



**New York City Council
Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations
Fiscal Year 2020 Preliminary Budget Oversight Hearing
Monday, March 11, 2019 – Council Chambers, City Hall**

Testimony Presented by New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA)
Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl

Good afternoon, Chair Van Bramer and members of the committee. I am Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl, here today to testify in regards to the Mayor's Fiscal Year 2020 preliminary budget proposal for the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA). I am joined today by a number of my staff from the agency.

First, I will review the numbers from this year's preliminary budget proposal. The agency's proposed baseline expense budget for Fiscal Year 2020 is \$151.5 million. This includes:

- \$28.6 million for the Cultural Development Fund;
- \$109.5 million for the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG);
- \$1.25 million for the Energy Coalition members;
- \$7.1 million for agency operations and other expenses;
- \$5 million that was baselined at adoption of the 2019 budget

It is important to note that this is the preliminary budget proposal. These figures do not include any initiatives or other one-time additions typically added at budget adoption.

Our 2019 baseline budget, as presented at this hearing last year was \$142.1 million or \$9.4 million less than this year's.

After incorporating the one-time additions I just mentioned, DCLA's Fiscal Year 2019 budget came to \$200.3 million, DCLA's largest-ever budget allocation. This investment in the cultural life of our communities is thanks in part to our strong partnership with the City Council, led by the Speaker and Chair Van Bramer. It also reflects a continuing commitment to the goals of CreateNYC. I'll discuss some of these in more detail later in my testimony.

I'd also like to highlight that the agency continues to be an incredibly efficient funder: operating expenses represent just 3.4% of our overall budget. This means 96.6% of funds flow directly to the cultural organizations and neighborhoods that make our city a cultural powerhouse.

Our process for distributing next year's funding is already underway. Applications for the Fiscal Year 2020 **Cultural Development Fund** were due last month. The panel review process starts soon, and will run through June. As always, we appreciate the Council's support and involvement in this important process. There is a seat at the table for the Council on every panel, and we value the collaborative input.

Turning to capital, DCLA's five-year capital budget currently allocates \$1.15 billion to ongoing projects at more than 200 cultural groups. These projects are essential to cultural organizations and audiences in all five boroughs. They ensure access to the best and most efficient facilities and equipment. This varied portfolio encompasses everything from purchasing A/V equipment to construction of entirely new facilities. But across the portfolio, energy efficiency has become a major priority in recent years, especially following the release of CreateNYC which called for more green capital investment. Highlights include:

- The **Brooklyn Botanic Garden** has nearly completed the multi-phase redevelopment of its South Garden, which featured numerous water conservation improvements through the installation of a comprehensive system to capture rainfall, filter and recirculate captured water, reduce the use of fresh water, and minimize storm water outflow while also creating a new botanical Water Garden display.
- The **Staten Island Children's Museum** received funding to upgrade their temperature control system. This will provide more efficient management of heating and cooling for collections and patrons alike, with the added bonus of being on-demand and automated, reducing its operation from 24 hours per day to an estimated 9 or 10.
- We're working with the **Bronx Museum** to support the renovation of their South Atrium, which will include installation of more energy-efficient windows and an upgraded HVAC system.
- The **Dance Theatre of Harlem** will also be upgrading their outdated HVAC system, as well as their boiler and fire safety systems to make them more efficient and effective.
- The **Queens Botanical Garden's** new education center will be a 15,000-square-foot facility including a teaching kitchen and teaching greenhouse, further supporting the organization's mission of celebrating plants and cultures through learning and real-world applications of environmental stewardship.

As you can see in these environmentally oriented projects, CreateNYC continues to influence DCLA's priorities, programs, and budget this year. In addition, new grant programs and initiatives are pushing forward cultural plan priorities on multiple fronts. For instance, another major priority for the plan is forging stronger connections between city resources and the cultural sector, which we've pursued in a number of ways:

- Following the **Mayor's Grant for Cultural Impact's** successful pilot year in 2018, this year we expanded it, providing \$500,000 for ten partnerships between City agencies and cultural organizations to fund programs benefitting underserved

New Yorkers. They include five renewed partnerships from the pilot and five new partnerships. For example, PEN America will work with the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment to host free writing workshops for immigrant communities in Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx. And the Weeksville Heritage Center will partner with the NYC Commission on Human Rights to trace the history of Bedford-Stuyvesant through its Black-owned restaurants.

- DCLA launched **Public Artists in Residence** – or PAIR – in 2015 to embed artists in City agencies, where they work alongside staff and constituents. The artists use their creative practices to help address some of our thorniest civic problems. Since then we've placed artists and collectives in nine PAIR residencies. And we are continuing the program with four new city agencies on board to host artists this year – the Department for the Aging, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Department of Records and Information Services, and the Mayor's Office of Sustainability.
- Working with the Department of Buildings and the Mayor's Office, we created **City Canvas** last fall to allow public art installation on the city's 300 miles of sidewalk sheds and construction fences. The omnipresent structures are essential to public safety, but they can be uninspiring to look at. After an open call seeking interested cultural organizations, we've selected the Studio Museum and ArtBridge, who will commission artists to beautify these neighborhoods throughout the city. We hope to celebrate the first installations under this program this spring.
- We've also made deliberate efforts to connect our constituent cultural organizations with City resources and to bring them together at events and programs.
 - In September, we convened a group of mid-sized organizations to learn how to secure contracts for arts-in-education services in New York City's public schools. Our partners at the Department of Education's Office of Arts and Special Projects presented detailed information on their contracting process. This met our goal of expanding access for our constituents as the DOE seeks to diversify the organizations offering services to schools and students.
 - In October, we partnered with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs to co-host ***What Can We Do? Immigration Summit for Cultural Organizations*** for nearly 250 representatives from NYC arts nonprofits. The event served as a forum to discuss how the cultural sector, along with City government, can work in solidarity with our immigrant neighbors, many of whom are at the core of our arts and cultural communities.
 - In February, we worked with the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities to host ***Disability and Inclusion in the Cultural Workforce***, an event for over 150 people representing over 90 cultural organizations. Attendees heard personal perspectives of people with disabilities working in the arts. They learned about local, state, and regional resources offering support in developing more inclusive recruiting, hiring, and retention practices.
- Two Citywide projects have become powerful tools for helping reduce economic barriers to participation in NYC's cultural life.

- **IDNYC**, the City's municipal identification card, is now in its fifth year. Among the card's wide range of benefits, it continues to provide cardholders with free one-year memberships at 40 cultural partners, now including the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art.
- 2018 saw the launch of **Culture Pass**, a new initiative administered by NYC's three library systems. Library card holders can use their cards to acquire free passes to over 45 cultural institutions in all five boroughs. DCLA was able to facilitate announcements about Culture Pass on LinkNYC kiosks across the city, and provide funding to support related programming at library branches in traditionally underserved neighborhoods.

CreateNYC also outlined our long-term commitment to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in NYC's cultural landscape. To this end, we have worked to build an emphasis on diversity into our agency's funding at every level.

- Fiscal Year 2019 was the first year that Cultural Development Fund (CDF) applications included questions about each applicant's efforts to hire diverse staff and reach diverse audiences.
- To further increase accessibility for all qualified organizations to the extensive programmatic funding DCLA offers, Fiscal Year 2020 CDF applicants benefitted from enhanced support in their application submission process. This is in addition to the services already offered such as the twelve application seminars held annually in locations across the city. These enhancements included:
 - An online version of the Fiscal Year 2020 CDF application seminar presentation, with closed captioning;
 - Drop-off tables at cultural locations in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, and Upper Manhattan, from 10am to 2pm, on the application due date of February 11, 2019;
 - Technical assistance for CDF applicants included extended hours of the CDF help desk. And finally, in-person drop-off at DCLA offices stayed open until 11:59pm on the evening of the deadline
- The members of the Cultural Institutions Group are being required to adopt full diversity plans that set benchmarks and increase accountability. These will be completed later this spring. We have worked closely with them to figure out how to produce plans that translate into concrete improvements toward cultivating a more inclusive cultural sector.
- In August, we announced the grantees of the new **CreateNYC Disability Forward Fund**. The fund provides programmatic support for organizations deepening their commitment to people with disabilities as artists, cultural workers, and audiences. Twenty-two organizations in a variety of disciplines received grants of up to \$35,000. Projects ranged from the creation of new work featuring disabled artists, to re-examining collections through the lens of disability aesthetics, to training people with disabilities for employment in creative careers.
- The **CUNY Cultural Corps** continues to go strong. In the 2018-2019 school year, over 130 students from 16 CUNY colleges hold paid internships with 63 cultural institutions throughout the city. This means that at the end of just three years, a

tremendously diverse group of 340 students will have received excellent professional development and experience in the working world. They have provided over 62,000 work hours to the cultural sector.

- The **CreateNYC Leadership Accelerator**, a newer partnership with CUNY, attempts to address the lack of diversity in high-level positions at cultural organizations. The program, which is free of charge to the participants, provides professional development and leadership skills training to diverse groups of mid-career cultural professionals. After a successful pilot cohort in June 2018, the program has just kicked off its second year, serving 52 participants this spring.

We're particularly pleased to be able to substantially increase funding for local arts councils: In partnership with the City Council, we provided the five borough councils nearly \$3 million, which in turn went to individual artists and community-based arts organizations. Artists are at the heart and soul of NYC, and this investment helps ensure that they have the support they need to stay living and working in our communities.

In January 2018, Mayor de Blasio released the final report from the Mayoral Advisory Commission on City Art, Monuments, and Markers. As you know, I co-chaired this commission alongside Darren Walker, President of the Ford Foundation. The commission was charged with developing recommendations on how the City should address monuments and markers on City property that are the subject of significant public debate.

In the past year, a significant amount of progress has been made in enacting the Commission's recommendations.

- In response to the Monuments Commission's report, the Public Design Commission is now undertaking a one-year project to review the City's art collection. The first phase of the project will result in a public online database of outdoor monuments and memorials, and is planned for completion in August 2019.
- Nearly a year ago, the City removed the controversial statue of Dr. J. Marion Sims from its pedestal in Central Park and committed to working with residents to commission new artwork for the site. As part of this process, the Committee to Empower Voices for Healing and Equity – made up of local stakeholders in East Harlem, DCLA, and the Department of Health – was formed to spearhead the Beyond Sims initiative. Its goal is to ensure ongoing community engagement throughout the artist selection and design process. Using the Percent for Art process, five finalists have been selected and will submit proposals in the coming weeks.
- Last summer, First Lady Chirlane McCray, former Deputy Mayor Alicia Glen, and women.nyc launched **She Built NYC**, an initiative to honor remarkable women who contributed to NYC's rich history through the creation of public monuments on City property. DCLA is pleased to be a part of this endeavor. Nominations from over 2,000 New Yorkers generated a list of over 300 worthy individuals,

groups of women, or events in women's history. Based on that list, five new monuments to women – one in each borough – have been announced, starting with Shirley Chisholm last November. This will essentially double the number of monuments honoring real women from history in the City's collection. It is a step on the path to more fully, accurately, and equitably reflecting the stories and contributions of all New Yorkers in our city's public art.

I'd like to wrap up with an update on City Council initiatives. Together, these programs would be larger than the entire cultural budget of most American cities. We hope to see funding for these initiatives once again added at adoption:

- The **Coalition of Theaters of Color** received nearly \$2 million in Fiscal Year 2019, enabling 44 organizations to serve audiences and artists citywide and greatly increasing the number of people of color whose stories are shared through theater.
- Over \$6 million went to 182 organizations as part of the **Cultural Immigrant Initiative**. I think we can all agree that NYC, a city of immigrants, can only benefit from amplifying the voices of people from all cultural backgrounds.
- **Art as a Catalyst for Change** continues to form important collaborations between arts organizations and elementary and middle schools to mobilize communities against gun violence.
- An even larger opportunity to bring art into the lives of NYC's students is the **Cultural After-School Adventures** program, or CASA. 765 programs – 15 in each council district – were funded for this current academic year. In my days working in the museum world, I saw firsthand how great CASA can be. It's much more than the huge opportunity to provide in-depth afterschool programming for kids in public schools. It can also create strong ties between cultural organizations and individual schools. And it gave us – the cultural institutions – the chance to work in depth with talented teaching artists.
- Last but not least, since New Yorkers of all ages benefit from art and culture, we have **SU CASA**. In addition to serving seniors through over 250 programs, this partnership with the five borough arts councils enables us to provide employment for over 100 teaching artists. Since I've been Commissioner I have made it a point to visit a number of SU CASA programs. All were well received by the senior centers and their clients. This program is a great model for "creative ageing" initiatives around the country.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.



