children librarian is busy working in the branch and doesn't have much time left for much-needed outreach."

"I was asked to travel to another location on a Saturday in order to keep a library open, forcing my location to cancel a scheduled outreach in the community."

The Mayor needs to fully restore the library's budget. You can't keep not funding libraries and closing locations. You can't operate on fumes. Something has to give. The library's budget should be baseline in the city's budget.

Respectfully submitted by

Deborah D. Allman, President New York Public Library Guild, Local 1930, DC 37, AFSCME, AFL-CIO

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Executive Budget Hearing Fiscal Year 2025
Committee on Finance, New York City Council
Testimony of Local 1482 President George Sarah Olken
May 21, 2024

Chair Rivera, Chair Brannan, and committee members, thank you for giving me the opportunity to share these stories from Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) union workers.

Adeeba Rana (Librarian) is a librarian who was promoted to Branch Manager of BPL's Bedford location in 2021. After three years in that role, Adeeba has never worked in the building. Instead, Adeeba has worked at six low-staffed branches across the borough from Williamsburg to Dyker Heights, while Bedford has remained closed through an extended HVAC replacement, which has been delayed and delayed. The branch was supposed to open last year, and then this year; if the proposed budget cuts go through, opening will likely be delayed again for lack of staff.

Now, when Adeeba does outreach in Bed-Stuy, she meets people who don't even know the building is a library (the branch has been in its "new" location on Franklin Avenue since 1905) and children at the school across the street who remember going there for storytime are now almost teenagers. They tell her: "The library was a safe haven. It's like our home is shut down."

Dee Bowers (Archivist) was one of two archivists working for the Brooklyn Public Library in 2020 when the library merged with the Brooklyn Historical Society to form the new Center for Brooklyn History (CBH). The world's largest and most comprehensive collection of Brooklyn history materials, in a national historic landmark building, CBH has been understaffed since it opened. The city helped the library pay for the merger; through these budget cuts it is undercutting its own investment.

The strain of keeping the six-story building, with exhibitions and programs, open to the public takes Dee and their coworkers away from their primary responsibilities of archival processing. This means that new collections remain "hidden," unavailable to the public because they cannot be conserved, digitized, cataloged, and prepared for patrons and

researchers to access. Every day, Dee sees the awe that making a collection like this part of the public library inspires in New Yorkers, that it belongs to them, and they are welcome there. These cuts are a broken promise: they threaten this public resource.

Christian Alston (Office Aide) works in Clerical Operations at our Central Branch on Grand Army Plaza. He usually works the early shift, which means he is at the check-out desk when we open. The library used to staff the desk in pairs but recently he's been assigned alone. More desk shifts means less time going over the shelves, making sure books are where they are supposed to be, so the library is orderly and accessible to all. At the end of the day, Christian walks out through the Youth Wing, where he sees we are down to only a few part-timers shelving. He sees the shelves are messy and disorganized. The library website boasts of more than 650,000 visits to Central last year. But workers like Christian can only be at one place at a time.

Finally, one of our special officer sergeants wanted me to share his experience but was embarrassed for me to share his name. He described what the loss of over-time means for him. As a union member supervisor he is tasked with making fair schedules. If one special officer works a Saturday, he tries to make sure someone else works the next Saturday. Library workers have lives beyond work: elderly parents and young children to care for, hobbies and leadership roles in our communities. With the cuts to overtime pay (but no cuts from the Rent Board), increasingly our days off include second and third jobs, too.

The sergeant could take all the good shifts for himself but he knows everyone is struggling and tries to make sure everyone gets something. Which means, on nights and weekends he delivers for Uber Eats to make ends meet. We think of delivery workers as among the most underpaid and marginalized groups in the city. Those same workers are making sure your children are safe at the library. We are union workers being pushed into low paying exploitative side gigs. We are the communities that won't have a library to take our kids to on the weekends. And we are the voters of New York City.

These cuts to libraries are cuts to the social fabric of our communities. Please do right by these workers and all your constituents by ending these unnecessary cuts and refunding libraries. *Increase library funding!* Support our democratic institutions. Cut the cynicism and austerity. Invest in our collective future.

Thank you!



Queens Library Guild, Local 1321 members are extremely frustrated with the Mayor's proposed budget cuts which forces the Library into an untenable situation of trying to provide Library services without adequate staffing levels. His budget cuts would put a terrible strain on Local 1321 members because, in spite of the proposed cuts, the Mayor still expects the Library to maintain the same high level and volume of materials, programs, and services, with fewer staff working six days per week. In February 2020, Local 1321 had 921 members. Four years later, in February 2024, our latest membership count total is 829. That is almost 100 fewer librarians, clerks, custodians, drivers, IT workers, catalog staff, and maintainers to perform the same amount of work with less staff than in 2020.

Each day there are branches opening with three or two employees. With understaffing throughout the library system, it creates a cascading effect on Local 1321 members' stress. Members, especially those in supervisory positions; need to focus on mitigating their short-staff issues by requesting or providing coverage, ways to avoid canceling programs, and juggling desk coverage and breaks. Meanwhile, the library's customers expect the same level and quality of services, which can lead to dangerous and unnecessary conflicts.

The following are testimonies from Library staff on the everyday issues confronting them and their colleagues.

"The lack of adequate staffing affects services at my small but busy library. Currently, we only have two librarians—an assistant manager and a children's librarian. In my position as assistant manager, I am responsible for all the administrative work, such as schedules, timecards, coverage requests, and monthly reports, while also providing customer service at the reference desk. This divided attention means constant interruptions with the management part of my job, leading to mistakes and having to redo the work."

"The need for days off, vacations, sick days, etc. leads to programs being canceled. For example, storytime in one particular week was canceled because the children's librarian was off to work on"

Saturday. The children and their caregivers were extremely disappointed. One of the caregivers asked if I could do storytime, but I was the only librarian in the building, so that was not a possibility.

“The constant juggling of the schedule also means I am always needing to ask for coverage, which disrupts the schedules of my location and the location sending coverage. Often the coverage is to make sure we have an adequate staff to cover programs and lunches. If we had adequate staff, we wouldn’t need to keep asking for coverage.”

“In every location our meeting space is the prized commodity of the community. Nonprofits and city agencies compete for bookings. However, a librarian is required to monitor the space while the meeting is in session. Due to skeletal staffing, librarians can barely cover the reference desk. Without sufficient staffing, agencies cannot book the space.”

“As a custodian, I will be called upon to cover another branch later in my shift. That means performing the same strenuous work of the first four hours of my day in my home branch at another branch. And this task will be repeated on other days of the week. Other branch custodians feel the strain, too, as they also cannot fully provide the work that libraries truly need. Lawns and hedges may wait for a week or longer before they’re trimmed. If a branch is in session and patrons are around, mopping floors and cleaning carpets will have to wait for another day, leading to less than optimal sanitary conditions. Some libraries with no custodians at all just receive the basics of coverage.”

“All of the Mayor’s budget cuts are impacting us now! Three branches—Bay Terrace, Broadway, and Hillcrest—that have been under renovation for years remain closed because they do not have enough staff. Broadway, one of the busiest branches in our system with two floors and multiple service desks, should have a minimum of twelve staff, but only has seven. Hillcrest, a medium-sized branch, should have a minimum of eight staff, yet it only has four. Bay Terrace, a small branch, should have a minimum of six staff, but only has three! They are extremely disheartened that they cannot go to their home branch.”

The Mayor’s budget cuts and how they are implemented will have a direct impact on our members and the communities they serve. None of us want our neighborhood library location closed, and the customers we care about to be without valuable library services. The Mayor needs to fully restore the library’s budget for the sake of Local 1321 members, our libraries, and our customers.

Respectfully submitted by

John Hyslop, President Queens Library Guild, Local 1321, DC 37, AFSCME, AFL-CIO

TESTIMONY - Ryan Gilliam, Community Board 3 Manhattan

For Budget Hearings on May 21, 2024

Cultural Affairs and Libraries

Hi, My name is Ryan Gilliam, I'm an artist and organizer. I lead FABnyc, which has a membership of 45 cultural organizations located in the Lower East Side.

I am also a member of Community Board 3 – and the Community Board, which is made up of people from all walks of life – a few of them artists, but most of them not – most of them just people who care deeply about the Lower East Side – the members of Community Board 3 asked me to represent their voices here, and to tell you that our community supports the Council's efforts to see fully restored funding for Libraries and Cultural Affairs.

We specifically support an expanded investment in arts and culture, including

- more funding for small and mid sized cultural organizations, particularly those serving communities of color,
- more support for the cultural activation of public spaces, parks, streets, and plazas
- more affordable workspace for artists,
- a reimaging of the Artists Corps program which supported individual artists and cultural producers during the pandemic, and
- city leadership in rebuilding Charas/El Bohio as a cultural hub in Loisaida.

Believe me when I tell you that the Lower East Side has many needs. It has a deep history as a community struggling to meet the needs of its people. But when Community Board 3 puts together its annual Statement of Needs, they have never left arts and culture off the list.

I was not born in the Lower East Side, but I have spent the majority of my time on earth making a life with the people there, and they continue to inspire me. I think they understand very well these words, I think many people in this room would understand these words, which were spoken by a Lower East Sider many years ago...

What the woman who labors wants is the right to live, not simply exist — the right to life as the rich woman has the right to life, and the sun and music and art.

The worker must have bread, but she must have roses, too.

On behalf of the Lower East Side, I thank you for the bread, and I ask you to send roses.

Speaker Adams, Chair Brannan, Chair Rivera and Distinguished Committee Members:

Good Afternoon, my name is Aaron Bouska. I am testifying today as the Bronx Vice-Chair of the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG) and proud employee of the New York Botanical Garden (NYBG). As the Council has stated time and again, this is a critical time for the cultural community in the City we all love; and the crisis is especially true in the Bronx for the five cultural anchors represented here today: Bronx Zoo, Bronx Historical Society, Bronx Museum, NYBG and Wave Hill.

In contradiction to the Council's request to fully restore cultural funding in FY25 Exec, cultural cuts were not fully restored and the April reversal was partial. The proposed budget for FY25 leaves CIG and CDF \$53 million in the hole. The lack of restorative action is serious and consequential—resulting in hiring freezes, program and service reductions to the Bronx, and even loss of jobs— but the current and previous fiscal year cuts are really part of a much bigger story.

Even before the Mayor's cuts, City funding to DCLA amounted to *less than a quarter of one percent* of the City's adopted FY24 budget. Organizations like ours received more City operating support in 2009 than they did in FY24 adopted. Flat funding is a cut. Union wages, COLAs, maintenance, inflation have risen while the culture funding has stagnated. Simply put, DCLA's budget has not grown proportionately to the City's significant budget growth over the past decade, a choice that economists might describe as penny wise, but pound foolish.

City Hall affirms often and publicly that cultural anchors are economic engines and revenue generators, and the Mayor does so for good reasons; consider the economic impact of just the 34 members of the Cultural Institution Group (CIG):

- Culture generates \$110 billion in economic activity annually, employs 300,000 New Yorkers, and provides a pipeline to jobs in the creative economy;
- CIG members provide 15,700 jobs to the City, including 5800 union members. Another 6,000 artists, educators and other per diem staff work with the CIGs;
- CIGs currently spend nearly \$500M with vendors, many of them local small businesses. Contracts with small businesses that rely on CIG business have been cut as organizations struggled to absorb mid-year cuts;
- More than 120 million people attend performances and museums each year, 60% of which are free.

So, all of this begs the question – since culture creates needed revenue for the City, serves as a lifeline to communities, educates and inspires the next generations of scientists, artists, business people and scholars **and** does so at a cost that is less than it was fifteen years ago, what is the Mayor's purpose in cutting culture? Thankfully, the City Council has been asking the same question! Until such time that we receive a sensible answer, I respectfully request all New Yorkers to pressure City Hall to: **Add and baseline \$53 million for culture in FY25.**

In conclusion, your Bronx anchors applaud the City Council for raising the alarm about the across-the-board reductions to City agencies and for fighting impacts to our non-profit cultural community and your neighborhoods. We look forward to working with you to mitigate all unnecessary cuts. Thank you, Speaker Adams, Chair Brannan, and Chair Rivera!

Respectfully submitted by: Aaron T. Bouska, Bronx Vice-Chair of the CIG; abouska@nybg.org.



**NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
FISCAL YEAR 2025 EXECUTIVE BUDGET HEARING**

**COMMITTEES ON FINANCE AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES &
INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS
May 21, 2024**

Good morning, my name is Tony Marx and I am the president of The New York Public Library (NYPL). I want to thank City Council Speaker Adams, Chairs Rivera and Brannan, and the members of the committee for the opportunity to testify today on the Mayor's Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) Executive Budget.

Unfortunately, New York City's libraries are in the same position we were in two months ago when I testified on the Mayor's Preliminary Budget. The executive budget still reduces expense funding for libraries by a staggering \$58.3M; this includes \$25.5M for the NYPL. If the budget passes with this reduction, the impact on our services will be devastating to the communities we serve. While the mid-year PEG ended Sunday-service at seven locations (all that offered it), the impact of this cut will be more severe. The majority of our branches will go down to five day service. The FY24 midyear cut already had a significant impact on our collections. With that reduction alone, we will purchase 20,000 fewer eBook copies, 6,000 fewer downloadable audiobooks, 40,000 fewer books in English, and 6,000 fewer world languages (non-English language) books, for a total of 72,000 fewer items. This number is projected to jump to 180,000 in FY25. This will affect the acquisitions of items in all subject areas, books for all age levels, and popular titles that have been banned at public libraries and schools across the country.

Hiring and recruitment will be even more tightly controlled. We have already experienced staff shortages which will continue to limit programs and services across the system. From November 2023 to March, the Library had 69 unplanned closures affecting 34 branches due to staffing shortages, with an average of two hours lost per closure. If the proposed cuts go through, we will not have the staff available to operate branches projected to reopen in FY25 after large-scale renovations. Among these renovations are five, 100-plus year-old Carnegie branches in high-needs areas: Melrose and Hunts Point in the Bronx, Fort Washington and 125th Street in Manhattan, and Port Richmond in Staten Island. These libraries were in dire need of capital upgrades for decades; their top-to-bottom renovation—made possible with funding committed by the City under the 10-year capital plan—allowed us to meet community needs such as ADA accessibility, dedicated spaces for children, facade restoration, and new teen centers. Opening them, while funding is cut, would require service losses at other locations. Other hiring impacts include the reduction of the budget for pages, the Library's important workforce development pipeline.

As you undoubtedly know by now, the Library has become a social safety net in underserved communities throughout the City. The FY25 reduction roughly translates to 850 fewer hours of service per week, a 20 percent reduction system-wide. When you put that in terms of our 50 After School locations, 20 Teen Centers, 24 ESOL, 11 Tax Preparation locations, 40 College and Career hubs, you can get a truer sense of just what these communities stand to lose.

A budget reduction of this size will further diminish our ability to address emergency maintenance and repairs. Reducing our budget in response to the midyear PEG already resulted in a delayed response to building emergencies. This past winter, funding reductions hampered our efforts to address malfunctioning heating systems, which led to unplanned closures of libraries. Since November 2023, the Library has had 29 unplanned closures affecting 14 branches due to emergency maintenance issues, with an average of six days lost per

closure. This will continue to be a problem in the summer, and it will make it harder to maintain our vital role as cooling centers for New Yorkers across the city.

On the research side, we've already seen the impact of the midyear PEG on staffing, which has led to increased wait times for key research library services, fewer service points staffed, and reduced capacity to process, preserve, and conserve collections. These gaps in our service will only grow with the FY25 reductions.

The current \$25.5M in anticipated reductions in City funding may also trigger a loss in state funding, as City support may not meet the Maintenance of Effort requirement outlined in State Education Law. If this happens, libraries will lose 25 percent of their State funding.

The unprecedented nature of the expense cuts Libraries face is matched only by the Mayor's capital cut to libraries, which has not happened since 2011. Libraries received a significant funding cut from our ten-year capital plan. We were also instructed not to submit any new needs. For NYPL, this translated to the removal of \$45.5M from our capital budget at a time when we have myriad, imminent needs across our system. Most of our buildings are aging, small structures, many of them over 100 years old. Capital funding is what makes our branches safe, welcoming, and reliable. If our spaces are in a constant state of disrepair and facing critical issues that leave patrons feeling uncomfortable and/or unsafe, then we have failed in our mission to make libraries a place that welcomes all New Yorkers. We simply can not effectively provide our services without adequate resources, capacities, and functionalities. The cut to our capital plan will undo much of the progress we have made over the last ten years to improve our infrastructure and the city capital process. The NYPL currently has over \$501 million in new priority capital needs system-wide. The city should be increasing funding to our capital plan, not reducing it.

As noted previously, one of the prime examples of the types of projects we undertake includes the renovation of the Carnegie branches that are at risk of not reopening on time. Again, these projects address the most essential, simple patron needs like ADA accessibility, the renovations of restrooms, or, in the case of Melrose Library, an entire new floor added to the branch. We have seen the impact of these projects on New Yorkers. We know that when we renovate our spaces or build new ones to better accommodate the needs of New Yorkers, they are used more. In its first full year following a recent renovation, Washington Heights Library in Manhattan saw a 47% increase in visits, a 45% increase in circulation, and a 105% increase in program attendance. In March 2022, we opened a brand new Charleston branch on Staten Island. Since its grand opening, Charleston has signed 5,282 patrons up for new library cards. The branch hosted 18,174 program attendees in FY23, and circulated 71,328 items, the second highest on Staten Island. This month, we will cut the ribbon on our brand new, state of the art, Inwood Library, as part of a development including 100% affordable housing and other amenities such as Universal Pre-K.

All of this comes at a time when New Yorkers are returning to their libraries. The City's recent Preliminary Mayor's Management Report shows key indicators such as circulation, program attendance, and library card registration steadily rising since FY21. Circulation is up over 50 percent during this timeframe while program attendance and library card registration has more than doubled. A \$58.3M cut to our budget stands to reverse this upward trend, which we expect to otherwise continue.

I want to bring the City Council's attention to the fact that we have reached a point where prospective and actual cuts to our budget have come to dominate a significant aspect of our resources and internal planning. Last fiscal year, we spent months and months of resources on the budget dance and battle for restoration. The time that went to this campaign could have instead been spent serving our communities, after all, we are here to provide library services, not

advocate for resources. What's more concerning is that even after these efforts were successful, even after the restoration of \$36.2M in expense funding, the FY24 November PEG reversed nearly two-thirds of these gains, setting the three library systems back by \$23.6M, with \$10.33M coming out of NYPL's budget. As I shared today, the Library's work to provide unfettered access and opportunity to New Yorkers of all backgrounds materializes in the form of our vast and diverse collections, our free career services, after school locations, teen centers, story times, tax preparation offerings, and ESOL classes for new New Yorkers. How can we build any consistency and dependability, or growth, if we are in a constant state of instability? Regularly having to stop and turn our attention to the latest budget dance? The question regarding branches slated to reopen after massive, community-driven renovations is "what should our programming be in our first week?" not "do we have the staff needed to even open?" This dance distracts us from providing New Yorkers with what they are entitled to. The truth is that even if we are fully restored in this year's budget, we will spend the following months planning for the possibility of current year PEG's and proposed cuts, unsure if these funds are to be reversed and our budget reduced. We must work together to end the library budget dance.

Exacerbating this diversion of resources and constant instability, is the fact that the cost of operations has increased. Uncovered rising costs include general inflation in wages and other spending, such as library materials, health insurance, contractual security, collections, maintenance, storage, and technology-related spending. We estimate that unreimbursed cost growth next year may be more than \$9M. With these historic cuts to both our capital and expense budgets, and with the rising cost of operations, I simply ask you to help us end this annual exercise in uncertainty and instability that only deprives New Yorkers of what this city long ago determined was their right. Let's restore and baseline funding to Libraries.

The existence and function of public libraries in today's world is an actual miracle. By our mere presence, libraries have normalized the once-radical idea that everyone is entitled to the same

access to information and opportunity as everyone else. And for less than half of one percent of the total New York City budget, we have delivered on that idea. The return on investment for this City and its citizens is truly unparalleled. Let's preserve the miracle that is the Library; let's end this year-round uncertainty and give New Yorkers the reliable, dependable service that they deserve.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, I am happy to answer any questions.

BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY
TESTIMONY ON THE FY2025 EXECUTIVE BUDGET

Jointly to the Finance Committee and the Committee on Cultural Affairs,
Libraries & International Intergroup Relations
May 21, 2024

Good morning. I am Linda Johnson, President & CEO of Brooklyn Public Library. Thank you, Speaker Adams, Finance Chair Brannan, Chair Rivera, members of the committees, our Brooklyn delegation, and the entire City Council for the opportunity to testify. We are grateful for your leadership and unwavering support of libraries and our mission.

New York City's Libraries are facing the most significant cuts we have seen in years. It pains me to repeat these numbers to you, but together, our systems stand to lose \$58.3 million in Fiscal Year 2025. And, for the first time in 16 years, the libraries' capital plans have been slashed by a staggering \$125 million. Tragically, these cuts come at a time when Library usage is high and the costs of running the system are even higher.

For Brooklyn this amounts to a drastic \$16.2 million cut – equivalent to 13% of our operating budget. This will force us to severely limit library service, a devastating and avoidable consequence. We *must* protect library service for the millions of patrons who rely on us.

Impacts

Libraries have not faced cuts of this severity since the years following the 2008 financial crisis. If the Executive Budget passes as proposed, the city will be turning back a decade of diligent progress. In six weeks, Brooklyn Public Library will be forced to:

- Drop down to five-day-a-week service in more than half of our locations
- Further reduce our operating hours
- Drastically diminish collections and programming
- Severely curtail hiring and cut part time staff hours in half

It is unjustifiable to put libraries in this position. As we continue to rebound from the pandemic, demand for services is soaring. Visits, program sessions, program attendance and new card applications are all up by more than 40%. Instead of rising to meet this increased demand, we are forced to reduce programming.

If these cuts are enacted:

- Teen programming will diminish by a third.
- We will offer half as many Young Adult Literacy classes
- Citizenship classes will be cut by more than half
- 50% fewer visits to Senior Centers and Nursing homes
- 30% fewer visits to children and families in hospitals, rehabilitation facilities
- 14% fewer creative aging classes for older adults.

It is heartbreaking to think of the people who will be deprived of our services. Just last week, a patron wrote to tell us the Sunset Park Library was a refuge for him while living at a local shelter. He said, "I found both housing and work by coming to this library every day that it has been open -- because there's no Wi-Fi at the shelter. It's also a place for peace, quiet, free books and activities." Our staff form genuine connections with patrons, helping answer questions from early childhood literacy to career development and everything in between.

But our library workers are struggling to provide excellent service to their communities, as they contend with staff shortages in the branches. A cut of this magnitude will only increase the burdens on our staff, requiring us to severely curtail hiring, operate with half of our part-time staff and permanently eliminate 146 public-facing vacant positions -- coveted city jobs.

Our patrons are experiencing the impact of a smaller collection after the \$6.5 million cut we absorbed in November. There are 40,000 fewer books on the shelves --10% of these titles are in languages other than English. We have had to suspend purchasing more expensive materials such as test prep and passport study guides, large print books and reference resources. 15% of our database subscriptions have been cancelled and we have had to restrict the number of books patrons can check out and place on hold.

Fewer books mean longer wait times: the average wait for eBooks and audiobooks has increased 30% since the November cut. Instead of encouraging young readers to explore their passions, we are holding them back. It is harder for patrons to check-out novels in their native language, harder to take home a GED test prep book, harder to find your child's favorite story on the shelves.

To make matters worse, if these cuts are not reversed, libraries will lose 25% of our state funding. The Maintenance of Effort (MOE) clause in the State's Library Aid statute requires local aid to remain at or above 95% of the prior 2-year average. If the MOE is triggered in this year's city budget, Brooklyn Public Library stands to lose an additional \$2 million in state funding next year.

These cuts are being proposed while Brooklyn Public Library is confronting more than \$5 million in increased costs. In FY25, we must cover the cost of union salary and minimum wage increases, the library's share of staff health care premiums, as well as the operating costs of two new locations, the Center for Brooklyn History and the Library for Arts and Culture. And this does not include the increased cost of doing business. We are running a library system *today* on a pre-pandemic funding level that has not kept pace with inflation. Restoration alone will not solve our operating budget needs.

Capital

While preventing the further loss of library service is my highest priority, addressing the library's capital crisis keeps me up at night. Brooklyn Public Library's unfunded capital needs have grown to over \$380 million dollars, including emergency infrastructure such as roofs, heating and cooling systems and accessibility upgrades.

This year, the city cut \$47 million from our capital plan, forcing us to eliminate four long-awaited renovations, remove funding for several construction projects and cancel critical infrastructure upgrades. In 2023, BPL branches lost more than 2,200 hours to unplanned closures stemming from outdated building systems and failing infrastructure. Just last month Macon and DeKalb libraries closed unexpectedly when their heating systems failed during a cold spell. In fact, every year, we end up spending nearly \$1 million in expense funding addressing emergencies that cannot wait for a full capital project. Without a restoration of the \$47 million in capital funding *and* dedicated funding in the City's Capital Plan, these unplanned closures will undoubtedly increase.

We depend on city support for the maintenance of our physical plant. And of course, without the backing of our councilmembers who have generously funded local projects in their districts and supported us with delegation-level funding, we would not have come this far in revitalizing our local libraries. Our progress is at risk.

Conclusion

We are not dismissing the city's financial difficulties. But the lifechanging opportunities libraries provide to all New Yorkers, even our newest neighbors, are an essential part of the city's safety net. We offer much more than books and reference materials; we provide support and security. And if libraries are not adequately funded the city's safety net starts to fray. We must protect our city and our neighbors by protecting our libraries.

I am not alone in making this urgent plea. I am proud to work alongside you at the Council, my colleagues in DC37 and all our staff as well as a strong coalition of library patrons and supporters, many of whom are in this room today. Over 22,000 letters from Brooklynites have already made their way to elected leaders imploring the city to protect library funding. Today, I'll also be submitting over 400 statements from New Yorkers who asked that their words of support for libraries be on the record.

Chair Brannan, Chair Rivera, members of the committee, the future of our libraries depends on your continued leadership and support. We are confident that working together, all our City Leaders will rise to this occasion. Thank you.



**Statement by Dennis M. Walcott, President and CEO, Queens Public Library
New York City Council's Committee on Finance jointly with the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and
International Intergroup Relations
Fiscal Year 2025 Executive Budget Hearing
May 21, 2024**

Good morning. I am Dennis M. Walcott, President and CEO of Queens Public Library (QPL, Library). It is a pleasure to be here today. Chairs Brannan and Rivera, Speaker Adams, and the members of these esteemed committees, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the Fiscal Year 2025 Executive Budget.

The City Council is the greatest advocate for the city's public libraries. You understand the promise of our trusted spaces and the life-changing impact we have on New Yorkers of all ages, backgrounds, and circumstances. Libraries provide opportunities for discovery, learning, and even joy. In the words of third grader Brooke Huggan, who described the day she received her very own library card, "They gave me a library card and told me I could bring books home with me. That was one of the happiest days of my life."

In March, the three public library systems testified about the devastating consequences of the budget cuts for the upcoming fiscal year. Today, we underscore the need for full restoration and baselining, at minimum, of \$58.3 million, including \$16.6 million for Queens Public Library. The cuts to QPL consist of both Administration funding and \$4.38 million from the Council's Library Initiative. We are facing these losses while confronting \$5 million of uncovered increased costs stemming from minimum wage and contractual salary increases, rising health insurance costs, and more. At the same time, the repetitive cycle of budget cuts and proposed cuts makes it impossible for the library systems to plan long term. In order to run our operations effectively, we need not only full funding but also a dependable stream of funding.

Queens Public Library would not be the institution it is without our outstanding staff who provide the services New Yorkers count on each day – storytimes, afterschool enrichment, language classes, job search assistance, technology trainings, Creative Aging workshops, film screenings, researching and answering questions, finding the perfect book, and more. They are devoted to our communities, working to meet their ever-growing needs. However, providing the resources and programs the public deserves has become increasingly challenging. In addition to ending Sunday service at our two busiest libraries (Central and Flushing), slashing budgets for collections, programs, services, and building maintenance and repairs, this year's PEG also curtailed QPL's ability to hire the proper number of staff for us to perform optimally across the system. Our staff are strained. Personnel is our largest expenditure, and we are down approximately 200 positions. We are currently keeping libraries open by regularly shifting staff from different locations to fill gaps. This is unsustainable, and the people of our great city deserve better.

If adopted, the Executive Budget reductions mean that Queens Public Library will be forced to postpone three long-awaited branch reopenings – at Bay Terrace, Broadway and Hillcrest libraries – once the capital work is completed, due to the shortage of staff. In addition, we will need to close on Saturdays at nearly every location in the borough, bringing our operations to only five-days a week. In 2015, the Council fought hard for universal six-day service, and it is unfathomable that we will lose it nearly a decade later. Last fiscal year, we had more than 883,000 visits on the weekends, and we estimate a loss of 120,000 visits at Central and Flushing on Sundays since their elimination in late 2023 through the remainder of this fiscal year.

On a recent Saturday at Peninsula Library, our mobile food pantry, which QPL hosts in partnership with the Food Bank for NYC, benefited 436 people with the distribution of proteins, vegetables, and shelf-stable foods. The same day, the Cambria Heights Teen Center held *Prom x QPL*, a prom attire giveaway that offered teens, their friends and family the opportunity to choose a memorable outfit from more than 1,100 new and gently used dresses, suits, shoes, handbags, and jewelry pieces that were generously donated by the Queens community. Closing on Saturdays means we will be unable to offer events like these and many other indispensable programs on Saturdays – ESOL classes for our newest New Yorkers, including the influx of asylum seekers in the city, family storytimes, skills trainings for job seekers, and other crucial resources.

Our collections represent the rich diversity of the borough and our commitment to broad access to knowledge, ideas, and the human experience. **Since the November PEG forced us to reduce our collections by an estimated 25,000 print books and 5,000 e-books system-wide, wait times for library materials are escalating.** These cuts will only deepen with next year's budget.

Since the November Plan PEG, QPL has been forced to close our doors or delay our opening on 27 occasions due to staff shortages and building and infrastructure failures. This situation will only continue to worsen if the cuts remain in place, hindering our ability to repair our facilities and hire for the level of staffing needed at our branches.

Libraries also sustained cuts on the capital side. This year, the three library systems were instructed to implement a capital PEG totaling \$125 million. **In the upcoming budget, Queens Public Library is seeking the reversal of the \$32.2 million PEG to our capital portfolio.** QPL has 42 active projects with the NYC Department of Design & Construction (DDC), and the reduction in capital funding puts our entire portfolio at risk. Each project is susceptible to being paused or delayed if a shortfall appears, and we will be unable to cover potential shortfalls when notified of them by DDC. These infrastructure, resiliency, and new building and renovation projects are crucial to ensuring safe and modern spaces for customers and staff. **QPL has a system-wide capital need of \$165.2 million, and we are respectfully asking the City Council to allocate \$10 million of unrestricted capital funding in our Capital Plan.**

When people are in need, they turn to their local library for help. For Douglaston Library user Debra, the library is her "second home." After entering a shelter, she sought assistance from QPL for computer, printer and Internet access, job search assistance, and social activities, such as the branch's karaoke program. With the staff's guidance, she was able to explore various career paths and submit job applications. Earlier this year, Debra announced that she had two job offers from the U.S. Postal Service and credited the Douglaston Library for "uplifting" her. Her story is just one example of the countless ways QPL has been there for our customers.

Libraries are vital to our neighborhoods and quality of life. We cannot afford to deprive NYC residents of robust collections, wide-ranging and diverse programs, access to resources, weekend service, and reliable buildings that are equipped to withstand whatever the future holds.

Public libraries are the last truly democratic institution. They have the power to change lives. **With your steadfast and continued advocacy, we are hopeful that there will be full restoration, baselining and meaningful investment in the Queens, Brooklyn and New York Public Libraries in the City's Fiscal Year 2025 adopted budget.**

Thank you, Chair Brannan, Chair Rivera, and Committee members, for the opportunity to testify.



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Norah Yahya
Sr. Government Affairs Officer

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The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Executive Budget Testimony
The New York City Council
FY 2025

Thank you to Speaker Adams, Chair Brannan, Chair Rivera and the Committees on Finance and Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Groups for the opportunity to submit testimony.

The Met is known for its iconic permanent collection spanning over 5,000 years of artifacts, objects and art from around the world, and its current, must-see exhibits, but the Museum also serves as a unique destination for training programs, educational opportunities for all ages and abilities as well as supporting world class research divisions in preservation, conservation, and archeology. Further, the Met's multi-disciplinary offerings are available both virtually and in-person, and in recent years, brought millions of attendees to over 30,000 events.

The Met, like many of our partner arts and cultural organizations in the City, have faced challenges due to the pandemic and subsequent economic fall-out with lingering effects that are likely impact us and our partners for years to come. Despite a healthy outlook for the tourism industry, and visitors beginning to return in numbers more like those of the years prior to the pandemic, arts and cultural organizations are long overdue an investment that reflects their corresponding importance as drivers of economic development in New York City. The Met itself is a robust contributor to these figures, with the museum directly employing over 1600 individuals, many of which are unionized, and attracting millions of visitors annually.

It is clear however, that we and our partner organizations, the Cultural Institutions Group (CIGs) in the arts will need stronger support from our counterparts in government to continue to offer the programming and services that New Yorkers and visitors rely on from the sector. Despite the restoration of cuts in this executive plan, CIG institutions have faced disruptions that have drastically affected jobs, programs, hours, and

operations within their institutions. Reiterating the concerns raised by our partners in the CIGs, in terms of operating support, for every dollar the Museum doesn't receive due to the project or actual cuts, we are unlikely to hire for existing, budgeted open positions. We are requesting the full restoration of the FY24 cuts as well as the one time add at adoption. Every dollar not invested into a cultural organization is a loss for the people and the industries that thrive on this sector, tourism, workforce development and education.

Lastly, we thank the Council and the Committees on Finance and Cultural Affairs for the opportunity to offer testimony.