Statement by Dennis M. Walcott, President and CEO, Queens Library

New York City Council's Committee on Libraries & Cultural Affairs FY 2020 Preliminary Budget Hearing

March 11, 2019

Good morning. I am Dennis Walcott, President and CEO of Queens Library. It is a pleasure to be here. Thank you, Chair Van Bramer, Speaker Johnson and the members of this esteemed committee for the opportunity to speak with you about our budget priorities for the next fiscal year.

Public libraries play a critical role in our society. We are the last, open democratic institution that seeks to transform people's lives by providing free access to knowledge and information, and by creating opportunities for growth and empowerment to all. Libraries are for everyone, regardless of people's background or identity. The public depends on us for outstanding programs and services, broadband access, and trustworthy information to improve the quality of their lives. It would be impossible for us to meet their needs without your steadfast support and leadership. Therefore, it is with deep gratitude that I thank you on behalf of every person who works at, and is served by, Queens Library.

I am happy to report that Fiscal Year 2018 was another busy and productive year for us at Queens Library. We welcomed over 11.4 million customers, a 2% increase from the previous fiscal year, and saw substantial increases in visitors at several of our locations. For example, the North Hills community library had an 18% increase in visitors, the Forest Hills community library had a 13% increase, Peninsula had a 9% increase and the Flushing community library had a 7% increase in visitors.

The Library's books, DVDs, magazines and other materials circulated 12.4 million times. Last summer, we launched our "bookcycle," outfitted with a book display and free Wi-Fi service within a 100-foot range, allowing our librarians to ride to various locations and provide the public with our services.

Over three million people used our computers or accessed our Wi-Fi network. In December 2018, we made it easier for our customers to access our Wi-Fi by removing the prerequisite of entering a library card number. Now our customers, whether they have a library card or not, can instantly connect to our Wi-Fi at any of our 65 locations. We have also tripled our Internet bandwidth, thereby providing even faster service to the public.

For too many Queens residents, the digital divide presents barriers to education, job opportunities and responsibilities of daily living. Approximately 30% of the borough does not have broadband access or a computer at home. In certain communities, that number is much higher.

In addition to presenting everyday obstacles, this divide can create a significant problem affecting the amount of funding the City receives from the federal government, and our representation in Congress. With the Census Bureau's emphasis on having people complete the 2020 census online, the Library will undoubtedly play a critical role in ensuring an accurate count. **Let us be clear - the City will not be able get a complete count of its residents without the assistance of libraries.** Therefore, we look forward to working with both sides of City Hall in the weeks and months ahead to secure resources for the outreach, training and equipment necessary to count every New Yorker and succeed in this vital mission.

As you all know, Queens Library is one of the largest public library systems in the nation and a national leader in the delivery of varied and innovative services to New Yorkers of all ages and from all walks of life. Queens Library offered 87,500 programs during Fiscal Year 2018, and customer attendance of more than 1.5 million surpassed the all-time high we set for our system just last year by 8%.

Libraries across New York City strive to help all New Yorkers who come through our doors. We even make an effort to go outside of our facilities in order to reach populations who may have difficulties coming to us. At Queens Library, we have storytimes in laundromats, provide resources to and conduct programming at homeless shelters, provide digital reading material at hospitals, and lend material and sign people up for library cards at LaGuardia Airport. Our mobile library travels across the borough to provide library services and programs to reach as many people as possible. In FY 18, we connected with tens of thousands of individuals through outreach events alone. We do this because we know people need our services. Moreover, just as communities need us, we need the city to keep investing in libraries.

As we connect with new populations, it provides us with more opportunities to transform people's lives. Let me give you an example of Izaya Hardwick, a formerly incarcerated woman, who in the first six months after her release struggled to find a job. She was close to giving up and was seriously considering leaving New York City. Then she was referred to our Job & Business Academy. With help from our amazing staff, Izaya enrolled in our free OSHA 30 certification program and earned her certification in November 2018. The following month she secured a job as a welder at a construction company. Izaya now earns a living wage, and acknowledges that she would not be where she is today without the Queens Library.

There are many, many more stories similar to Izaya's.

Since 2010, the City's population has increased, with Queens County witnessing a growth of 5.7 percent. With the influx of new residents comes a rise in demand for our services. Queens Library wants to do more, however we are limited in our ability. For example:

- Over 1,800 customers attended our information sessions for OSHA 30 safety training, but there were only 411 available seats;
- We were forced to turn away 800 individuals from popular ESOL classes because there weren't enough seats;
- Nearly 600 customers were unable to enroll in our Adult Basic Education and High School Equivalency classes; and
- One hundred and eighty (180) people participated in our Security Guard training and fingerprinting information sessions, but we only had seats for 75 people.

Universal Six-Day library service exists because of this Council and Mayor de Blasio. On behalf of every New Yorker, especially the people who visited Queens Library on a Saturday in FY 18 a total of 1.6 million times, thank you. As has been stated previously, the funding that we received several years ago was just enough to make six-day service a reality. Deep down in our collective hearts, we know that we are not providing the full level of service our customers need and deserve.

When the city empowers libraries, it empowers individuals, families and communities. **Libraries are at the heart of creating a fairer City**, so we stand ready and able to make that vision a reality. In order for us to do this, we will be respectfully requesting \$35 million in Expense funding in the Mayor's Fiscal Year 2020 Executive Budget, of which \$9.7 million would go to Queens Library.

This figure includes the \$8 million that Speaker Johnson and the City Council provided to libraries this fiscal year. It is of the utmost importance that, at minimum, the Council restore that investment for FY 20. However, it would truly make a difference if the Council were able to enhance that figure. This funding is critical to us as it supported vital Library operations such as staffing, programming, collections and critical maintenance projects. When you consider the fact that the Administration is looking to cut funding to libraries, reauthorizing—and potentially increasing—this funding is of great importance.

While we appreciate last year's funding, it does not keep pace with rising costs related to health care, insurance and inflation. Further, the two million dollars that the Administration allocated to DDC for libraries to address capitally ineligible projects was, in actuality, for libraries **and** culturals, and could not be used by any of the systems to address our vast critical maintenance needs.

Without increased funding, we will need to make serious decisions about our operations that will negatively affect our customers. Consequences may include:

- Reduction of operating hours;
- Inability to fully staff community libraries;
- Decrease in e-materials;
- Outdated information;
- Less programming;
- Inability to address critical maintenance issues, resulting in costlier capital projects.

In order to properly serve the people of this great city, we need clean, safe, modern and inspiring spaces. Queens Library has more than one million square feet of library space, and all of it is heavily used. Furthermore, over the next decade we will add nearly 50,000 square feet to our system's footprint. Maintaining our physical spaces is no small feat. We have identified a capital need of nearly \$270 million over the next 10 years to modernize all of our facilities and bring them into a state of good repair. For Fiscal Year 2020, the Library has projected at least a \$47 million need to fund new projects and address shortfalls for several pending renovation and expansion projects.

We are proud of all we have accomplished this year and are optimistic about the future. While deeply appreciative of the Council's and Mayor's efforts, we cannot rest on our laurels because there is still a great deal of work to do. The people of Queens need their libraries to do more for them, and we want to do more for them. Demand for our programs and services are at an all-time high, and we are providing six-day service at all of our libraries on an operating budget that cannot sustain it indefinitely. Faced with increased demand and rising costs, we continue to need your help. We need the City to continue to invest in Queens Library.

Every day, we transform lives by cultivating intellectual and personal growth. As the center of community life, we build strong neighborhoods through the multitude of free programs and services we provide. I am proud to say that Queens Library does an outstanding job in meeting the needs of our diverse constituents. Our accomplishments have been many, but so too are our needs. With your help and increased generosity, we will be able to meet those operational and capital needs.

Chair Van Bramer, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.



**NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
FISCAL YEAR 2020 PRELIMINARY BUDGET AGENCY OVERSIGHT HEARING
CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES & INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS
COMMITTEE**

Monday, March 11, 2019

INTRODUCTION

Good morning. My name is Tony Marx and I am the President of The New York Public Library (NYPL). I would like to thank Speaker Corey Johnson, Committee Chair Jimmy Van Bramer, and the entire City Council for holding this hearing. We are grateful for the opportunity to testify on behalf of our millions of patrons and to highlight an exciting period of growth, thanks to your steadfast support of libraries. The FY 2020 budget and our inclusion in the 10-Year Capital Plan will be critical in our ability to successfully deliver the thousands of individual programs and services that so many New Yorkers rely on in their communities.

STRONG LIBRARIES, STRONG NYC

NYPL is a free provider of education and information with 92 locations—including research and branch libraries—throughout the Bronx, Manhattan, and Staten Island. As a cornerstone in communities across the city for over 100 years and a pillar of literacy and knowledge, we offer computer access, classes, exhibitions, programming, and so much more to everyone. We have evidence that people need their libraries now more than ever: new library card sign-ups at NYPL

have gone up 33 percent overall compared to last fiscal year; MyLibraryNYC has expanded to one third of all Department of Education schools, and school visits are up nearly 10 percent in the first six months of FY 2019; early literacy program attendance increased by 137% in the last two years and Family Literacy Workshops are now in 87 branches; our Community Conversations program has exceeded last year's participation numbers in the first six months of this fiscal year and has expanded to 22 branches by patron request. In this program, discussions are driven by the community and topics have included civics 101, mental health and aging, access and inclusion, the midterm elections, fighting the cycle of addiction, the ever-growing divide among classes, and so much more.

With more people reading more, New Yorkers know that they can turn to their libraries as safe havens of democracy, civic engagement, and facts. Consistently, year after year, our virtual service AskNYPL receives over 100,000 inquiries about everything from personalized book recommendations and research needs to details about our free tax prep programming, health insurance sign-ups, and small business support—fighting misinformation and proving that knowledge is power. Last fall, we partnered with the Campaign Finance Board for the first-ever coordinated voter registration drive in all 217 of New York City's public libraries and distributed nearly 1,000 forms to new and long-time voters. Now that the Census is moving online and the number of federal outreach staff has been cut by half, the Library has already been named a key partner in 2020 Census efforts. We anticipate the hardest to count communities will turn to us—one of the few free and trusted institutions where they can access computers and Wi-fi—to complete their form and ask questions.

We know that you are committed to libraries and understand the essential services we provide to New Yorkers of all ages, backgrounds, and means. With your partnership, we have expanded our physical footprint, but this growth and our rapidly aging buildings have ever-increasing costs, and we need your help to keep up. Thanks to your support and advocacy, in FY 2016 we were included in the City's 10-Year Capital Plan for the first time and received a significant capital allocation. The funding we received will allow us to fully renovate five historic Carnegie branches in high-need neighborhoods, including Hunts Point and Melrose in the Bronx, Fort Washington and 125th Street in Manhattan, and Port Richmond on Staten Island. These buildings would have continued to decline, but with this funding, all five are moving forward as planned with construction slated to begin in early 2020. We are eager to remain part of the City's 10-year capital planning process and to build on the progress we have made over the last four years. Our capital portfolio currently includes 61 ongoing projects and the City contributed over \$228 million in FY's 2019 and 2020. For all this and more, thank you.

MORE BUILDINGS, MORE SQUARE FOOTAGE

We have worked hard to adapt and update our buildings over the last century of service, and we are thrilled to expand our physical footprint by nearly 37,000 square feet in five branches: Macomb's Bridge, Van Cortlandt, Charleston, Washington Heights, and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Library. At 685 square feet, Macomb's Bridge was our smallest branch. Located inside the New York City Housing Authority's (NYCHA) Harlem River Houses since 1944, this tiny branch served patrons during more than 25,000 visits in FY 2018 while offering only 12 seats—by comparison, an average subway car on the nearby 3 line has over 40 seats. This new, larger space will open in fall 2019 in another nearby NYCHA facility and will significantly expand the availability of Library resources for all New Yorkers, including NYCHA residents, by

providing more space for classes, story times, computers, and comfortable seating for reading. The brand new Charleston Library on Staten Island will bring 10,000 square feet and dedicated adult, teen, and children's areas to the neighborhood, located in an existing shopping area that will make it easier for family visits. The new Van Cortlandt Library in the Bronx broke ground last fall and will double from 2,700 square feet to 5,800. It will offer flexible community spaces, expanded space for children and teens, additional computers and laptops, and more. While these expansions are much needed and anticipated, the larger footprint includes higher operating costs to staff, maintain, provide adequate security, and fill with robust collections and materials for our patrons.