Lucy Sexton
New Yorkers for Culture & Arts
lucy@ny4ca.org

May 21, 2024

Testimony for the Joint Hearing of the Finance Committee and the Committee of Cultural Affairs and Libraries, concerning the FY25 budget

I want to start by saying that culture is in crisis. We are seeing cuts in staff programs, hours, most importantly cuts to benefits to community:

When there are less dance classes there is less for youth to do after school and increased isolation for struggling teens

When there are less shows at a local theater there is less street traffic to small businesses and less vibrant less safe streets in our neighborhoods

When there are less jobs, there is increased unemployment in our cultural workforce and less reason to stay in NY.

We didn't just get cut via dcla, we were cut in the dollars we receive thru DoE, DftA, DYCD, Dep of Probation. And we are being phased out by foundation funding to boot.

The DCLA dollars we do get are so late that many organizations are being forced to close. Organizations are struggling to run programs for months and months before their funding arrives. Capital funding is so bad that organizations then dip into program money and the situation spirals. It is not sustainable.

The Su Casa program was so late this year that seniors will receive only a few weeks of their vital cultural classes. I have been a su casa teacher in Chinatown where one of the students broke into tears telling me these classes, this community he was dancing and telling stories with, were the happiest time in his life. During covid my su casa student Ken told me I was the only person he connected with all week.

This is NOT the way we want to serve our city. We are asking for a FULL restoration of cuts and an addition to the baseline of \$53M in this year's budget. The baseline for culture has not increased in 15 years! Let me be clear \$53M only restores us to FY23 funding! And with inflation, that is actually a cut. We also need a restoration of the FY24 cuts to repair the injury that's been done this year, for a total ask of \$76M. thank you to the Council for advancing this ask and fighting for investment in culture, in our communities, and in a thriving New York City.

Finance Chair Brannan, Cultural Affairs Chair Rivera, and distinguished members of the City Council Finance and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name Dohini Sompura, and I am providing testimony on behalf of the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) in support of fully reversing all the cuts imposed on culture and baselining additional funding for Cultural Institutions Group (CIGs).

AMNH is one of 34 cultural institutions that comprise the Cultural Institutions Group (CIGs), which are charged with maintaining some of the most important New York City-owned properties throughout the five boroughs. Our institutions are vital economic engines that power tourism, employment, and commerce in addition to providing cultural, educational, and workforce development programming to New Yorkers.

While AMNH is appreciative of the restoration of the Fiscal 2025 January Financial Plan cuts to cultural organizations, which would not have been possible without the incredible leadership of the City Council, there is more work to be done. AMNH, along with our partner CIG institutions, have not seen an increase in operational support from the City for more than 15 years. Over this time period, the costs of operating our institutions, including staff wage increases under new union contracts, and increased costs for healthcare and retirement benefits have grown, yet we all have continued to provide high-quality programming and exceptional visitor experiences that we are all known for.

This is a critical time for the cultural community, as budget cuts lead to job losses, closures, deferred maintenance, and less public access and fewer programs. For Fiscal 2025, the cultural community and program groups requests \$53 million in baseline funding to fully restore cuts to cultural funding, including \$7.9 million to restore November Financial Plan cuts, \$40 million to restore one-time funding to CIGs, and the additional \$5 million in one-time funding CIGs received in FY24. For far too long, cultural institutions have been part of a budget dance that impedes our ability to plan financially for the long term, as one-time funding is not guaranteed to carry over into the following fiscal year. In addition to the \$53 million in baseline funding, we also ask for a full restoration of all cultural Council initiatives.

Please ensure cultural organizations like the American Museum of Natural History can maintain our workforce and continue and expand programs in the upcoming fiscal year.

Dohini Sompura (dsompura@amnh.org)
Director of Government Affairs

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Adhikaar for Human Rights and Social Justice
Testimony submitted to Committee on Finance
Preliminary Budget Hearing for FY25
May 21, 2024

"My name is Dropati Gurung. I live in Queens, New York. I moved to the United States in 2022. I joined Adhikaar through the Immigration Navigation Program. The class taught me about the five boroughs of New York City, how to navigate the subway system, and how to purchase and use metrocards. The class also taught us how to prepare for an interview, negotiate with an employer, and understand our fundamental rights. The information provided was quite beneficial, and I was previously unaware of it. I am grateful to learn from Adhikaar. Before, I had no idea how to use a metrocard. Now I can use it to travel anywhere via train without assistance. I had little understanding of the city's streets and avenues and was too timid to ask for help. After attending the training, I have learned how to navigate the streets and can travel anywhere on my own. The immigration navigation class is really beneficial to new immigrants like myself since it taught us to navigate our daily lives easier. I'd like to thank Adhikaar for their help and appreciate their effort."

- Dropati Gurung, Adhikaar member and New Immigrant Navigation Program

Adhikaar, meaning "rights" in Nepali, is a women-led community and workers' center that provides direct services to the Nepali-speaking community and organizes low-income workers and impacted community members to promote social justice and human rights. At Adhikaar, we define the Nepali-speaking community as descendants of Nepal, Bhutan, India, Burma, and Tibet that speak Nepali. We are often referred to as our community's 911 and 311 line.

Since 2005, Adhikaar has been providing direct services to the Nepali-speaking community, with an estimated 6,000 members and 15,000 Nepali-speaking community members every year on issues from workers' rights, immigrant rights, healthcare access and language justice. Every day in our bustling community center, we are providing essential services like Health Care Support, Community Safety Support, Adult Literacy classes, Civic Engagement and Legal Services. In our worker center, we provide workforce development workshops, leadership development opportunities for domestic workers and nail technician licensing support to our nail salon members.

Due to our cultural and linguistic niche, we are considered our community's first-stop for all needs. This gives us a unique perspective on community needs and an ability to reach Nepali-speaking immigrants. In our English for Empowerment classes alone, we have provided English classes to more than 2,000 Nepali-speaking individuals which has resulted in people negotiating higher wages, navigating social services, receiving NYC ID cards, supporting their children in the NYC school systems and so much more. Our efforts also ensure that our limited-literacy members have access to information on issues such as workers rights laws, health care and other issues affecting them. We regularly adapt our programs and services based on the community's needs. In the last three quarters of 2023 alone, we provided direct support to 5264+ members. We provided Workforce Development Training to 1,222+, we provided legal

support to 300+ members in immigration, worker rights and other issues, we enrolled 1,013+ members for health insurance, NYC Care and “Grocery to Go” programs. In addition to the services, in our organizing work, we engaged 50+ member leaders in 5 campaigns in City, State and Federal campaigns.

In the last year, we have seen an increase in new Nepali Speaking immigrants. Every week, we have been seeing 50+ new walkins at our small community center. To address these growing needs, we plan to expand our workforce development programs and continue providing on-the-job training for new immigrants in the nail salon and domestic work industries. For several years we have been offering the NY Nail Salon Beauty School in partnership with NYCOSH where we utilize a workers-rights based curriculum in Nepali and Spanish, with trainings led by peer worker trainers, as well as our “We Rise” nanny training program in collaboration with Cornell ILR and the National Domestic Workers Alliance-NY. These training sessions are a great tool for us to base, build and engage with our members, and are extremely popular amongst our members who are new immigrants and looking for an entry-level job.

For FY24 Budget, we ask that the New York City Council continue and expand this funding for these essential services and programs. Our ask is preserve and grow the city’s investment in adult literacy by 1) restore and baseline \$20.4 million in funding for DYCD RFP-contracted adult literacy programs, 2) renew the \$4 million City Council Discretionary Adult Literacy Initiative with added flexibility, and 3) renew the \$2.5 million City Council Discretionary Adult Literacy Pilot Project and expand it to \$5M under the new title “Adult Literacy Program Enhancement”. We also urge the Council to enhance the AAPI Community Support Initiative to \$7.5 Million to expand social services by AAPI serving community-based organizations to address the fiscal equity needed to build bridges between culturally competent and linguistically accessible services and the most vulnerable AAPI New Yorkers. For Adhikaar, we request funding from the FY24 Discretionary budget – specifically \$50,000 from CM Krishnan, \$30,000 from CM Won, \$50,000 from CM Caban. Lastly, we urge the Council to continue the funding of Adhikaar’s work through four important worker initiatives - the Domestic Worker and Employer Empowerment Initiative (\$150,000), the Immigrant Women Workers Initiative (\$100,000), Adult Literacy Pilot Project (\$187,500) and AAPI Community Support (\$100,000).

We look forward to partnering with the City Council to ensure that our growing community not only survives, but thrives.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

ARTHUR MILLER FOUNDATION

FOR THEATER EDUCATION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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CINDY TOLAN

NIK WALKER

Written Testimony for New York City Council Cultural Affairs Committee Hearing May 21, 2024

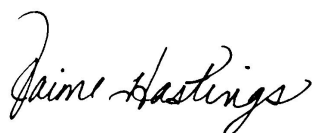
I serve as the Executive Director of the Arthur Miller Foundation, an independent, grassroots non-profit organization honoring the legacy of the American playwright, Arthur Miller, and his New York City public school education, by increasing equitable access to quality theater education for New York City public school students.

A recent study of our AMF Theater Education Programs found that in-school theater education provides students with creative outlets and safe spaces that help protect them psychologically during times of heightened stress. Theater education is an antidote to isolation and fosters literacy, classroom attendance and engagement, self-awareness, and collaboration skills, to name just a few of its proven effects.

The Arthur Miller Foundation currently supports 99 full-time theater teachers in NYC Public Schools, accounting for **50% of current full-time public school theater teachers in New York City. These teachers reach 49,500 students in all 5 boroughs of NYC.** Over the course of 3 years, theater teachers receive dedicated support to build sustainable in-school theater programs through mentorship, cultural partner residencies, classroom materials, Broadway tickets for students, and ongoing professional development. Not only are we supporting in-school theater education programs and certified theater teachers, but we're investing in the NYC cultural economy through partnerships with 8 organizations and their teaching artists.

The most recent arts in schools report showed that only 12% of NYC Public Schools schools have a full-time, certified theater teacher, a number that has decreased over the past two years. I am writing to request that any budget cuts we face do not affect theater teachers (approximately 200 of them) who are already severely underrepresented throughout NYC, when compared to other subject areas and arts disciplines. We need your help for arts education to have an equitable seat at the table. Please consider reinstating the funding for critical arts education programs supported through expiring federal stimulus funds for the 2024-2025 school year.

In order to do our part to continue providing support for our theater teachers and students in NYC Public Schools, we must ensure the Arts Office and arts education infrastructure are not lost and that NYC Public Schools is able to continue hiring certified arts teachers. We cannot lose the progress that's been made to this point when we still have such a long way to go. Please help us ensure that theater education is prioritized and considered a right — not a privilege. Thank you for your time.



Jaime Hastings
Executive Director

Arts in Education **NYC** ROUNDTABLE

Testimony to the New York City Council Committee on Cultural Affairs & Committee on Finance

Hon. Carlina Rivera, Chair

Hon. Justin Brannan, Chair

Hearing: Executive Budget Hearing

Tuesday, May 21, 2024

Thank you to Chair Rivera, Chair Brannan, fellow Committee Members and Council staff, for your passion, leadership, and support of arts education in New York City.

My name is Kimberly Olsen, and I am the Executive Director of the NYC Arts in Education Roundtable. **I'm testifying as part of the It Starts with the Arts coalition — calling on our city to prioritize funding for arts education in NYC schools and communities in the FY25 budget.**

We are grateful for the City Council's support for culture and arts education in the budget response and most the \$41M restoration of expiring federal stimulus funding for arts education. Opportunities like this mean:

Improving academic outcomes

Preparing students to enter the workforce

Increasing parent involvement and student attendance

Giving students space to develop empathy and critical thinking skills

It all starts with the arts.

At last week's Education Hearing, the Chancellor noted that cultural organizations "fill the gap" in the 307 schools that do not have a certified arts teacher and ensure that our city's students have access to arts instruction. We know that at least 607 arts and cultural organizations partnered with NYC schools last year (the most ever).

It should be no surprise that this spike in service coincided with a \$45M add-on in funds to the Department of Cultural Affairs and increase in the Support for Arts Instruction Initiative. Yet, in this interconnected ecosystem, this year we are seeing first-hand how cuts to the Department of Cultural Affairs deeply harm cultural organization's ability to provide resources and partner with schools.

Cultural organizations help students meet state instructional requirements at the elementary school level (437 schools) and enrich school communities with resources (with 36% of schools reporting receiving funding from cultural organizations to support arts learning). Despite the uptick in the number of organizational partnerships, only 74% of schools reported partnering with an arts organization last year (down 10% from 5 years ago). We need transparent and system-wide reporting to understand where organizations are present (for context only about 80% of schools actually completing the annual arts survey).

Arts Teachers and Cultural Organizations are essential partners in the delivery of arts instruction. But they can't do that without sustainable funding — otherwise we stand to only widen the access gap for years to come.

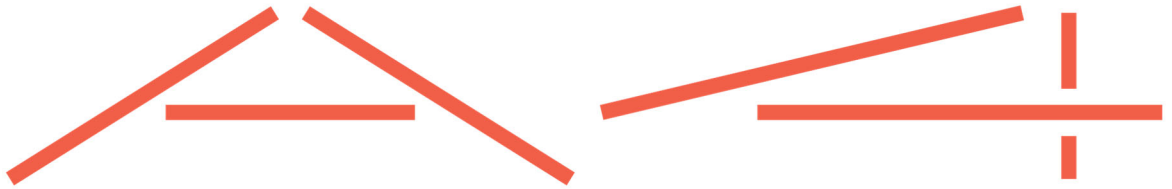
New York City must ensure that our schools offer all students the rigor, encouragement, and inspiration they need to learn and thrive in today's classroom. To lay the groundwork for universal access to arts education, the City must:

- **Hire certified arts teachers in every school (\$38M):** Ensure that all schools have at least one certified arts teacher, by bolstering the pipeline of certified arts teachers via supplemental certification program and filling arts staffing gaps (closing the equity gap for at least 307 schools).
- **Require DOE arts funding be spent on the arts (\$15M):** Boost the per student arts allocation to \$100 from \$80.47, and require that money be spent on arts education.
- **Baseline the \$41M arts funding restoration:** Ensure arts education programs on the chopping block due to continue for years to come, including arts initiatives, programming to support student social-emotional wellbeing and academic recovery through the arts, and Summer Rising.
- **Restore and Enhance "Support for Arts Instruction" initiative funding:** Build on city's down payment and boost allocation from \$4M to \$6M.
- **Improve data transparency** by compelling NYC Public Schools to provide a school-by-school breakdown of the state of arts education in public schools via a Legislative Services Request, T&C, and/or Oversight Hearing.
- **Restore and Baseline Funding for the Department of Cultural Affairs:** Reverse November (\$20M) and preliminary budget cuts to DCLA (\$15.5M) and restore/baseline one-time addition of \$45M to Cultural Institutions Group and all cultural organizations across the city.

Our city's young people represent the future of our city. Please prioritize investment in arts education because that future starts with the arts.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Kimberly Olsen
Executive Director
NYC Arts in Education Roundtable
kolsen@nycaieroundtable.org
516-205-7639



Public Testimony
Preliminary Budget Hearing - Cultural Affairs, Libraries and
International Intergroup Relations
May 21, 2024

Good afternoon, Chair Brannan, Chair Rivera, Members of the City Council, and friends from the Department of Cultural Affairs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Lisa Gold and I am the Executive Director of the Asian American Arts Alliance, a 40-year-old nonprofit service organization currently based in District 4 that works to ensure representation, equity, and opportunities for Asian American and Pacific Islander artists (AAPIs) and arts organizations of all disciplines across this great city. We are the only organization in the country that serves this role. I am also a member of the Cultural Equity Coalition, ensuring that 18% of NYC's population, our AAPI community, has a voice and a champion for the equitable distribution of city resources.

I am here today to ask for the restoration of all cuts made to the Department of Cultural Affairs for FY25, restoration of \$6.5 million for FY24 cuts to the Cultural Development Fund, an increased baseline for DCLA's FY25 budget, and fully funded Council initiatives—for a total of \$76.5 million.

On behalf of the thousands of constituents we serve, I want to express my gratitude to the City Council for putting forward the same budget restoration request.

Arts and culture are the backbone of the tourist economy in New York City and generate \$110 billion – 13% of the City's economic activity. More than 60 million tourists visit NYC each year to experience our world-class museums, theaters, and performances. But the arts aren't just important to tourists.

Cutting funds to culture will result in lost jobs—good union jobs—due to fewer performances and lost opportunities for revenue generating activities like pre-theater dinners at local restaurants.

Communities of color rely on city funding much, much more than private and predominantly white institutions. Organizations led by and serving people of color often do not have endowments or wealthy patrons to make up the loss in funds due to DCLA budget cuts. In order to ensure there is true equity in this city, I implore you to ensure the Department of Cultural Affairs receives the funds we need to keep our city the cultural capital of the world.

Thank you.

5.21.24

Remarks for City Council Cultural Budget Meeting

Good Morning Chair Rivera & City Council Staff,

My name is Judith Insell & I am the Executive Director of the Bronx Arts Ensemble...an organization that annually provides over 20,000 residents of the Bronx with "FREE OF CHARGE" live performances presented by professional musicians in multiple music genres, aiming to provide culturally responsive events to the neighborhoods we serve.

I join my colleagues in asking that the Council add \$53 million to the adopted budget to reverse the cuts and restore and baseline the one-time funding for CIGs and CDF in FY25. The Bronx Arts Ensemble and thousands of other city cultural institutions are committed to serving New Yorkers with something we all need: Arts & Culture.

How do I know that Bronxites need Arts & Culture? ...They actually tell us.

Each year thousands of Bronx residents experience the Bronx Arts Ensemble's live performances and tell us how much our performances have a positive impact on their lives. They show gratitude to us for bringing a community-building experience to their neighborhood that has healing and restorative emotional effects on their mind, body, & spirit. Bronx Arts Ensemble strives to enhance the lives of the citizens of our entire borough through arts & culture, unfortunately, we could not serve everyone this fiscal year due to the loss of Cultural Development Fund support. Since being "zeroed out" of the CDF, we have only been able to present performances in the districts where we received direct council member support... That's 4 districts out of 9, so over half of the Bronx did not experience our live performances this fiscal year.

Bronx Arts Ensemble has dealt with the challenges of FY24 vowing to remain on mission. Over the past 52 years, we have endured "the Bronx burning," stock market crashes, 9.11, & a global pandemic. We are "Bronx Strong" and we will fight through any circumstance to continue to serve our deserving borough. Funding neighborhood cultural nonprofit institutions is NOT OPTIONAL, IT'S ESSENTIAL. We employ artists & cultural workers as a part of the New York City Economic Eco-System & nourish the spirit of the citizens of our city. Add \$53 million to the FY25 cultural budget so we can successfully continue our work of serving New York.

Thank you.

Judith Insell, Executive Director
Bronx Arts Ensemble

Brooklyn Library Guild Local 1482
AFSCME District Council 37
125 Barclay Street, New York, NY 10007
www.local1482.org



Executive Budget Hearing Fiscal Year 2025
Committee on Finance, New York City Council
Testimony of Local 1482 President George Sarah Olken
May 21, 2024

Chairperson Rivera and committee members, thank you for giving me the opportunity to share these stories from Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) union workers.

Adeeba Rana (Librarian) is a librarian who was promoted to Branch Manager of BPL's Bedford location in 2021. After three years in that role, Adeeba has never worked in the building. Instead, Adeeba has worked at six low-staffed branches across the borough from Williamsburg to Dyker Heights, while Bedford has remained closed through an extended HVAC replacement, which has been delayed and delayed. The branch was supposed to open last year, and then this year; if the proposed budget cuts go through, opening will likely be delayed again for lack of staff.

Now, when Adeeba does outreach in Bed-Stuy, she meets people who don't even know the building is a library (the branch has been in its "new" location on Franklin Avenue since 1905) and children at the school across the street who remember going there for storytime are now almost teenagers. They tell her: "The library was a safe haven. It's like our home is shut down."

Dee Bowers (Archivist) was one of two archivists working for the Brooklyn Public Library in 2020 when the library merged with the Brooklyn Historical Society to form the new Center for Brooklyn History (CBH). The world's largest and most comprehensive collection of Brooklyn history materials, in a national historic landmark building, CBH has been understaffed since it opened. The city helped the library pay for the merger; through these budget cuts it is undercutting its own investment.

The strain of keeping the six-story building, with exhibitions and programs, open to the public takes Dee and their coworkers away from their primary responsibilities of archival processing. This means that new collections remain "hidden," unavailable to the public because they cannot be conserved, digitized, cataloged, and prepared for patrons and

researchers to access. Every day, Dee sees the awe that making a collection like this part of the public library inspires in New Yorkers, that it belongs to them, and they are welcome there. These cuts are a broken promise: they threaten this public resource.

Christian Alston (Office Aide) works in Clerical Operations at our Central Branch on Grand Army Plaza. He usually works the early shift, which means he is at the check-out desk when we open. The library used to staff the desk in pairs but recently he's been assigned alone. More desk shifts means less time going over the shelves, making sure books are where they are supposed to be, so the library is orderly and accessible to all. At the end of the day, Christian walks out through the Youth Wing, where he sees we are down to only a few part-timers shelving. He sees the shelves are messy and disorganized. The library website boasts of more than 650,000 visits to Central last year. But workers like Christian can only be at one place at a time.

Finally, one of our special officer sergeants wanted me to share his experience but was embarrassed for me to share his name. He described what the loss of over-time means for him. As a union member supervisor he is tasked with making fair schedules. If one special officer works a Saturday, he tries to make sure someone else works the next Saturday. Library workers have lives beyond work: elderly parents and young children to care for, hobbies and leadership roles in our communities. With the cuts to overtime pay (but no cuts from the Rent Board), increasingly our days off include second and third jobs, too.

The sergeant could take all the good shifts for himself but he knows everyone is struggling and tries to make sure everyone gets something. Which means, on nights and weekends he delivers for Uber Eats to make ends meet. We think of delivery workers as among the most underpaid and marginalized groups in the city. Those same workers are making sure your children are safe at the library. We are union workers being pushed into low paying exploitative side gigs. We are the communities that won't have a library to take our kids to on the weekends. And we are the voters of New York City.

These cuts to libraries are cuts to the social fabric of our communities. Please do right by these workers and all your constituents by ending these unnecessary cuts and refunding libraries. *Increase library funding!* Support our democratic institutions. Cut the cynicism and austerity. Invest in our collective future.

Thank you!



STRENGTHENING YOUNG MINDS THROUGH THE
LANGUAGE OF MUSIC

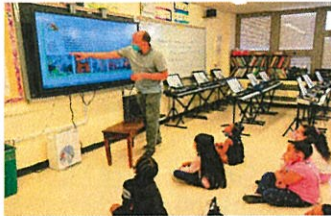
BUILDING FOR THE ARTS REQUEST FOR SUPPORT

Application: 138057 FEIN: 13-2852371



Building for the Arts (BFA) expands access to the performing arts by providing creative space, learning opportunities, and hubs for artistic connection.

BFA operates Theatre Row, The American Playwriting Foundation, and Music and the Brain



Music and the Brain provides a school-day general music curriculum using whole-class piano instruction. We provide **sequential K-8 music lessons, ongoing music educator support, piano/keyboard labs, physical and digital teaching materials, and an award winning web-based platform for digital inclusion** providing educator and student accounts for anytime, anyplace access **at no cost to schools.**

MUSIC AND THE BRAIN SUPPORTS MORE THAN 55,000 STUDENTS AND 145 MUSIC TEACHERS ANNUALLY ACROSS THE FIVE BOROUGHES

CITY COUNCIL TESTIMONY – MAY 21, 2024



I'm Lisala Beatty, Director of Music and the Brain, a program of the non-profit Building for the Arts. We're requesting funding for our program, which brings school-day music education resources and piano instruction to each K-8th grade student in more than 145 N.Y.C. schools, free of charge. Students need focus, critical and creative thinking, fine motor, social, and emotional skills to succeed. Research shows that learning to read music and play an instrument like the piano is a "full body workout for the brain." Students benefit from musical training, but it's cost-prohibitive for many N.Y.C. families.

For 27 years, Music and the Brain has improved school and life skills for more than 55,000 NYC students annually in hundreds of public schools across the five boroughs. We provide a sequential music curriculum with a diverse repertoire, a 16-station piano/keyboard lab, a web platform with a virtual piano that students can access at home, and ongoing support for the school's music teacher. Columbia University research shows a correlation between school partnership with Music and the Brain and higher scores on 3rd grade standardized ELA and Math tests, including English Language Learners.

We have more than 40 NYC public school applications on a waiting list, and Building for the Arts NY has applied for \$50,000 of City Council support to maintain and expand Music and the Brain through three citywide initiatives: Speakers Initiative, Educational Programs for Students, and Support for Arts Instruction. I'm a proud product of NYC public schools and a vocalist who's traveled the world because of music. Music and the Brain opens doors for our students and profoundly impacts our under-resourced communities. Thank you for your time and consideration.

BUILDING FOR THE ARTS REQUESTS:

\$50,000 support for Music and the Brain through the following citywide initiatives:

- **Speakers Initiative**
- **Educational Programs for Students**
- **Support for Arts Instruction**

musicandthebrain.org



STRENGTHENING YOUNG MINDS THROUGH THE
LANGUAGE OF MUSIC

2024 NYC COUNCIL MEMBER DISTRICTS SERVED

District 1 – Christopher Marte

3,171 Students and 4 Teachers

Served since 2007

P.S. 2M, P.S.20M, P.S. 140M, P.S. 343M

District 2 – Carlina Rivera

746 Students and 3 Teachers

Served since 2010

P.S. 63M, P.S. 64M

District 3 – Eric Bottcher

6,537 Students and 5 Teachers Served since 1999

P.S. 11M, P.S.111M, P.S. 340M, P.S. 212M,

De La Salle Academy

District 4 – Keith Powers

819 Students and 3 Teachers

Served since 2015

P.S. 281M

District 6 – Gale A. Brewer

893 Students and 1 Teacher

Served since 2017

P.S. 84M

District 7 – Shaun Abreu

3,367 Students and 4 Teachers

Served since 1999

P.S. 36M, P.S.145M, P.S. 862M,

District 8 – Diana Ayala

5,817 Students and 11 Teachers

Served since 2005

Reece School, P.S. 182M, P.S. 5X,

P.S.30X, P.S. 49X, P.S. 65X

District 9 – Yusef Salaam

4,730 Students and 6 Teachers

Served since 2004

P.S. 129M, P.S. 149M, PS 185M, Harlem

Children Zone, Promise Academy II

District 10 – Carmen De La Rosa

5,006 Students and 6 Teachers

Served since 2009

P.S. 18M, P.S. 132M, P.S. 152M, P.S.189M,

P.S. 513M, KIPP Washington Heights Middle

District 11 – Eric Donowitz

2,704 Students and 3 Teachers

Served since 2016

P.S. 20X, P.S. 77X, and P.S. 207X

District 12 – Kevin Riley

1,806 Students and 3 Teachers

Served since 2008

P.S. 153X, P.S. 596X

District 14 – Pierina Ana Sanchez

911 Students and 1 Teachers

Served since 2019

P.S. 363X

District 16 – Althea Stevens

1,641 Students and 2 Teachers

Served since 2005

P.S. 114X, P.S. 443X

District 17 – Rafael Salamanca Jr.

5,813 Students and 4 Teachers

Served since 2006

P.S. 1X, P.S. 157X, P.S. 463X,

Immaculate Conception

District 18 – Amanda Farias

4,107 Students and 4 Teachers

Served since 1999

P.S. 36X, P.S. 107X, M.S. 562X

District 19 – Vickie

Paladino

2,143 Students and 2

Teachers Served since 2008

P.S. 107Q

District 20 – Sandra Ung

1,166 Students and 2 Teachers

Served since 2017

P.S. 20Q

District 21 – Francisco Moya

7,749 Students and 7 Teachers

Served since 2002

P.S. 16Q, P.S. 92Q, P.S. 143Q, P.S. 14Q

District 22 – Tiffany Caban

3,410 Students and 3 Teachers Served

since 2006

P.S. 17Q, P.S. 85Q, P.S. 171Q,

District 23 – Linda Lee

3,321 Students and 3 Teachers

Served since 2008

P.S. 46Q, P.S. 115Q, P.S. 133Q,

District 24 – James F. Gennaro

1741 Students and 5 Teachers

Served since 2014

P.S. 201Q, P.S. 219Q

District 25 – Shekar Krishnan

7,016 Students and 6 Teachers

Served since 1998

P.S. 7Q, P.S. 149Q, P.S. 212Q, P.S. 398Q

District 26 – Julie Won

2,857 Students and 3 Teachers

Served since 2004

P.S. 78Q, P.S. 111Q

District 27 – Nantasha Williams

3,511 Students and 4 Teachers

Served since 2010

P.S. 176Q, P.S. 360Q, Riverton St. School, P.S. 37Q

District 29 – Lynn Shulman

1,397 Students and 3 Teachers

Served since 2017

P.S. 196Q, Tiegerman High School



STRENGTHENING YOUNG MINDS THROUGH THE
LANGUAGE OF MUSIC

NYC COUNCIL MEMBER DISTRICTS SERVED

District 30 – Robert Holden

8,579 Students and 6 Teachers

Served since 2002

P.S. 58Q, P.S. 71Q, P.S. 128Q, P.S. 68Q

District 31– Selvena N. Brooks-Powers

1,509 Students and 3 Teachers

Served since 2014

P.S. 181Q, P.S. 251Q, M.S. 356Q

District 32 – Joann Ariola

7,350+ Students and 7 Teachers

Served since 2007

P.S. 207Q, P.S. 63Q, P.S. 114Q, P.S. 91Q,
P.S.119Q

District 33 – Lincoln Restler

5,017 Students and 9 Teachers

Served since 2006

P.S. 38K, P.S.110K, P.S. 307K,
Brooklyn Rise Charter

District 34 – Jennifer Gutierrez

5,721 Students and 5 Teachers

Served since 2005

P.S. 17K, P.S. 123K, P.S. 132K, P.S.
147K, P.S. 257K

District 35 – Crystal Hudson

1,951 Students and 5 Teachers

Served since 2012

P.S. 316K, P.S.705K,,
Exceed Upper Charter School

District 36 – Chi Osse

549 Students and 1 Teachers

Served since 2015

P.S. 628K

District 37 – Sandy Nurse

4,456 Students and 4 Teachers

Served since 2005

P.S. 45K, P.S. 151K,
P.S. 383K

District 38 – Alexa Aviles

1,638 Students and 3 teachers

Served since 2017

P.S. 971K, Sunset Yards Elem, P.S.
200K

District 39 – Shashana Hanif

4,076 Students and 2 Teachers

Served since 2008

P.S. 130K, P.S. 133K, P.S. 10K,

District 40 – Rita Joseph

2,218 Students and 3 Teachers

Served since 2004

P.S. 139K

District 41 – Darlene Mealy

745 Students and 5 Teachers Served

since 2019

P.S. 770K, P.S. 446K, P.S. 309K

District 42 – Chris Banks

6,328 Students and 7 Teachers

Served since 2004

P.S. 66K, P.S. 233K, P.S. 346K, P.S. 557K,
Brooklyn Scholars Charter

District 43 – Susan Zhuang

3,579 Students and 6 Teachers

Served since 2010

P.S. 101K, P.S. 247K, P.S. 682K

District 44 – Kalman Yeger

1,499 Students and 1 Teachers

Served since 2007

P.S. 199K

District 45 – Farah Louis

3,121 Students and 3 Teachers

Served since 2009

P.S. 193K, P.S. 361K,
P.S. 251K

District 46 – Mercedes Narcisse

1,058 Students and 2 Teachers

Served since 2009

P.S. 114K, M.S. 366K

District 47 – Justin Brannan

253 Students and 1 Teachers

Served since 2021

P.S. 188K

District 50 – David Carr

1,868 Students and 3 Teachers

Served since 2014

P.S. 30R and P.S. 39R

District 51 – Joseph Borelli

2,414 Students and 2 Teachers

Served since 2016

P.S. 42R, P.S. 55R



STRENGTHENING YOUNG MINDS THROUGH THE LANGUAGE OF MUSIC

IMPACT AND TESTIMONIALS

Music and the Brain Program Evaluation

The data below was collected by Dr. Rob Horowitz of Columbia University's Center for Arts Education Research between Spring 2019 and Summer 2020. According to teacher surveys and student achievement data:



97%

Demonstrated increased task persistence

96%

Demonstrated Increased focus



Social-Emotional Learning

96%

Developed increased self-confidence

94%

Developed Collaborative skills

97

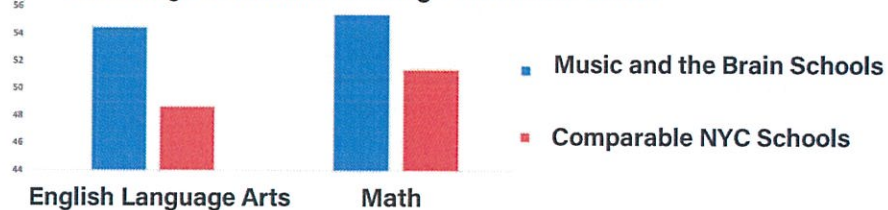
%



Standardized Tests

Partner School Music Teachers say they are more effective because of MATB

Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient or Above



Scott Bergersen,
MATB Music Teacher
P.S. 443X, Bronx, NY



"It's wonderful! I like having the (MATB) platform...Composition works are in there, the visuals, the recordings, all the listening activities... It's amazing to watch the students grow...The comraderie, the partner work, the pride!"

Michelle Johnson,
Mother of MATB Student
P.S.66K, Brooklyn, NY



"When my daughter's music teacher told me Shania was playing nicely I decided to get her a keyboard. Both of my children love music and they play together and play for family. Music helps the brain and I see that."

Courtney Scarpatti and Johanna Paez
Music Teachers, P.S. 7Q, Queens, NY



"Our administration comes in and they're wowed! They've said to us 'you have literature in this, it's great for math. It has everything!' Administrators liked the fact that lessons flowed seamlessly, we had great transitions, timing and pacing. Kids are constantly engaged, we're switching it up and then they get to the keyboards... it's a big incentive."

Pooja Das
8th Grade MATB Student
P.S./M.S.45K, Brooklyn, NY



"I'm proud of my skills and proud that I am a representative of Music and the Brain. I've been playing the piano in school since I was in Kindergarten. My family got me a keyboard at home because playing is my passion and they wanted me to focus on it. Playing piano is helping me with Math and ELA."

**Testimony of Melody Capote, Executive Director
Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute
before the
City Council Committee on
Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations
May 21, 2024**

Chairperson Rivera, Chairperson Brannan and Members of the Committee. My name is Melody Capote, Executive Director of the Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute. I'd like to begin by congratulating you, CM Rivera. on the birth of your new baby and for your work as a mommy and wife and being here today in support of the arts and culture community to do your other job here at city council. Talk about a woman's work and a woman's worth. I salute you!

I am here to testify about the gross inequity between funding that is awarded to community-based organizations through DCLA's Cultural Development Fund (CDF) and in particular, such organizations that are led by and focused within communities of color. I have read, again and again, the aspirational "word salad" set forth in DCLA's "Cultural Development Fund Reform" and find myself angry that, decade after decade we are confronted with the same desire to reform, but a complete inability to reform. Reforms and THE overhauling of the DCLA agency requires funding and a commitment to doing so!

One would think that the issues are so complex that it actually has required decades of study. It does not. The bottom line is that 85% of the budget for programming activities goes to 34 organizations whose right to that money is based on ownership of property designated over 100 years ago when community organizations of African descent could not have possibly been in a similar position let alone, BE competitive.

The remaining organizations, most of which are rooted in communities of color, are forced to compete with each other for the remaining 15%. Explain to me if you will, how a city like New York in the year 2024, can continue to allocate tax levy funds for arts and culture based upon 100-year-old property values? Someone please make it, make sense.

It is small wonder that the arguments made for increasing funding for arts and culture rely so heavily upon tourism. Let me say at the outset that I agree, fully and completely, that DCLA funded programming enhances tourism dollars and add to the bottom line at a level that is disproportionate to the money it receives. While DCLA will argue that promoting the richness and diversity of the many communities in New York is part of the agency's mission, what is really happening is that the agency is being made into an artistic form of the traffic enforcement administration collecting dollars for other activities – The tourism argument by the Administration is that the major cultural institutions are economic drivers for the city and yet while the CDF organizations don't reap those benefits, we find that even the CIG that generate those tourism dollars that increase year after year, aren't seeing the impact in their budgets either. Instead of prioritizing and highlighting culture, the City is investing these very dollars elsewhere as opposed to in the very agency and organizations from where these dollars are generated.

In a time where this city's Administration and City Council is the most representative of people of color, our cultural organizations are none the better. Consider this, baseline funding to DCLA has not seen an increase since 2008. 2008! Someone please make it, make sense.

That is not the bottom line to which we should aspire. It is now clear and even more so for years after the death of George Floyd that Arts and culture are first responders. It is not a reactor to events but a first responder providing context and curated themes to events that occur in society. Arts and culture is not a Band-Aid, it is first-aid.

I remind everyone about the impact of the many public murals of George Floyd and the impact of Black Lives Matter being written across the street. Arts and culture help society to contextualize the events around them, around us, thus providing second thought about the use of violence.

In addition, the arts and culture funds of DCLA can and should be used to develop the next workforce of artists, cultural workers and activists dedicated to addressing racial and social justice issues.

The city needs to stop treating arts and culture within communities of color as a museum piece to be curated. The reality is that communities of color are leaders throughout the country in the movement to restore cultural values that are critical for democratic society. They are the ones that are fighting “the good fight” against the “book burners” and others like them.

In closing, I support the call for restoration and increases of \$53M that our arts and culture organizations rightfully deserve, and particularly those working directly in communities of color because that is where the need is greatest. And I urge you to look at the inequity. Look at the difference in the ability of large museums to raise money from their boards and endowments when small organizations are small organizations do not have the same access.

Don’t just ask us for input and to testify. Bring us to the table. We are prepared to work with you to make it work.

###

CARNEGIE HALL

New York City Council Fiscal Year 2024
May 21, 2024

Executive Budget Hearing: Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations

Chair Brannan, Chair Rivera and Members of the Committees on Finance and on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations:

Thanks for the opportunity to testify about Carnegie Hall's invaluable contributions to New York City's cultural fabric and the City of New York in service to our communities.

Carnegie Hall's mission is to present extraordinary music and musicians on the three stages of this legendary hall, to bring the transformative power of music to the widest possible audience, to provide visionary education programs, and to foster the future of music and culture through the cultivation of new works, artists, and audiences.

For over 130 years, Carnegie Hall has represented the democratic ideals of freedom of expression and artistic excellence, with music as a universal language to foster awareness of cultural diversity, to bridge divides among peoples, and to promote individual expression. Since its opening in 1891, the Hall has been an important showcase for America's diverse cultural development with a history that reflects the rich and varied story of our country. Launched by Andrew Carnegie's aspiration that "all causes may here find a place," Carnegie Hall has been a site for both artistic excellence and civic engagement—the place to experience the best in almost every genre of music as well as a prominent public forum for causes ranging from women's suffrage, labor, and civil rights to AIDS activism and criminal justice system reform.

In 1960, the iconic building was saved from demolition by a citizen's campaign led by violinist Isaac Stern. An act of the New York State Legislature allowed the City of New York to purchase the building and establish the nonprofit, The Carnegie Hall Corporation, to operate the facility in service to all New Yorkers. Today, Carnegie Hall welcomes over 750,000 attendees each season to the 170 concerts it produces, and some 500 events presented by outside producers, in three halls as well as in community venues throughout the five boroughs. Carnegie Hall is a leader in creating far-reaching music education and social impact programs that inspire the next generation of music lovers, nurture musical talent, contribute to the evolution of music education, and explore how music can play a meaningful role in people's lives. Each year, these programs reach nearly 800,000 people in NYC, across the US and around the globe in schools, orchestras, arts organizations, homeless shelters, correctional facilities, refugee camps, hospitals, and more, supporting music learning at all levels.

Highlights of Carnegie Hall's offerings throughout the five boroughs include many of our partnerships with human services agencies:

- **The Council's \$25,000 initiative for youth programs and \$200,000 Innovative Criminal Justice Programs Initiative allocation** supports [The B Side](#), a free intensive program for New Yorkers ages 14-22 interested in the business of music, with a focus on those from under-resourced communities. The B Side provides participants an interactive space to learn about the inner workings of the music industry. Curriculum is designed and facilitated by teaching artists, and music executives, while guest speaker panels, and field trips guide participants through the many roles and career paths across the industry. Participants, experienced youth development facilitators, and

guests are encouraged to co-create a learning community that supports the development of aspiring artists and future music industry leaders.

This season, participants will progress through activities beginning with an exploration of the various career tracks through the music industry and an introduction to key terms and concepts. Activities will include engaging in lessons/curricular activities; presentations from guest speakers; field trips to record labels, music tech companies, local recording studios, music festivals, venues; panels and interactive discussions; and jam sessions/performances. This is a paid experience. Participants receive a stipend, transportation and meals.

Through The B Side, Carnegie Hall draws upon our experience creating meaningful youth development programs in order to deepen our impact and provide young people with the tools they need to thrive, lead, and transform the music industry.

- In partnership with NYC's Administration for Children's Services (ACS), Carnegie Hall's **Future Music Project (FMP)** creates a space for young people ages 14-19 in juvenile justice settings to develop as artists, critical thinkers, collaborators, and individuals. Carnegie Hall's Teaching Artists support young people in creating, producing, and performing music, using songwriting as a vehicle through which they can explore their creativity, develop musical skills, and collaborate with their peers. In addition to direct service workshops customized to the unique needs of secure and non-secure settings, young people in non-secure placement and ACS staff participate in sharing events at Carnegie Hall for family members and peers.
- Carnegie Hall's early childhood programs encourage connection, well-being, and creativity for families, most of whom are facing challenging personal circumstances. The [Lullaby Project](#) pairs new and expectant parents and caregivers with professional artists to write and sing personal lullabies for their babies, supporting maternal health, aiding child development, and strengthening the bond between parent and child. Since the launch at Jacobi Medical Center in 2011, nearly 1,800 families have written original songs for their children through city agency partnerships including the NYC Departments of Homeless Services (DHS), Correction (DOC), Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), and Education (DOE's LYFE program), the Administration for Children's Services (ACS), Health + Hospitals (H+H), and the Housing Authority (NYCHA). [Big Note, Little Note](#), is a music class for NYC families that offers a range of experiences for families and caregivers to engage with their babies through musical play, singing, instrument exploration, and more. The program—in partnership with Harlem Children's Zone—is centered around community, and supports family well-being, early childhood development, and parent-child connection.
- Regarded by DOE's Office of Arts and Special Projects as a lead partner in music education, Carnegie Hall's school programs have effectively delivered the agency's standards for music education, providing high quality, fundamental music instruction and best practices by amplifying and celebrating the cultural richness of our city for over a decade. Our learning and engagement programs inspire the next generation of music lovers in NYC's K-12 classrooms and support local teachers in refining their skills.
 - [Musical Explorers](#) connects students in grades K–2 to NYC's rich and diverse musical community as they build fundamental music skills through listening, singing, and moving to songs from all over the world. Each season, students meet six NYC-based artists who each represent a different musical genre

and cultural tradition. Teachers have access to a free curriculum, professional development, and a culminating interactive concert for their students.

- [Link Up](#)—Carnegie Hall’s longest running education program—introduces the orchestra to children in grades 3-5, inviting them to sing and play an instrument in the classroom and perform with a professional orchestra from their seats at a culminating concert at Carnegie Hall. Both programs continue to expand with digital platforms that provide teachers with free online resources, including lesson plans, artist-led videos, and virtual concert experiences.
- [Music Educators Workshop](#) provides on average more than 450 NYC K–12 music teachers monthly professional development each year, in a vital space for teachers to recognize their shared experiences and receive support, community, and professional growth. The program leverages teachers as catalysts to enhance the quality of instruction for almost 30,000 NYC students each year.
- [Ensemble Connect](#) is a program of Carnegie Hall and The Juilliard School in partnership with DOE. Ensemble Connect places extraordinary young classical musicians for a two-year fellowship in NYC public schools. Fellows partner with DOE music teachers to bring insight, creativity, and artistry to classrooms; and create interactive performances in schools and at community sites.

Programs like these continue to be critical components of the city’s strategy to meet people directly, effectively, and safely where they are. The Council’s continued investment in these partnerships is absolutely critical to ensure that these essential services for our city’s youth and families continue. We welcome the opportunity to meet with you individually to discuss Carnegie Hall’s programming partnerships in your district.

Carnegie Hall respectfully asks the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations support for the following requests:

- **Renewal of \$200,000 with an increase to \$250,000 through the Innovative Criminal Justice Programs Initiative will underwrite the third year of The B-Side**, a free intensive program for a minimum of 40 New Yorkers ages 14-22 interested in the business of music, with a focus on those from under-resourced communities. The B Side provides participants an interactive space to learn about the inner workings of the music industry. Curriculum designed and facilitated by teaching artists, guest speaker panels, and field trips guide participants through the many roles and career opportunities across the industry. Participants, experienced youth development facilitators, and guests are encouraged to co-create a learning community that supports the development of aspiring artists and future music industry leaders.
- **\$200,000 Speaker’s Initiative for Carnegie Hall’s Music and Well-being programming:** In alignment with the Council’s Mental Health Roadmap, Carnegie Hall’s Lullaby Project is an evidence-informed, low-cost, safe, and scalable approach to supporting caregivers, infants, and early relational health. The Lullaby Project invites families, often in high-stress environments, to create, sing, and record their own personal lullabies. Since its inception in 2011 in response to patient care needs identified by Jacobi Medical Center’s neonatal unit staff, the Lullaby Project has helped to create approximately 4,000 lullabies, in over 40 languages, and currently has 60+ Lullaby Partners across the U.S. and globe.
Carnegie Hall’s Well-Being Concerts combine world-class musical performances with elements of self-care and mindfulness, animated by evidence that music helps people heal and thrive. Each concert creates an immersive, nurturing space in which audiences and performers share in the soul-nourishing benefits of music, create shared experiences, and explore tools for well-being that last long after the performance.
- **\$100,000 for Carnegie Hall Citywide programming:** For more than half a century, the Citywide Concerts series has taken Carnegie Hall beyond its four walls with free, world-class concerts to diverse audiences of all ages and

cultures across all five boroughs. The series showcases outstanding mainstage artists and exciting rising stars of classical, jazz, world music and more. Through partnerships with local community organizations, Citywide taps into the pulse of the city and brings people together to share the joy of music. Through leveraging high-profile artists in hyperlocal venues, these partnerships generate tourism throughout the city and stimulate local economies. Built on long-term and new partnerships with important neighborhood gathering places such as libraries; museums; houses of worship, mission-driven organizations; public plazas; and parks, our close collaborations with local partners are key to the program's success, strengthening these community anchors.

Carnegie Hall is also a proud member of the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG), a collective of 34 nonprofit museums, performing arts centers, historical societies, zoos, and botanical gardens across all five boroughs with a distinct private-public partnership with the City of New York and a commitment to serving all New Yorkers. In pursuit of meaningful, sustained public support of the vast array of cultural programming and public resources offered by our CIG colleagues and the NYC arts and culture community at large, **Carnegie Hall endorses the field's \$53 million request to restore culture fully in FY25:**

- **Reverse November Plan PEGs - \$7.9 million**
- **Reverse CIG FY24 reduction - \$5 million**
- **Restore one-year funding - \$40 million**

A commitment to funding the arts and culture is a compound investment in economic resiliency and growth, workforce development, community healing, education, and public safety. Sustained investment in the arts and culture is a statement to each and every person who calls New York City home that their holistic wellness matters, and we urge this sector's outsize impact to be recognized and duly supported.

Programs like these continue to be critical components of the city's strategy to meet people directly, effectively, and safely where they are. The Council's continued investment in these partnerships will be absolutely essential in the year ahead to ensure that these essential services for our city's youth and families continue.

We thank the Committee for their interest and investment in these programs, and we encourage the Council to continue to support this important work and other programs by our cultural colleagues across the city.

We welcome the opportunity to meet with you individually to discuss Carnegie Hall's school and community programming partnerships in your district. Thank you for your support for and consideration of our requests, and thanks to our public partners, artists and arts organizations, teachers, stakeholders, and the talented young people involved in these programs for being a part of truly transformational changes.

My name is Dian Dong and I am the Artistic Director of Chen Dance Center. Our organization serves not only the Chinatown & LES community, but also brings free performances & follow-up workshops citywide – to over 7000 New Yorkers through Art & Culture funding.

As a teaching artist, I can attest to the importance of funding for arts & culture. When the company travels into schools in Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island and citywide, we witness the transformation of hundreds of young audiences who become instantly engaged through our interactive dance performances which tell the stories of the Building of America by immigrants.

NYC is known as the dance capital of the nation; attracting the best talent in the industry. And, NYC is the greatest city because we fuel the minds & imaginations of all New Yorkers.

As a working artist, I can't emphasize enough the impact of funding for arts & culture.

We are counting on you to ensure that funding for Arts & Culture is included in the budget's PRIORITY LIST. And, that you continue to support Arts & Culture and Arts Education by: Restoring \$6.5 million to the Cultural Development Fund to account for the *budget cuts made in Nov 2023 and Jan 2024*.

Please restore all cuts made in FY25 to the CDF & CDG, while increasing the baseline for DCLA's total budget for a combined \$53 million.

Very important is supporting Arts & Dance Education, because we all know that movement is essential for child development. DOE Arts Funding of \$15M to be spent on the arts, boosting the Per Student Arts Allocation to \$100, and ensuring that all schools have at least 1 certified arts teacher. Last but not least: restore & enhance Support for Arts Instruction from \$4M to \$6M.

The Creative Industry is a major economic driver for NYC. Culture & Arts also benefit the health of individuals, families as well as the flourishing of communities.

When you restore funding for Dance, you restore the universal language of love, connectivity and community. Thank you for your leadership and this opportunity to speak with you today.

Cultural Institutions Group Executive Budget Hearing Testimony
Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations
Tuesday, May 21st at 12:30 pm
Coco Killingsworth, Chair, Cultural Institutions Group (CIG)

Thank you Chairs Rivera and Brannan and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify. I am Coco Killingsworth, Chief Experience and Impact Officer at the Brooklyn Academy of Music and Chair of the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG). I am here today to provide testimony on behalf of the CIGs – a coalition of 34 nonprofit museums, performing arts centers, historical societies, zoos, and botanical gardens located in all five boroughs of New York City.

We are here today to support Culture For All and to ask for \$53M in baseline funding for the CIG and the Cultural Development Fund for FY25. \$53M in funding would fully reverse all the cuts imposed on culture and baseline the one time addition for CIGs and the Cultural Development Fund.

I testified back in March about the devastation of the November and Preliminary budget cuts. I am back today to thank the Council for prioritizing culture in your Budget Response and for your advocacy in securing a restoration of the January cuts. However, as you all know, the work is far from over. The CIGs and our CDF partners are facing baseline cuts that would put us \$53M behind where we were in FY23. Baseline support for the CIGs has not increased since 2009 so this reduction would be bringing us back 15 years.

This is an unprecedented disinvestment in what makes our city great. Arts and culture generate \$110 billion in economic activity annually and are vital to the city's economy. Our cultural sector is also central to the success of our city's tourism industry and workforce. The Cultural Institutions Group alone employs 15,700 full and part-time staff, 5,800 of which are union members. The jobs driven by the cultural sector also include the education contractors and food services

staff at the CIGs, to those driving cabs, and working in hotels, retail, and restaurants.

Culture is a lifeline for communities and should be accessible to ALL New Yorkers. Investing in culture is investing in safe, public spaces for New Yorkers of all ages and all walks of life. More than 120 million people attend performances and go to museums each year, 60% of which are free. Our institutions position New York City as a world-class cultural hub and leader in Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) education and 2.5 million students visit CIGs and participate in our educational programs every year. Cultural Institutions also provide lifelong learning opportunities for older adults and accessible programming for neurodivergent audiences and audiences with disabilities.

Our gardens, the New York Botanical Garden, Queens Botanical Garden, Brooklyn Botanic Garden, and Snug Harbor Cultural Center and Botanical Garden, play an important role in composting and sustainability. With the community composting cut, the Botanical Gardens have had to severely curtail composting operations, community outreach initiatives, compost/environmental education programs, as well as their capacity to support local not-for-profit partners in their community gardens.

The Council has been a real champion for culture and we ask for your continued support as we call for the restoration and baselining of \$53 million to arts and culture in Fiscal Year 2025. We also ask that the Council fully fund key initiatives including Cultural After-School Adventures Program (CASA), the Cultural Immigrant Initiative, Coalition of Theaters of Color (CTC) and the SU-CASA Arts Programs for Seniors.

We must eventually get to a place where we are no longer talking about cuts to economic drivers and community uplifters – but how to invest further in arts and culture for the benefit of all New Yorkers. Investment in culture is an investment in New York City



May 23, 2024

Testimony for Finance Committee meeting Jointly with the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations

I write to join my colleagues in asking that the Council add the proposed \$76M to the budget at adoption to reverse the cuts and restore and baseline the one-time funding for CIGs and CDF in FY25. These cuts have inhibited our ability to serve our communities throughout the five boroughs through our Community Engagement Programs for NYC school children, seniors and underserved communities through the NYC Dept. of Parks and Recreation at just the moment that we prepared for their culmination in the 18th annual Dance Parade and DanceFest that took place last weekend.

Dance Parade represents, as far as we know, the largest single-day event in the world, and we know of not a single other city that has one. On the third Saturday of May, as many as 10,000 dancers invigorate the people in the streets of our City and then hold forth in a 4-hour free festival in Tompkins Square Park. There, 5 stages including teaching and social dancing stages bring the Park to exuberant life.

At the culminating DanceFest in Tompkins Square one of the most interesting stages, and certainly the most hopeful for the future of the City, would have to be the Community Stage. We provide Community Engagement programs for seniors and school children throughout the Five Boroughs and here, having just danced through the streets for a mile and a half, they complete their journey through the year in celebratory public performance. The joy they embody for each other and themselves completes the cycle that began on West 17th Street where, all in one block as they prepare to step off, they see each other in all their many cultured glory and realize that they have become part of something much bigger than they might have imagine.

The power and centrality of arts and culture in our city remains the crown jewel of the city's life. We ask the Council to support us in keeping our Community Engagement programs and the Parade itself alive. In this way you will help our children catch a glimpse and feel the exhilaration of what might be possible in a City of Yes.

We join our colleagues in asking the city to

- **Reverse** the November and Preliminary Budget Cuts to culture - that's \$20 million in FY24 and \$15.5M in FY25.
- **Restore and baseline** last year's one-time addition of \$45 million to CIGs and all cultural groups across the city as well.
- **Fully fund City Council initiatives** including the \$76 M the Council has proposed at adoptionCASA for school kids, Su Casa for seniors, Cultural Immigrant Initiative especially dear to Dance Parade, and the Coalition of Theaters of Color.

Respectfully submitted

DJ McDonald



Testimony for the 05.21.24 Hearing of the

Committee on Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations

From the Green-Wood Historic Fund (the 501c3 organization of Green-Wood Cemetery.)

Good afternoon. My name is Lisa Alpert. I am the Senior Vice President of Development and Programming at Green-Wood in Brooklyn.

I'm gonna start with the obvious. Green-Wood is a cemetery. We are a National Historic Landmark and we cover a really big piece of land in South Brooklyn: 478 acres. That's "you can easily see it from the airplane" big. We've been here since 1838.

And now, the less obvious. Green-Wood is a cultural institution. We serve over 450,000 New Yorkers through our public programs and our school programs and the thousands who come to stroll our beautiful landscape every year. Green-Wood has become a fascinating, non-traditional, and much-loved cultural space. And yet, we have not received discretionary funding from the City Council in seven years. We very much hope that can change this year. Simply put, we need support from the City Council to help us continue to serve New Yorkers

What do we do at Green-Wood? So much! Dance performances, art installations, walking tours, trolley tours, our artist-in-residence program, concerts in our catacombs, Latinx programming, LGBTQ+ programs, Juneteenth programming, a huge Day of the Dead program, which attracts over 1,500 attendees, environmental programs throughout the year and more. We are located in an area that is severely lacking in cultural institutions. Green-Wood has taken on that role for the residents of Sunset Park, Boro Park, Kensington, Ditmas Park and more. And we are open seven days a week from dawn to dusk, 365 days a year, at no cost to the public.

Councilmembers: I believe you are dedicated to expanding opportunities for cultural

programming. We are too. We love sharing this incredible place with New Yorkers. We need the support of the council to do that.

Lisa W. Alpert

Vice President of Development and Programming

Green-Wood

718-210-3011

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2023/2024 Season

May 23, 2024

**CELEBRATING THE JOY
OF DANCING ON ICE**

RE: May 21, 2024 – New York City Council Hearing – Budget – Cultural Affairs,
Libraries and International Intergroup Relations – written testimony

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Dear Council Members Carlina Rivera, Justin Brannan and Gale Brewer,

I thank you for letting me address this Cultural Affairs budget hearing.

My name is Jirina Ribbens, and I am the Executive Director of Ice Theatre of New York®, the City's one and only ice dance company.

Since our founding in 1984 by Moira North, our mission is to create dance on ice as an art form through our professional dance company, partnerships with choreographers, and public performances and classes for people of all ages.

We serve New Yorkers & visitors, including those that are Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), immigrant, LGBTQIA+, low-income, and disabled.

Every year we present over 30 ice dance performances. Except for 4 ticketed performances at our home base, Sky Rink, Chelsea Piers, all are free performances for the general public at the seasonal rinks all around the City. These attract about 30,000 spectators every year.

Thanks to the assistance we receive from DCLA, the additional discretionary funding from CM's Shaun Abreu and Christopher Marte, as well as the support from Borough President Mark Levine, we serve about 1,000 New York City public school children from Title One schools every year – from Downtown Manhattan to Harlem, the South Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens. The students watch a professional show, and they participate in a free skating clinic on the ice.

Here are some testimonials of our program participants:

"Thank you so much for giving our students this opportunity. We all had a great time, and the performances were amazing!"

Mr. Sylliac from Robert F. Wagner Jr. School for Arts & Technology - Queens

"Hi, my name is Vera Sinnrich. I work at Hostos Lincoln Academy... it's a South Bronx High School where I teach math. This used to be the only trip that I would do during the year. I've been coming here for about 10 years, plus minus, and the kids love it, I love it. I think that if we were going to take the kids to do something active this is the best, most complete, and safest program. The kids enjoy the show. We really appreciate the fact that the performers come on the ice and help them learn how to skate. We've never had any incidents or accidents, and this is something that the kids talk about for the rest of the year."

Vera Sinnrich, Hostos Lincoln Academy – the Bronx

"I really love to see the performers on the ice, I love the expression, and creativity. I loved watching the students as they watched the performances and how you can see just so much joy and curiosity being imbued in them. I loved how each of the performers at the end were coaching the students on how to fall, and how to keep trying, just be persistent and determined and resilient."

Ms. Maisonette PS. 307 – Brooklyn

"I'm a staff member from MS 302, as of right now, MS 302 our students are loving the ice rink, the performance we had was phenomenal, it was fun everybody enjoyed it."

Teacher from MS 302 – Manhattan

Ice Theatre of New York® does all this programming on a shoe-string budget and with a full-time staff of only two. Annually we employ up to 40 artists - super-dedicated, passionate arts workers - from our performers to production personnel, to multi-disciplinary artists to choreographers from the dance world and Broadway. Ice Theatre of New York® and all the other non-profits arts organizations are a vital part of the creative economy.

Our sector is in crisis. The baseline for culture has not been increased since 2008 and funding for cultural organizations has remained stagnant since. This is effectively a decrease in support for arts funding. Ice Theatre of New York® cannot continue this level of programming with dwindling funding.

I acknowledge all the work and support you give our sector. We are grateful to have you on our side in our request to restore the necessary funds to all cultural institutions and organizations in FY24 and all future years, so we may continue to do our essential and magical work.

The transformative power of the arts to children, adults, seniors, and all our communities is so needed.

We like to say that skating is the closest thing to flying without leaving the ground and doesn't that appeal to the Peter Pan in all of us? Please help us to continue our programming so every New Yorker may experience this feeling of flying.

I join my colleagues in asking for a full reversal of all budget cuts and baselining of the one-time funding. In fiscal 2025 we call for \$53m to be added to the baseline—which has not been increased in 15 years! In addition, we call for restoration of ALL FY24 cuts for a total add of \$76M to the budget!

Thank you,



Jirina Ribbens



Ice Theatre of New York®

ABOUT THE COMPANY

Ice Theatre of New York® exists to create and advance ice dance as an ensemble performing art with its professional ice dance company. It remains dedicated as well to providing education and to presenting public performances to people of all ages. We aim to inspire people, especially children, to experience the balance, flow, and flight of skating and to engage in a lifelong healthy activity. In so doing, we represent our city in its diversity and international flavor across axes of ethnicity, race, and gender expression.

Founded by Moira North in 1984, ITNY created the first not-for-profit professional ice dance company in the U.S. and was the first to receive funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. ITNY represents one of the hidden-in-plain-sight gems of NYC, presenting dozens of free public performances at The Rink at Rockefeller Center, Bank of America Winter Village in Bryant Park, Wollman Rink in Central Park, Brookfield Place and Governors Island as well as at Sky Rink, Chelsea Piers where our Home Season and Gala take place. We also perform and do outreach at the LeFrak Center at Lakeside in Prospect Park, Brooklyn and City Ice and World Ice in Queens.

MISSION- ITNY's mission is to create and advance dancing on ice as an ensemble performing art through its professional dance company, collaborating with choreographers and other artists, and presenting public performances and classes to people of all ages.

In short: Establish and advance ice dance as a contemporary performing art form.

VISION- Create a passion for ice dance as a performing art form.

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EIN 13-3258301 – 501 c (3)



Photo Darial Sneed

May 21, 2024 at 10AM

Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations

Gina Tribotti , International Studio & Curatorial Program

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Gina Tribotti and I am the Development Manager at the International Studio & Curatorial Program.

As the largest visual arts residency in New York and the fourth largest in the world, ISCP brings together 100 New York City-based and international artists each year. Housed in a former printing factory in the industrial area of East Williamsburg, ISCP provides transformative opportunities in an area designated by New York state as severely disadvantaged, including free exhibitions, artist talks, open studios, paid internships, and public high school visits. Our programs nurture the cross-pollinations that emerge when people from diverse backgrounds come together, which we share with our 10,000 annual visitors from across the city and the world.

ISCP's Ground Floor Program aims to counteract the lack of affordable workspace in the city by providing subsidized studios for New York-based artists. Our funded residencies such as the Vision Fund counteract centuries of disinvestment in communities of color by providing free studios and monthly stipends that eliminate the necessity of maintaining a mix of part-time and full-time jobs just to survive.

If you were to visit us today, you would meet artists from Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, India, Iran, Italy, Kenya, Norway, Qatar, South Korea, Spain, Taiwan, Turkey and the United States. Our current Ground Floor exhibition recreates a West African living room with four large-scale paintings saturated with color and feelings of nostalgia and friendship by Ghanaian painter Crystal Yayra Anthony, and on the second floor, scenes of war and family are told through a series of Japanese papercuts by Japanese-American-Israeli artist Noa Yekutieli.

In a world where we often feel powerless to combat crises and transcend the issues that divide us, funding for organizations like ISCP help to bring global problems back down to a human scale. By showcasing art from immigrant communities and sharing international art practices with New Yorkers of all backgrounds, cultural funding helps to de-escalate tensions and promote understanding throughout this great city.



Testimony to: City Council Committee on Cultural Affairs and Libraries

May 21st 2024

From Terry Greiss, Actor, Executive Director, Founder Irondale Ensemble Project, Brooklyn NY

I join my colleagues in asking that the Council add \$53M to the adopted budget to reverse the cuts and restore and baseline the one-time funding for CIGs and CDF in FY25. I think it is curious that when there is an existential crisis: 9/11, HIV/AIDS, COVID, in the darkest of days, money is found to support artists. It's almost as if in those moments, when hope is most needed, our public and private sectors rally to say "what will happen the day after this ends". What kind of a culture will we be? Then, things improve, crises past and the support goes away. And the arts and artists are once again on our own, at the margins. Where does it go?

For 41 Years the Irondale Ensemble Project has served the people of New York City. We make plays, and we use the techniques that we learn from doing that, to address the needs and concerns of the people in our city, because we feel that that is our responsibility as Citizen/Artists. We reach 1,000 children, students, youth every year. We teach them how to think critically about the world they live in, we teach them to communicate with each other and to understand each other. Our program To Protect, Serve and Understand uses these same techniques in an intensive 10-week workshop program designed to get police officers and the citizens they are sworn to protect and serve to trust each other by improvising together, singing together and engaging in difficult conversations. I have seen with my own eyes transformative change take place when cops and "civilians" walk in each other's shoes.

After the World Trade Center was attacked, we were in high schools in every borough of New York City helping teenagers process an unimaginable experience by telling each other stories. During the HIV/AIDS epidemic, we partnered with the Dept. of Health to work with teenagers in schools and in the streets, those from stable, comfortable homes and those who survived by working in the sex industry or were members of gangs to help them practice the skills that would prevent infection and transmission. Through theatre. Through the arts.

There is an existential crisis right now. The arts community in New York is in pain, artists are in jeopardy here, in the greatest cultural mecca in the world; in a city that is powered as much by art and culture as by finance, artists are in jeopardy of disappearing. Is that really what you, as our representatives, want to happen. What kind of a world do you want to wake up to tomorrow?

Thank you,

Terry Greiss

LINCOLN CENTER

70 Lincoln Center Plaza, New York, NY 10023-6583 | [LincolnCenter.org](https://lincolncenter.org)

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc. FY25 Executive Budget Testimony May 21, 2024

Testimony of Leah C. Johnson
Executive Vice President & Chief Communications, Marketing and Advocacy Officer

On behalf of Lincoln Center, I am submitting this written testimony in support of the unified cultural sector request for \$53 million to restore all cuts and to baseline funding in FY25. Speaker Adams, Finance Chair Brannan, Cultural Affairs Chair Rivera and Members of the New York City Council, **culture is essential to the vibrancy of New York City** and the next few weeks of negotiations are crucial to supporting these spaces of creativity, learning, healing, growth, and welcome. We thank you for your continued advocacy and look to your leadership in securing stability for the cultural ecosystem which is critical to our collective humanity.

The Lincoln Center campus, founded in 1956 as “an experiment in cultural democracy,” is grounded in this concept of cultivating, fostering, and centering arts programs within civic daily life. We are home to 11 arts and arts education nonprofits, presenters of emerging and established local and global artists, and civic and arts education partners to community-based organizations. The resident organizations at Lincoln Center include the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Film at Lincoln Center, Jazz at Lincoln Center, The Juilliard School, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center Theater, The Metropolitan Opera (Met Opera), New York City Ballet, New York Philharmonic, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, and School of American Ballet (SAB). These organizations represent the cultural program groups and members of the Cultural Institutions Group. Funding culture brings city-wide economic resiliency and growth, invests in tourism, and lays the foundation for an equitable and educated New York City.

The City’s cultural organizations of various sizes in every neighborhood are the beating heart of New York City. Annually this sector generates \$110 billion in economic activity, 13% of the City’s economy, and employs more than 300,000 New Yorkers. The cultural organizations that make New York the cultural capital of the world welcome over 307 million tourists and locals every year and over 77% of those are attending for free. These organizations act as community centers providing STEAM education, peaceful public spaces, workforce development, food pantries, community blood drives, resource fairs, mental health support, community composting, violence prevention programs and so much more. Our spaces are where one comes to open their mind, feed their soul, and nurture their wellbeing.

At Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, we are committed to being a place where all New Yorkers see themselves and feel welcome. We continue to see new and growing audiences attending free and Choose-What-You-Pay performances throughout *Summer for the City* and year-round through *Lincoln Center Presents*. We welcome guests to come as they are with *Lincoln Center Moments*, designed for older adults with dementia, and *Passport to the Arts* and *Big Umbrella Festival* for young people with disabilities and neurodiverse audiences. This work is ongoing, and our audiences know first-hand the positive impact of culture in our city. Here are just a few of their stories:

“Lincoln Center is one of my family's favorite places to visit. We are so happy that so many excellent, innovative performances are open and accessible to so many groups - people who have financial issues, physical disabilities, neurodiverse people, etc. We also love how diverse the offerings are. The dance troop with wheelchairs was my children's favorite show so far. We also love that there is a mix of different venues - inside, outside, accessible and loose and more formal and traditional. There is something for everyone there and I highly recommend it to many people.” – *Lincoln Center Presents* attendee

“Lincoln Center calms and soothes my soul. I continue to be touched by the efforts to be inclusive and diverse, their commitment to the arts and New York City, and to stay fresh, engaging, and innovative to and for all.” – *Lincoln Center Presents* attendee

“La verdad fue muy fácil, el centro ofrece muchos eventos, conseguir el acceso rápido fue fácil y súper cómodo. Igualmente, la organización estuvo espectacular, el lugar está muy bien ambientado y se siente como si fuera un concierto personalizado y VIP. Muchas gracias por crear estos espacios para la ciudad y traer artistas de todo el planeta para que los inmigrantes nos sintamos en casa.” – *Summer for the City* attendee

[*ENGLISH TRANSLATION*: “The truth is it was very easy, the center offers many events and getting quick access was easy and super comfortable. Likewise, the organization was spectacular, the place is very well decorated, and it feels like it was a personalized VIP concert. Thank you very much for creating these spaces for the city and bringing artists from all over the planet so that immigrants feel at home.”]

“My favorite part of the Lincoln Center Moments program was when I was in the breakout art room and one of the musicians sat next to me, brainstormed about the picture with me, then went up to get his instrument and played a song to help go with the story. I usually don’t talk but he helped me contribute.” – *Lincoln Center Moments* attendee

“My husband usually has a flat affect, but he was singing and smiling as we left. Your program did that. Thank you.” – *Lincoln Center Moments* attendee

“My son with autism has been attending *Passport to the Arts* for many years. As a younger child, he loved the music performances that we got to attend, and we loved that there was no pressure or stress if we had to step out or if he got fidgety. We appreciate that we can attend events as a family because he has a twin sister who would otherwise feel left out. Overall, it has been a wonderful experience, and I now have children who love and appreciate music and the arts! My daughter has grown to love opera and aspires to be an opera singer. How many 15-year-olds would say that? If not for your program, I don’t think we would ever have been able to attend as a family. Thank you!” – *Passport to the Arts* attendee

“Being able to share the performing arts with my daughter, in a world class setting, where she can 100% be herself. Our most special memory to date has been the ballet workshop that she was able to share with her younger sister. The whole experience, the size, the format, were tailor made for my daughter, and getting to share it with her younger sister who is a ballerina was such a bond for them too.” – *Passport to the Arts* attendee

City support this year is essential for the longevity of the arts in New York City. A healthy cultural ecosystem helps enrich our economic resiliency and growth, and uplifts the mental and civic health of communities.

On behalf of the 11 organizations that call Lincoln Center home, in support of the artists that grace our stages, the young people that will be the artists of tomorrow, and the ecosystem of small businesses supported by the cultural sector, we urge you to support culture in the Fiscal Year 2025 budget by following the ABC’s:

A. Add \$53 Million in FY2025

- To reverse the cuts and hold funding for the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG) and Cultural Development Fund (CDF) level, the FY25 Budget needs to increase by *\$53 million*.
 - CDF is cut by \$6.7 million in FY24 and \$1.4 million in FY25
 - CIG PEGs total \$6.5 million in FY25

B. Build the Baseline

- Baseline the \$45 million one-time add in FY25. Culture funding is stagnant; there has been no baseline increase in 15 years!

C. Commit To Culture for All

- Support DCLA (Department of Cultural Affairs) and fund City Council initiatives:
 - *Autism Awareness*
 - *Geriatric Mental Health*
 - *Arts as a Catalyst for Change*
 - *CASA*
 - *SU-CASA*
 - *Cultural Immigrant Initiative*
 - *Coalition of Theaters of Color*

We appreciate the City Council including restorations for culture in their response to the preliminary budget and for working with the Mayor to reverse some of the hurtful budget cuts imposed earlier this year. However, the work is not done. We need to move forward, not back, and maintaining stable funding for the arts and culture sector needs to be the bare minimum. Culture has the data-proven ability to strengthen communities, improve education outcomes, decrease youth involvement in the criminal justice system, and improve the mental health and well-being of neighborhoods. City funding allows the cultural sector to fulfill its role within a healthy democracy as spaces for convening, learning, and healing.

I thank the members of the Committee on Finance, members of the City Council and Committee staff. The full restoration of \$53 million is needed for the cultural and arts sector, which includes live performance, living science centers, gardens, museums, and much more, to continue serving New Yorkers as an integral part of New York City's identity. Lincoln Center is committed to New York City as a place where everyone is welcome and where they belong, and we continue to engage in community to embrace the values and practices of being an active citizen through artistic practice and experiences.

Respectfully submitted,

Leah C. Johnson

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Enclosures: Summer for the City and Amsterdam Avenue Design Team press releases

Lincoln Center

***Summer for the City* Returns to Lincoln Center** June 12 - August 10, 2024

Hundreds of FREE Events Welcome New Yorkers All Summer Long

**Seven New Commissions Across Classical Music, Hip-Hop, Multimedia,
Musical Theater, and Intersections of Art and Technology
Join Long-Time Lincoln Center Summer Favorites**



Summer for the City 2023, Photo by Lawrence Sumulong

NEW YORK, NY (April 17, 2024) – Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (LCPA) today announced the third annual [*Summer for the City*](#), welcoming New Yorkers to hundreds of free events over three months.

A highly anticipated staple of New York City summers, this year’s festival features new commissions and a wide variety of programming bringing together thousands of artists from across the world in celebration of the multitude of cultural histories and stories that live within the city.

From June 12 to August 10 Lincoln Center’s campus transforms into a welcoming oasis where neighbors and New Yorkers from across the city can gather, relax, participate in performances, enjoy expanded food offerings at the Lincoln Center Night Market, and even play outdoor games. The outdoor spaces are designed by Visual Director Clint Ramos and inspired by flora and fauna of the American prairie, with greenery and plants by Donyale Werle Design, lighting designs by Andrew Grant, and projection designs by Zachary Borovay.

“Life, Liberty, and Happiness” is this year’s guiding curatorial theme, highlighting how active participation in the arts helps strengthen civic bonds and grow strong community.

Throughout the summer, audiences are invited to be creators themselves—whether as songwriters, poets, dancers, or storytellers.

“The ethos that drives all we do for New York is to live up to our founding mission that the arts are for everyone. It is in service of this democratic ideal that we offer a summer with artistry from so many perspectives and lived experiences—all for free or Choose-What-You-Pay,” said **Shanta Thake, Ehrenkranz Chief Artistic Officer of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts**.

Thake continued, “Our guiding theme this summer helps reinforce so much of what we all share, but sometimes lose in our busy daily lives. The arts are core to our collective well-being and to helping us realize our hopes and dreams for future generations. We look forward to coming together this summer with artists from across the globe and with neighbors from across New York City.”

This year’s festival includes several **new commissions**; a series of dynamic concerts with the **Festival Orchestra of Lincoln Center** in its first season with Renée and Robert Belfer Music Director Jonathon Heyward; a week-long celebration of Indian cultural traditions during **India Week**; a contemporary concert series curated by **Nadia Sirota**; the return of the **BAAND Together Dance Festival**; **Pride Month** celebrations; **Juneteenth** events; **comedy nights**; activations at the **intersections of the arts and technology**; **wellness events and workshops**; and expanded **offerings for families**.

The summer also shines a light on Deaf and disabled artists, with the return of **Deaf Broadway**; a Night of Access Magic silent disco curated by **Kevin Gotkin**; and performances centering disability artistry from guest curator **Ryan J. Haddad**. A relaxed open rehearsal with the **Festival Orchestra**, inclusive dance classes with **Mark Morris Dance Group’s Dance for PD** program, and the return of **Big Umbrella Day** are among the many access offerings for audiences. Additional highlights and a full calendar follow.

Summer for the City is presented in collaboration with organizations from across the city and the Lincoln Center campus, including **Bushwick Starr, Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute, Film at Lincoln Center, Jazz at Lincoln Center, The Juilliard School, Korean Cultural Center New York, La Casita, PEN America, New York City Ballet, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, NY Laughs, the School of American Ballet**, and many more.

“In reaching people from all five boroughs and beyond with its warm welcome, *Summer for the City* has established itself as a New York tradition, but—as this year’s lineup shows—it’s a tradition as dynamic and inclusive as the city itself. When public space comes alive, it’s a whole that’s greater than the sum of its parts, and we can’t wait to experience that anew this summer,” said **Andreas Dracopoulos, Co-President of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF)**, which is providing lead support for the festival’s community programming.

In recent years, Lincoln Center has expanded its role as an artistic and civic cornerstone, hosting dozens of blood drives, food distributions, naturalization ceremonies, graduations, and serving as a polling place, core to its broader commitment to the city and a statement of confidence in its enduring vitality.

“There's no place like New York City in the summer, where people across the five boroughs gather in our public spaces to enjoy the events, programming, and the magic of our city,” said **Speaker Adrienne Adams**. “For its third consecutive year, Lincoln Center will provide hundreds of free events to New Yorkers through *Summer for the City* so everyone can enjoy free, world-class art and cultural programming. Art is critical to our imagination and can help expand what we believe is possible for ourselves and our communities. That's why it is critical that the City invests in our arts and cultural institutions, because all New Yorkers deserve to experience the life-changing power of the arts.”

“*Summer for the City* initially grew from a need to bring together our community after the isolation of lockdown,” said **Erika Mallin, Executive Director of the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA)**. “Over the past three years, it has affirmed the measurable healing benefits of arts and culture, bringing us together with new technologies and both free and affordable programming. Now a treasured cultural tradition, NYSCA is a proud supporter of Lincoln Center as it welcomes all New Yorkers to transformative and inspiring performances all summer long.”

“Lincoln Center's *Summer for the City* is an amazing expression of the unmatched power that culture has to engage and connect New Yorkers with joy, excitement, enlightenment, education, and so much more,” said **New York City Cultural Affairs Commissioner Laurie Cumbo**. “New Yorkers deserve every opportunity to connect with the cultural activity that makes living here so exciting, so I applaud the hundreds of free programs happening as part of *Summer for the City*, which are open and accessible to all. We're proud to continue our work with Lincoln Center to bring the arts to all New Yorkers. I'll see you this summer!”

The majority of the more than 200 events during *Summer for the City* are free, with select indoor performances having a Choose-What-You-Pay ticketing model, starting at \$5.

Choose-What-You-Pay tickets go on sale to the public Thursday, May 16 at 12pm. Friends of Lincoln Center have pre-sale access to Choose-What-You-Pay tickets beginning Thursday, May 9 at 12pm.

Most free performances offer a free [Fast Track](#) line to gain priority access to the event ahead of the general admission line, and these free Fast Track registrations are available every Monday at noon for that week's performances. Check event webpages on [SummerForTheCity.org](#) for performance-specific information on Fast Track availability or ticket on-sale dates.

Click [here](#) for full calendar of events and [here](#) for imagery.

A link to the online event calendar can be found at [SummerForTheCity.org](#)

Lincoln Center commissions featured in *Summer for the City*:

- [***Soundcake***](#) - The opening night extravaganza features classically-trained drag queens—well-known from their stints on RuPaul's Drag Race—**Sapphira Cristál** and **Monét X Change**, celebrating the fabulosity and queerness in opera. From Mozart to Mariah Carey, the superstars make their Lincoln Center debuts performing together for the first time in a sparkling new commission from director **James Blaszk**, featuring a full orchestra, conducted by **David Bloom**. (June 12)
- [***The Dream Machine Experience***](#) - From the mind of the incomparable **Nona Hendryx**, comes a brand-new experience that pushes the boundaries of art and technology, combining the physical and digital worlds through Afrofuturist art, music, and storytelling. A press release with more information can be accessed [here](#). (June 12 – 30)
- [***Ethan Lipton & His Orchestra and Their Orchestra: Most of Us Love You Anyway***](#) - For the first time in its 20 years as a band, the cheeky Obie-winning quartet **Ethan Lipton and His Orchestra**—featuring Lipton as lead vocalist along with Eben Levy (guitar), Ian Riggs (bass), and Vito Dieterle (sax)—will realize its music with an actual orchestra, performing tracks from their latest album and the rest of their eclectic catalog. With arrangements and conducted by **Giancarlo Vulcano**. (June 28)
- [***Passing the Crown: Celebrating the Queens of Hip-Hop***](#) - An all-star revue of Hip-Hop performers centering female emcees, DJs, producers and B-Girl crews with an immersive night of orchestral music, DJs, and dance. (July 7)
- [***City of Floating Sounds***](#) - The **Festival Orchestra of Lincoln Center**'s official opening concerts feature **Renée and Robert Belfer Music Director Jonathon Heyward** leading the Orchestra in the North American premiere of **Huang Ruo**'s interactive work that fuses music and technology with a mobile app-enabled soundscape and live performance, co-commissioned by Factory International and LCPA. A press release with the Festival Orchestra roster and full summer season can be accessed [here](#). (July 23, 24)
- [***MVP***](#) - A multimedia tribute concert honoring the trailblazing work of filmmaker **Melvin Van Peebles**, written and hosted by his son Mario Van Peebles and scored by the soul-jazz-funk fusion collective **Burnt Sugar the Arkestra Chamber**. (August 9, 10)
- [***He stretches out the north over the void and hangs the earth on nothing***](#) - The closing concerts with the **Festival Orchestra of Lincoln Center** feature Jonathon Heyward conducting the world premiere of **Hannah Kendall**'s newest piece, co-commissioned by LCPA and Musikkollegium Winterthur. Alongside a curated panel series which explores arts and wellness, the final performances shine a light on the transformative power of music and connection to mental health. (August 9, 10)

Events at the intersections of the arts, participation, and civic engagement:

- The world premiere performances of the final three anthems as part of [*Anthem to US*](#)— a new project presented by Brooklyn Public Library and Lincoln Center in collaboration with The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts and Queens Public Library, that invites applicants of all ages and backgrounds to create a contemporary anthem to add to the canon. This concert also features beloved songs that have served as anthems of hope, peace, and persistence, directed by **Keenan T. Oliphant**, with **Lara Downes** as creative director, music. (July 6)
- A special “crowd-composed concert”, [*Symphony of Choice*](#), with the **Festival Orchestra of Lincoln Center** invites audience members to vote on pieces to co-create the evening’s program, conducted by Jonathon Heyward. (July 20)
- The New York premiere of [*The Ritual of Breath Is the Rite to Resist*](#), a transdisciplinary opera and creative act of resistance that was composed as a response to the murder of Eric Garner. Coinciding with the 10-year remembrance of his death, the remounting is directed by Niegel Smith, conducted by Kamna Gupta, with choreography by Jawole Willa Jo Zollar. The work is presented in collaboration with Hopkins Center for the Arts at Dartmouth alongside a series of civic partnerships, community activations and healing rituals taking place in Staten Island and across the city. (July 19)
- [*Civic Saturdays*](#) is an event series designed to unite friends and strangers in the spirit of shared community. Events include gatherings hosted by poet-in-residence Mahogany L. Browne in collaboration with Citizen University with conversation, music, reflection, keynote speeches, and more; performances, pop-up speeches, and artist talkbacks featuring songs and readings in collaboration with Voices of a People’s History; and a live event with WNYC’s All Of It with Alison Stewart for the Public Song Project, as part of their centenary. (June 15, June 29, July 13, July 20, July 27, August 3)
- The 20th annual [*NYC In C*](#) features **Terry Riley**’s magnum opus, *In C*, performed by a broad community of musicians across the rock, classical, experimental, and jazz scenes, in their largest gathering yet. Led by composers Nick Hallett and Zach Layton, with Brian Chase from Yeah Yeah Yeahs on drums, the lineup includes Ava Mendoza, Matana Roberts, Qasim Naqvi, Zoh Amba, Gelsey Bell, Angélica Negrón, Kaoru Watanabe, Aba Diop, and Adam Tandler, with more names to be announced. (June 30)
- [*The Black Studies: An Education for Me + You Bookmobile and Book Fair*](#), developed by United Way of New York City in partnership with the Education Equity Action Plan Coalition (EEAPC), has embarked on a tour that includes stops in all five New York City boroughs. Ten thousand books will be distributed to students and conversations with Black authors, illustrators, and storytellers from across genres will be featured. The Bookmobile, an interactive museum on wheels, will make a stop on campus during the festival to provide an immersive learning experience. (June 22)
- Pop culture meets activism with the [*Ruidosa Fest*](#), the Latine-led international feminist platform, with a full day of industry panels and conversations, and

performances featuring artists from across the Latin diaspora, including iLE, Buscabulla, Fran Valenzuela, Salt Cathedral, Renee Goust featuring Khyllie Rylo: CYBER MASHAKA, Riobamba, Tayhana and Mare Advertencia Lirika, and Mireya Ramos. (August 10)

- **A Century of Baldwin**, a celebration of the iconic author, social critic, and culture changer James Baldwin, to commemorate the historic occasion of his centenary, presented in collaboration with National Black Theatre and The Baldwin Family Estate. (August 2)
- **Carl Hancock Rux** commemorates the rich and varied history of Black American music in **Some Sing: A Juneteenth Celebration**—a campus-wide tribute to Juneteenth, featuring performances by Cooper-Moore, Tamar-kali, Stephanie McKay, and more. The evening culminates with a performance by **Toshi Reagon**, her band BIG LOVELY and special guests, and her participatory Songs of the Living Community Choir. (June 19)
- **The PEN America Little Library for Big Ideas**, a book exchange available during the entire festival featuring a collection curated by authors Min Jin Lee and Julia Alvarez to be read on site as well as opportunities for New Yorkers to leave their own favorites. The book-sharing box features a range of authors and genres—from poetry and YA to fiction, non-fiction, and more—with books donated by PEN America and Bookshop.org. (June 12 – August 10)

This summer also sees the return of:

- **Social dance on The Dance Floor** under the now iconic disco ball, with dozens of genres all summer long. Featured artists include **Abaddón New York Tango** (June 21), the **NYC Ska Orchestra** (June 28), and **Louie Vega** (August 8), with returning favorites **Joe McGinty & The Loser's Lounge** (June 20), **Garba360** (July 11), **Stud Country** (July 25), and more—each beginning with a DJ set and dance tutorials across a variety of dance styles including ballroom, mambo, swing, salsa, line-dancing, and Hip-Hop.
- **Silent discos on The Dance Floor** multiple nights per week with a diverse range of dance styles from cumbia, Hip-Hop, salsa, a celebration of LGBTQIA+ Pride, Indian traditional and contemporary music, and more.
- **The Underground at Jaffe Drive**, a speakeasy-inspired space, hosting **Comedy Underground**, stand-up comedy nights with **NY Laughs**, and **Jazz Underground**, jazz nights with **Jazz at Lincoln Center**. New this year are Civic Saturdays; **Living Music Underground** curated by Juilliard faculty member **Nadia Sirota** and featuring performances from Ringdown, Claire Chase, Rafiq Bhatia, Josh Johnson, and JACK Quartet (July 12 – August 9); and performances centering disability artistry from guest curator **Ryan J. Haddad**.

- [The Outdoor Film Series](#) in Damrosch Park, featuring an eclectic lineup of special screening events, complete with popcorn and drinks, and transmitted via Quiet Event headphones, in collaboration with **Film at Lincoln Center**.
- [The Wedding: New York's Biggest Day](#), inviting hundreds of couples to our 16-acre campus and offering New Yorkers the chance to celebrate love. Directed by the Founding Artistic Director of Ars Nova, Jason Eagan, the celebration brings couples together for a multicultural ceremony with music, poetry, social dance and more, for a wedding that could only happen at Lincoln Center. (June 22)
- A collaborative showcase performance highlighting the talents of [Juilliard summer music students](#) from around the globe (July 19), and dance workshop for families on The Dance Floor with faculty and students from the [School of American Ballet](#). (July 20)
- [Big Umbrella Day](#), a one-day iteration of Lincoln Center's Big Umbrella Festival, creates relaxed spaces which specifically welcome neurodivergent audiences through multi-sensory experiences, performances, installations and workshops, and culminates in A Night of Access Magic silent disco. (July 6)
- [BAAND Together Dance Festival](#) with five of NYC's most iconic dance companies—**Ballet Hispánico**, **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater**, **American Ballet Theatre**, **New York City Ballet**, and **Dance Theatre of Harlem**—performing together on one stage for five performances. Made possible by CHANEL (July 30 – August 3)
- [Deaf Broadway](#) returns, performing *Once On This Island* entirely by Deaf actors in American Sign Language. (July 31)
- [Panel discussions](#) presented as part of the **Jameel Arts & Health Lab's global Healing Arts initiative in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO)**. This summer's sessions shine a light on the transformative power of the arts on our mental health and well-being, coinciding with the **Festival Orchestra of Lincoln Center** concerts. (July 26, August 2, August 9)
- [Our Echos Be Bloom](#), a meditative spoken word series hosted by Lincoln Center's inaugural poet-in-residence, Mahogany L. Browne. (July 18, August 8)
- [Urban Bush Women](#) kicks off their 40th anniversary with a week-long series including participatory workshops, a discussion series, and site reflective performances of their newest work, *Haint Blu!* (July 26-August 4)
- Film screenings with a new presentation of *The Ephemeral Cinema of Sam Green*, a collection of the Oscar-nominated filmmaker's signature live cinema documentaries that pair live music with narration. The triple feature includes the globally acclaimed [32 Sounds \(2022\) with JD Samson](#) (Le Tigre, MEN), [The Love Song of R. Buckminster Fuller \(2012\) with Yo La Tengo](#), and [A Thousand Thoughts, a live documentary with](#)

[the Kronos Quartet \(2018\)](#), marking the final NYC performances of members Hank Dutt and John Sherba after 42 years. (June 13-16)

- Featured musical performances in Damrosch Park including [Rosanne Cash](#) (June 23); the Brazilian trio [Gilsons](#) (July 17); [Emily King](#) (June 26); French jazz-funk group [Cortex](#) (June 27); K-pop star [Yerin Baek](#) (July 21); and a [Comedy Night](#) hosted by **Kiran Deol** featuring **Aasif Mandvi**, **Hari Kondabolu**, **Nimesh Patel**, and **Aparna Nancherla** (July 13), presented as part of India Week.
- The **Art of Wellbeing**, participatory movement and mindfulness sessions harnessing the power of the arts to engage the mind, body, and spirit, presented in collaboration with health and wellness experts at NewYork-Presbyterian, the Official Hospital of Lincoln Center. (June 15 – July 20)
- Expanded [offerings for families](#) featuring interactive dance workshops and showcases with Dance Lab New York, Step Into The Light, and Jenn Lopez; Storytimes with the **New York Public Library for the Performing Arts**; and performances with artists including **La Manga**, **Sara Curruchich**, **Dobet Gnahoré**, **Yacouba Sissoko & SIYA**, and more.

Building off the success of Korean Arts Week during last year's *Summer for the City*, this year's festival immerses audiences in a range of festivities that highlight the depth of India's cultural landscape during [India Week](#) (July 10-14), showcasing the country's music, dance, art, cuisine, and more. Performances include silent discos curated by **DJ Rekha**, a performance by **Ragamala Dance Company** at Damrosch Park, a high-energy social dance party celebrating garba, comedy nights, a literary event presented by PEN America, and programming for families, presented in collaboration with Riff Festival.

Several additional events celebrate the multicultural communities of the city including a concert by **Electric Fields and DEM MOB** celebrating South Australians First Nations (June 22); **Brasil Summerfest** (July 5 & July 17); the **San Juan Procession** (June 23); the **iVAYA! Series**; **Los Van Van** (July 28); **La Casita** (July 21); **globalFEST** (August 3); a celebration of Jamaican Independence Day with **Steel Pulse** (August 4), **Jaime Lozano & The Familia** (July 31), **Ars Nova Napoli** (June 30), and the **Ruidosa Fest** (August 10) for the closing weekend.

New this summer is the **Lincoln Center Night Market Presented by Chase**, an outdoor food emporium open Wednesday - Sunday from 5pm to 10pm, featuring a wide range of cuisines at affordable prices including Jerrell's Betr Brgr serving 100% plant-based burgers; Maya's Snack Bar featuring Mexican dessert snacks; Harlem Seafood Soul with gourmet seafood and soul food; Japanese-style street food from Yakitori Totto; Manousheh, serving traditional Lebanese street food; and authentic Mexican from Taqueria al Pastor. There will also be a tent with rotating food offerings that align with that week's programming. Joe Coffee will be available during the day. Additional vendors to be announced soon.

Events throughout the summer are inclusively designed, integrating access needs with a range of accommodations for select performances and upon request—from ASL

interpretation, audio description, live captioning, haptic suits, relaxed performances and more. Select performances will be livestreamed across Lincoln Center's social channels.

Accommodations for *Summer for the City* events include accessible seating; accessible entrances; all gender and gendered restrooms with accessible stalls; FM Assistive Listening Devices; alternatives to standing in line for entry; noise-reducing headphones, earplugs, and fidgets to borrow; and Chill Out Spaces, offering reduced noise and visual stimulation, for guests to take a break and reenter when they're ready. In addition, many venues have higher weight capacity chairs, and David Geffen Hall features tactile maps and a hearing loop installed in the Wu Tsai Theater and box office. Visual directions, describing arrival instructions for neurodiverse communities, will be available online. For accommodations for specific performances and venues, visit event pages online or contact access@lincolncenter.org or 212-875-5375. Lincoln Center also offers an Access Concierge Service, with trained representatives to support guests with disabilities, and providing one on one support for individual guests and their party. To request this service, contact guestexperience@lincolncenter.org or 212-875-5456 at least one week before attending an event. Guests are welcome to request additional accommodations for specific events.

****In person press opportunities for *Summer for the City* must be arranged in advance with the Lincoln Center Press Office, pressoffice@lincolncenter.org****

About Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (LCPA) is a cultural and civic cornerstone of New York City. The primary advocate for the entire Lincoln Center campus, our strategic priorities include: fostering collaboration and deepening impact across the Lincoln Center resident organizations; championing inclusion and increasing the accessibility and reach of Lincoln Center's work; and nurturing innovation on stage and off to help ensure the arts are at the center of civic life for all. LCPA presents hundreds of programs each year, offered primarily for free and choose-what-you-pay, including many specially designed for young audiences, families, and those with disabilities.

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Lincoln Center

Lincoln Center Announces Design Team To Reimagine Amsterdam Avenue Side of Its Campus

**Hood Design Studio, Weiss/Manfredi, and Moody Nolan Will Develop
Design Ideas Based on Feedback from Thousands of New Yorkers**

Initiative Continues Series of Bold Investments in the Vibrancy of NYC

New York (March 4, 2024) – Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (LCPA) today announced the design team that will develop plans for the Amsterdam Avenue side of its campus.

The first phase of design will focus on Damrosch Park to deliver a major revitalization, providing open space for New Yorkers and state-of-the-art performance areas for artists from across the globe. Damrosch is a park under the jurisdiction of NYC Parks, operated and maintained by LCPA.

The design team—**Hood Design Studio**, landscape architect; **Weiss/Manfredi**, design architect; and **Moody Nolan**, architect of record—will create proposals based on ideas and feedback from more than 3,400 New Yorkers who have participated in a robust and ongoing [participatory planning process](#) focused on making the campus more welcoming and accessible for all New Yorkers.

The feedback from thousands of neighbors, community members, and city-wide stakeholders are collated in a publicly available report, [here](#).

This project builds upon a number of bold initiatives from LCPA in recent years that invest in the vibrancy of New York City through the arts—including Restart Stages, an outdoor performing arts center created in 2021 during the height of the pandemic so the live performing arts could continue; Summer for the City, soon embarking on its third summer welcoming hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers; and the recently completed new David Geffen Hall, built through the pandemic and supporting 6,000 jobs and \$600 million in economic activity when the City needed it most.

Guided by broad community input, this marks Lincoln Center's continued commitment to signature investments that open up the campus to more New Yorkers. That means a Damrosch Park that is both a state-of-the-art outdoor performance space and a welcoming place where students, neighbors, visitors can meet up with friends, relax, have a snack, watch a summer show and take a moment to enjoy the magic of the City.

Lincoln Center was initially built in the 1950s during the Robert Moses era as part of a series of “urban renewal” projects that razed the nearby San Juan Hill community to make way for the arts center and other neighboring institutions. A huge swath of the area, home to more than 7,000 families and 800 businesses by mid-century—was razed in the 1950s as part of the project, called the Lincoln Square Development Plan.

The campus was ultimately designed with a fortress-like wall along Amsterdam Avenue, separating the neighborhoods to the west from Lincoln Center’s campus and making it largely inaccessible to foot traffic. A stark contrast to the iconic Revson Fountain and open plaza oriented to the east.

The **Stavros Niarchos Foundation** (SNF) is a Founding Partner of this visionary process, building on their support of many initiatives vital to transformation at Lincoln Center, including [Summer for the City](#) and [Legacies of San Juan Hill](#).

Upper West Side community members, elected officials, the design team, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF), and Lincoln Center leadership weighed in on the news.

Quotes are available [here](#).

The design team

LCPA has hired a team composed of three of the world’s premier design firms to action the learnings from the ongoing participatory planning process. The team will develop ideas to present to the public that reflect the community’s aspirations, ideals, and visions for the Amsterdam Avenue side of the Lincoln Center campus.

Altogether, the team brings together designers with collective decades of experience in public design.

[Hood Design Studio](#) (landscape architect), was founded in 1992 and is led by creative director Walter Hood. The studio is dedicated to work that attempts to reveal and activate the benign, looking to existing site elements—the sidewalk, the sign post, the tree canopy, the narrow stream—as infused with emergent beauty, strangeness, subjectivity, and possibility. The firm is known, among other projects, for its work on the International African American Museum in Charleston, South Carolina, for which it won a prestigious Project of the Year award from the Architect’s Newspaper, and for the Oakland Museum of California, the de Young Museum, and the Cooper Hewitt Garden in New York. Hood is also a 2019 MacArthur Fellow and is member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

[Weiss/Manfredi](#) (design architect) is a multidisciplinary design practice based in New York City. Founded by Marion Weiss and Michael Manfredi, the firm is known for the dynamic integration of architecture, art, infrastructure, and landscape design. Weiss/Manfredi is well known for its work on the Seattle Art Museum’s Olympic Sculpture Park and the Brooklyn Botanic Garden Visitor Center. The firm’s current projects include the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, India and most recently, Weiss/Manfredi was selected through an international competition to reimagine the

La Brea Tar Pits and Museum in Los Angeles. In 2018 the firm was recognized with the Cooper Hewitt National Design Award and in 2020 with the Thomas Jefferson Foundation Medal in Architecture.

[Moody Nolan](#) (architect of record), the largest African American-owned architecture firm in the country, was founded more than 40 years ago. It is known for its work on the Jacob Javits Convention Center, as well as aviation projects at LaGuardia Airport and John F. Kennedy Airport. The team is working on the renovation of the Ancient Near Eastern and Cypriot Art galleries at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. In 2023, the team was recognized for its work on the award-winning International African American Museum in Charleston, South Carolina. The firm prioritizes diversity and inclusion with 42 percent of its 360 employees identifying as minorities and 46 percent of the staff composed of women.

Beginning with Damrosch Park, the design team will now work to develop proposals that reimagine the Amsterdam Avenue side of the campus, to make it more publicly accessible while transforming it into a state-of-the-art performance park. Feedback from more than 3,400 neighbors, advocates, and community leaders over the past several months indicated the importance of beginning with Damrosch Park, which occupies the largest footprint on the west side of Lincoln Center's campus and does not currently accommodate the extensive needs for a wide range of performance types. Exploring design opportunities within Damrosch Park will be a key toward reimagining a more accessible, inclusive, and welcoming Amsterdam Avenue for all.

The team will also work towards a design that includes a commemoration of the history and public memory of San Juan Hill and historic Lincoln Square, continuing a slate of programmatic and artistic collaborations that celebrate the legacies of the neighborhood, anchored by the [Legacies of San Juan Hill](#) digital hub.

A robust public process

Since June 2023, LCPA and its partners have hosted thousands of conversations, including one-on-one interviews, focus groups, a paper and online survey, pop-up events, and workshops in collaboration with the award-winning architecture, urban design and planning firm NADAAA and the nonprofit firm Hester Street, which has an established track record of building relationships with people that are historically and currently marginalized from civic decision-making.

Between the summer and December 2023, LCPA hosted more than 3,400 neighbors, nearby NYCHA residents, advocates, community groups, staff and students from nearby educational institutions, elected officials, civic leaders, and other members of the New York City community to share their ideas, interests, questions, and feedback about the campus.

To provide broad access to each session, engagement materials were translated into Spanish and Simplified Chinese, and when workshops were held, Spanish, Mandarin, and American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters were offered and assisted listening devices (ALDs) were made available. Engagement events were held on weekdays and weekends during daytime and evening hours with childcare and refreshments made available during workshops.

In total, the work included:

- **2,220+ surveys**, online and on paper, that gathered information from stakeholders and Lincoln Center campus users about the current appearance of the wall along Amsterdam Avenue, the design of Damrosch Park, and the uses (both actual and desired) of the park and the campus' outdoor spaces
- **1,000+ sticker exercises** that enabled participants to discuss how often they visit Damrosch Park, what they do there, and the largest challenges of the space
- **1,200+ memories**, shared by participants offering personal recollections of Lincoln Center experiences, as well as ideas about memories they'd like to create on campus
- **7 stakeholder interviews** with local community leaders to seek guidance and gather comprehensive feedback to help guide the participatory planning process
- **5 focus groups** of 10 to 15 participants each, including community stakeholders, accessibility groups, seniors, NYCHA residents, community organizations, school leadership, and members of Community Board 7
- **3 community workshops** attended by 170 participants in total, in which stakeholders offered design ideas, reflections on access, and posed invaluable questions about the future of the campus

What we learned

In total, LCPA gathered information from more than 3,400 individuals to ensure a broad array of stakeholders have had a voice in the process, allowing for a lasting, positive impact.