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES

Expansion and growth don't come without moments of transition and, at times, temporary branch closure. While we always try to minimize closure whenever possible, patron safety and the ability to complete the project quickly sometimes necessitate closures. To prepare and support our communities when a branch temporarily closes for major renovations, we have created a three-pronged approach that includes collaborating with community-based organizations and nonprofits to offer program space, expanding library service at nearby branches, and launching bookmobile service in all three boroughs in FY 2020.

While expanding our footprint and providing new, bright, inspiring spaces is wonderful, our systemwide infrastructure still has an aging footprint, faces serious capital needs, and is in need of vastly improved spaces. As we've proven with the five full Carnegie renovations, well on their way after our inclusion in the 10-Year Capital Plan, we can do so much for New Yorkers with your support. Our next focus, pending inclusion in the ten year capital plan in FY 2020, will be

on the equally high-need neighborhoods of Edenwald, West New Brighton, Francis Martin, Spuyten Duyvil, and Countee Cullen.

MAINTAIN SIX-DAY SERVICE FOR ALL COMMUNITIES

With your leadership, NYPL is pleased to offer seven-day service at seven branches and the Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, and six-day service at 87 branches. This is impossible to continue without sustainable funding given the rising operating costs for staff, security, capitolly ineligible expenses, and required local law compliance. This is why we are requesting that our current funding is fully baselined and that an additional \$35 million investment in operating expenses is allocated for the three library systems so we can continue to maintain, grow, and offer the programs and services New Yorkers need and deserve.

This is not the time to cut libraries—on the contrary, this is the time to invest. We have proven that we are essential partners to the city and deliver essential services to millions of New Yorkers who often have nowhere else to turn.

CONCLUSION

We truly believe that strong libraries make New York City stronger. With your help, we can continue to serve as a reliable partner to the City and offer the programs and services to those who need them most in safe, welcoming spaces.

Thank you again for all your support and for the opportunity to testify. We remain available to answer any questions you may have.

INVEST IN LIBRARIES
LIBRARIES
MAKE NYC
STRONGER

FY20 PRELIMINARY BUDGET HEARING

DENNIS M. WALCOTT, **QUEENS LIBRARY** | TONY MARX, **THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY** | LINDA E. JOHNSON, **BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY**



New York
Public
Library

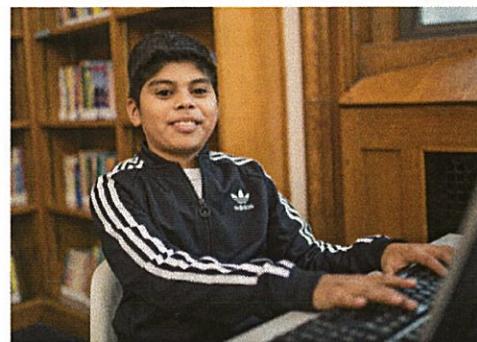
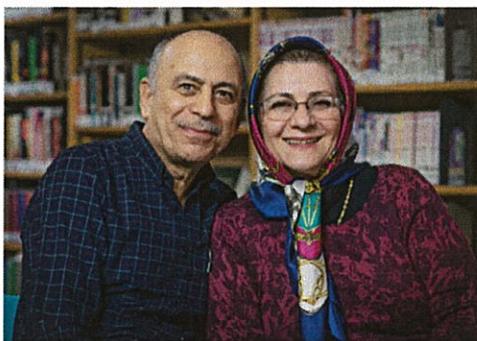


Queens Library

#INVESTINLIBRARIES

INVEST IN LIBRARIES

Libraries Make NYC Stronger



INVEST IN LIBRARIES
LIBRARIES MAKE NYC STRONGER



New York
Public
Library



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NYC's 3 Library Systems: FY20 Needs

OPERATING

\$35 MILLION IN FY20*

- Brooklyn Public Library: \$9.7M
- The New York Public Library: \$15.4M
- Queens Library: \$9.7M

CAPITAL

\$957 MILLION (10-YEAR PLAN)

- Brooklyn Public Library: \$275M
- The New York Public Library: \$412M
- Queens Library: \$270M

*This figure includes the \$8M request to the City Council

QUEENS LIBRARY

FY20 Operating Needs



OPERATING

\$9.7 MILLION IN FY20

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LIBRARIES MAKE NYC STRONGER



New York
Public
Library



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QUEENS LIBRARY

Busier Than Ever



- **11.4 million** visits system-wide
- Library materials circulated **12.4 million** times
- **1.5 million** customers participated in over **87,500** library programs
- **Over 3.3 million** computer & wireless sessions

Peninsula Community Library
Queens Library

INVEST IN LIBRARIES
LIBRARIES MAKE NYC STRONGER

Bklyn
Public Library

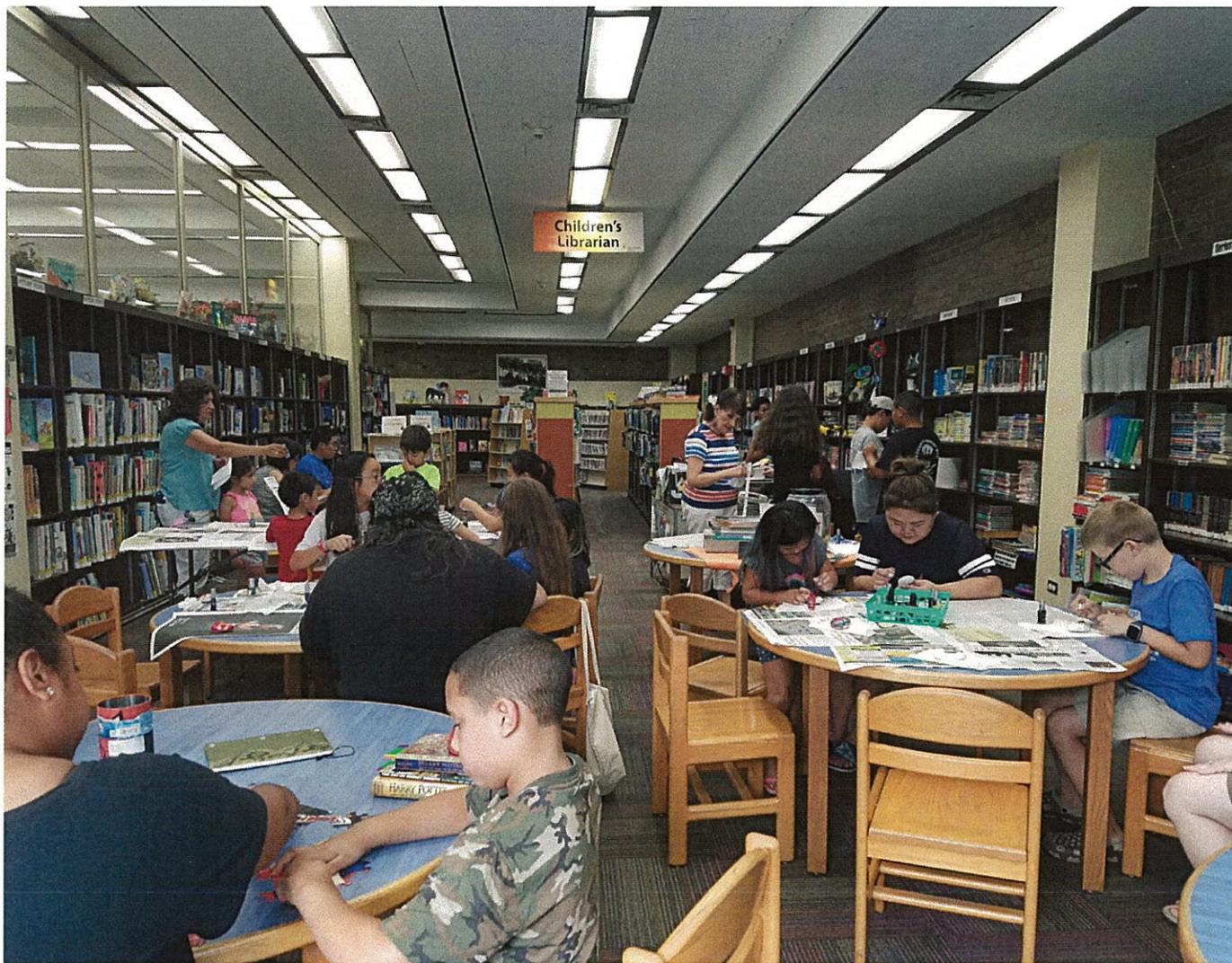


New York
Public
Library

Queens Library

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Protecting Full Six-Day Service



- **Ensure sufficient staffing levels** to provide improved services & maintain our safe & inviting spaces
- **Boost collections** to offer customers an extensive & diverse selection
- **Address critical maintenance needs** at our libraries

Whitestone Community Library
Queens Library

QUEENS LIBRARY
Capital Needs



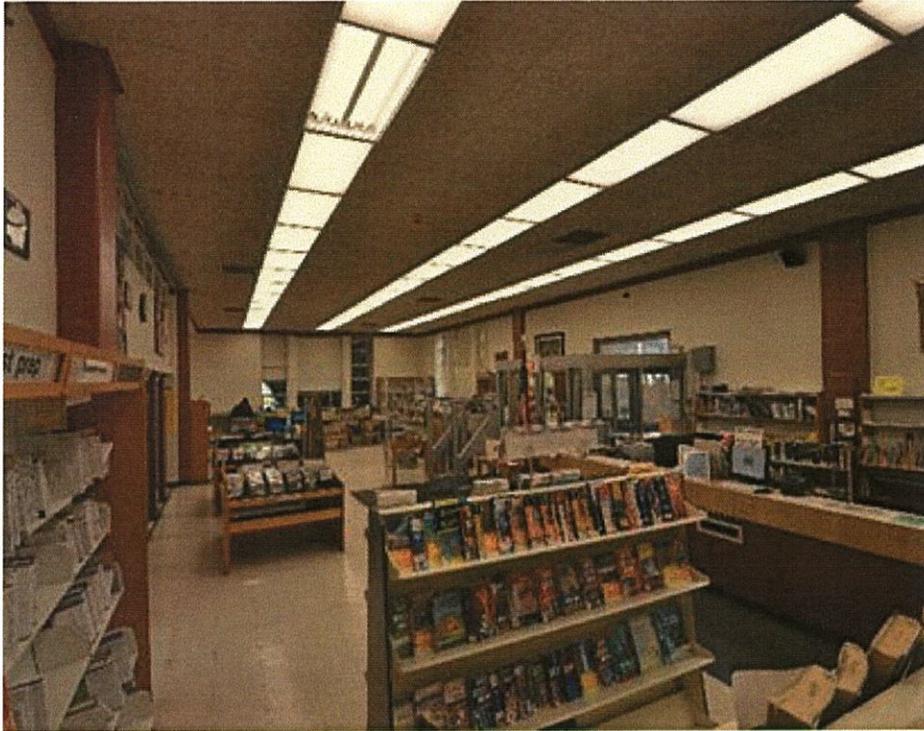
CAPITAL

\$270 MILLION (10-YEAR PLAN)

\$47M in FY20 for Shortfalls

QUEENS LIBRARY

Project Shortfalls



Richmond Hill Community Library, Queens

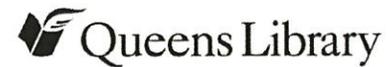


Baisley Park Community Library, Queens

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LIBRARIES MAKE NYC STRONGER



New York
Public
Library



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THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

FY20 Operating Needs



New York
Public
Library

OPERATING

\$15.4 MILLION IN FY20

- Branches: \$13M
- Research: \$2.4M



Essential Civic Spaces for Everyone



- **500%** increase in ESOL enrollment since FY12
- **5,000** people helped on their path to becoming citizens
- **2.9 million** public computer sessions

Naturalization ceremony at the Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, Manhattan
The New York Public Library

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Vital Support for City Priorities



- **788,000** early literacy program visits
- MyLibraryNYC expanded to **one third** of DOE schools
- **6,200** visits to outreach programs in homeless shelters
- Nearly **20%** of all IDNYC cards issued at NYPL

St. George Library Center, Staten Island
The New York Public Library

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Bklyn
Public Library



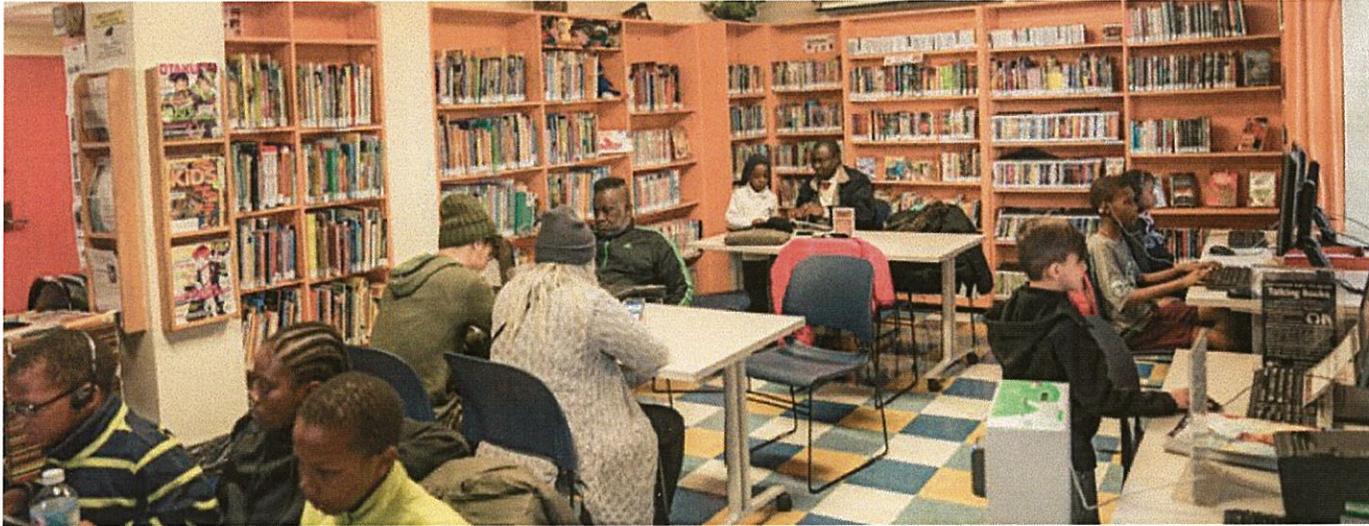
New York
Public
Library

Queens Library

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THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Growing to Meet Demand



- **Expanded spaces:**
Roosevelt Island,
Van Cortlandt,
and Macomb's
Bridge
- **New branch:**
Charleston
Library, Staten
Island
- **Increased cost:**
Staff, collections,
services

Macomb's Bridge Library, Manhattan
The New York Public Library
TOP: Current branch
BOTTOM: Rendering of new library

INVEST IN LIBRARIES
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Bklyn
Public Library



New York
Public
Library

 Queens Library

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THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
FY19 Capital Needs



New York
Public
Library

CAPITAL

\$412 MILLION (10-YEAR PLAN)

**For Critical Building
Infrastructure & Technology**

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Public
Library



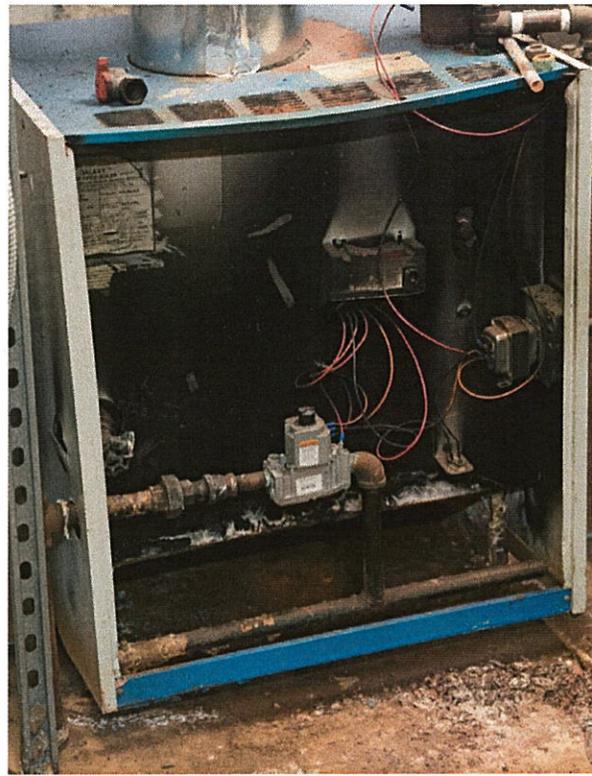
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THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

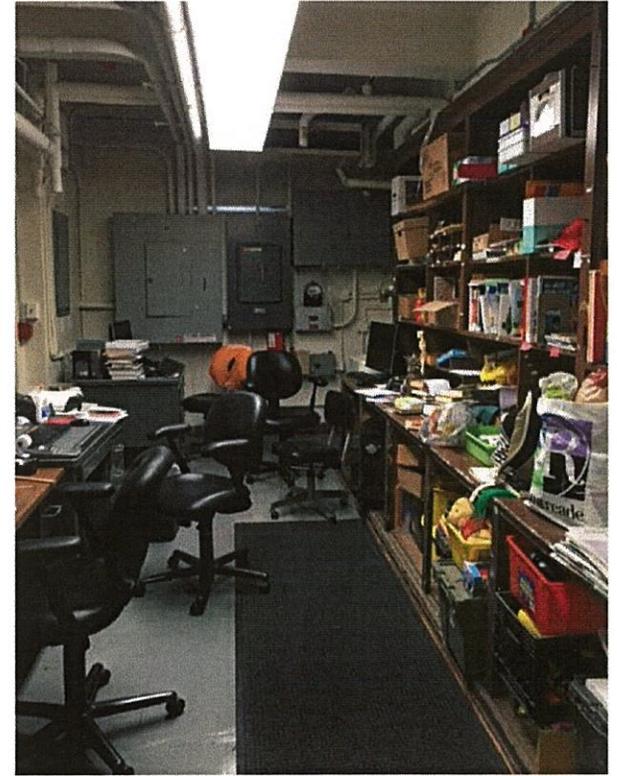
Critical Maintenance



Francis Martin Library, Bronx



Countee Cullen Library, Manhattan



West New Brighton Library, Staten Island

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New York
Public
Library



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BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY
FY20 Operating Needs



OPERATING

\$9.7 MILLION IN FY20

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New York
Public
Library



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BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Soaring Demand



- **13%** increase in Library Card signups
- **70,000** programs with over **one million** attendees
- **ESOL class attendance up 14%**

Sunset Park Library
Brooklyn Public Library

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New York
Public
Library



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BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Innovative Programs



- **First ever** college degree program in a library
- **Musical instruments** available to check out from the collection
- **37,000** programs for children
- **More than 1,000** community partners last year

Central Library
Brooklyn Public Library

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Bklyn
Public Library



New York
Public
Library

 Queens Library

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BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Growing to Meet Demand



- **Expanded Spaces:**
Brooklyn Heights,
Sunset Park,
Greenpoint
- **New Branches:**
Adams Street,
Cultural District
(300 Ashland),
Brower Park
- **Increased Costs:**
Staff, collections,
services

Aerial Rendering of Greenpoint Library
Brooklyn Public Library

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LIBRARIES MAKE NYC STRONGER

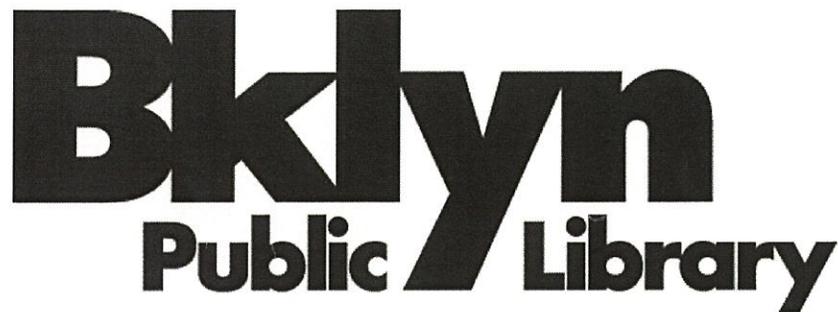


New York
Public
Library



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Capital Needs



CAPITAL

\$275 MILLION (10-YEAR PLAN)

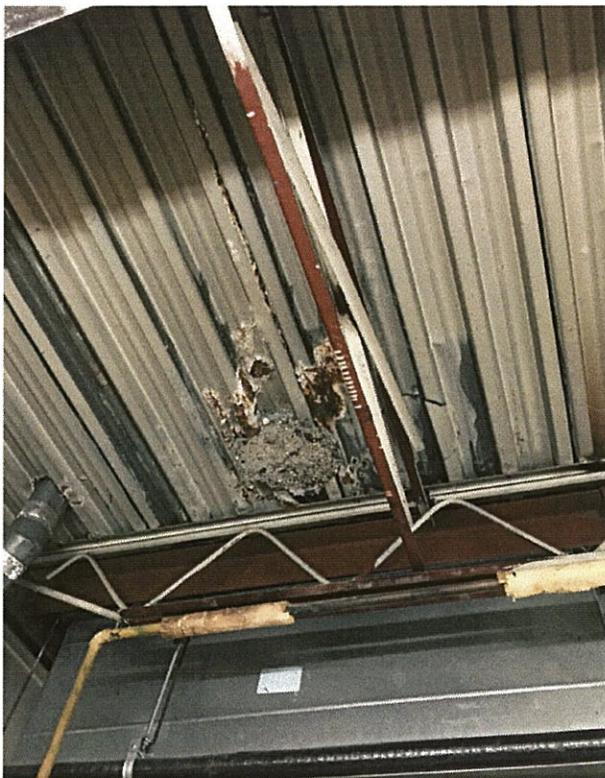
**For Library Infrastructure,
Overhauls & Technology**

BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

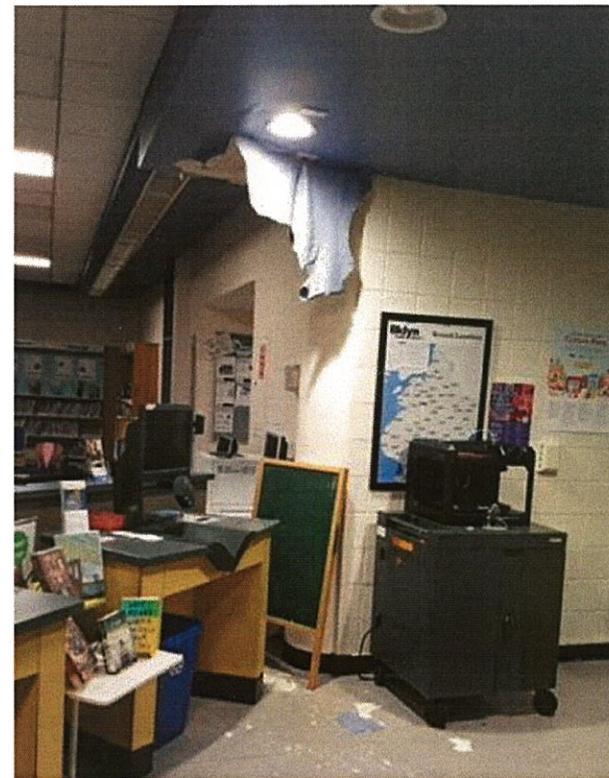
Critical Maintenance



Cracking facade at Central Library, Brooklyn



Water damage at Clinton Hill Library, Brooklyn

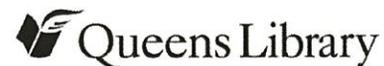


Leaking roof at Mill Basin Library, Brooklyn

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New York
Public
Library



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INVEST IN LIBRARIES

NYC's 3 Library Systems: FY20 Needs

OPERATING

\$35 MILLION IN FY20*

- Brooklyn Public Library: \$9.7M
- The New York Public Library: \$15.4M
- Queens Library: \$9.7M

CAPITAL

\$957 MILLION (10-YEAR PLAN)

- Brooklyn Public Library: \$275M
- The New York Public Library: \$412M
- Queens Library: \$270M

*This figure includes the \$8M request to the City Council

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LIBRARIES
MAKE NYC
STRONGER

FY20 PRELIMINARY BUDGET HEARING

DENNIS M. WALCOTT, **QUEENS LIBRARY** | TONY MARX, **THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY** | LINDA E. JOHNSON, **BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY**



New York
Public
Library



#INVESTINLIBRARIES

BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY
PRELIMINARY BUDGET HEARING

Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries & International Intergroup Relations
March 11, 2019

Thank you, Chair Van Bramer and members of the committee, Speaker Johnson, Majority Leader Cumbo, Finance Chair Dromm, our Brooklyn delegation, and the entire City Council for supporting New York City's libraries.