Key learnings include:

- A repeated point community members made was that they want the design to take a **community-centric approach that emphasizes interaction and communication through thoughtful design**
- **The entrance should feel welcoming** and offer pathways where everyone can enter, regardless of physical ability, particularly along Amsterdam Avenue and 62nd Streets
- Stakeholders expressed a need for a dedicated area for **community performances where local talent can have a stage** that is separate from the main stage. Additionally, flexible exhibit spaces should celebrate new talent and student artists, as well as **community-generated artwork**

- Community members also feel strongly that we should prioritize **greenery and sustainability**
- Food options in Damrosch Park during events should **reflect different cultures and ethnicities** to enhance the park experience and cater to diverse tastes

Enhancing the campus experience

The design team will develop plans that explore possibilities along the Amsterdam Avenue side of the Lincoln Center campus. Sites for design considerations will begin with Damrosch Park, in collaboration with NYC Parks (especially how it is accessed at the southwest corner of the campus); and, in the future, the campus entrance at the northwest corner; as well as the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts terrace and Amsterdam Avenue entrance.

In addition to the initiative's primary goal to extend a greater sense of welcome and improved access to communities to the west, a significant priority is also to upgrade aging infrastructure, including:

- Heating and cooling systems
- Power and data distribution
- Public and back-of-house restroom facilities
- Access for the artists, audiences, and community members

Improvements to these systems are essential for the campus's resident organizations, will provide better service to operators and audiences, and increase efficiency to meet contemporary sustainability standards.

A commitment to a more equitable future

To honor the communities of the neighborhood, LCPA has invested in several major projects that shine a light on this important history and celebrate its significant cultural impact. These include the [Legacies of San Juan Hill](#) digital hub, a collaboration with the Center for Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College (CENTRO) and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, as well as a series of [events and exhibits](#) that engage with this history from a multitude of perspectives.

Years in the making, [Legacies of San Juan Hill](#) features scholarly essays, articles, multimedia, and a series of live events from a diverse slate of contributors. It is a resource that will grow over time.

The initiative also recognizes that more inclusive programming across Lincoln Center's outdoor venues requires updated facilities to improve audience experience and access, which will allow the institution to continue to usher in new audiences. Among those programs are the annual [Summer for the City](#) festival, which has included hundreds of free events and thousands of artists performing across Lincoln Center's 16-acre campus.

Call to action

LCPA is still calling upon New Yorkers to get directly involved by offering feedback through [LincolnCenter.org/series/planning-process](https://lincolncenter.org/series/planning-process) and by participating in workshops, focus groups, surveys, and events on and off the Lincoln Center campus, including upcoming workshops in April and May.

Imagery may be accessed [here](#).

About Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (LCPA) is a cultural and civic cornerstone of New York City. The primary advocate for the entire Lincoln Center campus, our strategic priorities include: fostering collaboration and deepening impact across the Lincoln Center resident organizations; championing inclusion and increasing the accessibility and reach of Lincoln Center's work; and nurturing innovation on stage and off to help ensure the arts are at the center of civic life for all. LCPA presents hundreds of programs each year, offered primarily for free and choose-what-you-pay, including many specially designed for young audiences, families, and those with disabilities.

About Hood Design Studio

Hood Design Studio, Inc. is a social art and design practice based in Oakland, California founded in 1992. The studio's practice is tripartite: art + fabrication, design + landscape, and research + urbanism. This breadth allows us to understand each place in its scale and context. We respond not with a standard design, but with an approach adaptive to the particulars and specifics of a space. We strengthen endemic patterns and practices—those ecological and cultural, contemporary and historic, and those that remain unseen or unrecognized. Urban spaces and their objects act as public sculpture, creating new apertures through which to see the emergent beauty, strangeness, and idiosyncrasies around us.

About Weiss/Manfredi Architecture/Landscape/Urbanism

WEISS/MANFREDI Architecture/Landscape/Urbanism is a multidisciplinary design practice based in New York City. Founded by Marion Weiss and Michael Manfredi, the firm is known for the dynamic integration of architecture, art, infrastructure, and landscape design. The firm is well known for the Seattle Art Museum's celebrated Olympic Sculpture Park, and other notable projects include the Women's Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery, the Brooklyn Botanic Garden Visitor Center, and Hunter's Point South Waterfront Park. The firm's current work includes the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, India, and most recently, Weiss/Manfredi was selected through an international competition to reimagine the La Brea Tar Pits and Museum in Los Angeles.

Weiss and Manfredi have won numerous awards, including the 2024 Louis I. Kahn award for architecture, the 2020 Thomas Jefferson Foundation Medal in Architecture, the Cooper Hewitt National Design Award, the AIA President's Award, the Academy Award for Architecture from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and the International Veronica Rudge Green Prize for Urban

Design. They have also been named one of North America's "Emerging Voices" by the Architectural League of New York, received the New York City AIA Gold Medal of Honor, and were inducted into the National Academy of Design. Michael Manfredi is a Senior Critic at Harvard University and Marion Weiss is the Graham Chair Professor of Practice at the University of Pennsylvania. Three monographs on the firm's work have been published, including most recently *Public Natures*, and their upcoming book, *Drifting Symmetries*, is slated for publication with Park Books in fall 2024. Their work has been exhibited at the Venice Biennale, the São Paulo Biennale, the Guggenheim Museum, and the Museum of Modern Art.

About Moody Nolan

Moody Nolan is the country's largest African American-owned architecture firm. Founded in 1982 with just two employees in Columbus, OH, Moody Nolan has grown to more than 360 employees in 12 locations around the country, leveraging the power of diverse backgrounds to drive design innovation. Specializing in cultural, corporate, education, sports/recreation, collegiate, healthcare, housing/mixed-use, and civic, Moody Nolan is guided by its mission to improve every life the firm touches through responsive design – pairing empathetic listening with innovative thinking – to find harmony between client, community, and environment. Acknowledging the firm's sustained professional excellence, The American Institute of Architects (AIA) named Moody Nolan as the 58th recipient of the Architecture Firm Award in 2021; the highest honor the AIA bestows on an architecture practice. In 2022, the firm celebrated its 40th anniversary and was also named one of the most innovative architecture firms by Fast Company. For more information about Moody Nolan, visit www.moodynolan.com.

About NADAAA

NADAAA is an architecture and urban design firm led by principal designer Nader Tehrani, winner of the American Academy of Arts and Letters's 2020 Arnold W. Brunner Prize, member of the Cooper Hewitt, and a newly elected member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Tehrani leads the studio with partner Arthur Chang, AIA who also leads the office's fabrication workshop NADLAB.

NADAAA has evolved over three decades as a multi-disciplinary practice dedicated to bridging design disciplines; from landscape to urbanism, architecture to interiors, and industrial design to furniture. With an eye towards integrated thinking, the office enters the discourse on technology, aesthetics, and building protocols as part of a holistic process. Rather than focus on typology, NADAAA's portfolio is built on process, with examples of institutional, academic, housing, commercial, retail, and civic projects.

Design excellence is core to NADAAA's pursuits. The firm boasts 19 Progressive Architecture Awards, 4 American Architecture Awards, 4 Chicago Athenaeum Awards, and an AIA Cote Top Ten Award. NADAAA is a 2017 Moriyma RAIC International Prize Finalist and a 2017 Marcus Prize for Architecture nominee. NADAAA consistently places among the top design firms in Architect Magazine's annual ranking of US design firms, and has been selected as top firm three years in a row.

About Hester Street

Hester Street is an urban planning, design and development nonprofit that works to ensure neighborhoods are shaped by the people who live in them. Hester Street offers planning, design and community development technical assistance to community-based organizations, government and other institutions in order to foster more equitable, sustainable and resilient neighborhoods and cities. With projects in nearly every zip code of New York City, and a history of deep collaboration to engage NYCHA residents, Hester Street is uniquely positioned to lead community engagement for the Lincoln Center *West Initiative*.

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New York City Executive Budget Committee on Finance- *Jointly with the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations.*

May 21, 2024, 12:30 pm

TESTIMONY

Juliana Cope, Assistant Executive Director for Development and External Affairs, jcope@mind-builders.org, 718-652-6256

Thank you, Chair Brannan and Chair Rivera, for your service and for this opportunity to share the work of Mind-Builders Creative Arts Center and other community-based organizations who train the next generation of New York City civic leaders and cultural contributors and on behalf of the youth, families, and neighborhoods we are honored to serve.

Founded in 1978, Mind-Builders began with a grassroots mission to inspire the growth of local youth and families in the Northeast Bronx by providing low-cost, high-quality arts education. Since then we have grown to become a cultural anchor for our community – more than just an arts center, we bring together best practices in arts education, youth development and community engagement in the belief that a healthy community is a vital ingredient in the healthy development of a child.

For 46 years, Mind-Builders has offered hundreds of music, dance, theater, visual art, folk art, and martial arts programs serving over 750 young people every week. Programs center on building skills and knowledge on the contributions of artists and culture bearers in our midst. Our public performances include Jazz Nights, Mind Your Beat dance battles as well as annual Kwanzaa and Heroes Day celebrations serving thousands of New Yorkers.

Intrinsic to our purpose is the community we serve, which is predominantly lower-income; our children and families identify as West African, Black, Latino, and/or Caribbean. Participants come from every zip code in the Bronx, but predominantly from neighborhoods local to our facility – Olinville, Wakefield, Williamsbridge, and Norwood, which have historically had fewer safety nets than their peers, despite greater need. Mind-Builders employs 53 dedicated staff coming from the five boroughs: professional teaching artists, pre-kindergarten instructors, support and administrative staff, reflective of the communities we serve. Our work is woven into the fabric of our neighborhood and our staff continue to make transformation in the lives of our young people possible.

Mind-Builders Creative Arts Center is a grateful recipient of funding through the Department of Cultural Affairs Cultural Development Fund, Speaker Initiatives, City Council Member Expense Funding, Coalition of Theaters of Color and Cultural Immigrant Initiative. Artistic productions and cultural organizations like ours are vital engines in our communities – for jobs, mental health, activism, education, youth development, empowering messages, and access to other local services. Our communities need us and your support is vital.

Our current FY25 requests include:

Programs

Speaker Initiative \$100,000

Bronx Delegation \$50,000

City Council Member Discretionary Expense \$20,000

Coalition of Theaters of Color \$180,000

Cultural Immigrant Initiative \$130,000

Community Safety and Victim Services \$50,000

Capital

Capital Equipment \$526,000 for six upright and one medium grand piano

Organizations like Mind-Builders Creative Arts Center touch every vital aspect of daily life - from public education, health and human services, cultural enrichment to language access. We thank you for your support and call on the City to continue your ongoing investments in the cultural sector, supporting work that effectively transforms lives, neighborhoods and cities.

MUSEUM OF JEWISH HERITAGE A LIVING MEMORIAL TO THE HOLOCAUST



Edmond J. Safra Plaza | 36 Battery Place
New York, NY 10280
646.437.4202 | mjhny.org

Good afternoon. My name is Elyse Buxbaum, and I am the Chief Operating Officer at the Museum of Jewish Heritage - A Living Memorial to the Holocaust.

Chair Rivera, Members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today on the impact of the City's support of the Cultural Sector.

The Museum of Jewish Heritage educates diverse visitors about Jewish life before, during, and after the Holocaust. We are committed to the crucial – and timely – mission of teaching about what unchecked hate and bigotry can do. We are dedicated to education and remembrance.

The Museum is an essential resource for combatting antisemitism in New York City. We provide free admission for NYC public school students and teachers, CUNY students, and IDNYC cardholders. Our Holocaust Curriculum, developed with support from the Department of Education, is a free and trustworthy resource for educators.

In October 2023, we opened *Courage to Act: Rescue in Denmark*. For the first time, this world-class exhibition has enabled the Museum to start conversations about one's role in a community and expand our Holocaust education programs to 3rd through 5th grade students. Further, as part of our commitment to removing barriers to education, the Museum subsidizes free private bus transportation for schools in need. Recently, in response to a growing request from New York City's teachers, the Museum created and launched a free online resource to discuss antisemitism constructively in the classroom.

Among other partnership programs, we also operate the Interfaith Living Museum in which Muslim and Jewish students find commonalities as they educate each other about cultural practices. In addition, the Museum organizes over 100 free public programs, including the annual New York Jewish Book Festival and the Spring Equinox Festival celebrating Purim and Nowruz, the Persian new year.

Council funding has been vital as we rebuild our audiences and school outreach. Prior to COVID, we served 200,000 visitors annually. In 2023, we served over 150,000 people including 40,000 students. In the year ahead, with a planned growth in student tours, we project reaching 200,000 once again. Council funding is essential.

In a climate of rising antisemitism and Holocaust denial, education is our first line of defense. Our entire Museum community is deeply grateful for the Council's support of our crucial work. We urge your continued support of the entire cultural sector and the impact we make across New York City.

Thank you.



**MUSEUM OF
JEWISH HERITAGE**
A LIVING MEMORIAL
TO THE HOLOCAUST

EDUCATOR RESOURCE

Antisemitism FAQ

EDMOND J. SAFRA PLAZA | 36 BATTERY PLACE, NYC | MJHNYC.ORG



EDUCATOR RESOURCE

Antisemitism FAQ

MUSEUM OF JEWISH HERITAGE – A LIVING MEMORIAL TO THE HOLOCAUST



EDUCATOR RESOURCE

Antisemitism FAQ

Museum Statement Regarding Hate

The Museum opposes antisemitism, Islamophobia, and all forms of hatred, including hatred on the basis of ethnicity, religion, nationality, and other shared group identities. While the Museum naturally focuses on antisemitism given its subject matter, as a Museum dedicated to preserving and sharing the rich heritage of Jewish culture, the Museum is committed to promoting peace, tolerance, and understanding among all peoples, toward a vision of a world where different cultures and religions coexist in harmony.

Context & Background

The Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust is New York’s resource for Holocaust education and the third largest Holocaust museum in the world. The Museum welcomes between 60,000 students each year to learn the lessons of the Holocaust. For more than 25 years, the Museum has offered professional development to educators in public, private, and religious schools, in addition to daily guided tours of the Museum’s exhibition led by skilled educators at the institution. In addition to a variety of other programming efforts, the Museum’s recently debuted Holocaust Educator School Partnership, a special partnership with New York City Department of Education middle schools and high schools, will partner with more than fifty public schools in the 2023-2024 academic year, reaching over 12,000 students in their schools as well as at the Museum.

Since October 7th, Museum educators and staff have received numerous comments and questions from educators and students focusing on building understanding about antisemitism, both historical and contemporary. In this working document, the Museum provides helpful answers and background information to some of these questions. We welcome feedback on this ongoing document, which can be submitted to education@mjhny.org.

General Notes

Has antisemitism been present in the United States?

Yes. Like other forms of hate and discrimination, antisemitism has been and continues to be present in the United States. Many of the tropes addressed above circulate commonly to this day, including by people who may not be aware of the history behind these statements and sentiments.

Historically, continuing through the mid-20th century in the United States, Jewish people faced forms of legal discrimination in the U.S., including restrictions on the ability of Jews to immigrate to the United States (as in the Immigration Act of 1924), quotas and restrictions on the admission of Jewish students to elite colleges and universities, and restrictions against Jewish people purchasing homes in specific areas or neighborhoods, a practice known as red-lining. The impacts of these forms of discrimination are ongoing and generational. In one example, The New York Times found that some seven decades after red-lining laws were passed, financial and racial differences remain apparent in these areas, regardless of whether the laws remained active.²

Antisemitic incidents have surged in recent years. The ADL, which tracks such incidents, reported in 2022 that antisemitic incidents in that year had reached an all-time high since recording began in 1979.

How can we learn more about the history of antisemitism?

A collection of videos of talks given at the Museum about the history of antisemitism can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL9NM7b8I78b-WeBvhHMGV70Zav6gT-vfYV>.

The Jewish community is a diverse group, spanning nations and experiences. There is no one singular Jewish experience. A stereotype about all Jewish people is just that.

Like any group, it is important to recognize and stand up against hate toward Jewish people.

2. Times reporter Emily Badger covers this phenomenon in Brooklyn in the Aug. 24, 2017 article "How Redlining's Racist Effects Lasted for Decades," <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/24/upshot/how-redlinings-racist-effects-lasting-for-decades.html>.

**What are some common antisemitic tropes?
How do we identify them?**

***Jews are wealthy/greedy/control financial institutions/
money-obsessed.***

Catholic and Orthodox churches banned usury (charging interest on loaned money, or moneylending). Jews then took on this necessary task, which was one of few jobs they were allowed. *This was a symptom of discrimination rather than a cause.*

Jews control the media.

Restrictions were made on jobs and tasks that Jews could perform in society often under the guise of “protection” of non-Jewish people from performing undesirable work, dating back centuries. Jews were allowed to engage in unwanted careers including commerce, manufacturing, and the free professions, which included jobs in the arts, music, and journalism. *The long-standing tradition of participating in cultural areas such as media and journalism is actually based in early racism and prejudice towards Jews.*

Jews are blood-hungry, seeking to kill and harm non-Jewish people.

The myth of blood libel began centuries ago, stating that Jews used the blood of Christian children for ritual purposes. Historically, blood libels often took place close to Passover, when Jews were charged with using the blood of Christian children to bake matzahs. The proximity of such charges to Easter was thus also often associated with the continuing belief that Jews were responsible for the Passion and Crucifixion of Jesus. Blood libels, together with allegations of well poisoning, were a major theme in Jewish persecution in Europe throughout the Middle Ages and into the modern period. They were a central component in the development of modern antisemitism in the 19th century. Blood libel accusations often led to pogroms, violent riots launched against Jews and frequently encouraged by government authorities. *Murder is expressly forbidden in the Torah, as are the blood sacrifices which were practiced by ancient pagan religions. In fact, Jewish dietary laws (kashrut), forbid the consumption of blood in food and require all blood to be drained from slaughtered animals before consumption.*

Jews are part of a secret cabal with a conspiracy to take over the world.

This ideology is most commonly seen in the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, which continues to be circulated as truth to this day. First published in Russia in 1905, the text is a work of fiction written and presented as a real document. The text spreads lies about Jewish-led conspiracies to take over the world. The document is written as minutes from a meeting of Elders, which never took place. Topics include plans to rule the world by way of increasing conflict between religions, controlling the media, and manipulating the economy—ideas which we see above are rooted in discrimination. *The text, despite being thoroughly debunked, is unfortunately still read by many today and taken as fact.*

Where do these tropes come from?

As shown above, many of these tropes are rooted in discriminatory practices and laws from centuries ago. The Nazis invoked these tropes and more, which would have been familiar to people living in Europe.

What is neo-Nazism? What is its relationship to the Nazi party?

While Neo-Nazism is separate from the Nazi party, neo-Nazi groups are inspired by and believe in Nazi ideology. That ideology never went away and has been adopted by other groups. Even during the rule of the Nazi party, some in America supported their platform. In 1939, approximately 20,000 Americans gathered at Madison Square Garden in New York to show their support for the Nazi party and Nazi ideology. In a contemporary context, neo-Nazis in America have made statements reminiscent of those made by Nazis.

How many Holocaust survivors live in the New York City area? How many Jews are in New York and the U.S.? What are some other important statistics?

There are approximately 15,000 survivors in NYC per the Claims Conference. Some of these survivors were instrumental in the founding of the Museum.

A total of 7.6 million people in the United States are Jewish, accounting for 2.4% of the total US population. 21% of Jewish people in the United States live in the state of New York.

A disproportionate amount of hate is directed toward this small percentage of the population.

Why were Jews targeted during the Holocaust?

Antisemitism had existed in Europe for thousands of years. Differences between the Jewish communities and local populations, centered around their traditions as well as separatism that antisemitism itself had created, created space for the growth of false misconceptions and hateful ideas to spread.

Although many German Jews had fought on the German side in World War I, in the economic devastation that followed the end of the War in Germany, the rising Nazi Party and Adolf Hitler blamed the Jews for Germany's loss of World War I as well as the connected economic crisis that the country faced. One piece of this was the idea that Jews had profited from the reparations that Germany owed following the Treaty of Versailles.

Antisemitic ideas met historical circumstance, and Jews were used as a scapegoat.

Aren't Jews white? How can antisemitism be a racial form of hate?

While in the U.S. today, race is determined by the color of one's skin, this was not the case in Europe. In Europe, racial distinctions relied on other definitions, including "ethnic" features. The Nazis focused on the stereotype that Jews had specific physical features which could identify them. This ties to this racial ideology.

Outside of Europe, Jewish communities lived continuously throughout the Middle East and in North Africa, as well as in far reaches such as in China. These Jewish people may not have had light skin or the specific racialized features that the Nazis sought to recognize in Ashkenazi populations.

Today, there are many Jews of color. The Jewish community is not a racial monolith.

In the U.S. today, hateful ideology of neo-Nazi and white supremacist groups continue to separate Jewish people, including those of European descent, by what is seen as racial difference.

Why do some deny the Holocaust?

To avoid accountability for their crimes, the Nazis made attempts to obfuscate their actions against the Jews, going so far as to bomb gas chambers to destroy the evidence of their mass murder by gas in the Final Solution. Even during the events of the Holocaust, the Nazis were cautious about how the world would perceive their actions. The Nazis controlled media that went in and out of Nazi Germany, including having final say over images published by the Associated Press. The Nazi Party manipulated images from sites such as ghettos to reduce public concern over the treatment of the Jewish people. During a Red Cross visit to Theresienstadt, the Nazis created the impression that living in that camp was simply a peaceful resettlement. Some have taken these and other instances as examples that the Holocaust was overblown or simply did not occur.

What if anything does the Holocaust have to do with current events?

The events of the Holocaust led to support by some government entities of the idea of the creation a state for Jewish people. This was an idea that dated back to more than a hundred years prior. The state of Israel was established in 1948, in the direct wake of the Holocaust.

Isn't there a reason Jews are always victims? Why do Jews not take accountability for their role in causing these situations?

Antisemitism doesn't seem to make sense. It adapts to fit a variety of circumstances and always finds blame against Jewish people, typically for living in ways according to their beliefs or for being in the very conditions that antisemitic policies have created. For example, the trope that Jews are wealthy can be traced back to the career of moneylending in Europe, which was seen as "dirty." Jews were only allowed to hold certain, unwanted jobs, and this was one of them. This then mutated into the idea that Jews are greedy, money-obsessed, wealthy, and control the banks and financial systems, all tropes that continue to be seen in antisemitic rhetoric today.

Questions Regarding Antisemitism

What is antisemitism?

Simply put, antisemitism is the hatred of Jewish people on the basis of their identity. In the past and today, the ideology of antisemitism has had a range of causes and presentations.

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) created a working definition of antisemitism in 2016 which is used by numerous United Nations member states. The definition is as follows: "Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities." IHRA's working definition additionally includes a set of explanatory conditions to distinguish what may constitute examples of antisemitism in a variety of contexts, including political.¹

What are the roots of antisemitism?

While antisemitism continues to exist today, this hatred originated thousands of years ago, in antiquity. The term antisemitism today is used to refer to hatred of Jewish people on the basis of both religious and perceived racial distinctions. Historically, the hatred of Jewish people began with a focus on religious difference, constituting something called not antisemitism but *anti-Judaism*.

After the destruction of the biblical kingdom of Israel in 722 BCE and the biblical kingdom of Judah in 586 BCE, the Jews lost their political independence. As a consequence of the latter war, a large Jewish community was exiled to Babylonia (present day Iraq). The Jews enjoyed independence under the Maccabees, but ultimately, they were conquered by the Romans. The Jews led two, perhaps three, major revolts against the Romans. As a result, Jews were carried off as slaves to Rome. Jewish communities formed in Babylon and Rome, in what became known as the "diaspora," a term that comes from the Greek "diaspeirein," meaning to scatter or disperse. In each location Jewish communities adapted local traditions while maintaining their Jewish practice and identity. The Jewish religion was one of many religions practiced in the area; many religions existed in the Roman Empire, including Christianity, which was persecuted until

313 CE, with the Edict of Milan. In that Edict, the Christian Emperor Constantine removed religious persecution from Roman law. However, while this led to the accepted rise of Christianity, it had an opposite impact on Judaism.

As Christian tradition spread, Jewish people were systematically discriminated against for their religious beliefs and disparate cultural traditions. This constitutes something called *religious antisemitism*, an antisemitism based on the religious beliefs of Jewish people and their lack of adherence to Christian tradition. Jewish people were condemned for refusing to accept Christian belief, particularly the belief in Christ as the Messiah. The Jewish refusal to accept Christianity led to widespread *anti-Judaism*, hate that served as a key factor in the Crusades of the Middle Ages.

In modern Europe, Jewish communities that had a separate existence for centuries were given opportunities to, legally and culturally, join European society in ways that they had not been allowed in the past. During this time, there was also fierce debate within the Jewish community about assimilation or acculturation, a debate which led to the origination of several forms of modern Judaism, including the Reform and Conservative movements. While the legal and social status of Jewish people differed from country to country, a pattern of Jewish assimilation into society, followed by a hateful backlash and limiting of legal and other rights of Jewish people, can be seen across a variety of historical contexts.

False racial science was common in modern Europe in a variety of contexts, and this was soon adopted into ideas of *antisemitism*. The term antisemitism was coined in late nineteenth century Germany to create a scientific-sounding term for the hatred of Jewish people, to justify that hate on a racial basis, defining Jews by their racial distinction as a Semitic group. The idea of Jews as a separate, inferior racial group, perhaps stemming in part from their status as outsiders in Europe, spread throughout Europe, and was ultimately harnessed by the Nazis.

Despite its contentious history, the term antisemitism is now widely accepted as representing the hatred of Jewish people, including on racial, ethnic, and religious grounds.

1. The full IHRA working definition may be read here:
<https://holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definition-antisemitism>.

EDUCATOR RESOURCE

Antisemitism FAQ

Context & Background

The Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust is New York’s resource for Holocaust education and the third largest Holocaust museum in the world. The Museum welcomes 60,000 students each year to learn the lessons of the Holocaust. For more than 25 years, the Museum has offered professional development to educators in public, private, and religious schools, in addition to daily guided tours of the Museum’s exhibition led by skilled educators at the institution. In addition to a variety of other programming efforts, the Museum’s recently debuted Holocaust Educator School Partnership, a special partnership with New York City Department of Education middle schools and high schools, will partner with more than fifty public schools in the 2023-2024 academic year, reaching over 12,000 students in their schools as well as at the Museum.

Since October 7th, Museum educators and staff have received numerous comments and questions from educators and students focusing on building understanding about antisemitism, both historical and contemporary. In this working document, the Museum provides helpful answers and background information to some of these questions. We welcome feedback on this ongoing document, which can be submitted to education@mjhny.org.

Museum Statement Regarding Hate

The Museum opposes antisemitism, Islamophobia, and all forms of hatred, including hatred on the basis of ethnicity, religion, nationality, and other shared group identities. While the Museum naturally focuses on antisemitism given its subject matter, as a Museum dedicated to preserving and sharing the rich heritage of Jewish culture, the Museum is committed to promoting peace, tolerance, and understanding among all peoples, toward a vision of a world where different cultures and religions coexist in harmony.



**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF THE MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
HEARING OF THE COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES, AND
INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS**

New York City Council

May 21, 2024

As the Director and President of the Museum of the City of New York (MCNY), I am pleased to submit this written testimony to the New York City Council and the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations.

I write to you today to request that the City Council advocate for a full reversal of all the cuts imposed on culture and baseline funding for the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG) and the Cultural Development Fund in the FY25 budget. Additionally, we request that the City Council add additional funds to the Cultural Immigrant Initiative.

The Museum of the City of New York, located in District 8 in the East Harlem neighborhood of Manhattan, is a beacon for arts, culture, and community at the top of Museum Mile. MCNY connects with thousands of visitors each year, including K-12 students and teachers, to celebrate, document, and interpret the city's past, present, and future.

Education is at the core of the Museum's mission and the Frederick A.O. Schwarz Education Center has a long history of providing in-gallery field trips for school groups. MCNY collaborates with the NYC Department of Education and local schools to ensure our programs complement in-classroom learning to best meet the needs of our city's students and teachers.

At least 50% of recently polled school groups who submitted a field trip request this fiscal year noted that their classroom included ELL (English Language Learners) students and the majority selected Spanish as the primary language of those students. The Museum is working to expand its K-12 student and teacher programming to include in-gallery field trips that are offered in both English and Spanish as a bilingual experience. Offering bilingual field trips ensures that all students, especially those in our neighborhood of East Harlem where over 40% of the population identifies as Hispanic, can participate in field trips.

In service to K-12 students and teachers across New York City and locally in our neighborhood of East Harlem, funding from the Cultural Immigrant Initiative will directly impact the Museum's ability to hire bilingual Museum Educators to develop, translate, and facilitate the currently offered field trips as well as expand this offering to widen the Museum's reach. Support will also enhance outreach efforts within the Museum's local community of East Harlem and beyond, ensuring the widest possible reach for these important programs.

The Museum is currently offering a bilingual option for the “Manny Vega: Art in El Barrio / Arte en El Barrio” field trip which takes students through *Byzantine Bembé: New York by Manny Vega* to explore the work of local East Harlem artist and the Museum’s first artist-in-residence, Manny Vega. MCNY seeks to also offer this option for *Activist New York*, our ongoing exhibition which tells the stories and histories of activism across the city and *Changing the Face of Democracy: Shirley Chisholm at 100*, a new exhibition opening this summer on the life and legacy of Shirley Chisholm as a pathbreaking politician and New Yorker.

Through these bilingual education initiatives, the Schwarz Center is committed to creating meaningful impact within our communities, maintaining a level of high-quality programming, and expanding the Museum’s reach and visibility. This is especially important this year as we continue to welcome the newest New Yorkers, almost a third of which are school-aged children resulting in over 30,000 migrant students in NYC schools.

As a member of the CIGs, a collective of 34 essential neighborhood-based city-owned cultural institutions, the Museum also urges the New York City Council to commit to lasting permanent investment in our city’s arts and culture organizations. As the cultural community has made clear, cultural organizations drive New York City’s economy and the City’s workforce, and sustained cuts to the budget will affect livelihoods both directly and indirectly. Organizations such as the Museum of the City of New York and other CIGs are foundational to the City’s economic strength, neighborhood safety, and social health.

To restore culture fully, the following budget actions are necessary in Fiscal 2025 to meet a \$53 million total need: reverse the November Plan PEGS (\$7.9 million), reverse the CIG FY24 reduction (\$5 million), and restore one-year funding (\$40 million).

Any threats to culture, across organizations big and small, have rippling effects on the city’s economy and workforce. The cultural community is a major economic driver, impacting revenue, tourism, and local economies—all of which have been put at risk. Investing in culture promises a lifeline for our communities as arts and culture organizations are foundational to providing access to safe, publicly accessible spaces for all New Yorkers.

Thank you, Chair Rivera and committee members, for the opportunity to share this testimony and for your championship of arts and culture across the City.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie Hill Wilchfort". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Stephanie" being the most prominent.

Stephanie Hill Wilchfort

Ronay Menschel Director and President



New York City Council
Committee on Finance
Executive Budget Hearing
May 21, 2024

Title: NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL FISCAL YEAR 2025 EXECUTIVE BUDGET HEARINGS

I want to thank Chair Brannan, Cultural Chair Rivera, the members of the Finance Committee and the rest of the City Council for listening to New Yorkers on the importance of having an Executive budget that truly reflects a better New York City. On behalf of the New York Hall of Science, thank you for accepting my testimony on the importance of Cultural institutions and the impact of arts and culture across New York City.

NYSCI's mission is to nurture passionate learners, critical thinkers, and active citizens through an approach called ***Design, Make, Play***. Located in Queens, NY—one of the most multicultural and diverse communities in New York City—NYSCI is committed to creating a world where diversity drives innovation, and where individuals learn to utilize science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) to tackle complex 21st-century challenges. We are a proud member of the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG), a collection of 34 diverse cultural institutions that operate on city-owned property. As such, we are tasked with stewarding a unique historical and environmental asset for the city, a mission crucial to public health, public life, and public benefit.

As an educational and cultural institution in Flushing Meadows Corona Park, NYSCI embraces its responsibility to respond to the needs of Corona and Elmhurst. Inspired by the community's diversity, NYSCI develops programs for children, students, families, and educators that build on and expand access to STEM opportunities, nurturing curiosity for lifelong learning. We also provide pathways to STEM careers through the Alan J. Friedman Center for the Development of Young Scientists. The Science Career Ladder (SCL) is NYSCI's signature youth and workforce development initiative, addressing the challenges posed by educational and economic inequities faced by New York City's minority high school and college students from under-resourced neighborhoods.

Furthermore, the demographics of youth participants in the SCL program reflects the diversity of NYSCI's home borough of Queens with:

- 87% come from Queens



- 41% are from neighboring communities of Corona (15%), Elmhurst (15%), Flushing (8%), Jackson Heights (3%)
- A typical class of Explainers speak approximately 23 languages
- 95% of Explainers go to college, and 70% of SCL Alumni work in STEM Careers

NYSCI's Science Career Ladder is part of **SCI Network NYC**, which comprises eight science-based cultural institutions: the American Museum of Natural History, Brooklyn Botanic Garden, New York Botanical Garden, New York Hall of Science, Queens Botanical Garden, Staten Island Zoo, Wave Hill, and the Wildlife Conservation Society (which includes the Bronx Zoo, New York Aquarium, Central Park Zoo, Prospect Park Zoo, and Queens Zoo).

SCI Network NYC programs combine education, workforce development, networking, and outreach to increase opportunities for over 1,200 youth throughout New York City. Collectively, the youth working in these institutions earn a livable wage, allowing them to pursue their dreams and gain experiences that build meaningful careers in STEM.