Over the last four years, the city has invested in the growth of libraries, understanding the value we bring to our communities as free, open and democratic spaces for all. That investment has empowered us to deliver reliable core services six-day a week; create responsive new programming; and upgrade our spaces. Today, I urge you to take the next step in fulfilling that commitment, allocating \$35 million in operating funding for all three systems. This will ensure our growing programs remain strong and our new and expanded spaces are staffed with library workers, program-rich and filled with materials our patrons deserve.

Unfortunately, rather than supporting this much-needed growth, the Administration has just asked us the three library systems to take a collective reduction of \$8 million, Brooklyn's share is \$2.5 million. It threatens our ability to fully deliver on the promise of best-in-class library service. There is no doubt that collections, staffing and hours of service will suffer if we are forced to bear this cut.

I also ask that you advocate once again for our inclusion in the city's ten-year-capital plan. One time in our history, four years ago, libraries were included, helping address long-unanswered needs in some of our aging facilities, but we have not been included since. We ask the Council to champion our inclusion once again. Recurring capital funding in the ten year plan is essential -- without it, we simply cannot plan or efficiently manage our physical plant, which as you know is almost entirely comprised of city-owned buildings. The three library systems also request \$15 million from the Council in capital funds this fiscal year, \$5 million for each system, to cover critical maintenance.

Expense Funding Needs

Brooklyn Public Library's share of the TriLi operating budget request of \$35 million for consideration in the executive financial plan is \$9.7 million. This funding will support increased collections, programming, and staff, particularly aimed at our new and expanded spaces, as well as funds for maintenance updates in our branches that are not capitolly eligible.

The size of BPL's collection is far from what it should be for a system serving 2.6 million people. In years where we faced budget cuts, where possible, BPL chose to keep staff in place at the expense of the collection. The toll of keeping the collection budget constant for so long is that too many of our materials are aging or outdated. Last year, your allocation, allowed us to bring the collection budget up to \$10 million for the first time. As part of this year's request, we aim to reach a collection budget of \$12 million, in order to serve our new and expanded branches. While this would raise to \$5 our per capita book budget here in Kings County, New York, it would still be far less than the \$10 per capita in King County, Washington.

Demand for our services has soared. Last year we hosted 8 million visits to our branches and our materials were checked out more than 13 million times. Library card signups are up 13 percent. Beyond our walls, we offered library service and collections at 200 sites throughout the borough, including schools, senior centers, homeless shelters and correctional facilities.

Though patrons continually stream through our doors to check out books, our purpose has expanded beyond making the printed word available to all. In 2018, we offered an astounding 70,000 programs that attracted over one million attendees, an increase of over 8 percent. In every branch across Brooklyn, it is standing room only at weekly Story-time sessions offered in 12 languages as often as possible, and our New Americans Corners are helping smooth the path to citizenship. Patrons rely on ESOL classes, where attendance is up 14 percent, and senior citizens are learning basic computer skills from technology resource specialists in every branch. More than 37,000 programs enriched our children, from literacy programs for those five and under, to young adult STEM programming like our Lego Robotics league.

We've also introduced exciting and innovative programs including the first musical instrument lending collection in the NYC area; and, in partnership with Bard College, we now offer the first-ever accredited college degree program in a public library. Expanding our work with vulnerable populations, BPL's youth services librarians filled nearly 500 backpacks with books and materials in multiple languages, and delivered them to children waiting in a Brooklyn Courthouse, after separation from their families at the U.S. Southern border. Our librarians also offer Hospital Storytelling, providing children free books and story time programs while they await treatment. And just this month, Emma's Torch opened up shop in our Central Library Cafe, offering 12 week paid culinary apprenticeships to refugees who learn skills and improve their English literacy while working in the cafe at BPL.

The growth of library service is not confined to our programs, staff and collection, it also includes reworking physical locations that were bursting at the seams, inefficiently laid

out, and saddled with enormous capital needs. Brooklyn Heights, Sunset Park and Greenpoint Libraries, are being entirely rebuilt. With your support, these bigger, brand-new, and inspiring libraries will soon be open to meet the demands of their growing communities.

We are also delighted to open BPL's first new branches in 36 years, beginning with a new library on Adams St. near the Brooklyn waterfront, as well as a new library in the downtown cultural district. Brower Park Library is moving to a new location in the Brooklyn Children's Museum, affording us a new space in a city-owned building two blocks away from the current leased location. These new branches all require adequate staffing, expanded programming, and materials. Staffing needs include a range of library workers from librarians and public service managers to increased security and custodial staff.

Tapping into the over 1,000 government and community partners we worked with the last year, BPL will host more library services off site than ever before, as many of our branches undergo crucial capital improvements. There is nothing we hate more than service disruption in the community, and increased funding will help us better address this challenge. With additional outreach librarians building local partnerships, and drivers for our bookmobile fleet, and at least one new techmobile in the coming year, we will strive to offer programs in every community experiencing a branch closure.

Finally, many of our branches face unplanned closures due to maintenance issues and equipment failures. Every year, we spend precious operating dollars maintaining old boilers, replacing dilapidated furniture, and funding temporary heating and cooling fixes while we wait for long overdue capital projects to be completed. We are funding urgent projects that are either not capitably eligible or are impractical, costly and time consuming to address through the city's design and construction process.

Every summer we are forced to shut down branches when air conditioning systems fail, and every winter, when boilers break. In the last fiscal year we lost 629 hours to unplanned closures, at 35 of our 59 branches. Just last month, Borough Park, Macon and Washington Irving Libraries all closed unexpectedly because of heating failures. Keeping libraries open is our highest priority, but short-term fixes drain our already overtaxed expense dollars, and ultimately take funds away from other worthy library operations.

Capital Funding Needs

As I stated at the outset, the three library systems are requesting a total of \$15 million in capital funding this year, to address critical maintenance -- \$5 million for each system from the council in addition to a capital allocation from the administration.

Our current level of capital funding only allows us to tackle the most urgent problems. In Brooklyn, the vast majority of our allocation is swallowed up filling shortfalls to keep existing projects afloat. Valuable time and scarce resources are spent responding to emergencies, rather than strategically approaching building renovations.

Relying on small yearly capital allocations makes it impossible for us to manage capital plans efficiently. Upgrading our buildings piecemeal, system by system, increases costs, elongates timelines, and disrupts communities. Because libraries do not have recurring discretionary funding in the ten-year plan, we cannot draw from future fiscal years to cover current year shortfalls, leading to delays and further cost escalations.

Four years ago, the administration included libraries in the ten-year plan for the first time. Brooklyn's funds were earmarked for five full branch overhauls, allowing us to approach building renovations comprehensively. These five projects are underway, and the funding was put to good use, but it did not address the need for discretionary capital funding for the rest of the 1.1 million square feet of physical space we are charged with maintaining.

While each library system needs \$5 million in this budget year from the council alone, it is equally, if not more important for libraries to be funded in the city's ten-year capital plan. We implore you to urge the administration to include us once again, and definitively categorize library buildings as city infrastructure. Without a recurring source of yearly funding, we are not able to perform necessary preventative maintenance, ensure projects continue to move forward when they incur a shortfall, or manage our physical plant—city owned buildings—in the most efficient way possible.

It has never been more important for civic institutions to support their communities. In dark times, when truth and access to information is of critical importance, libraries provide the light. When neighbors want to gather to discuss the day's headlines, libraries provide the safe space. When civic engagement, voter registration, participatory budgeting, IDNYC and free legal help for immigrants are top city priorities, libraries have taken the lead.

With resources and representation at stake in the upcoming 2020 Census, the city will rely on libraries, as it should, to help ensure every resident is counted.

Now is the time to help us achieve our mission. Now is the time to shore up your investment in libraries and allow us to realize our potential. Millions of New Yorkers are relying on you to ensure that libraries, our most accessible, democratic institutions remain strong for all who come through our doors and that, as promised, they remain open wide for everyone.



Testimony for Public Hearing
Library Funding Committee
March 11, 2019

LaMeane Isaac
Brooklyn Public Library- Macon Branch
361 Lewis Ave. Brooklyn, NY 11233

Good afternoon, New York City Library Funding Committee Members.

My name is LaMeane Isaac. I am the Branch Manager at the Macon Library, a Carnegie building, located in Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn.

Thank you, New York City Council Members for all of your generous support of public libraries. Due to your generosity, the Macon Library is able to open its doors for 53 hours per week, 7 days per week.

For over 100 years, the library staff at Macon Library has been serving the community. As a direct result of additional service hours, our multigenerational programs and attendance have increased significantly.

Due to the Library Funding Committee's generous funding and collaborative partnerships, we offer numerous programs and services for all ages: seniors, adults, teens, school age and toddlers. Some of the programs include technology, resume assistance, and First Five Years programs.

Also, with assistance from collaborative partnerships, Macon we have been able to provide cutting edge programs that benefit and enrich the lives of patrons and community served. Recently, we held a 30 hour Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) certification class and Mother Coders. Patrons who attended the Mother Coders' classes were enabled to learn coding and participants in the class earned their 30-Hour OSHA card. During the sessions, mothers and caregivers were provided with childcare. These enhanced programs and partnerships, uplift and enrich the lives of our patrons and community.

The library is a safe haven for the most vulnerable of the city residents: the young, older adults and the homeless. With the continued and increased support from the Library Funding Committee, the library staff will be able to increase outreach within the community. The patrons served will benefit, and the library will continue to be a place of life-long learning, opportunities and discovery.

Macon and other Brooklyn libraries have structural building issues. As Macon's Branch Manager, I have witnessed the direct impact upon patrons; and loss of or decreased hours of service, due to early closures because of extreme building temperature:

Heating and cooling issues-

*10 Grand Army Plaza
Brooklyn, NY 11238-5619
bklynlibrary.org*



- Last summer, Macon Library had to remove its cooling center sign. The Heating Ventilation Air-Conditions (HVAC) system did not adequately cool the building, during several extremely hot summer days. Also, this winter, the building closed early, on a number of days, due to insufficient heat.
- Staff were wearing gloves and scarves at the information desk on days when the building temperature is too low

Structural Issues

- The walls are crumbling and plastic bags are taped to the wall to cover damaged areas
- Faulty elevator, wherein, parents and caregivers, must use the stairs to the lower level to attend programs. Additionally, the physically challenged and those with strollers are forced to use the stairs and risk potential harm
- The roof leaks, so trashcans are positioned to catch water when it rains and snows

There are looks of disappointment on the faces of the patrons when we are forced to close earlier than scheduled, due to structural issues and weather conditions. When the library is unable to serve the patrons, and maintain service hours, the library is failing the patrons. Many Bedford Stuyvesant residents depend on the library: as an institution of learning or as a place of refuge in their community. Without the New York City Library Funding Committee's increased and continued support, aging yet well utilized libraries like Macon will continue to deteriorate and prior investment in programs, technology and staffing propelling libraries into the future, will be not be sustainable.

In conclusion, continued loss of service hours may have detrimental effects on the lives of library users. Many patrons depend on the Library staff to compile and/or print their resumes. School aged children come to the library as a safe place afterschool. Homeless patrons seek relief from extreme weather and utilized library resources to find housing and employment. These actions are life changing and will adversely affect the many patrons that we serve when they are not completed. They are your constituents who vote for you in libraries in some cases. An informed and supported constituent and library user will make better citizens.

Therefore, I am imploring you to not decrease library funding.

On behalf of the Macon community and the entire Brooklyn Public Library, I would like to thank you for your past and future support.

Brooklyn Public Library

Kokila Frank

March 11th 2019

Good afternoon members of the Cultural Affairs, and Library Committees. My name is Mrs. Kokila Frank. I work for Brooklyn Public Library with Sunset Park Branch. I am also the constituent of Sunset Park area. I came to the US in 1975 after I got married and have always lived in Sunset Park.

I worked on Wall Street for 9 years and was a stay at home mom for 14 years. All these years, I always came to the library for books and videos. Ever since my children and my Church children were very young, I brought them to the Library. They loved the books, children's videos, various children's programs, arts and crafts and loved Reading Is Fundamental (i.e.RIF) program. In 1997, I joined the BPL staff as a part timer. On March 15th 1999, I became a full time clerk. I will be retiring on March 29th after 22 years.

We have grown here from catalog box, the due date cards, etc. to catalog computer and other IT technologies. At this time and age, when technology is on the rise, we require updated computers and other devices. We are in need of Capital budget. Most of our buildings are aged and are in need of repair and other amenities.

We thank all the elected officials who also love the libraries and have always supported us. I have been to Albany 15 times for lobby day. All the officials promised us help and I am glad to say that they have fulfilled them.

I request all of you humbly to provide us with more funding so we can provide Children, Young Adults, Adults and seniors with their needs to develop in their lives.

We have various programs in the branches, like story time, Coding, Book Adventures, Kids Tech Time, 3D Printing, Robotics, After school stories, Read and Play, Chess, Homework help, Family Gaming Night, Computer Basics, We speak

NYC, knitting, citizenship classes, ESOL conversation, Adult coloring, Dancing, RSK, La Hora Magica etc.

Sunset Park Branch won the first place in Robotics competition. Now we are going to compete for First Lego League State Tournament where 64 teams will compete for championship at City College of New York and then to Nationwide.

I once again, I thank everyone for this opportunity to bring before you the various programs and funding needs for our Libraries.

Brooklyn Public Library
Danielle Shapiro
March 11th 2019

Good afternoon members of the Cultural Affairs, and Library Committees. First and foremost I would like to thank you for your support of the libraries and taking the time to listen to me this afternoon. I work in the Highlawn Library which is located in Bensonhurst. It is unique, being the only round branch in the system. This is its second location. Originally it was located in a storefront on West 6th Street and opened in its new location in 1972.

The libraries today provide a place where all ages and ethnicities are welcome.

During a regular day we provide programming to all ages starting with babies and books, toddler time, little scientists, afterschool homework help, library lab, Saturday stories, Robotics, teen tech time, assistance with SAT studies, and teen time, where they have their own space to hang out with their friends and socialize.

For our adults and older adults we offer dance lessons, computer classes, drawing, painting and writing classes as well as jewelry workshops, citizenship classes and English as a second language – both classes and conversation groups. Some of branches also host conversation groups in other languages such as Japanese, Spanish and French.

Through our outreach services we visit the local jails to provide book cart service that allow the people who are incarcerated the ability to have access to literature during their stay. Recently I started answering letters sent from people who are incarcerated, who request information, some ask for information that will assist them when they reenter society and others just for knowledge on a topic.

We also provide bookmatch, a service which is available not only to members of the Brooklyn Public Library, but also anyone who fills in an inquiry form. Librarians, such as myself, answer the inquiry, responding with a book list of titles based on the authors or genres they have provide us with.

In my 20 years working for the Brooklyn Public library system I have had the opportunity of working in various locations throughout Brooklyn and meeting many families. On several occasions I have seen parents at outreach events or in another location and they thank me telling me that I had issued their child or children their first library cards when they were small and assisted them in the library. They proceed by telling me how they are still active library user's today and are either in high school or have successfully graduated college.

Many of our youth librarians, including myself, do outreach to schools and childcare centers, reading stories, talking about the library, hosting parent workshops and talking about new titles we feel the children or young adults would enjoy. It is heartwarming when the children remember you, either when you visit the school or when you are outside the library. The other night when I was going home a young girl smiled at me and waved. She then told her mother that I was the librarian who came to her school.

All of our libraries have seen an increase of patrons who come into the library to have access to the internet both on our in house computers and via the wifi we offer. Many of them are working on resumes, school work or social media which allows them to keep in touch with family and friends. After school the children and teens use the computers to play games and unwind after a full day of studying. Very often the library is the primary source of access for our low income NYers.

As you can see the libraries are a community place that are well used and needed by all but in order to continue providing these services we need to be sure that the buildings are operational and that we can provide not only computers and wifi but to upgrade the bandwidth to accommodate the current needs. When many of our libraries were constructed the idea of needing computers and the bandwidth for connection did not exist.

The Highlawn Library is currently 47 years old. 48% of the local are 60 or more years old and an additional 33% are 30 or more year old. The infrastructure of our local libraries is decreasing rapidly as they are aging. At least 25% of the libraries are not fully accessible to all of our patrons.

The public libraries are both a cooling center as well as heating center during the summer and winter months. While we want to be able to offer our services year round, very often our branches need to close due to the lack of heat or airconditioning within the building preventing our public, who may have nowhere else to go, access to the resources we provide and the programming that is offered.

Thank you once again for taking the time to listen to my testimony.



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

**John F. Calvelli, Executive Vice President, Public Affairs – Wildlife Conservation Society
March 11, 2019**

Good afternoon, Chairman Van Bramer and members of the Committee. I am John Calvelli, Executive Vice President for Public Affairs at the Wildlife Conservation Society, Chair of the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG) and a founding member of New Yorkers For Culture and Arts. I am here today to provide testimony on behalf of the CIG – a coalition of 33 cultural organizations who share a public-private partnership with the City of New York and are located in all five boroughs.

Let me begin by stating how grateful we are for the Council's vital support for culture and the arts in New York City throughout the years. Your support yields a monumental return on investment for all New Yorkers regardless of age, background, or status. Furthermore, I want to acknowledge our non-CIG colleagues with whom we have worked alongside several years to both develop unique programming as well as advocate to increase resources for culture and the arts. Together, we make New York City a sought-after destination for visitors, but more importantly, we provide an array of services to New Yorkers that is world-class.

Like many of the CIG, WCS has roots in diverse neighborhoods throughout the City, and our parks connect local youth and families to science and conservation through accessible and inspiring programming, as well as through employment. For example, for over forty years, WCS has provided thousands of young people across New York with an entry to STEM professions through our five parks. All of our parks are located within a mile of public housing facilities. Four of our parks are in districts with a poverty rate above 20%, and our Bronx flagship is based in one of the poorest congressional districts in the country, with a poverty rate of 42%. Collectively, last year over 1,400 young people worked and learned at WCS and earned more than \$8.6 million working in WCS parks. More than 70% of the youth who work, intern and volunteer at our parks identify as young person of color. They hail from 30 different countries, and speak 31 different languages. WCS, like the CIGs, and the cultural community are more than just what our mission states. We not only inspire youth but we provide them with tools to transfer their gateway experience into long-term career goals.

As the City's partner in culture, this sector is a complex ecosystem, residing in diverse neighborhoods, remaining interdependent and interrelated with neighborhoods outside their immediate communities. Our cultural ecosystem has made our City the vibrant and exciting

place it is for New Yorkers, in addition to the 23 million CIG visitors that take part in various aspects of our cultural offerings each year. As an ecosystem, diversity is essential to make the system thrive: it relies on individual artists, big and small groups, mid-size groups, and the public—including visitors from all corners of the globe. When I became Chair of the CIG, one of my immediate actions was to visit each borough and meet with each CIG to familiarize myself with the needs of their organization and the challenges they face. Each CIG inherently is aware of their responsibilities to serve the people of New York. They integrate the communities in which they live and serve, they are fully aware that they provide safe places for youth and families, serve as examples of accessibility, and remain the go-to entity that the City relies on to pilot programs like PlaNYC and IDNYC—which have been major successes.

Due to the unique historical relationship that we share with the City, we are expected to meet certain standards and are restricted by others, such as our limitations on raising admission prices. We operate on the understanding that CIGs are owned by the People of New York and we exist as an ecosystem with a lot of cross-sections of our resources being accessed by hundreds of thousands of New York City schoolchildren and teachers, families, and international audiences, as well as being major employers of New Yorkers, who in turn contribute to the economic vitality of the City.

Therefore, as the Council determines its budget priorities for FY 2020, we ask that we be held harmless at \$20 million, and consideration be given to additional funding for both the CIG and our program group partners. We ask that the \$10 million total that Culture has previously received be baselined, inclusive of the \$2.25 million that was baselined for CIGs in the budget last year. Additionally, both CIG and program groups are supportive of using the same distribution model for that \$10 million that has been used for the past three years (\$4.5M to CIGs, \$5M to program group colleagues, \$0.5M to CUNY Cultural Corps). We request that the additional \$10m, plus any enhanced culture funding that can be allocated in FY20 be divided evenly between the CIG and our program group partners to support our efforts to enact the goals laid out by the City in the Cultural Plan and to continue to serve as reliable community hubs that provide needed programs and services to New Yorkers in all 5 boroughs.

It is our hope, that the City Council understand what we offer New Yorkers and that the CIG belong to and are responsive to the needs of the people of New York. We need the City's full support. Thank you for this opportunity to testify today. We appreciate the Council's unwavering support, and ask you to once again assure that Culture remains viable in New York City.

March 11, 2019

**Testimony to the City Council Committee on Cultural Affairs and Libraries
Submitted by Sarita Daftary, Senior Organizer, JLUSA**

Dear Committee Members,

I'm here from JustLeadershipUSA. You most likely know us for our work on the #CLOSErikers campaign. An essential component of that campaign has always been the second part of our campaign name - #buildCOMMUNITIES. Last year, we started talking convening conversations to get more specific about what we mean by that. We worked with over 60 partners and advisors from more than 30 partner organizations and groups, and hosted conversations with more than 200 individuals from communities worst impacted by incarceration. We asked them about what kinds of investments would create true safety in their communities.

The starting point for our conversation was the money that will be saved by closing Rikers -- \$540 million per year, as estimated by the Lippman Commission, and asking people how they believe that money could be invested to create strong and stable communities. However, we quickly recognized that it is not only the Department of Corrections that is over-resourced, but all elements of law enforcement, including the New York City Police Department, the New York City Department of Probation, and our courts. Our City pumps over \$7.3 billion dollars annually into these agencies and charges them with solving problems they will never be equipped to address. And in doing so, our City applies law enforcement solutions to problems of public health, poverty, and inequality. It is a square peg in a round hole. It will never work. It hasn't worked.

But as we spoke to people about what investments really would work to create true safety in their communities, investments in libraries and cultural activities came up repeatedly.

These are the needs we heard, and which were included in our #buildCOMMUNITIES platform:

Invest in public libraries to expand educational and recreational services.

- Increase expense funding NYC's three library systems to \$35 million, and baseline this funding into the City's expense budget to more adequately fund six-day service and programs. Increase capital funding for urgent facility maintenance in libraries.
- Expand services like ESL classes, computer skills training, TASC (formerly GED) preparation, and career counseling.
- Offer expanded free resources through libraries, like meeting space and printing.
- Expand the diversity of library offerings, including programs and materials in multiple languages, increasingly representative of NYC communities.
- Invest in learning centers focused on activism & social justice.

Establish creative spaces & cultural hubs in communities for all creative disciplines.

- Increase funding to expand creative spaces & cultural hubs that are accessible to the entire community, and support and sustain community institutions that serve as creative spaces & cultural hubs, such as libraries, schools, museums, small businesses, and community organizations.

Invest in community-led community centers, recreational parks, and community spaces with accessible facilities for the entire community, and especially those 18-26 years old.

- Provide funding for community-driven research projects to assess local neighborhood needs and strengths and for the development of neighborhood specific community centers.
- Utilize and re-develop vacant or underutilized buildings for community uses.
- Help non-profits to buy their own buildings and support incubators sites for the development of new non-profits.
- Create more spaces for mentoring and peer mentoring.
- Support positive events to help people connect with their neighbors out in the community (block parties, street festivals, etc).