These examples highlight the profound impact culture has on society. New Yorkers rely on various cultural institutions, non-profit organizations, programs, and resources to strengthen engagement and learning opportunities. NYSCI's mission and programming extend beyond every visitor, seen through our efforts to make STEM exciting, appealing, and inviting to everyone. Without continuous support from the city government, this work would not be possible. It is imperative that funding for the Cultural Institutions Group, cultural groups, and community-based organizations remains intact and continues to receive support.

The New York cultural community—through both good and challenging times—supports and provides essential educational services to our students and communities. Our spaces offer comfort and challenge people to think about solutions that enhance the community experiences of our city. In the FY25 Budget, the executive budget must invest in culture by:

- **Restore and Baseline the Department of Cultural Affairs- \$53 Millon**
 - o We need a lasting, permanent investment in our cultural sector. The annual budget dance, which leaves cultural organizations begging for city funding each year, is destabilizing. Last year, the Council negotiated a \$40 million addition for CIGs and programs; the year before, it was \$45 million. It's time to reset the budget, eliminate this yearly uncertainty, and establish culture as a fundamental, baseline priority in our city's financial planning.



- o The baseline for CIGs has not increased since 2009. With that investment, it gives organizations the steady annual funding needed to sustain our workforce, plan long-term community focused programs, and prepare for future crises. For NYSCI, having secure funding allows us to plan accordingly and service our community and their needs for STEM education. Now is the time to invest and stabilize culture as the foundation for healthy communities and a thriving city.

- **Fully fund all Council Initiatives**

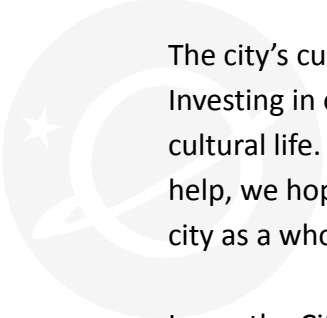
- o The Council Initiatives are critical to the health of cultural organizations of every size. These funds make an impact in all 51 Councilmanic Districts and organizations rely on these funds to provide services to our communities.
 - **CASA** serves our City's children in after-school programs;
 - **SU-CASA** uses arts and culture to reduce the isolation of our Seniors, and build community;
 - **Coalition of Theaters of Color** supports BIPOC-led and serving organizations;
 - **Cultural Immigrant Initiative** invests in the rich array of cultural organizations by which immigrant New Yorkers make this place their home.
 - **SCI Network NYC**- supports teen internships for youth with a focus on populations underrepresented in STEM-based careers.

- **CIGs are a LIFELINE for Communities**

- o **Investing** in culture is investing in safe, public spaces for New Yorkers of all ages and from all walks of life. Engaging in the arts and culture supports wellness and health, counteracts social isolation, and enhances civic life.
- o **Education:** CIGs position New York City as a world-class cultural hub and leader in Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) education and public programs
 - Cultural institutions partner with NYC Public Schools to educate New Yorkers. Students make 2.5 million visits to CIGs and participate in CIGs educational programs every year. NYSCI has a pre-school in our campus. PS 369Q is a national model for early STEM Learning for over 300 Prek3/Prek4 students
- o **Public Programs:** Museums and cultural institutions provide safe accessible spaces for New Yorkers of all ages and abilities. Programs include:
 - Virtual and In-person older adults programming;
 - Programming and accommodations for neurodivergent audiences and audiences with disabilities;
 - Community composting, gardening, and environmental programs;



- Career development, volunteer, and internship opportunities;
 - Blood drives, food banks, and community support;
 - Programming featuring diverse histories and cultures;
 - Life-long learning and adult education opportunities;
 - Outreach and community engagement.
- o NYSCI led the establishment of the **Elmhurst Corona Resource Collaborative (ECRC)** with more than 25 other CBOs and provides these resources to our immediate community members.



The city's cultural organizations are its lifeblood, impacting every aspect of New York life. Investing in our cultural institutions has lasting effects on our communities and the city's vibrant cultural life. The return on investment in our institutions has been outstanding, and with your help, we hope to continue strengthening the public health, public life, and public benefit of the city as a whole.

I urge the City Council to make a historic investment in the cultural sector of \$53 million to ensure the vitality and vibrancy of New York City cultural organizations—large and small, in every borough—in FY25. Investing in arts and STEM education is crucial for cultivating a vibrant, innovative society. We are actively empowering the next generation to think broadly, solve complex problems, and contribute meaningfully to our cultural and scientific landscapes that will shape our future.

We appreciate the Council's hard work on behalf of New Yorkers and thank you for including our testimony.

Respectfully submitted by:

Frances Escano
Director of Government Affairs
New York Hall of Science
47-01 111 Street
Queens, NY 11368

[NYSCI.org](https://nysci.org) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Twitter](#)





Testimony for the New York City Council Fiscal Year 2025 Executive Budget Hearing - Libraries

May 21, 2024

Good morning,

My name is Max Prime. I serve the New York Library Association (NYLA) as its Director of Government Relations and Advocacy. On behalf of our Executive Director AnnaLee Dragon and President Lisa Kropp, I thank the Chair Brannan, Chair Rivera, the City Council and its members for providing NYLA with the opportunity to submit testimony regarding library funding in the City of New York's FY 2025 Budget.

NYLA is a not-for-profit corporation formed to lead, educate, and advocate for the advancement of New York State's library community. With over 4,470 individual and 350 institutional members statewide, NYLA represents librarianship in the public, school, academic, and special library settings.

Last month, the State of New York adopted a FY 2025 budget that makes robust investments in flagship library aid programs. In its final form, the budget increases State Aid for Libraries by \$4.25 million to a total of \$103.85 million and State Aid for Library Construction by \$10 million to a record \$44 million. By boosting these categories of spending, Governor Hochul and legislative leaders have moved to ensure that libraries and library systems have the state support needed to effectively leverage local funds and provide patrons with the collections, programs, services, and facilities they deserve.

Unfortunately for patrons of the New York Public Library (NYPL), Brooklyn Public Library (BPL), and Queens Public Library (QPL), the state's efforts will only succeed where localities elect to provide local funds in quantities sufficient to be leveraged.

If enacted, Mayor Adams' Executive Budget proposal to reduce funding for library operations and construction by \$58.3 million and \$125 million, respectively, would erase the impact of state-level increases and force sharp cuts to essential library services citywide. The proposed disinvestment from libraries would establish New York City as a negative outlier in the state while inflicting gross injury on the millions of New Yorkers who rely on their local branches as community anchors and agents of equity in their neighborhoods.

Following last fall's mid-year cut that brought the end of Sunday service in City libraries, these further reductions would exacerbate already rising operational costs and render across the board reductions in hours and staffing, as well as sharp curtailment of collections, programs, and services, unavoidable. Under the Mayor's plan, half of BPL, nearly 60% of NYPL, and all but two of QPL's libraries would lose Saturday service for the first time since 2016. Fully half of all part time hours would be eliminated at BPL, with hundreds of jobs left vacant across all three City systems.

With weekends the only time many New Yorkers have available to visit their libraries, the loss of universal six-day operations would impact working families and those who depend on daily access to library-

provided services. Likewise, reduced staffing and hours will limit the ability of patrons to visit their local branches and prove detrimental to neighborhood accessibility.

Furthermore, the \$125 million Capital PEG that libraries face withdraws funding despite immediate need for infrastructure updates and renovations that are essential if New York is to maintain consistent and safe access to library facilities.

For the four-year period spanning 2023 to 2027, the New York State Library estimates that statewide construction needs total more than \$1.75 billion. \$944,851,652, roughly 54% of that total, is derived from sorely needed projects in the NYPL (\$502,164,600), BPL (\$385,350,000) and QPL (\$57,337,052) systems. This is a growth of 22.5% over the \$771,220,662 of estimated need during the last five-year period calculated by the State Library (2021 – 2025), outpacing the increased need for construction funding statewide in the same period (16%) by 6.5%. Since this data was compiled, priority capital needs have continued to grow and currently exceed \$1.125 billion.

To withdraw \$125 million of capital funding for library projects for FY 2025, the first cut in 16 years, would leave libraries without support in a time of clearly increasing need. Doing so would delay the completion of at least 11 branches across the City's three library systems and prevent critical work ranging from HVAC and roof replacements to ADA-compliant entrances and full branch renovations that are essential for keeping New York's libraries open and accessible to all members of the public.

New York's libraries are instruments of the common good – institutions established to serve our collective interest in guaranteeing access to art, education, and community for all people. As centers foundational and lifelong learning, they bridge gaps in access to critical resources for vulnerable populations and provide sorely needed support for job seekers, new Americans, and those in need of assistance with tasks like obtaining government ID, navigating the Health Insurance Marketplace, and applying for a passport.

New Yorkers deserve fully supported libraries with dependable access not limited by inconsistent funding. NYLA thanks the New York City Council for its call to restore library funding and joins with the NYPL, BPL, QPL, and library patrons across New York in advancing the following budget requests:

Expense Restoration: \$58.3 million

- **Reverse November PEG: \$22.1 million**
- **Non-Baselined City Funds: \$20.5 million**
- **City Council Funding: \$15.7 million**

Capital Restoration: \$125 million

- **Brooklyn Public Library: \$47 million**
- **The New York Public Library: \$45.5 million**
- **Queens Public Library: \$32.2 million**

Thank you again for allowing me to testify on this issue today.

NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM & LIBRARY

Testimony to the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries & International Intergroup Relations

FISCAL YEAR 2025 EXECUTIVE BUDGET HEARING

Wednesday, May 21, 2024

Dear Council Member Rivera and Members of the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries & International Intergroup Relations:

Thank you for your continued service to education and the arts in New York City, particularly during these challenging times, and for the opportunity to submit this testimony on behalf of the New-York Historical Society. For over 200 years, New-York Historical has told the story of our nation's founding and history, using our vast collections to highlight diverse perspectives throughout that history.

DIVERSIFYING MUSEUM PROGRAMMING

New-York Historical aims to supplement content in cultural institutions or history curricula by re-telling critical chapters in our history through the perspectives of those often left out of the American narrative. Current exhibitions include:

Women's Work (July 21, 2023 - July 7, 2024), an exploration of how broad trends in American economic, legal, and political history have encouraged women to take certain jobs and restricted them from "men's work," while also considering how race, ethnicity, social class, legal status, sexual orientation, and gender presentation have impacted these distinctions. The exhibition demonstrates that "women's work" defies categorization and has been essential to American society.

New York Before New York: The Castello Plan of New Amsterdam (March 15, 2024 - July 14, 2024), an exciting look at the Castello Plan, a map depicting New Amsterdam around the peak of its settlement circa 1660, just before the English took control. The installation unpacks the Plan, highlighting the remarkable global reach of the tiny settlement, its dense mix of ethnicities and languages, the Dutch ideas of tolerance that undergirded it, and the dark legacies of slavery and of the dispossession of Native Americans that it relied upon.

Beatrice Glow: When Our Rivers Meet (March 29, 2024 - August 18, 2024), an alternative commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the establishment of the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam from local and global perspectives. Working in conversation with a group of culture bearers, artists, and scholars whose heritages were impacted by the Dutch colonial enterprise, artist-in-residence Beatrice Glow is creating a series of seven parade float maquettes that present an untold version of this history. The small VR-sculpted and 3D-printed sculptures will be complemented by Glow's interpretations of decorative arts collection objects, such as embroidered textiles and gilded baby rattles that reflect ideas of social and cultural power. Together, these exhibitions help to provide a more comprehensive view of the American story by

including voices historically left out of museums or history textbooks. Our programming reflects our efforts to engage the broadest possible audience in the making and meaning of history.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

New-York Historical partners with schools across the five boroughs to provide quality **K-12 education services** that reflect the cultural fabric of this city. Through field trips, social studies enrichment, workforce development opportunities for teens, early childhood education, teacher professional development opportunities, and digital curricula and classroom resources, New-York Historical enriches classroom learning and highlights under-told stories of BIPOC and minority heroes that have shaped this nation. Our staff conduct deep and thorough outreach to ensure our programs are promoted across all five boroughs, and school discounts are offered on a case-by-case basis for programs that aren't already offered free of charge. In addition, 60% of slots in our high school internship program—for which students are paid a stipend—are reserved for students who are eligible for reduced-price lunch, ensuring that students do not face financial barriers to participation. Participants in select programs receive Family Passes or Family Memberships, which encourage students who have visited the Museum with their classes to return with their families.

Our commitment to education and outreach also extends to adult audiences. For example, our **Citizenship Project** provides Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs) seeking citizenship with free civics and American history workshops that prepare them for the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Naturalization Test. Launched in 2017, in direct response to drastic new federal restrictions on immigration, the Citizenship Project is the first program nationwide to utilize a major museum collection to facilitate citizenship education. In addition to civics classes based on the Naturalization Test, the program includes English language practice workshops and mock test interviews to help participants prepare beyond the test itself. Participants are recruited through CUNY's Citizenship Now!, the USCIS, and local immigrant advocacy organizations, and a dedicated Citizenship Project Outreach Coordinator works to build strategic partnerships with community organizations to ensure communities across the five boroughs are aware of the program. The program is offered in-person and virtually, in both English and Spanish to attract the broadest possible audience.

CONCLUSION

Ever-rising to the challenge of bringing little or unknown histories to light, New-York Historical's mission is to collect, preserve, and interpret, for the broadest possible public, material relevant to U.S. history, and serve as an accessible community resource and destination for audiences underserved or underrepresented by cultural institutions. This work would not be possible without the support of the City Council and the Department of Cultural Affairs, and New-York Historical remains grateful for programmatic and capital funds received in recent fiscal years. These funds are essential to our institutional goals, and we thank you and your fellow City Council Members for your exceptional service.



Testimonial Letter to the New York City Council Committee on Finance,
Jointly with the committee on cultural affairs

5/21/2024

Thank you to Chair Brannan and the City Council for your support of arts, culture, and arts education across New York City. I'm calling on our city to prioritize funding for arts in NYC schools and communities. My name is Monika Wuhrer, and I work at Open Source Gallery and KoKo NYC in Park Slope.

Open Source Gallery is an arts-based non-profit organization inspired by the open source movement. In the spirit of this free exchange of knowledge, we provide a forum where art intersects with the community and the world at large. Open Source energizes a diverse and creative community for people of all ages and backgrounds with an emphasis on expression, experimentation, sustainability, and social engagement. At Open Source Gallery's education program KoKoNYC all kids are artists & inventors. We encourage playful and imaginative risk-taking by using real tools and recycled materials in our sustainability focused programs. Empowered by our Teaching Artists, kids see possibilities, problem solve, create, and explore.

Budget cuts to the Department of Cultural Affairs threaten our city's creative spirit, economic prosperity, and our students. Cuts to these agencies spell disaster for the arts and arts education and the cultural community that is part of the fabric of this city.

Let us not take it out on our students or their future. And let us not make New York – where culture is a major economic sector with over 400,000 jobs – a place that disregards culture and community as an integral part of our lived experiences. Programs that foster student engagement, mental health, tourism, and community rejuvenation should be the last cut, not the first.

Our city's young people represent the future cultural and economic vitality of our city. Please prioritize investment in arts and in arts education and in NYC's future because success **starts with the arts.**

Thank you for your attention and consideration,

Monika Wuhrer



Queens Library Guild, Local 1321 members are extremely frustrated with the Mayor's proposed budget cuts which forces the Library into an untenable situation of trying to provide Library services without adequate staffing levels. His budget cuts would put a terrible strain on Local 1321 members because, in spite of the proposed cuts, the Mayor still expects the Library to maintain the same high level and volume of materials, programs, and services, with fewer staff working six days per week. In February 2020, Local 1321 had 921 members. Four years later, in February 2024, our latest membership count total is 829. That is almost 100 fewer librarians, clerks, custodians, drivers, IT workers, catalog staff, and maintainers to perform the same amount of work with less staff than in 2020.

Each day there are branches opening with three or two employees. With understaffing throughout the library system, it creates a cascading effect on Local 1321 members' stress. Members, especially those in supervisory positions; need to focus on mitigating their short-staff issues by requesting or providing coverage, ways to avoid canceling programs, and juggling desk coverage and breaks. Meanwhile, the library's customers expect the same level and quality of services, which can lead to dangerous and unnecessary conflicts.

The following are testimonies from Library staff on the everyday issues confronting them and their colleagues.

"The lack of adequate staffing affects services at my small but busy library. Currently, we only have two librarians—an assistant manager and a children's librarian. In my position as assistant manager, I am responsible for all the administrative work, such as schedules, timecards, coverage requests, and monthly reports, while also providing customer service at the reference desk. This divided attention means constant interruptions with the management part of my job, leading to mistakes and having to redo the work.

"The need for days off, vacations, sick days, etc. leads to programs being canceled. For example, storytime in one particular week was canceled because the children's librarian was off to work on

Saturday. The children and their caregivers were extremely disappointed. One of the caregivers asked if I could do storytime, but I was the only librarian in the building, so that was not a possibility.

"The constant juggling of the schedule also means I am always needing to ask for coverage, which disrupts the schedules of my location and the location sending coverage. Often the coverage is to make sure we have an adequate staff to cover programs and lunches. If we had adequate staff, we wouldn't need to keep asking for coverage."

"In every location our meeting space is the prized commodity of the community. Nonprofits and city agencies compete for bookings. However, a librarian is required to monitor the space while the meeting is in session. Due to skeletal staffing, librarians can barely cover the reference desk. Without sufficient staffing, agencies cannot book the space."

"As a custodian, I will be called upon to cover another branch later in my shift. That means performing the same strenuous work of the first four hours of my day in my home branch at another branch. And this task will be repeated on other days of the week. Other branch custodians feel the strain, too, as they also cannot fully provide the work that libraries truly need. Lawns and hedges may wait for a week or longer before they're trimmed. If a branch is in session and patrons are around, mopping floors and cleaning carpets will have to wait for another day, leading to less than optimal sanitary conditions. Some libraries with no custodians at all just receive the basics of coverage."

"All of the Mayor's budget cuts are impacting us now! Three branches—Bay Terrace, Broadway, and Hillcrest—that have been under renovation for years remain closed because they do not have enough staff. Broadway, one of the busiest branches in our system with two floors and multiple service desks, should have a minimum of twelve staff, but only has seven. Hillcrest, a medium-sized branch, should have a minimum of eight staff, yet it only has four. Bay Terrace, a small branch, should have a minimum of six staff, but only has three! They are extremely disheartened that they cannot go to their home branch."

The Mayor's budget cuts and how they are implemented will have a direct impact on our members and the communities they serve. None of us want our neighborhood library location closed, and the customers we care about to be without valuable library services. The Mayor needs to fully restore the library's budget for the sake of Local 1321 members, our libraries, and our customers.

Respectfully submitted by

John Hyslop, President Queens Library Guild, Local 1321, DC 37, AFSCME, AFL-CIO

Queens Museum
New York City Building
Flushing Meadows Corona Park
Queens, NY 11368

Cultural Affairs Testimony
Testimony Submitted by:
Sally Tallant, Executive Director, Queens Museum
May 21, 2024

Thank you so much for this opportunity to provide testimony today. I am Sally Tallant, President and Executive Director of the Queens Museum (QM).

I would like to extend our deepest thanks to the New York City Council for your continued support of all of our work. We are so grateful for your faith in our efforts and for your discretionary CASA and SUCASA funding. We are proud that our programs reach children, teens, families and seniors in every district across the Borough. We are excited to share that we will break ground on the final phase of our capital project this time next year.

While we are looking forward to all of the exciting things in store for us, we need to take this opportunity today to convey just how deeply the administration cuts have affected the Museum.

In November 2023, we instituted an organization-wide hiring freeze. We are currently operating without a Director of Development, a Director of Human Resources or a Director of Exhibitions and Programs. These roles are critical to the operations of our Museum and we cannot afford to hire them. Separately we had eliminated admission fees during the pandemic to ensure our constituents had no financial barriers to entry. We have had to reinstitute these policies in an attempt to keep our doors open.

We have had to cut back on programs and offerings, despite a significant influx of newly arrived immigrants to Queens who would benefit from programs such as our *New New Yorkers program* which offers free multilingual opportunities to meet the needs of adult immigrant communities in Queens. This program has courses that emphasize the arts, technology and English language acquisition and are provided at no cost in a variety of languages.

With regards to our FY25 budget requests, we are seeking an additional \$2M in capital funding to support the final phase of our capital project which will bring Queens Museum into the future. This project will provide improved access for all visitors, offer the Borough's first children's museum for art and culture, include a revamped theater space which will be available for community use and an Archive and Study Center. The project will also provide Queens Museum staff, who have been working in provisional spaces for too long, with a safe and nurturing workplace.

Additionally, we need to ensure that we have enough money to operate this amazing new Museum. We have not seen a baseline increase in years; not even at completion of the Phase One of our capital project which saw our space and programs nearly double in size.

We need to be sure we have enough money to operate this amazing new place. To that end we are requesting:

- \$100,000 Speaker Request
- \$50,000 Queens Delegation
- \$30,000 Cultural Immigrant Initiative

All of this funding will go towards increasing educational capacity for our education and programming departments. In order to make the most of all of these new spaces and meet the needs of larger audiences, we are engaging in capacity building in advance of the Children's Museum including staffing and research. Our goal is to provide educational programming for our community: from the youngest visitors to seniors in advance of and continuing through to the reopening of the Museum.

Standing in solidarity with the CIG groups and all of culture, we support the \$53M ask for Culture. The Adopted Budget for Fiscal 2025 should fully reverse all the cuts imposed on culture and finally baseline funding for CIGs and the Cultural Development Fund.

The need for increased capacity is clear and, in light of the continued cuts from the City, which have been devastating for us, we need to make sure that we are prepared to meet the needs of all of our constituents. We thank you for your consideration of this request. With your support, we hope to have a Queens Museum that better serves the growing needs of the Queens community.

Thank you for your time.



P.O. BOX 150253
BROOKLYN, NY 11215
Email: info@reginaopera.org
718-259-2772

PRESIDENT

Francine Garber-Cohen

EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT/ SECRETARY

Linda Cantoni

TREASURER

Joseph Delfausse

TESTIMONY AT THE NYC COUNCIL HEARING ON MAY 21, 2024 AT 12:30PM

Good afternoon. I'm Fran Garber-Cohen, President of Regina Opera, which offers fully-staged operas with full orchestra and English supertitles, in Sunset Park - an underserved and low income community, as well as many free concerts in public, accessible spaces in Brooklyn. Today I ask that New York City reverse the 5% Budget Cuts to Culture which have already been reversed for other agencies in the NYC budget, but not for Culture and the Arts.

We rely heavily on funding from the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs which allow us to provide affordable, professional-level entertainment in accessible venues for people who may not otherwise attend live performances. About 65 percent of the NYC residents that attend our performances are Senior Citizens, who cannot afford the high ticket prices at the major opera houses or are unable to travel the long distances to Manhattan.

Cuts in funding hurt small organizations like Regina Opera who provide services for NYC's Senior Citizens, a continuously growing population. This important sector of our population depends on us, and on other local groups, to give performances that get these vulnerable groups – our aunts and uncles, our grandparents, and even our own parents, out of the house, where they often live alone. At our operas and concerts, Seniors socialize, make plans to meet their friends, often for dinner before or after an opera or a concert, and make new friends. Due to the budget cuts, Regina Opera, like many other organizations, cut some free programming including Make Music NY and a Juneteenth event. We cannot let these people down because of these funding cuts.

Respectfully submitted.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Francine Garber-Cohen'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Francine Garber-Cohen President, President, The Regina Opera Company, Inc.



May 21, 2024

Re: Executive Budget Hearings (T2024-1881)

To: The Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, & International Intergroup Relations

Thank you, Chair Rivera and esteemed members of this Committee, for the opportunity to testify. At Roundabout Theatre Company, we are deeply grateful for DCLA's longstanding support, which has enabled us to deliver programs and services to thousands of New Yorkers through programs that extend far beyond our work onstage. We are dismayed, however, at the cuts facing vulnerable arts not-for-profits during a time of existential hardship. These organizations provide an irreplaceable civic good and play a key role in New York City's ongoing recovery.

Roundabout joins our colleagues to ask that the City restore \$53 million to the adopted budget to reverse the proposed cuts and baseline the one-time funding for CIGs and CDF in FY25. We also call for full support for City Council one-year discretionary funding, including member items, CASA, the Cultural Immigrant Initiative, and other important programs that were funded in FY24 at \$43.9 million. These resources are key to our ability to provide arts education for thousands of students in New York City public schools each year.

Roundabout celebrates the power of theatre by spotlighting classics from the past, cultivating new works of the present, and educating minds for the future. We produce plays and musicals on and off-Broadway, serving an annual audience of hundreds of thousands. Offstage, our education programs serve over 24,000 public school students, teachers, and outer borough residents each year. We reduce physical, financial, and cultural barriers to the arts through a portfolio of community partnerships, accessibility initiatives, and workforce development programs. This past year, Education at Roundabout leveraged DCLA support to serve 21 partner schools in all five boroughs. Using the creative and collaborative tools of theatre, Roundabout Teaching Artists promoted academic success, enriched social emotional learning, and enhanced student engagement across all subjects—not just the arts and humanities, but also Economics, Algebra, and English as a New Language.

Beyond the classroom, DCLA funds supported initiatives including the Theatrical Workforce Development Program (TWDP), a first-of-its-kind public-private partnership that offers paid training and job placement in technical theatre for 18-24-year-old New Yorkers. Through six cohorts so far, TWDP has put over a hundred young people who were “out of school, out of work” on the path to union membership and sustainable careers in the entertainment industry.

While offering fellows a path to economic mobility through the arts, the program also addresses an urgent need for skilled technical workers within the entertainment industry—an important economic driver for New York City. As *American Theatre* reported in June 2023 (“The Big Crunch: Theatre’s Labor and Materials Crisis”), the mass exodus of technical professionals from the live entertainment sector during the pandemic has caused “a protracted crisis” for companies large and small. We are proud to connect skilled workers with the arts institutions that need them to regain full strength. By creating a new entry into the industry for technical theatre professionals, and by focusing on young BIPOC New Yorkers, TWDP contributes to the recovery of the entire American theatre while promoting greater equity and sustainability within our industry. It would not have been possible to launch and sustain an innovative program like TWDP without DCLA’s support.

Not-for-profit theatres make economic and civic contributions that resonate far beyond the work on our stages. We have done so while facing profound challenges including millions in lost revenue, exponentially increased business costs, and dramatic volatility in consumer behavior. *The Washington Post* warns that “Theater is in freefall,” while *The New York Times* reports that “A Crisis in America’s Theaters Leaves Prestigious Stages Dark”. Theatre companies around the city have laid off staff by the dozens, cut successful programs onstage and off, and even shut their doors for good. For its part, in recent seasons Roundabout has made painful cuts to our artistic and educational programming—cuts that affect thousands of New Yorkers whose horizons narrow without equitable access to the arts.

Public support is necessary to ensure that the arts will remain a public good. All New Yorkers deserve equitable access to one of our city’s greatest resources—its culture—and to the opportunities for a better life that a healthy arts sector provides. With gratitude for the City’s years of impactful partnership, we testify to DCLA’s irreplaceable role in sustaining the arts, and we stand with our peers to advocate for the restoration of full arts funding. Thank you for your advocacy on behalf of arts organizations, and your generous consideration of our testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Mercanti'.

Sarah Mercanti
Director of Government Relations
Roundabout Theatre Company

[REDACTED]

From: Matthew Zadrożny [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, May 21, 2024 4:52 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] saveNYPL.org testimony, from today's hearing of the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations

[REDACTED]

Testimony of Matthew Mateusz Zadrożny
President, Committee to Save the New York Public Library (saveNYPL.org)

New York City Council
Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations
Tuesday, May 21, 2024

Chair Rivera, councilmembers, fellow New Yorkers:

Good afternoon, my name is Matthew Zadrożny. I am the president of saveNYPL.org, an all-volunteer watchdog group. In 2014 we saved the great 42nd Street Library and the Mid-Manhattan Library on 40th & 5th.

Since November, NYC libraries have been closed on Sundays, depriving one million school kids of a safe space to study and hang, and kneecapping millions of ambitious adults. An incalculable social cost and economic loss.

The decision to keep ALL libraries closed on Sundays is political theater, and a scandal. Especially at the NYPL, which recently spent hundreds of millions on a new patio and catering elevator.

When the city built the 42nd Street Library, its contract with the NYPL stipulated that "one or more reading rooms [...] be open on week days, holidays included, from 9.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m., and on Sundays from 1.00 to 9.00 p.m." †

When NYPL president Tony Marx and former chair Evan Chesler were growing up, in Inwood and Allerton, the 42nd Street Library was open more than 80 hours per week.

And yet, today, as service at 42nd Street has dwindled to just 52 hours per week, NYPL's finances have seldom looked better.

The NYPL endowment is 1.5 billion dollars, a record.

And the NYPL board has a combined net worth in excess of 90 billion dollars.

This means that NYPL trustees alone could fund the entire NYPL system for two hundred and forty years.

To quote Tony Marx: "We're not in the 1970s here."

In L.A., where NYPL trustee Ethan Hawke works, the central library is open 60 hours a week and on Sundays.

In Boston, backyard of trustees Henry Louis Gates Jr and Robert Darnton, the central library is open 66 hours per week and on Sundays.

In Paris, where trustee Hubert Joly studied, libraries are open every day, including Sundays.

In Seoul, home of trustee Michael Kim, the central library is open 78 hours per week, and on Sundays.

In Washington, where Senator Schumer works, the MLK library is open 66 hours a week, and on Sundays.

And yet, in our own city, home to more than 100 billionaires — the most of any city on earth — libraries are closed on Sundays.

"Sorry about tomorrow's test, kid. Have you tried Yonkers, Nassau, or Hoboken? Their libraries are open."

So, what's it going to be, New York? Are we still, in fact, "the state of opportunity"?

Or are we a second rate city, in a second rate state, with a second rate library, high on our own supply?

It's up to you, New York.

Today, the library chiefs came before you, once more, with pockets out-turned.

Give them the money they ask.

But require them to keep some libraries open every day and every night of the week.

Require NYPL leadership to keep the 42nd Street Library — the largest, most central, most accessible and most well endowed of all NYC libraries — open 80 hours per week, including on Sundays, as stipulated in NYPL's contract with the City.

80 hours a week at Forty-Second Street!

80 hours a week at Forty-Second Street!

80 hours a week at Forty-Second Street!

And on the seventh day there was service.

Thank you

† Lydenberg, Harry M. History of the New York Public Library: Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations. Pg 450.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=8i8vIn25MoQC&pg=PA450#v=onepage&q&f=false>

TESTIMONY OF JESSICA BAKER VODOOR
PRESIDENT & CEO
SNUG HARBOR CULTURAL CENTER & BOTANICAL GARDEN

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL FY25
Executive Budget Hearing of the Committee on Finance
with the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries,
and International Intergroup Relations
May 21, 2024

As President & CEO of Snug Harbor Cultural Center & Botanical Garden, I am honored to submit this written testimony to Speaker Adams, Chair Brannan of the Committee on Finance, Chair Rivera of the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations, the Budget Negotiating Team, and the entire New York City Council. I thank you for this opportunity to detail the impact of the Mayor's budget cuts on Snug Harbor's ability to deliver for our communities, and to make our pitch for full restoration.

Founded in 1977, Snug Harbor Cultural Center & Botanical Garden is an expansive culture park where arts, nature, education and history unite to bring dynamic programming, events and festivals to our diverse community. Snug Harbor aims to create a more culturally connected, thriving community. We are Staten Island's largest cultural organization, welcoming 480,000 visitors to explore our galleries, gardens and grounds, and experience the breadth of history, architecture, culture and the natural environment that we manage across our 83 acres. We are open daily, year-round, from dawn to dusk and our grounds are free to explore. We are a property manager, overseeing a historical campus and serving more than 40 tenant organizations including museums, galleries, artist studios and community services.

As a member of the Cultural Institutions Group, Snug Harbor has a vested interest in working with our colleagues across the cultural spectrum to ensure that New York remains a vibrant cultural destination. We note that the spending cuts implemented in November and January have NOT been fully restored, and the sector continues to struggle. We are requesting \$53 million in FY25 to make culture whole, and baseline support for the Department of Cultural Affairs. We note that the baseline has not been increased in FIFTEEN YEARS, and that culture represents a mere .02% of the City budget. In sum,

To fully restore culture, we need the following budget actions in fiscal year 2025:

- ⇒ Reverse November Plan PEGS: \$7.9 million
- ⇒ Reverse CIG FY24 reduction: \$5 million
- ⇒ Restore one-year funding: \$40 million

Total fiscal year 2025 need: \$53 million

The impact of City budget cuts to Snug Harbor is devastating. Like every cultural organization, we are facing alarming increases in operating expenses. This fiscal year, our general liability insurance increased from approximately \$100,000 to nearly \$400,000; our deductible also rose. Service contracts have increased by over 15% this year to maintain the aging campus physical plant. Constant failures of the campus's aging infrastructure -- including regular steam leaks and electrical outages-- create a steady stream of emergency repair costs. Cuts have delayed re-opening of the historic Music Hall, a significant revenue generator for Snug Harbor, and we are putting our exhibitions program on hiatus.

Snug Harbor manages 83 acres of City-owned property, including 26 buildings, parking lots and sidewalks. We receive no funding from NYC Parks, yet our grounds, galleries, and stunning botanical gardens must be nurtured for today's New Yorkers and future generations. City budget cuts mean reducing repairs to the spaces occupied by two additional CIGs, 40+ small businesses and independent artists in residence on our campus. Our vibrant Snug Harbor campus community delivers critical services and education to Staten Islanders, including classes across disciplines, a pre-school, children's grief counselling, and more. When well maintained, our grounds provide respite, peace and tranquility for our visitors; when not maintained, the campus is rife with liabilities and security risks.