We know that your committee would probably like to fund all of these initiatives. And New York City could. We have the resources, but they are disproportionately given to law enforcement. And since the NYPD will never voluntarily reduce it's own budget, we need you, the Council members who understand the importance of resourcing other priorities, to urge the Mayor to make the boldest step he can towards a safer, fairer, and more progressive City. He can do that by shifting money away from law enforcement, starting with the NYPD budget, and investing it in the kind of community resources, like libraries and cultural programming, that create true safety.

Sincerely,

Sarita Daftary
JustLeadershipUSA

#buildCOMMUNITIES

To create true safety in our City, we need resources for communities, not for policing and incarceration. Mayor de Blasio, we need a budget to #buildCOMMUNITIES.

OUR DEMANDS

PUBLIC HEALTH

Invest in the well-being of our communities to address ill health exacerbated by systemic racism, poverty, discrimination, criminalization, and gentrification.

HOUSING

Invest in safe, stable, and dignified housing as a human right for all New Yorkers.

EMPLOYMENT & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Invest in programs that support people to achieve economic independence and stability, especially for the people who have been most excluded from opportunities to generate income and build wealth.

EDUCATION & SCHOOLS

Invest in schools as spaces for students, families, and the broader community to access education for success and for liberation, to connect to the resources they need, and as places where transformative and restorative justice is taught and practiced.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Support and expand resources that all of NYC's diverse residents can access in their communities to relax, learn, thrive, and lead.

CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION & ALTERNATIVE ACCOUNTABILITY

Support communities to manage conflict so that it does not escalate to harm, and when harm has happened, to intervene with models that focus on restoration rather than punishment.

STRUCTURE OF INVESTMENTS

Restructure the methods by which funds are distributed in order to better support grassroots groups and avoid replicating systems of oppression.

Go to bit.ly/buildCOMMUNITIES for more info & to get involved

#buildCOMMUNITIES



Illustrations by Crystal Clarity

NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM & LIBRARY

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL BUDGET AND OVERSIGHT HEARINGS

Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations

Monday, March 11, 2019

The New-York Historical Society is grateful for this opportunity to share how essential the support of the New York City Council and the Department of Cultural Affairs has been in furthering our mission to educate the broadest possible public about the making and meaning of history.

OUR MISSION

Founded in 1804, New-York Historical Society's collection spans five centuries and numbers over 14 million objects. We are proud that our accessible, multidisciplinary exhibitions, public programs, and educational initiatives advance humanities scholarship and attract a broad base of diverse constituents, including more than 200,000 City students every year from every district and borough, with 75% of the students we serve living at or below the poverty line.

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

The continued and generous support of the Council in partnership with the Department of Cultural Affairs has been instrumental in mounting exhibitions that explore important but under-examined stories that ask "What does it mean to be an American?" With important funding from the DCLA's Cultural Development Fund, New-York Historical was able launch major exhibitions like the recently closed *Black Citizenship in the Age of Jim Crow*, which explored the Black American struggle for full citizenship and racial equality in the fifty years following the Civil War. We were able to mount *The Vietnam War: 1945-1975* in 2017, which highlighted the many ways the war challenged ideas about American democracy; and *Chinese American: Exclusion/Inclusion* in 2014, which interpreted the Chinese-American saga as a key part of American history.

This support has also fueled free or low-cost Museum tours and hands-on workshops for visiting classes; school-based enrichment programs supporting social studies and visual arts learning through direct classroom instruction; teacher professional development programs serving thousands of educators annually; and online, interactive social studies curricula available for free download. Through these activities, made possible by the Cultural Development Fund, our visitors and program participants acquire historical literacy and critical thinking skills, preparing them to become active, engaged citizens.

The leadership of the Council has also led our institution to break new ground and establish major new hubs for education and tourism through vital capital project support. In November 2011, after a three-year, \$90 million renovation to the façade, first floor, and lower level of our landmark building, the New-York Historical Society opened stunning new gallery spaces that included the nation's first children's museum dedicated to American history. In 2017, after a renovation of the institution's fourth

floor Henry Luce III Center for the Study of American Culture, New-York Historical debuted the Center for Women's History—the first permanent museum space dedicated to Women's History in the United States. Neither of these transformations would have been possible without the leadership of the New York City Council and the capital support it provided through the Department of Cultural Affairs. We are excited to report that we will soon break ground on our new Citizenship Project Gallery and are in the final planning stages of our Equality and Justice for all capital project.

WHAT'S NEXT

In pursuit of our shared commitment to serving an engaged and inspired populace, New-York Historical is preparing to embark on another “first” for New York City. At a time of national political discord and uninformed debate, we believe that providing the City's young people with a thorough understanding of the roots and evolution of America's government could not be more urgent. We are thus planning to establish a new Academy for American Democracy at New-York Historical—an enriching, Museum-based learning experience that we have designed in partnership with former New York City Department of Education Chancellor Carmen Fariña.

Advancing the Civics for All initiative, our proposed Academy will offer a classroom-based, student-focused study of ancient Athens, helping students compare and contrast it with the founding era of the United States and present-day democracy. Sixth-grade students from around the City—youth at a critical age for academic disengagement—and their teachers and administrators will participate in five-day residency programs at the new Academy. Drawing from our successful object-based programming that has helped hundreds of thousands of students improve their historical literacy and critical thinking skills, the Academy will empower participants to explore the collections of New-York Historical along with historic Greek artifacts, works of art, and literature to discover the Hellenic traditions found in Federal-period writings, arts, and architecture. An integrated, experiential curriculum will illuminate the foundations and evolution of American democracy and help them explore and understand the challenges facing our democracy in the present day.

EXPECTED RESULTS

We anticipate that this new educational initiative will increase our capacity to serve students, allowing us to reach some 30,000 more students and teachers from across the city by 2025. In the spring of 2019, New-York Historical will pilot the Academy with DOE Community School Districts 2 and 5—two demographically and geographically diverse districts—to test the project design and the curriculum's alignment with teacher and student needs, as well as with the Social Studies Scope and Sequence. In fall 2019, we will expand to new school districts following the pilot.

We are able to respond to the needs of New York City's students—and indeed, all its residents—thanks to the committed and generous support of the Council and the Department for Cultural Affairs. We remain exceptionally grateful for all that you have made possible for this institution and look forward to continuing our partnership to serve the greatest number of New Yorkers with engaging and inspiring history and culture programming.

*Ines Aslan, Vice President of Marketing and Communications, New-York Historical Society
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FOR THE RECORD

March 10, 2019
New York City Council Budget Hearings,
The Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations
Submitted by Traci Lester, Executive Director, National Dance Institute,

Good Morning. My name is Traci Lester and I am the Executive Director of National Dance Institute also known as NDI. NDI was founded in 1976 by New York City Ballet principal dancer Jacques d'Amboise and leads the field of arts education with a model program that has been studied and replicated worldwide.

At the root of NDI's Method is the belief that the arts have a unique power to engage children of every background, ability, and socioeconomic position, and motivate them toward excellence in an environment of inclusivity. We utilize dance and music to instill in students a love of the arts, a passion for learning, and a desire to strive for their personal best. Our program also helps foster the social development, global awareness, and cultural literacy of our partners.

NDI serves close to 7,000 children each week through our In-School Program and brings a full year of dance classes integrated with live music to students at over 41 New York City public schools. Our classes are taught during the school day alongside core curriculum, placing dance and music on par with math and science in our students' academic studies. Since inception we have reached over 2 million children—free of charge.

Arts and culture have always been and remain the lifeblood of New York City's economy. The importance of maintaining robust funding for our City's cultural institutions – from performing

arts venues, museums and theaters – can't be overstated. Today I am joining with my colleagues from New Yorkers for Culture and the Arts (also known as NY4CA) as we ask that culture receive a total increase of \$20 Million in funding for 2020. Of the \$20 million, we are asking that \$10 million be a baselining of last year's increase as a standard part of the annual budget and that the additional \$10 million be allocated for new cultural spending; divided evenly among program groups and the CIG as we work to implement the plans laid out by the City's Cultural Plan.

Thank you for allowing me to speak before you today. I would like to thank the Members of the Committee on Cultural Affairs and the City of New York for its ongoing support of the cultural community. When the arts thrive, New York City thrives.

Submitted by:

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Dear Members of the New York City Council Committee on Cultural Affairs,

I am Francine Garber-Cohen, President and Producer of the Regina Opera Company, Inc.

For 49 years, Regina Opera has offered year-round, fully-staged operas and ticketed and free concerts in Southwest Brooklyn.

Regina Opera performances are places where thousands of Brooklyn residents, many of them retirees, come to meet their friends, stimulating their minds and getting them out of their home. Attending our performances distracts them from their troubles. We have also been told that our performances are of high quality.

Regina Opera provides affordable entertainment for audiences who may not otherwise attend live opera performances. Some are on a fixed income and cannot afford the tickets. Some cannot travel to Manhattan. Others are intimidated by the "Major" opera houses, or have not been exposed to opera previously. The venues in which we perform are all handicap accessible.

Regina Opera offers matinee performances, reducing travel after dark. The response of the audience is overwhelming. 4000 people will attend performances during Fiscal Year 2019, taking advantage of the low cost and free tickets: between \$20 and \$25 for operas; and \$15 for Concerts; less for students. Many tickets are donated to Senior Centers.

Regina Opera is unique in Brooklyn. Music schools and other groups present occasional operas or concerts in Brooklyn, but Regina Opera is the only group presenting professional-level, fully-staged operas and operatic concerts year-round, and the company has been doing so for 49 years.

Our Company is well-known in the music world for providing training and opportunities for musical artists of all backgrounds and reflect the make-up of New York City.

Regina Opera also helps the entire community: the performances add to the cultural vitality which serves as a magnet for prospective residents and businesses. We directly affect the economy of this locality by employing local residents and purchasing local goods and renting a storage unit 3 blocks away from our theater. Our performers and audience members frequently shop and eat in this area.

Regina Opera depends on the support of audience members, our Sunset Park and Bay Ridge NY City Council members Menchaca and Brannan, and on New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. We ask that the expense funding for culture be increased by \$20 Million for 2020: \$10 Million of that is an increase from Fiscal Year 2019 that we are asking to be baselined as a standard part of the budget going forward and \$10 Million in new cultural spending to be divided between the Cultural Institutions Group and Cultural Development Fund, so groups like ours we can fulfill their goals of a person in each seat, and great singers on the stage

and don't — retain what they learn in school. "A lot of the information we teach doesn't stick."

What she saw as a school principal, she said, was that when arts were integrated into the curriculum, "learning became more visible." Teachers told her "the children would remember the information better when they taught it through the arts."

So though arts education has many other benefits, she said, such as creative thinking, her studies have focused on children's memory for academic subjects, comparing what children remembered 10 weeks after material was taught. Researchers wrote two different versions of the curriculum, matched for content and timing, both involving active learning, but one including arts education. For example, in an arts integrated curriculum, students would sketch their vocabulary words, or learn some of the material as songs, or act out molecular motion with their bodies.

The children who had learned the material in the curriculum that made use of the arts remembered more, and the effect was largest among the children who were less strong academically, the "lower performers."

"We found the biggest difference with children at the lower level of achievement," Dr. Hardiman said. "Could this be at least one lever for closing an achievement gap?" After all, these are often the students who are condemned to dreary drill and repetition, in hopes of bringing them to a higher level: "What if the arts are a lever of school reform, better than the drill and kill we do with remedial students?"

In a 2019 article in the journal *Trends in Neuroscience and Education*, Dr. Hardiman and her colleagues described the results of a randomized controlled trial looking at fifth-graders who were taught science content, some using techniques from arts education, and others with more conventional instruction. The researchers again saw an effect on the students with more limited reading skills; they remembered more science if they had learned with the integrated arts methods.

So why might the arts integration help children's memory? "Arts allow for elaboration, allow for repetition," Dr. Hardiman said. "Memory is certainly enhanced through repetition, the more you revisit something, the more you remember it." And the visual and performing arts also allow children to elaborate in creative ways on the material.

The advantage of learning through the arts will come as no surprise to anyone who grew up with the "Fifty Nifty United States" song or learned how a bill becomes a law from Schoolhouse Rock. Some of today's children are learning history from the lyrics of "Hamilton."

I suddenly remembered a rather mournful tune from decades ago, in high school, when a science teacher told us we would be tested on the elements with a charge of positive 2 and a friend and I set them to a chant; I can still name them, in order, and when it comes to chemistry, I am definitely one of the less able students.

“Arts integration should not replace arts education,” Dr. Hardiman said. She suggested a “three-legged stool,” with one leg being arts education, including dedicated classes in visual and performing arts, and the second arts and cultural offerings, such as artists coming into the school or visits to museums. The third leg would be the integration of the arts into the teaching of other subjects.

“Parents can easily do simple arts activities with kids,” Dr. Hardiman said, and can incorporate these ideas around homework or just in spending time together. Maybe it would help to put the multiplication tables into a song, or ask children to sketch their ideas, or use body poses to show the emotion that a character in a story is feeling.

Ronald Beghetto, a professor of educational psychology and the director of Innovation House at the University of Connecticut, studies creativity in educational settings, which, he said, “can be manifest across all different disciplines.”

“We tend, as adults, to overplan and overstructure young people’s experiences,” Dr. Beghetto said. While structure is important, he said, so is “letting kids determine their own problems to solve, their own ways to solve them.”

Arts education, he said, can provide those structured opportunities that foster creativity.

“Working through some creative endeavor, we’re really resolving uncertainty,” he said. “We approach the blank canvas.”

Testimony by Victoria Kowanetz, Children's Librarian – Queens Library
New York City Council's Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International
Intergroup Relations
Fiscal Year 2020 Preliminary Budget Hearing
March 11, 2019

Good afternoon, Chair Van Bramer and the members of the Libraries' Committee. My name is Victoria Kowanetz and I am the Children's Librarian at Seaside Community Library in Queens. I am honored to be here to tell you about the amazing work we do at Queens Library.

One of my fondest memories is of my mother bringing my sister and I to the library. I especially remember receiving my own library card. As I signed my name, I felt so proud to have my Queens Library card, which at the time was blue and white, in my possession. I remember my mother telling me stories of how my grandfather used to take her to Central Library to pick out books. She would also use the bookmobile whenever it would come by. Now, being an employee of Queens Library, I feel everything has come full circle. I can share my love of books and reading with others, just like my mother did with me.

One of the things I love about the library and my job is that the library is a place that means many different things to a diverse group of people. We help children do their homework, assist adults in their jobs search and conduct digital literacy classes for seniors. We help customers achieve their goals, find their purpose, or just escape the world for a little while with a good book. We have arts and crafts programs, movie viewings and book clubs. The times of libraries being solely book dispensaries are long gone. We have so much to offer to our customers!

As a Children's Librarian, one of my most favorite things is having a new child come to storytime. It is great to see the transformation and progress from their first visit onward. From being shy and just learning the storytime songs, to leading the group and welcoming new children joining the group; it is a rewarding and fun experience. I am grateful that I can have a positive influence on a child's life through my work at the library.

That is why I am here today. I witness the wonderful impact libraries have on every individual who walks through our doors. Our patrons rely on us to be there for them, and we want to be there for them, but we need continued investment in our library systems to allow us to do so. Without investment in the public library systems, our customers will not have a reliable and welcoming space to receive free programs and services. I hope the City Council and Administration acknowledge the importance of public libraries by increasing financial investment in them.

Again, thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify here today.



Testimony from Mark Rossier, Director of Grants
New York Foundation for the Arts
March 11, 2019

Thank you Chair Van Bramer and members of the committee for calling this hearing and for your tireless support of the New York City cultural community. My name is Mark Rossier. I am the Director of Grants at the New York Foundation for the Arts and I am here today to ask that the Council baseline last year's game changing \$10 million increase and provide an additional \$10 million to be divided between the program groups and the CIGS.

Support from the Department of Cultural Affairs is vital to NYFA's operations and allows us to provide critical support to artists, administrators and the arts community. These funds support our fiscal sponsorship program, which last year helped individual artists and emerging organizations raise over \$4 million, most of which is spent right here in New York City. It allowed us to provide professional development support to over 7,000 artists and programming is Mandarin and Spanish. It supported our website, which is used by over one million people annually and posts over 700 jobs and opportunities every month. Again, the vast majority of these jobs are in New York City, thus creating employment opportunities and tax revenue. Last year, with DCLA's support, we provided in-person workshops and information sessions in all five boroughs. Finally DCLA funds help us provide cash grants to artists.

DCLA's support also provides organizational skill and stability which allows us to work with the city in other ways. For example, on February 28, working with the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment, we were proud to announce the recipients of the first ever "Made in NY" Women's Film, TV and Theatre Fund which awarded \$1.5 million to film, media and theatre projects with strong female and female identified perspectives. Sixty three projects by those who identify as women were funded and 56% were from artists of color and 10% from trans, gender non-conforming and queer artists. New York is the first major city in the country to have a program of this sort.

This, of course, is no surprise since there is no other city in the country, or the world, for that matter, with the richness, diversity and excellence of New York's cultural community. It is a community which supports the city in so many ways and I hope the city will do its part by baselining last year's \$10 million and providing an additional \$10 million this year.

Thank you for all you do for our spectacular city.

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demetries morrow
Manager of Communications and Civic Engagement

theater et al, Inc. d.b.a.
The Chocolate Factory Theater
Long Island City, Queens
NYC Council District 26



Keely Garfiend, choreographer – Telling the Bees, 2016
Photo Credit, The Chocolate Factory Theater

Testimony before the
**New York City Council Committee on Cultural Affairs,
Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations,**

March 11, 2019

Good afternoon and thank you, Chairman Jimmy Van Bramer and members of the Committee for giving me the opportunity to testify.

I am demetries morrow. I'm new to New York City and just started working at The Chocolate Factory. Our Executive Director, Sheila Lewandowski could not be here today but asked me to share some of my story to give a face to the fight for funding culture and the arts. We, at The Chocolate Factory, stand with New Yorkers for Culture and the Arts asking for the \$20 million increase in 2019 to be baselined in 2020, along with an additional \$10 million in 2020.

109 Willow Brook Dr, Clinton, Mississippi 39056 located on a corner lot, housed a very intimate cultural space that the Morrow Family knew as “The Stage”.

“The Stage” served a vital space for the exchange of not only creative expression but of love, support and the development of self.

Growing up in Clinton, Mississippi, I sometimes felt I was being perceived as being a weird boy because of my blackness, articulate speaking voice and shyness in the world outside of my home.

On The Stage my parents highly encouraged me to explore my creative side and put up with weekends of me recreating dance scenes from Step Up and Honey.

My first professional dance experience was as a member of the Reject All Tobacco Pack. R.A.T. Pack is a troupe of high school students, who travel around Mississippi and educate young Mississippians about the effects of tobacco funded by the Department of Health. I began to understand how cultural exchange progresses to society as a whole.

After high school, I went to The University of Mississippi but quickly realized the culture of Ole Miss was deeply rooted in elitism and racism.

After seeing white students protest Barack Obama's second term and being rejected from a fraternity on the sole fact that I was black I went home for Christmas break and did not return for the spring semester.

The next semester, I went to community college and used the time to reflect and question my role in the world:

- 1) Why was I no longer dancing? *But also -*
- 2) Why did our state boundary signs say we are the "Birthplace of America's music" and
- 3) Why did the state car tags display the slogan "Celebrating the Creative Economy?"

What does New York City claim? Whatever the claim, New York City attracts people like me because the lure of a stage rich with many cultures and as a place of hope for progress, healing and humanity.

Chairman Van Bramer and all of the Council. I imagine that each of your homes is rich with music, artwork, and stages just like the one in my childhood home.

Give more for -

- this City's Department of Health to support performances like RAT Pack;
- for arts education;
- to support the labor of artists; and
- so that the diversity of this City can be celebrated.

As Pablo Picasso once said, "Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up."

The responsibility to our City is to support the artist in all of us at every age. Again, thank you.

March 11, 2019

Testimony to the New York City Council
New York City Department of Cultural Affairs

My name is Cathy Hung, I am the Executive Director for Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning (JCAL). On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of JCAL, I am here to testify on the New York City cultural budget for Southeast Queens.

JCAL was founded in 1972 as part of a large effort to revitalize Downtown Jamaica. Since then, JCAL has become the cultural destination for local residents and a magnet for local economic growth.

As a CIG and the one and only multi-disciplinary arts center in Southeast Queens, JCAL serves as an arts oasis in a neighborhood of New York City where cultural opportunities are limited for one of its largest communities of color. JCAL operates two city-owned landmark buildings, the first is the **Jamaica Arts Center** – formerly the Queens Registry, features a stunning array of art galleries, dance studios, music studios, visual arts classrooms, a ceramic studio, as well as a digital art lab. It also boasts a 99-seat proscenium theater. The 2nd building, **Jamaica Performing Arts Center (JPAC)** – formerly the First Dutch Reformed Church, is a state-of-the-art performance venue located three blocks away. This multi-functional space features a 400-seat theater that can accommodate different configurations for performances and events.

With this capacity provided by the City, last year JCAL was able to present over 80 diverse cultural programs that served more than 52,000 visitors, 6,000 students, and presented more than 500 local and international artists. At the Jamaica Performing Arts Center (JPAC), more than 200 co-presented rental activities took place throughout the year. JPAC has been the place-to-be for the community since it came under our management in 2011. Since then, many local cultural organizations have enjoyed it as a central presenting house for their rich activities, at an extremely affordable rate. These organizations include A Better Jamaica, Afrikan Poetry Theatre, Caribbean Repertory Theater, Braata Productions, Fat Afro Latin Jazz Cats, Bangladesh Institute of Performing Arts, and local BIDs, to name a few.

Our comprehensive array of **in-school**, **after-school**, and **summer arts** programs are the most popular in the community. Our **Saturday School of the Arts**, with more than 300 students every year, offers students of all ages the opportunity to pursue their creative expression at the most affordable rate. Last year, JCAL partnered with 10 schools to offer various genres of creative arts and cultural programs. Through these programs, JCAL employed more than 35 teaching artists.

While JCAL is proud to support the community through a wide range of educational programs, nothing has received more attention than our **Visual Arts** program. Each year, JCAL mounts multiple exhibitions that explore issues in community and in contemporary art. Additionally, our WORKSPACE residency program has consistently supported artists for more than 30 years. Artists like Lorenzo

Pace (1986), Lorna Simpson (1987), Sarah Haviland (1989), Susan Rostow (1988), Yuri Marder (1995), Kenta Furusho (2000), and Yungshu Chao (2001), to name a few, has been JCAL's residency artists before they stepped into the international stardom.

JCAL has a long history of supporting both established and up-and-coming artists through **residencies and professional development** programs. Last year, JCAL offered more than 14,400 free studio hours to artists for dedicated work-space to develop new work. Our Co-Work space program supported local artists and local organizations, at a rate of only \$200 per month, for the operation of their small businesses.

Our **Thursday Night Jazz program**, not only provided performance opportunities for emerging jazz musicians, but also brought in local homeless shelter residents to experience live jazz for the first time in their lives.

JCAL has a full menu of annual festivals and monthly series like the **Making Moves Dance Festival**, featuring emerging contemporary performances by NYC's local-born and immigrant artists; **Thursday Night Jazz**, in partnership with The Jazz Gallery presents the most dynamic emerging jazz performers from around the world; **First Friday**, where performing artists can debut new work across disciplines; **Queens International Children's Festival**, a festival designed to promote creative and critical thinking and expand children's love for learning by having live and engaging performances in different expressions of creativity, cultures and disciplines. This Summer, we are launching our first **Downtown International Jazz Festival**, aims to make Downtown Jamaica a jazz destination for local and international tourism.

Did I mention our free **College Access Program**? Of last Fall's inaugural class of 18 local students, by end of this February, six of them have already been admitted through the Early Action process to Columbia, Cornell, Johns Hopkins, University of Chicago, and Vanderbilt, all with full financial aid packages. Why College Access program, you might ask? Because we can and we want to make our resource available to the community who needs it the most.

So, what is JCAL? To put it in one sentence, I want to say that JCAL is in every fabric of Southeast Queens resident's life.

Big or small, no matter the size of our organizations, our agenda for arts and culture is the same; make New York City the cultural capital of the world; and make art and culture accessible to all New Yorkers.

Your support is very important for us to continue our work. We ask total \$30M of cultural budget to be allocated for all New