Our community is a rich tapestry of culture and vibrant diversity. Snug Harbor is located in Council District 49, a dynamic area with no single predominant ethnic or cultural heritage. The North Shore includes 35% Black, 28% white residents, and 26% Latine. Twenty-four percent of our residents live in poverty with 77% of our children qualifying for free/reduced lunch. The level of disengaged youth (16-24 year olds who are neither in school nor employment) hovers around 24%. The area is home to multiple immigrant populations, with recent arrivals from Mexico and Central America (many from Indigenous populations) joining established communities from Liberia, Sri Lanka, Albania and elsewhere. Spanish is spoken at home by 11% of the population. The North Shore offers 18,866 units of NYCHA housing, 11,982 of them within a two-mile radius of Snug Harbor. It is an area of great need.

Snug Harbor is proud to be an essential resource for our community, providing a robust workforce development program to under-served youth, free cultural programming, subsidized space rental to a host of community organizations, technical and material assistance to local growers. Snug Harbor supports local entrepreneurship with monthly vendor fairs showcasing creators and small businesses, and hosts a variety of food and cultural festivals with community partners throughout the year. Our galleries and museums inspire visitors to create and connect.

We are losing talented staff because we cannot compete with salaries escalating across the city. The stressors are high, but our small team of dedicated public service professionals works miracles every day to keep the campus running and to serve our community. Staffing levels and salaries must be preserved, and to attract and retain the best, we must be competitive and grant annual cost of living adjustments. The cuts have forced us to freeze salary levels while inflation continues to rise, and to stall rehiring vacated positions, escalating burnout levels for current staff. We need MORE funding, not less.

Like our CIG peers and cultural organizations throughout the five boroughs, Snug Harbor is an economic driver for our community and a lifeline to the families and young people we serve every day. Cultural institutions deliver \$110 billion into New York's economy each year. Thousands of union and non-union jobs depend on the cultural sector. Every day, cultural institutions serve students, seniors, low-income, and historically marginalized New Yorkers, and are the primary attractions that draw 62 million visitors to our city every year. The unprecedented disinvestment in arts and culture ravages the sector, and by extension New York's economy and standing as a world cultural leader.

Given that the Department of Cultural Affairs' budget is less than one-quarter of one percent of the City budget, we are collectively asking "are the cuts really worth it?" Cultural organizations depend on City funding to provide the quality, community-centered programming we have described today. I join my CIG colleagues and the entire cultural sector to ask for restoration of \$53 million so that culture can continue to serve all New Yorkers – residents and visitors alike.

Thank you for your time.



JESSICA BAKER VODOOR

President & CEO

Snug Harbor Cultural Center & Botanical Garden

1000 Richmond Terrace, Staten Island NY 10301

<https://snug-harbor.org/>

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718.425.3501



The 92nd Street Y, New York
1395 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10128

**Testimony to the New York City Council
Committee on Finance
Jointly with Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries & International Intergroup Relations
The 92nd Street Y, New York
Tuesday, May 21, 2024, 9:30AM**

Thank you to the New York City Council and both Committees for the opportunity to share testimony on cultural outreach. **My name is Elizabeth Costa, and I am the Vice President of Government and Community Relations at The 92nd Street Y, New York (92NY), a nonprofit cultural and community center in Manhattan.**

Community service programs have been offered since 92NY's founding 150 years ago. We provide high quality, innovative arts experiences that empower New Yorkers, particularly students, who will most benefit from them. While 92NY is based on the Upper East Side, we reach patrons, schools, and communities in all five boroughs.

Through our School Engagement in the Arts department, we connect approximately 6,500 students annually with artists of the highest caliber through school-based instruction and live events at 92NY. A program widely enjoyed by the City's public school students is the Discovery Series.

- This year, the Discovery Series has offered curriculum-based dance and music education to students in grades 2-5 at 30 schools Citywide from 15 Council Districts.
- By the end of the school year, each student will have received 18 classroom-based lessons led by a 92NY teaching artist and visited 92NY's Kaufmann Concert Hall twice for engaging performances by the featured artists.

Overall, we serve 53 K-12 public schools in 27 Council Districts in 5 boroughs with a variety of arts education. 75% of partner schools have Title I status; the majority of schools receive significant subsidies; some programs are free.

We are honored that City Council members again awarded CASA and SU-CASA partnerships to us during FY24. These programs have expanded 92NY's direct engagement with schools since 2013 and senior centers since 2018.

- **Through FY24 CASA funding, 92NY is providing impactful after-school cultural programs at 7 schools in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx.**
- We hold longtime partnerships with many of the partner schools, enabling us to work closely with school staff to craft a program unique to local needs. This year's CASA offerings include visual arts residencies, a percussion club, a circus extravaganza and a hip hop and house dance residency with Passion Fruit Dance Company, to name just a few examples.
- **Our SU-CASA residency is again supporting the joy of singing at Carter Burden Roosevelt Island Older Adult Program.** Participants receive group and individual vocal training and coaching as they sing selections in a wide range of musical styles.

Building on the work accomplished in communities Citywide, 92NY increases access for students to further their skills in the arts through classes and workforce development at 92NY:

- **Arts Fellowships offer 4 years of fully subsidized instruction in music, dance, or visual arts at 92NY for select public high school students; mentorship; and access to live 92NY performances.**
- **Teen Gems offers professional trade skills training for teens in basic jewelry-making techniques.**
- **Teen Producers offers a two-year paid internship in the arts at 92NY to high school juniors and seniors.**

A highlight of our FY24 engagement with New York City youth was the return of **Teen Arts Week**, which we were thrilled to bring back after a pandemic-induced hiatus.

- This unique initiative creates collaborations between 92NY's Teen Producers, arts organizations across NYC, and arts-interested teens.
- Teen Arts Week is the only event of its kind in NYC — created by and for teens, with the conviction that access and career pathways in the arts should be more attainable to young people across the City.
- **From March 11-17, 980 students from 150 schools in all five boroughs signed up for 61 events hosted by some of the city's most dynamic arts organizations**, including Lincoln Center, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Brooklyn Museum, the Noguchi Museum, Mark Morris Dance Group, Bronx River Art Center, Snug Harbor Cultural Center and dozens of other organizations.
- Teens participated in free events such as hands-on creative workshops in drawing, filmmaking and theater, and attended free performances, all designed to open doors and build creative communities.
- We were also proud to introduce the **Community Artist Awards** as a new festival component honoring NYC's talented teens. In late February, we presented the Community Artist Award to one teen from each borough as an award for their creative service to their community.

92NY and participating cultural organizations are encouraged by results from the post-festival survey:

- 75% of respondents visited an arts organization they had never been to before.
- 96% of respondents plan on visiting the arts organization(s) again in the future.
- 76% of respondents described their primary reason for being interested in Teen Arts Week as "the opportunity to view and learn about the arts in person."

We are grateful to City Council members for supporting this unique and innovative experience. Given that **90% of Teen Arts Week survey respondents said they will attend next year's festival**, we hope the City Council will again provide support so 92NY can continue the program.

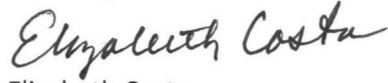
As FY25 approaches, we remain concerned about the budget forecast for the Department of Cultural Affairs. Without an increase to our City-funded cultural services programs, we will not be able to continue a robust level of service through which we support students and provide working artists with teaching artist income. These are services on which our partners and communities rely.

- **Since FY22, our organization's CDF funding has been reduced by 26 percent (\$47,395).**
- Despite the decrease, we remain committed to providing full or partial financial subsidies to schools in our arts education programs -- and we will continue to work with each school to assess its ability to pay for participation in 92NY programs. However, the ongoing pattern of annual and mid-year cuts will, over time, diminish our ability to continue such deep subsidies.

We urge the City Council and the Mayor's Office to not just restore the Cultural Affairs budget to previous levels but also expand it in order for our organization and hundreds of others to be able to provide robust public service to New Yorkers.

Thank you again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth Costa". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Elizabeth Costa

Vice President, Government and Community Relations

Thank you, Chair Rivera and members of the Committee on Cultural Affairs and Chair Brannan and members of the Committee on Finance. My name is Steven Payne, and I am Director of The Bronx County Historical Society, a member of the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG). Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and for your ongoing advocacy for arts and culture across New York City.

As you well know, the 34 cultural institutions that make up the CIG are bastions of culture and belonging throughout New York City and greatly enhance the quality of life for all New Yorkers. This we do directly, by providing programming, venue space, educational opportunities, childcare, green space, and many other resources to our communities. CIGs, however, are also revenue generators, employing more than 15,700 full and part time staff and bringing \$110 billion in economic activity to the city through vendors, visitors, and tourists. As Speaker Adams said in her State of the City address, cultural institutions are the “heartbeat” of the city. Indeed.

That being the case, we are sorely in need of a little “heart health,” so to speak, if we are to keep our rich and diverse cultural institutions afloat. Budget cuts, real and threatened, lead to layoffs, closures, decreases in programming, deferred maintenance, and an unsustainable development path. To provide concrete examples, because of cuts this year, The Bronx County Historical Society has reduced its workforce by 30%, which means less programming, less preventative maintenance, and less accessibility to our museums and collections. The Administration’s recent reversal of this year’s January PEG was certainly welcome, but there is much more restoration of funding needed. The proposed budget for next year would still leave CIGs and the CDF institutions \$53 million in the red. For this reason, we respectfully request that you advocate for the following in your ongoing budget negotiations: a reversal of the FY24 November PEG of \$7.9 million; a reversal of the \$5 million cut to CIGs at FY24 adoption; and a restoration and baselining of the \$40 million one-time addition at FY24 adoption. We also ask for a full restoration of all cultural Council initiatives.

These reversals and restorations would get us back up to where we expected to be at adoption this year, but we still need to address the fact that there has been no baseline increase for cultural institutions in 15 years. Each year we are left to try to plan the growth and continued health of our institutions while facing the potential of budget cuts or large swings in one-time funding additions and a stagnant baseline. Clearly, this situation cannot go on, and we need a more predictable, equitable level of funding for our cultural institutions.

I join with my colleagues and peers across the city and respectfully ask that the budget reflects the value our institutions and our partners at the Department of Cultural Affairs bring to our city. Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and for your leadership and proven commitment to arts and culture.

THE BRONX MUSEUM

New York City Council
Committee on Finance
jointly with the
Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations
FY2025 Executive Budget Hearing
May 21, 2023

Written Testimony
Shirley Solomon, Deputy Director
The Bronx Museum of the Arts

Chair Brannan, Chair Rivera and members of the Committees on Finance and Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations, I am pleased to submit written testimony on behalf of The Bronx Museum of the Arts.

I join my CIG colleagues in calling for the full restoration of FY2024 cuts to culture and the baseline of \$53 million in the FY2025 City budget. We thank the Council for its steadfast support of culture and for its advocacy. We are also grateful for the partial reversal made by the Mayor in the Executive Budget in April, but the devastating and unprecedented funding cuts we have been forced to absorb have not been fully restored.

New York's cultural community reflects organizations both big and small, multidisciplinary and from across the city, and generates \$110 billion in economic activity. Our sector includes over 1,800 non-profit theaters, zoos, dance companies, botanical gardens, and historic preservation societies, including 34 members of the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG) – The Bronx Museum is one of five in the Bronx – and over 1,000 organizations receiving funding through the Cultural Development Fund (CDF). Collectively, the CIGs employ 15,700 full- and part-time staff, 5,800 of which are union members. Another 6,000 artists, educators, and other per diem staff work with the CIGs to implement our diverse programming across all five boroughs.

This is a critical time for culture – our sector is in crisis. In FY2024, CIGs faced a \$5.8 million cut, CDF groups a \$6.7 million reduction, and organizations that have long received funding through the CDF process have been zeroed out. As a result of these devastating cuts, our organizations have reduced hours, laid off staff, decreased internships, curtailed and/or canceled free programming accessed by New Yorkers including 2.5 million students who visit and participate in our educational programming each year, and more than 120 million people who attend performances and museums annually, 60% which are free.

THE BRONX MUSEUM

For The Bronx Museum, the funding we receive via the Department of Cultural Affairs directly impacts the programs we provide and our workforce who make our services possible including educators, security guards, and maintenance personnel. We are a 50-year-old organization and the only free contemporary art museum in the Bronx. Our Bronx community relies on the Museum to experience and access free exhibitions highlighting culturally diverse artists; free family workshops; free Teen Council and Teen Summer programs where youth create art, interact with contemporary artists, organize exhibitions, while receiving a stipend; and free tours, school-day and after-school art instruction, including *CASA* and *Art a Catalyst for Change* initiatives enjoyed K-12 Bronx public schools who use the Museum to meet their students' arts education needs. And free Public Programs offer Bronx community members a wide array of panels, artist talks, film screenings, dance productions, and studio art programs for older adults.

Cultural organizations create vibrant quality of life, offer social health, and provide safe public spaces for New Yorkers of all ages. Baseline funding for CIGs has not changed since 2009 and restorations will bring us back to FY2023 levels. Without the full reversal of FY2024 cuts and the baseline of \$53 million for the CIGs and the CDF, we will continue to see devastating disinvestment in programming and services we offer to everyday New Yorkers. We need lasting permanent investment. We thank the Council again, for its support.

THE CENTER

Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations
Preliminary Budget Hearing - Fiscal Year 2025
May 21, 2024

Testimony of
The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center
New York, NY

**THE LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL &
TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY CENTER**
208 W 13 ST NEW YORK, NY 10011

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gaycenter.org

THE CENTER

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding the proposed Fiscal Year 2025 budget as it relates to issues within the oversight of the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations.

New York City's LGBT community formed The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center (The Center) in 1983, in response to the AIDS epidemic, ensuring a place for LGBTQ people to access information, care and support they were not receiving elsewhere. Now the largest LGBT multi service organization on the East Coast, The Center sees more than 6,000 weekly visitors and hosts over 400 community group meetings each month. The Center has a solid track record of working for and with the community to increase access to a diverse range of high-quality services and resources, including our substance use recovery programming for adults and youth; HIV/AIDS programming; youth programs; and our families and opportunities work.

On Cultural Affairs & Libraries

The vibrancy and spirit of LGBTQ+ communities has been foundational to our existence and our movements. Our contributions to the cultural histories of our city and country are well-established, although not often well-preserved. The Center is a cultural center for the LGBTQ community, offering a wide variety of arts and entertainment events and showcasing original work by artists including Keith Haring and David LaChapelle.

Over the years, many artists, historians, academics, activists, scholars and more have graciously donated their work to The Center's National Archive of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender History ("The Archives"). Founded in 1990, the National Archive works to preserve the LGBTQ community's vast and rich heritage – making it accessible through regular exhibits, publications and scholarly research activities. Currently, The Center Archive's holdings consist of 1,600 cubic feet of papers, periodicals, correspondence, audiovisual recordings and photographs.

The Center requests continued allocation of \$100,000 to The LGBT Community Center National History Archive to support it's operating expenses, and the continued curation of impactful LGBTQ+ cultural programming in New York City.

Currently, The Archives at The Center are partially hosting the exhibition "Young Lesbians, On Selfhood," a "narrative that represents the history, ingenuity, joy, and creativity of multiply marginalized young Lesbians."

The Center's services

The Center fosters a welcoming environment where everyone is celebrated for who they are. We offer the LGBTQ communities of NYC advocacy, health and wellness programs; arts, entertainment, and cultural events; recovery, parenthood, and family support services. In addition, The Center has made racial equity a keystone element of our approach to community building.

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THE CENTER

- **Counseling and support groups:** The Center provides short-term individual counseling and referral services, as well as hosts a range of support groups for our transgender and gender nonconforming communities. Both individual counseling and groups offer support around a variety of topics, including gender identity and expression, emotional challenges, substance use and recovery, and aim to build peer support networks.
- **Employment support:** Despite legal protections in New York State, the effects of discrimination continue to place trans and gender nonconforming communities at extremely high rates of poverty, unemployment, underemployment and homelessness. The Center provides services to directly combat this inequality, including individual career coaching support, case management, events focused on career exploration, legal workshops and networking opportunities.
- **Health insurance enrollment and linkage to care:** The Center is a designated navigator agency for the NY State of Health, the health insurance marketplace for New York through the Affordable Care Act. We provide information and education on the options available, and help individuals, families, small businesses and their employees enroll in New York State Medicaid, The NY Essential Plan, Child Health Plus and Qualified Health plans. We also help connect individuals to TGNCNB affirming medical and behavioral healthcare as needed.
- **HIV prevention, testing, and linkage to care:** We offer counseling for individuals, groups, couples and families, plus a variety of events, speakers and informal social gatherings for positive people and their loved ones. This includes HIV & AIDS education, anonymous testing, counseling and support, partner notification, and linkage to medical treatment including PEP, PrEP, and antiretroviral medications.
- **Legal services:** The Center partners with community-based legal providers to provide TGNCNB community members with drop-in assistance around gender-affirming access to healthcare, insurance, employment issues, housing, name and gender marker changes, public benefits and more.

For over forty years, The Center has worked to ensure that the LGBT community of New York City has access to the highest quality and most diverse range of services and resources. Though we are living in a time of unprecedented social, legal and political acceptance of the LGBTQ community, there is still much work to be done on a local and state level to ensure that our community members can successfully combat the social and economic injustice they face daily. Thank you to the Committee for the opportunity to provide this testimony today on an issue of great importance city-wide. We look forward to

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continue working with you to ensure New York City's future as a safe space for all New Yorkers.

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Statement by Sheila Lewandowski, Executive Director
The Chocolate Factory Theater
38-33 24th Street
Long Island City, NY 11101

New York City Council Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Relations
May 21, 2024

My name is Sheila Lewandowski, Co-Founder and Executive Director of The Chocolate Factory Theater in Long Island City, Queens.

The Chocolate Factory is an artist-run and led incubator for dance and performance, an artist service organization, a Western Queens community anchor and place of pride; a voice in the City's responsibility to increase funding and raise awareness around the impact and importance of the arts; and an international destination to see high-quality ground breaking performances outside of Manhattan.

NYC, this administration, this council reached out and, in a large part, supported the cultural community in 2021 and 2022 to partner with the City in the height of the COVID crisis. So, we stepped up MORE. We pivoted and distributed food and PPE, we paid artists to make virtual work, we kept our staff employed and borrowed from the future until relief funds came in. Then, the City asked for more. We were asked to fully open without adequate support to help the City's economy recover so that tourists flocked here again, small businesses and restaurants would fill again.

We did because we believed in a shared vision of NYC with culture in all of its glorious diversity as the center of NYC's identity was critical to the economic, emotional and spiritual identity. I still do believe that and I think most of you do.

Now, we need you more than I can recall in my 40 years in the arts in NYC.

Almost every organization I know of is facing 20-40% operating budget deficits next year and the year beyond that. There are fewer foundations and corporations giving to the arts. Earned income (tickets and such) are only a small portion of our operating especially in the performing

Statement by Sheila Lewandowski, Executive Director
The Chocolate Factory Theater
38-33 24th Street
Long Island City, NY 11101

New York City Council Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Relations
May 21, 2024

arts because most of us operate through a lens of equitable access. The Chocolate Factory offers tickets from \$10 to \$250 so that all have access regardless of their socio-economic status.

We need you.

I will close with a little show and tell.

This artwork I am showing was my uncle Tadeuz Rosicki. In his memoir about surviving 50 months in concentration camps from Birkenau to Auschwitz he wrote of how it was only through the arts that he survived. He drew the animals he saw from chickens to the deer outside of the barbed wire in the sand and dirt or in the air. He locked those memories away and then unloaded when he survived into thousands of pieces of artwork. Art was his therapist, his partner (until he met my aunt) and how he found beauty and hope.

Culture is healing, jobs, beauty, criticism, sharing, language, history, herstory, therapy, and the best investment this City can make for all of its residents, businesses and visitors.

Please don't kill hope in NYC. Increase funding for Culture and the Arts, don't decrease it.

NY City Council Budget Hearing Testimony May 21, 2024

My name is Ty Jones, and I'm the Producing Artistic Director of The Classical Theatre of Harlem. I'd like to open by saying thank you to Chair Carlina Rivera and members of the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations. I've seen members of the City Council at our free summer productions in Marcus Garvey Park, at the Skirball Center, and at last month's Harlem Arts Alliance gathering, and I want to say that I see and deeply value the level of your engagement with the cultural life of the City. Sophokles, Virgil, Shakespeare, Mozart, and more would not have been able to accomplish what they did without the support of visionary public servants such as yourselves.

Taking inspiration from the Harlem Renaissance that flourished one hundred years ago today, we believe in the ability of the arts to uplift a community: physically, economically, and spiritually. We have seen how, by putting on a play, we have converted a center of indigence in Marcus Garvey Park use into a lovely, enriching, family-friendly space. Dozens of Harlem entrepreneurs can attest that our art provides them with opportunities for their businesses to prosper that didn't otherwise exist. And we have seen the children of Harlem come back night after night to see the same show, becoming deeply familiar with the great works of literature because actors who look and sound like them allow them to see themselves in ancient stories that remain relevant today.

CTH has adopted a deeply community-centered approach to our work, achieving what we do through the connections we are able to leverage. By working with the City Parks Department and our peer nonprofits like the Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance, United Palace Theatre, and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, we are able to secure performance space for free. Similarly, marketing partnerships with peer cultural groups, churches, and NGOs pack our events to capacity. In lieu of a gift shop, we spotlight microbusiness entrepreneurs offering unique Harlem-made goods, and work with Uptown Grand Central to provide support infrastructure like tents, tables, and electricity. To expand audiences and make the most of

our presence in the park, we invite peer cultural groups to make use of our infrastructure, offering pre-show concerts with Jazzmobile, the Harlem Chamber Players, and the Young People's Chorus of NYC. In learning to do our own work by involving everyone in it, CTH has become an essential institution that holds together the social, economic, and cultural fabric of our part of New York City.

Social justice in our placekeeping work is also profoundly important to us, not only in the content of our plays, but as we seek the means of establishing a family-friendly atmosphere for our work. We recognize the park penury as part of our community, and respectfully offer free water, grooming essentials, and access to healthcare if they desire. By design, CTH productions are accessible to anyone who shows up, for free and with no reservation required. This encourages repeat viewership, multi-generational family audiences, wholesome date nights, and the participation of block residents and passersby. Over the years, we've cultivated what the Executive Director of the Theatre Communications Group calls, "among the most racially and generationally diverse audiences in the nation."

Studies have shown that CTH's presence in Marcus Garvey Park generates half a million dollars in economic activity for our partners and neighborhood businesses in July alone. Our 25th Anniversary this summer coincides with renovations to the Delacorte that make us New York's only Shakespeare in a Park theatre in 2024. As such, we expect audiences to increase by as much as 50%, or 30,000 people.

Welcoming so many new visitors to Harlem this year, we are working with our partners to help position the neighborhood - once again, a century later - as an essential destination in the cultural life of New York City: a *Renaissance Reborn*.

As you allocate public resources, I would like you to consider the extraordinary return on investment that The Classical Theatre of Harlem and our peers offer the City. Our work directly contributes to making our neighborhoods feel safe and vibrant, attractive places to live, prosperous places to do business, and inspiring places to nurture the next generation.

Thank you.



May 21, 2024

Dear Chair Rivera and members of the committee,

My name is Andrea Gordillo, and I am Development Director of The Clemente Soto Velez Cultural and Educational Center. We are among the only organizations of its kind to provide affordable creative and rehearsal spaces and cultural specific programs to the City's intersectional and wide ranging artistic community. In my role, I am acutely aware of the impact sectoral cuts have on communities and the industry, particularly for Black and Latino based organizations, which are overrepresented in the Cultural Development Fund Program.

The Clemente is also a founding member of the Latinx Arts Consortium of New York, which together with the Cultural Equity Coalition implores the Council to partner with us in the plea to increase the City's investment in cultural programs before the end of the current fiscal year. We appreciate the restoration of budget cuts to FY25 and FY26, but outstanding cuts to the Cultural Development Fund hurt the jobs and programs that more vulnerable New Yorkers need most.

We join our coalition in calling for the complete restoration of the CDF and the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG) cuts, specifically:

- Restoring \$6.5 million to the CDF to address the cuts made in November 2023 and January 2024 for FY24.
- Restoring the November 2023 cuts to the CDF in FY25, FY26, and FY27, totaling \$4.2 million.
- Baselining \$45 million for DCLA's total budget in FY25.

These restorations are crucial to prevent further loss of talent, economic impact, and the essential cultural services that make New York City vibrant and compelling. As a coalition, we conduct our work within an ecosystem, and the ecosystem in our backyard is as affected by these cuts as are our partners across the five boroughs, having a domino effect on the strength of our partnerships to scale up the programs we provide to artists and concomitant communities.

Sincerely,

Andrea Gordillo



Daniel “Rocky” Bucano
Chief Executive Officer and President
The Hip Hop Museum
610 Exterior Street, Suite B100
Bronx, NY 10451

May 21, 2024

Subject: Fiscal Year 2025 City Council Executive Budget Hearing Testimony

City Council Committee on Finance & Committee on Cultural Affairs

Thank you, Chair Brannan, Chair Rivera, and all the members of the New York City Council for the generous investments made to date to support The Hip Hop Museum (THHM). Your commitment to enriching our city's cultural landscape is deeply appreciated.

As the Hip Hop Museum's chief executive officer and president, I am pleased to provide a brief overview of the project's progress. After several years dedicated to raising capital funding through the support of the New York City Council, the construction of the museum's shell and core is complete. We are excited to share that THHM is slated to open its doors to the public in 2025, promising to be a beacon of cultural education and its profound impact on the Bronx and the City of New York.

Additionally, the interior of THHM is designed to be a dynamic and engaging space, featuring a state-of-the-art theater for performances and presentations, a vibrant restaurant that will serve as a community gathering spot, Interactive exhibits that showcase Hip-Hop, history, and its cultural contributions, and educational spaces designed to host workshops and cultural programs.

As we transition from the construction phase to the next critical stage, THHM will turn to the city once again in FY 25. We seek your support for the museum's interior fit-out, a crucial step in bringing our vision to life.

In FY 25, THHM submitted a \$4 million capital application to the city. We are embarking on a Capital Campaign that will begin in June 2024 to aid in the museum's sustainability; however, we need additional funding to complete the interior fit-out. Therefore, we respectfully call upon the New York City Council to allocate this additional capital funding in FY 25 to ensure the timely and successful completion of our interior spaces.

Completing the museum is paramount, as it is not merely a cultural institution but a testament to the enduring legacy and global influence of hip hop, which originated in New York City. The museum will be a symbol of pride for our city, a beacon of hope for our youth, and a driving force behind positive overall positive change.



As an example, one of the foremost benefits of The Hip Hop Museum is its educational significance. It will provide a unique platform for residents and visitors to explore the history and evolution of hip hop, from its humble beginnings in the Bronx to its far-reaching impact on music, art, and culture worldwide. Our educational programs will include [specific programs or initiatives], designed to inspire young minds, foster creativity, and self-expression, and empower the next generation of artists, scholars, and leaders.

Economically, the Hip Hop Museum will catalyze the growth of the Bronx and New York City. We estimate that the museum will generate millions of dollars in revenue annually, contributing significantly to the local economy. As an example, tourism is expected to flourish, drawing visitors from around the globe. The economic opportunities that will arise from increased foot traffic will breathe new life into local businesses, providing a vital boost to our community. Job creation and entrepreneurship will follow, creating a ripple effect of prosperity that will benefit us all.

The Hip Hop Museum will serve as a cultural hub, bringing our diverse communities together. It will showcase the talents of local artists and performers, revitalizing the arts scene in the Bronx. Through exhibitions, concerts, and community events, the museum will strengthen the bonds among our residents and celebrate the rich tapestry of cultures that define our city, instilling a sense of pride and hope for a brighter future.

In conclusion, I implore you, Chair Brannan, Chair Rivera, and the esteemed New York City Council members to continue to lend your unwavering support to The Hip Hop Museum. Together, we can ensure that this institution symbolizes pride, prosperity, and progress for the Bronx and the City of New York. Let us continue to showcase the enduring power of hip hop and the limitless potential of our communities.

In closing, I extend our heartfelt thanks and gratitude for your past support. Your investment in THHM is an investment in the cultural enrichment of our entire city. We look forward to continuing our collaboration and making THHM a landmark institution that celebrates and preserves for future generations, a testament to our shared commitment to the cultural growth of our city.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and dedication to our great city.

Rocky Bucano
Chief Executive Officer and President
The Hip Hop Museum
Email: rocky@uhhm.org
Phone: 917.495.8144



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...where the future is present

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Randy Weston
George Wein

New York City Council

Finance Committee

Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations Committee

Tues May 21, 2024

My name is David Johnston and I am the Development Director for The Jazz Gallery.

The Jazz Gallery presents over 350+ concerts a year to in-person audiences of over 12,000. We have been bringing top-quality jazz to New York City audiences since 1995.

We offer free tickets each month to the students of the Institute for Collaborative Education, a public school located on the Lower East Side. Students at ICE are in grades 6-12, from all five boroughs, and from all ethnicities and socioeconomic backgrounds.

We provide educational programs for the South Bronx Charter School for International Cultures and the Arts. We also offer free tickets every month through Culture Pass, and free concerts in Hudson Yards and the Financial District through partnerships with Brookfield Properties and the Flatiron NoMad Partnership.

Starting in July '24, we will again offer our annual SummerPass Program, a \$60 pass for entry to all July/August events (40+ performances). We offer steep discounted memberships to musicians and students. We provide world-class jazz at affordable prices; our top ticket price on weekends is \$45, and most performances are at \$25. Many are free to members.

We are facing a crisis in the cultural field in NYC. in the past two budget cycles, we have been cut over 20% as our expenses have risen.

Delays have caused us to pause or cut commissions and residencies. We are trying to plan our budgets and the fiscal year has ended and we still don't know what award we are getting, if any.



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The City must reverse all cuts imposed on the Department of Cultural Affairs and restore \$53 million in the City budget for cultural institutions and programs to repair these critical organizations and enable them to do their essential work.

In the 20+ years since I have worked fundraising from DCA, this field has dealt with 9/11, the Great Recession, Superstorm Sandy, COVID. At no point was it even suggested that any of these catastrophes were reason for cuts at this level. We cannot deliver our programming, our services to NYC audiences, we cannot meet expectations that way.

DCLA must have more capacity to deliver funding and hold the line against these catastrophic reductions.

We want to thank our City Council representative, Carlina Rivera and her staff for their diligent work and steadfast support of this sector.

**David Johnston
Development Director
The Jazz Gallery
david@jazzgallery.org**



229 W 42nd Street, 10th Floor
New York, NY 10036
646.223.3000

May 21, 2024

First, we'd like to thank the New York City Council, and in particular the Committee on Cultural Affairs, for your tireless efforts to restore city funding for cultural organizations. As we all know, arts and culture are the heart of our City, and meaningful funding for cultural organizations is critical to maintaining our status as a world leader in the arts.

As many young New Yorkers have their very first engagements with live performance at the New Victory Theater, we are acutely aware of the transformative power of the arts. Reductions in funding (this year, New 42 saw a reduction in DCLA funding, lost discretionary funds, and was not awarded Speaker Funding) have caused a strain on our resources, making it more difficult to think expansively about how we invite ALL New Yorkers to engage with the arts.



As we look toward FY25, we continue to urge the City Council to fight for cultural funding. Here at New 42, we partner with 143 schools throughout the boroughs to provide dynamic, in-classroom arts education as well as welcoming students into the New Victory Theater for the highly-subsidized rate of \$2 per ticket - the same price since 1995. Additionally, we recently began a partnership with the New York City Housing Authority and have distributed over 1,800 free tickets to NYCHA residents

citywide over the past two seasons. These programs (and more) rely on sustained city funding.

New 42's mission is to make extraordinary performing arts a vital part of everyone's life from the earliest years onward. Thank you again for your commitment to ensuring that all New Yorkers have access to world-class performing arts and we would love to see you at the New Victory sometime soon!



The New York Shakespeare Festival dba The Public Theater Testimony
Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations Hearing
Tuesday, May 21, 2024

Good afternoon, Committee Chair Brannan and Chair Rivera, present council members and staff. I am Kate Madigan, government affairs coordinator for The Public Theater in Astor Place. I am here to testify on the impact of the last few years since the pandemic, recent inflation, and unrestored PEG cuts on the New York City Cultural Institution Groups. The CIGs hope the budget for fiscal year 2025 will fully address our ever-growing financial deficits and bring recognition to our essential programming that makes NYC the best city in the world. While it is very encouraging and appreciated to hear verbal support from our allies, we require fiscal action on the city's part.

I am disappointed to share that CIGs and CDFs alike feel their work to support the City of New York has been taken for granted. From free and low-cost programming, to attracting tourists from around the world, the cultural institution groups consistently show up for New Yorkers from every borough and every life experience and deliver an outsized economic impact for the City, and yet the baseline budget is stagnant. We truly hope to see The Council's call for the restoration of \$75.6 million to cultural institutions to come to fruition.

Due to inflation and the residual effects of the Pandemic, The Public Theater has been forced to make difficult decisions about how to put on our FY25 season in a way that maintains excellence and financial sustainability. This is reflected in the reduced number of productions we can put on next season. Reducing the number of productions not only harms The Public but the overall economy of the City and the livelihood of thousands of New Yorkers. As an example, The Public Theater originated two shows currently running on Broadway: SUFFS and HELL'S KITCHEN. I'm sure you can realize the economic impact these Broadway shows have on midtown and the city overall. Now, with fewer new shows than usual, this virtuous cycle of economic benefit for employment, local businesses and City revenues overall will be diminished hurting cultural organizations and the City alike.

Unfortunately, even with our innovative work to find a sustainable model and maintain our level of artistic excellence, The Public Theater had to take extremely painful steps to achieve a sustainable financial model. This move resulted in laying off almost 20% of full-time employees in 2023, and the absence of an increased baseline in the FY25 budget threatens to upset the careful balance we have found. The Public Theater, like many live performing arts organizations, is in a particularly precarious position given the ways in which the pandemic has uniquely changed our industry. These repercussions include countless cancelled shows due to covid cases, related union health and safety requirements, lower ticket sales as a result of changed consumer behaviors, lower donor investments, supply chain gaps, the subsequent aforementioned inflation and government funding cuts. The sad reality is additional layoffs or reductions in programming are always looming. For all of us

Without fiscal action, namely permanent government investment, the nonprofit component of New York City's arts and culture industry will continue to struggle and may eventually fail resulting in an arts and culture landscape less equitable, diverse, and accessible. Should we let this version of the future come to pass, art, culture, and entertainment will become solely a commercial enterprise rather than a public good and ultimately will shut out those who cannot afford to pay hundreds of dollars for tickets to commercial productions and cultural offerings. The only way to avoid the bleak reality of this future is to reverse, restore and finally baseline DCLA and its CIG and CDF recipients.

Please let us know how we can contribute to advancing this mission, and feel free to reach out to me directly with any questions you may have on this testimony. Thank you for your time, attention and dedication to the people of New York City.

Kate Madigan Government Affairs Coordinator for The Public Theater
kmadigan@publictheater.org



TESTIMONY BEFORE THE NYC COUNCIL COMMITTEES ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES
& INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS AND FINANCE RE: THE FY 2025 EXECUTIVE
BUDGET

May 21, 2024

Thank you so much to Speaker Adams, Chair Carlina Rivera, Chair Brannan and all the committee members for the opportunity to speak on the devastating budget proposal for libraries in FY25. My name is Lauren Comito, I'm a librarian here in NYC and the Executive Director of Urban Librarians Unite, a 501c3 professional organization based in Brooklyn that focuses on supporting library workers in cities across the US.

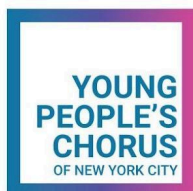
I know that none of the members of this committee needs to be told this, but political and budgetary decisions have consequences, and those consequences fall most heavily on the communities with the highest need, and the workers who meet those needs.

That's the case here - budget cuts will eliminate Saturday service in most of the city, further reduce purchase of materials, and continue the libraries' hiring freezes. Short staffing is stretching library staff to the point of burnout and even physical injury. Library work is an intellectual, emotional, and physical job. As workers try to keep up with the holds and moving materials with fewer staff, it puts more pressure on them physically.

These staff shortages are affecting all sorts of logistical issues, but the one I'd like to highlight caused a staff injury. Because of a lack of drivers, some libraries in the city are only receiving book deliveries every other day. This can mean that instead of 4 or 5 bins of holds, staff are attempting to process 10 in one day. The difficulty is compounded by the hiring freeze in the branches, which means that there are fewer staff available to process those 10 bins. In an attempt to get all of those holds on the shelf for our patrons, one library worker injured their shoulder to the point where they had to take a sick day to recover.

The city budget isn't just numbers in a spreadsheet, it's human beings. In the case of libraries, it's workers with a commitment to service trying their best to keep up with an ever expanding workload and ever shrinking resources.

We know from decades of trying, that austerity never results in growth. We know that growth comes from investment, and that the sheer human potential of the people of New York City is worth investing in. Libraries amplify that potential in every neighborhood of this city, please continue to invest in that amplification, and help library workers do their vital work with the resources required to do it.



IN THE KEY OF *Love*

Young People's Chorus of New York City®

Francisco J. Núñez, Founder/Artistic Director

37 West 65th Street, 2nd Floor

New York, NY 10023

T: 212.289.7779 | F: 212.289.6918 | www.ypc.org

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Cultural Affairs Testimony

Submitted by:

Francisco J. Núñez, Artistic Director, Young People's Director of NYC
May 21, 2024

Thank you so much for this opportunity to provide testimony today. I am Francisco J. Núñez, Founder and current Artistic Director of the Young People's Chorus of New York City (YPC).

YPC has been in existence for over 35 years and currently provides nearly 2400 children aged 8-18 with life-changing music education, academic support and performance opportunities. We were one of the many organizations that saw our Cultural Development Fund (CDF) funding nearly zeroed out, after nearly 20 years of significant support from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. This cut is going to impact our ability to provide scholarships to low income students.

YPC is a lifeline for our young participants who hail from low-income, underserved neighborhoods across the five boroughs. In addition to the amazing choral education programs that we provide, YPC offers a phone and screen-free environment where young people sing, dance, laugh, and connect with one another in person. Through our programs, children discover the power of their voice, forge lifelong friendships, and gain the confidence to pursue their dreams and aspirations. This connection is more important than ever as we see children continuing to struggle with the after affects of the pandemic and grapple with anxiety, self-esteem, and even suicidal ideation.

At YPC, we provide so much more than a world class music education. Through our College Bound initiative we provide individualized college preparatory services, resulting in 100% of participants graduating from high school on time and gaining acceptance to the colleges of their choosing. But perhaps even more importantly, we help children develop social skills, become well adjusted young adults, and provide a loving and caring environment where they can flourish.

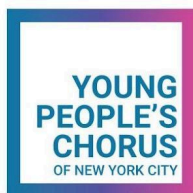
In light of this devastating cut, I wanted to provide you with our FY25 Discretionary requests:

- **\$100,000 Speaker Request (*All programming; New Horizons chorus*)**
- **\$30,000 Cultural Immigrant Initiative (*New Horizons chorus*)**
- **\$20k in Delegation Funding (*School Chorus programs in Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn, Bronx*)**

Much of this funding would go towards sustaining our current operations. We would also like to implement a new choral after school program for newly arrived immigrants to New York City. This pilot program, called *New Horizons*, *will* not move forward without additional support from the Council. We also submitted Member Item requests to all those districts where YPC has programming.

Additionally and standing in solidarity with all of our arts and culture colleagues, we support the FY25 \$53M cultural ask of baselined funding and a complete restoration of all initiative funding. The Adopted Budget for Fiscal 2025 should fully reverse all the cuts imposed on culture and finally baseline funding for CIGs and the Cultural Development Fund. We currently have 4 CASA partnerships and would very much like to renew those partnerships and secure additional ones in FY25.

We thank you for your consideration of this request.



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Chairman Emeritus

Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations CDF Rules Hearing Testimony Submitted by: Maureen McNeil, Government Relations Manager May 10, 2024

The Young People's Chorus of New York City (YPC), founded by Artistic Director Francisco J. Núñez, provides children of all cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds with a unique program of music education and choral performance that seeks to fulfill each child's potential, while creating a model of artistic excellence and diversity that reflects, and enriches, the community.

YPC has served thousands of NYC children, aged 8 to 18, since our inception. Our three core programs are School Choruses where we work with over 15 public schools to provide a music and choral education program, our core after school Performance Choruses, and Community Choruses where children attend after-school rehearsals in their neighborhood hosted by YPC community partners, and perform concerts throughout the year locally and across New York City.

City funding, and in particular our CDF Funding from the Department of Cultural Affairs, allows us to provide all of these programs. While we understand there was a need for some reform, the process as it has taken shape has ended up critically hurting organizations like YPC and destabilizing the sector. For FY24, we learned very late in the fiscal year that we were completely zeroed out representing an over \$118,000 loss. YPC, an organization that DCLA saw fit to fund in excess of \$100k for over 20 years, was given completely zero using a very similar proposal to one submitted the year before. This does not make sense to us. This week we learned that we were awarded \$26,500 as a result of our CDF appeal which speaks to issues with the initial panel process.

This cut has had significant ramifications. YPC has historically provided scholarships to over 85% of our student participants; this cut is directly impacting our ability to do that. We have also had to postpone our plan to create an after school choral program for new arrivals in our local neighborhood. We will be unable to initiate this programming unless we receive significant funding from the Council.

To this end, YPC is supportive of going back to a system of having a minimum of 3 rounds of panel meetings so that each application receives the proper attention and vetting it deserves, considering the many hours and days required to complete

this application. We would also be in favor of returning to the system where Council staff are included in the panel process. Council staffers are intimately familiar with the cultural organizations in their respective districts and really understand the importance and impact these programs have on average New Yorkers.

With regards to transparency of the process there needs to be a timely release of all data re: how these awards were evaluated and allocated. We also favor the release of the individual scores per section of the application; telling us that we scored 60 percent better than the bulk of the applicants does nothing to help us address the most problematic area of our application moving forward. Last but not least, we think that there needs to be additional oversight on the CDF process in general.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to testify today.

Cultural Affairs Council Committee,

Dear Speaker, Council Finance Chair, Committee Chair & staff. I am submitting written testimony for public record. I support a #PeoplesBudget, and urge the Council to hold the line on #CareNotCuts.

I am demanding that the Mayor fully fund the following programs in his budget proposal – and if he does not, I demand that my council member, Speaker Adrienne Adams and Finance Chair Justin Brannan use all of their charter-appointed powers to ensure that a budget will not pass unless it reflects these priorities.

Mayor Adams has proposed more than \$2.55 billion of budget cuts that could have devastating consequences on essential services such as libraries (\$36M), early educational 3-K programs (\$567M), CUNY (\$60M), education (\$1B), adult literacy (\$24M) and more. Meanwhile, NYPD and DOC budgets go up. NYPD is slated to spend 2x its overtime budget at \$740M. DOC budget is going up by \$35M, and spending \$138M a year on staff mismanagement.

As we all know, education, social services, and housing programs create real safety for our communities. City services and workforces that provide critical support to individuals and families who are struggling to make ends meet. Mayor Adams' cuts means slower housing vouchers and food stamps processing, more hungry and unhoused New Yorkers, fewer after-school and youth programs, and a general degradation of city services.

New Yorkers need #CareNotCuts at a minimum so they can continue to have access to the crucial city services they rely on. #CareNotCuts means:

- *No cuts to school budgets. Restore funding and staff lost due to Mayor Adams' prior budget cuts. Invest in student mental health, community schools, and restorative justice programs.

- *No cuts to CUNY. Restore funding, faculty, and staff lost due to Mayor Adams' prior budget cuts. Increase funding for advisors, ASAP, and MetroCard access for student support and retention.

- *No cuts to libraries. Restore funding cut by Mayor Adams' prior budget cuts.

- *No cuts to adult literacy programs. Restore and baseline funding to keep programs whole and invest in greater resources, services, and supports for adult literacy students.

- *No cuts to 3K. Recommit to universal 3K. Fulfill salary parity for the early childhood workforce.

- *No cuts to the provision of social services, such as housing services and health or mental health services. Invest in social safety net and housing solutions for low-income New Yorkers.

- *Reduce the NYPD's bloated budget. Cut vacant school police positions. Remove police from mental health, drug use, and homelessness response. Invest in community safety solutions.

- *Reduce DOC's bloated budget. Invest in supportive housing and alternatives to incarceration.

By taking these steps, we can create a safer, more equitable city that works for ALL of its residents. I urge you, City Council, to consider the well-being of all residents: reject proposed cuts to care-based programs and cut NYPD and DOC bloat instead. Thank you.

Bright Limm
bdlimm@gmail.com

Jamaica, New York 11435

Council General Testimony,

Dear Speaker, Council Finance Chair, Committee Chair & staff. I am submitting written testimony for public record. I support #CareNotCuts and a #PeoplesBudget, and I oppose the deep cuts and reductions to libraries proposed by Mayor Adams in the preliminary budget.

I am here to talk about cuts to libraries in this fiscal year. New York City's public libraries have been forced to cut staff, hours, branches and programming as they face potential multi-million-dollar budget cuts in the Mayor's budget. Libraries are facing \$58 million in budget cuts, which could make the already painful cuts, including no Sunday service, even worse.

This is a travesty and an attack on public institutions that serve as a safe haven to New Yorkers, providing only access to books but a warm, safe space to simply exist, and services such as Wi-Fi, computer access, online content and educational programs, IDNYC and voter registrations, tutoring, youth programming, and translation. The Mayor is essentially cutting off a lifeline for working class communities.

We must invest in our libraries and stop the cuts. I am calling for the Council to restore \$130M in capital and \$58.3M in expense funding

cut by Mayor Adams' prior budget cuts, and ensure weekend service for all branches.

We obviously hope that the Mayor and Council can accomplish a people's budget through negotiations. BUT if not, we need Council to use its full budget powers of amending the budget and passing terms and conditions to make sure restorations to library budgets are in any budget that passes.

New Yorkers need their libraries and they need libraries to be fully funded and staffed now more than ever. It is critical that the Council reject cuts to libraries and invest in these critical institutions instead. Thank you.

Caitlyn Passaretti
cdpassaretti@gmail.com

NYC, New York 10031

Testimony in Support of Brooklyn Public Library

to the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries,
and International Intergroup Relations

May 21, 2024

Chidera Ihejirika

Saint Marks Avenue

Brooklyn, NY 11216

The local public library has had an undeniably amazing impact on my life. I regularly check out books and use ebooks and have attended events for my whole life. The access to these free resources has expanded my mind, helped me evolve as a person and educated me beyond belief. I cannot imagine my life without the library.

I think picking up the eclipse glasses was a way that the library plays a role in bringing my community together. Also the JAY-Z Exhibit was one of those moments. The library continually strengthens community ties - it's a place to access free and necessary resources for that it must remain!

It's honestly devastating that more cuts are even being considered. I have been to the library on many a Sunday - so much so that I have accidentally showed up to the library on Sundays forgetting they are now closed. Weekends are one of the few days where most people who work can access the library and so it is very important that the library remains open on those days. It would impact me by making it tougher to fit visits to the library into my schedule even more so now that Sunday is already gone. Please do not make the cuts, please invest in our libraries!

Submitted electronically to bklynlibrary.org and hand delivered to City Hall.

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am here to express my urgent concerns regarding the critical need for funding to address the migrant and asylum seeker crisis AND to initiate an investigation into the egregious misappropriation of funds to RXR and Ryerson for the leases on these shelters which are ten fold what the properties were worth to buy.

As communities like mine strive to welcome an influx of migrants and asylum seekers, we are doing so without any additional resources from city agencies.

This situation is exacerbated by ongoing budget cuts, which are counterproductive in the face of this crisis.

I live in Clinton Hill, near two large migrant shelters: the Hall Street HERCC and the Ryerson Shelter. Last June, New York Health and Hospitals leased a block of industrial office space and converted it into a massive congregate shelter, now housing 3,200 single men. On neighboring Ryerson Street, the Department of Homeless Services leased a hotel that is housing 1,000 more individuals.

I want to stress that the city cannot provide enough resources for a community to integrate such a large concentration of people in need—over 4,000 migrants and asylum seekers. Until the city does what is right and closes these mega shelters, creating smaller, more humane shelters across the five boroughs, it is imperative to provide additional resources to avert the complete humanitarian disaster unfolding under your leadership with shelters of this size.

Here are the urgent needs:

1. **Investigate, investigate, investigate.** The mayor has criminally misused tax dollars to fund friendly developers. This is sickening, millions towards leases for buildings that are not even worth what the city agreed to pay.
2. **Parks and Recreation:** Thousands of migrants and asylum seekers are congregating in our parks because shelters do not provide adequate space on-site. Our parks attendants and regional manager, Tanise Palmer, have stated they cannot keep the parks safe and clean for our children without additional support.
3. **Sanitation:** There is a significant increase in trash piling up in our neighborhood. District Superintendent Lou Devito reports that his funding has been cut, forcing him to rely on community volunteers to pick up the slack. Additional resources are necessary to maintain sanitation standards.
4. **Education:** Our schools and teachers are struggling with increased classroom sizes and language barriers as they work to educate new Americans. More funding is needed to support these efforts and ensure quality education for all students.
5. **Public Safety:** Assistant Chief Commanding Officer Scott Henderson has been deploying more resources to our neighborhood to safeguard thousands of traumatized new residents cycling through our area every 30 days. This is a Herculean task that requires additional support for the NYPD.

Our neighborhood is a vibrant and welcoming community that has been growing and thriving. However, it is now in jeopardy due to governmental and agency mismanagement and negligence. The city is transitioning from the emergency phase—providing beds for asylum seekers—to the implementation phase of creating long-term humanitarian solutions. Cutting budgets amidst this crisis is ludicrous. We are at the epicenter of the city's mismanagement of the migrant crisis, and we must demand better!

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Chris DSchuetz

Dear Councilmembers,

My name is Gabrielle, I'm a 15 year old returning intern at ENYF located in Brooklyn NYC, and I want to raise awareness to the impact of library cuts; for it has and will continue to affect my community tremendously. As a profound Reader myself, i can speak on the behave of library enjoyers that this space provides access to Education support, Knowledge, and promote expression through the use of words. Libraries provide a wide range of books, articles, logs, magazines etc physically and digitally on various subjects. The web can be used to access and inform you on quite literally any and everything as long as you're willing to look. The budget reduction will cause a decline in knowledge materials being lost and un-replenished. Knowledge evokes evolution, and evolution is how humanity and society progresses and we clearly need progression if embracing knowledge is becoming expendable. Similarly so library's encourages education support. If you need help or just touching up on a certain subject you'd go to the library. They offer text books specifically for certain subjects to aid students; even designated sections labeled by subject to find things easier; libraries even provide tutors or staff that can aid those who need help, But if the budget decreases staff and tutors will shorten providing less access to reliable in person help. Although yes you can just search things up using the latest iphone or ipad, the environment of the library is really why it's a popular place.

The library allows a space for expression. I can say I enjoy going to the library, picking out a book that interests me based on the genre or even the cover however; that scouting will come to an end if libraries go out of business. If the budget gets cut severely, staff shortens, people stop showing up to the library; how will they make money? The libraries in the area would get shut down because they lost traction and my voyages into a story or novel will come to an end. Libraries are made for everyone; providing support and inclusion, if one is feeling insecure about their ethnicity or nationality they could research about their history to understand how unique and powerful their voice is, finding confidence within themselves to take that step forward. That step whether it's evolution or the progress of evolving needs to be expressed to our youth. The current budget cut of 58.3 Million will cause a decline towards these community necessities. Me taking a step forward is hoping to convince the council that there should be an increase in the libraries budget or to abolish the libraries cut in full. All I have left to ask you is how do you think we'll evolve with these severe limitations of knowledge? I appreciate you for listening to my testimony and I hope that together we can make a change in our community for the better.

Sincerely,
Gabrielle Crosdale
East New York, Brooklyn

Council General Testimony,

Dear Speaker, Council Finance Chair, Committee Chair & staff. I am submitting written testimony for public record. I support #CareNotCuts and a #PeoplesBudget, and I oppose the deep cuts and reductions to libraries proposed by Mayor Adams in the preliminary budget.

I am here to talk about cuts to libraries in this fiscal year. New York City's public libraries have been forced to cut staff, hours, branches and programming as they face potential multi-million-dollar budget cuts in the Mayor's budget. Libraries are facing \$58 million in budget cuts, which could make the already painful cuts, including no Sunday service, even worse.

This is a travesty and an attack on public institutions that serve as a safe haven to New Yorkers, providing only access to books but a warm, safe space to simply exist, and services such as Wi-Fi, computer access, online content and educational programs, IDNYC and voter registrations, tutoring, youth programming, and translation. The Mayor is essentially cutting off a lifeline for working class communities.

We must invest in our libraries and stop the cuts. I am calling for the Council to restore \$130M in capital and \$58.3M in expense funding cut by Mayor Adams' prior budget cuts, and ensure weekend service for all branches.

We obviously hope that the Mayor and Council can accomplish a people's budget through negotiations. BUT if not, we need Council to use its full budget powers of amending the budget and passing terms and conditions to make sure restorations to library budgets are in any budget that passes.

New Yorkers need their libraries and they need libraries to be fully funded and staffed now more than ever. It is critical that the Council reject cuts to libraries and invest in these critical institutions instead. Thank you.

Jennie Spector
jenniespector@gmail.com

Brooklyn, New York 11201

Cultural Affairs Council Committee,

Dear Speaker, Council Finance Chair, Committee Chair & staff. I am submitting written testimony for public record. I support a #PeoplesBudget that is built on #CareNotCuts.

I believe all New Yorkers deserve access to housing, livelihood, and resources to thrive. And I am OUTRAGED that Mayor Eric Adams continues to slash the budgets of and underinvest in programs my neighbors and I depend on.

I demand that the Mayor fully fund the following programs in his budget proposal. If he does not, I demand that my council member and Speaker Adrienne Adams use all of their charter-appointed powers to ensure that any budget that passes reflects key People's Budget priorities.

This includes:

- Investing in capital infrastructure for public and affordable housing, schools, and CUNY colleges
- Investing in and protecting public education, CUNY, childcare, libraries, social safety nets, and housing from budget cuts and restoring previous cuts
- Divesting from wasteful spending at the NYPD and DOC, and directing funds to community safety, supportive housing, mental health, and alternatives to incarceration

Our full list of People's Budget demands are here: <https://peoplesplan.nyc/2024-peoples-budget-campaign/>

As we all know, education, social services, and housing programs create real safety for our communities. City services and workforces that provide critical support to individuals and families who are struggling to make ends meet. Mayor Adams' previous and proposed cuts means slower housing vouchers and food stamps processing, more hungry and unhoused New Yorkers, less parents with the childcare support they need to stay in the city, fewer after-school and youth programs, and a general degradation of city services.

Stand with me and my neighbors to defend our budget and services against Mayor Adams,
and deliver a People's Budget that has #CareNotCuts. Thank you.

Kmea Jones

Joneskmea@gmail.com

Staten Island, New York 10305

Dear Councilmembers,

Good afternoon, my name is Minerve Alexandre, I am 16 years old. I am a returning intern at East New York Farms, located in East New York. My goal is to testify against the budget cut for libraries and propose policy requests to save our libraries. The recent cuts to library funding are deeply concerning. Some policy priorities for addressing library cuts are outreach and marketing, community engagement, and partnerships and collaboration. Starting these simple priorities is a step in the right direction to saving our libraries.

Promoting policies that support outreach and marketing can help raise awareness about the value and importance of libraries. By implementing effective outreach and marketing strategies, libraries can engage individuals who may not be familiar and showcase benefits and opportunities that can attract new users. Outreach and marketing is a great way to increase support, usage and funding. Community engagement is also another powerful tool in addressing library cuts. Libraries engaging with the community can help build support. Library activities and programs can build a support network. Research has shown, building a sense of connection to the library, communities are more likely to advocate for the importance and fight against budget cuts. Fostering partnerships and collaboration, libraries can share their resources, expand their reach. Working with other organizations can help libraries reach new audiences and advocacy. It is shown that collaborations can offer a wider range of programs and services to cater new audiences.

Cutting library funding would have a destructive impact on individuals, families, communities. These cuts are jeopardizing the access to books, educational resources, and community programs. We need your support to ensure our libraries can continue to be a safe space for all regardless of their income or background. Just reaching out to local representatives, signing petitions, or just spreading the word can make a big difference!! Thank you council member for the opportunity to express my concerns. Together we can make a difference for our libraries. I believe that advocating and funding for libraries is funding our future. #NoCutsToLibraries.

Sincerely,
Minerve Alexandre
Canarsie, Brooklyn

Dear Councilmembers,

Hello, my name is Mo or Moyina Liguier-Laubhouet. I am 21 years old, born and raised in East New York in Brooklyn. I currently work as Pink Houses Community Farm Ed Junior Staff at a nonprofit called East New York Farms! I'm writing this testimony to suggest at least a 50% decrease in police spending in this city. It's incredibly heartbreaking to know that there have been huge budget cuts towards important recreational and educational facilities such as the public libraries, compost and green thumb funding, nutrition education funding, etc. but the police budget hasn't budged one bit in years. Through the decrease of police funding and the increase of the facilities mentioned above, the city will be on a better road to overall wellness, improvement and care.

To begin with, libraries have been vital to my academic and overall adolescent development. The library was my sanctuary, my escape from the chaos that occurred at home. Kids today can't fully rely on the library the way I did. If at least 10% of the 10.8 billion dollar budget went towards public libraries, we can have libraries open for longer hours including open on Sundays, we can continue to expand the libraries' selection, and offer more wellness and self discovery workshops and opportunities for youth.

To further support my claim, compost and green thumb funding is extremely vital to the health of our planet. Working in urban agriculture has shifted my values and forced me to have a more optimistic view of how we can stop or slow down climate change with compost being a huge solution. According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, compost protects the climate by reducing methane emissions from landfills, conserves water and reduces water use by helping soils retain moisture, along with many other benefits. With an increase to green thumb and other compost/agriculture related orgs' funding, we can keep more compost sites flourishing and offer more compost and agriculture related education and employment opportunities.

Lastly, the fact that nutrition education funding is up for debate for nearly 660 schools is truly outrageous. No one school is better than the next. Every student deserves healthy school meals period. Our brains and our bodies need to be fueled by nutritious food to function properly. My experience of school meals was never anything too memorable but I definitely made sure that I ate the free food that was given to me at school because there were many times that I would go home having nothing to eat but a bag of chips and top ramen. With another 10% of police spending being put towards nutrition funding, any food insecure child that suffers at home would not have to suffer in school as well.

To conclude, it's a shame that New Yorkers don't have a say in where our tax dollars go. It's so disappointing that 94% of the police budget is funded by us so that police can incite fear in MTA stations, provide no safety in dangerous situations and hang out on their phones for hours. If the police spending budget is going to be so high, there needs to be some major reformation within the structure of the police force. Police at least need better de-escalation training, better mental health and empathy training. I would prefer if my tax dollars went towards the bare minimum solution of more safe, free, homeless shelters and rehabilitation centers for the mentally ill. Instead of being forced to watch police harass the people that do not have a warm place to sleep. I could go on and on about where I think a couple of these billions of dollars should go towards but all of this is to say that the police urgently need to be defunded. It's simply unfair that the people of this city are being legally robbed so that the people in the blue suits have a secured pension. As a young person, I would like to think that my voice matters so please consider putting your time towards ending this excessive budget. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Moyina Liguier-Laubhouet

East New York, Brooklyn 11208



Stefanie Batten Bland

May 20, 2024

DCLA Funding increase

Dear committee, I am Stefanie Batten Bland, Artistic Director of Company SBB, Casting & Movement Director of Emursive Productions, and Performance & Identity liaison for Sleep No More.

As a testament to my involvement in the arts, I am honored to serve at the Mayor's discretion on the Board of New York City Ballet as a community participant. This connection underscores the importance of our arts community in the eyes of our city's leadership.

We are a cultural economy that makes this city purr. Being a midsize AA-led company means that I am feeling the squeeze more than anyone regarding budget cuts from FY 2024. I implore the Mayor's office to reinstall and increase budgetary support for our city's creatives. We must all have the right and access to create in fair condition. Not only the large-scale institutions.

Thank you for your time and reading this testimony.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Stefanie Batten Bland

A handwritten signature of Stefanie Batten Bland.

Veronica Schanoes

The public libraries of New York City, the New York Public Library, the Brooklyn Public Library, and the Queens Public Library, are the best of what this city has to offer. They are part of what make this a great city, and have done so for well over a century. They have been featured in classic children's books, such as *All-of-a-Kind Family* by Sydney Taylor as places where impoverished and immigrant children can go to be safe and enjoy reading and learning, and they are an indispensable source for scholars who live in the city.

I am an associate professor in the Department of English at Queens College - CUNY. I have recently completed the manuscript to what will be my third book, and I wrote it entirely at the New York Public Library, in the private reading rooms, using the research collection's ample resources. At the NYPL, I was able to gain access to the works of a nineteenth-century Jewish folklorist who, prolific, as he was, has been all but forgotten. Across the street is the Stavros-Niarchos branch, where I took my 8-year-old son yesterday afternoon after school, and from where we staggered home under the weight of more than a dozen books on airplanes, rockets, and space travel, his preferred subjects.

How many library systems in the world can accommodate both the needs of scholars and of children? It is a travesty that there is now no Sunday service in the city—when I was a little girl, one could at least count on the Donnell always been open on Sundays. That is bad enough; in a city where so much of the population is Jewish, to close the libraries on the only weekend day when many observant Jews can travel is a slap in the face. But now we have to contemplate some branches giving up Saturday service as well? When, exactly, are school children and people who work Monday through Friday supposed to go to the library?

We saw how essential libraries were during the height of the pandemic, that libraries gave out masks and information about vaccinations, as well as providing housebound people with books. Library usage is up; we know that. Library budgets should be up as well. Please restore FULL funding to these precious city systems.

Library attendance is up at all 3 systems. I want to see the library's budget baselined in the city's budget to not have to make the budgetary case each year. And I'd go further, and say I want a 5% property tax allocation built in for libraries. I realize that would be a significant increase. Increasing public library funding for our communities always delivers a high return on investment. Libraries keep us safe and help us thrive.

NYC's libraries, for decades, have been used as a bargaining chip in the budget process. Mayors say they gotta cut library funding to "balance books" (pay for cops who actually make us *less* safe and *increase* the violence in our communities) and the City Council "fights back" (performs outrage) and sometimes "wins" (handing over another thing the mayor actually wanted).

I want the City Council to pick a bigger fight than just restoring cuts. Can we get stable library funding and not find ourselves in this scramble year after year? Can we please fight for meaningful INCREASES in funding? Can we find ways to stabilize this funding whether that means setting it as an earmarked property tax percentage or some other approach?

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

42

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Gina Tribotti (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: ISCP

Address: - culture

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/21/24

Name: DAVID JOHNSTON (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: THE JAZZ GALLERY

Address: 1153 BROADWAY

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

44

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/21/24

Name: Elyse Boxbaum (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: Encyclopedia of Jewish History

Address: 3644 18th ave

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

41

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. Cultural Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/21/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christopher Leon Johnson

Address: _____

I represent: SPIT

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

40

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5-21-24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Colby Herchel

Address: 270 E 7th St NY 10009

I represent: Scantic River Productions

Address: 270 E 7th St NY 10009

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

39

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Shale Livingston SL

Address: _____

I represent: The Chocolate factory

Address: Queens

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LUCY SEXTON
Address: 160 SIXTH AVE 10013
I represent: New Yorkers for Cultural
Address: Arts

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LIANG EPOU VIBO
Address: DCLA GENERAL COUNSEL
I represent: _____
Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LAURIE EMBROUNSEL
Address: DCLA COMMISSIONER
I represent: _____
Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

35

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: RISA SHOUP

Address: [REDACTED] BROOKLYN 11201

I represent: A.R.T. / NEW YORK

Address: 520 8th AVE STE 319 NYC 10018

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/21/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LISA GOLD

Address: _____

I represent: AS AN AMERICAN ARTS ALLIANCE

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Coco Killingsworth

Address: 30 Lafayette Ave

I represent: BAM / CIG

Address: 30 Lafayette Ave

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

32

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kimberly Olsen

Address: _____ LIC, NY 1109

I represent: NYC Arts in Education Roundtable

Address: 219 W 19th Street, NY, NY 10011

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Michelle Lema

Address: _____

I represent: Artworld NYC / Media / Social Media Influencer

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/21/2020

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Skye Kowalski

Address: _____

I represent: JACK Arts Inc.

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DAVID ROBERTS

Address: _____

I represent: BUILDING FOR THE ARTS NY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 05/21/2011

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DOHINI SOMPUKA

Address: _____

I represent: AMNH

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dian Dong Chen

Address: [REDACTED] NYC 10036

I represent: Chen Dance Center

Address: 70 mulberry St NYC 10013

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MELODY CAPOTE

Address: CARIBBEAN CULTURAL CENTER

I represent: AFRICAN DIASPORA INSTITUTE

Address: 10035

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Andrea Gardillo

Address: _____

I represent: The Clemente Soto Velez

Address: 107 Suffolk Street

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/21/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nicole Gardner representing Building for the Arts

Address: _____

I represent: Building for the Arts

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: May 21, 2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Beth Allen

Address: Brooklyn, NY

I represent: Downtown Brooklyn Arts Alliance

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: May 21, 2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Candace Thompson-Zachery

Address: New York, NY

I represent: Dance/NYC

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Judith Insell

Address: [REDACTED] NYC, 10031

I represent: Bronx Arts Ensemble

Address: 80 Van Cortlandt Park So. #7M3 Bx, NY
10463

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/21/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JIRIANA RIBBENS

Address: _____

I represent: ICE THEATRE OF NEW YORK

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/21/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DAVID S. PECORARO

Address: _____

I represent: Friends of Rosedale (Queens) Library

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: FRANCINE GARBEL-COHEN

Address: _____

I represent: The Regina Opera Co, Inc

Address: 599 E. 5 ST (1A) BKL7N

AND IN SUNSET PARK
Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kate Madigan

Address: _____

I represent: Public Theater

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: RYAN GILHAM

Address: [REDACTED] NY NY 10003

I represent: COMMUNITY BOARD 3

Address: 59 EAST 4TH STREET NY NY 10003

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Elyse Buxbaum

Address: Museum of Jewish Heritage -

I represent: A Living Memorial to the

Address: Holocaust

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tamia Santana

Address: _____

I represent: Ballet Hispanico

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

13

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lisa Alpert

Address: _____

I represent: Green Wood Cemetery

Address: - culture

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: David Freudenthal

Address: _____

I represent: Carnegie Hall

Address: - culture

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**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/21/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Claire Mooney

Address: _____

I represent: Brooklyn Public Library

Address: _____

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**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/20/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MARIA GARRETT

Address: _____

I represent: Theresa Creek Nature Preserve

Address: CANARIE BROOKLYN NY 11234

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tony Marx

Address: _____

I represent: New York Public Library, President

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/21/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: CINDA JOHNSON

Address: 10 GRAND ARMY PLAZA

I represent: BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Address: 10 GRAND ARMY PLAZA, BK NY 11238

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/21/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dennis M. Walcott

Address: 89-11 Merrick Blvd

I represent: Queens Public Library

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/21/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lauren Comito

Address: [REDACTED] BK NY 11222

I represent: Urban Librarians Unite

Address: 87 Richardson St BK NY 11211

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ROSA CHANG

Address: [REDACTED] NYC

I represent: GOTHAM PARK

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/21/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Leonard Paul

Address: 125 Barclay Street NY NY 10007

I represent: President, L. 374, DC37

Address: (NYPD security guards/custodians)

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/21/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: George Olken

Address: 125 Barclay Street NY NY 10007

I represent: President, L. 1482, DC37

Address: (BL library workers)

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/21/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: John Hyslop

Address: 125 Barclay Street NY NY 10007

I represent: President, L1321, DC37

Address: (@ns/brary workers)

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Matthew Zadrozny

Address: _____

I represent: Committee to Save the NYPL

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms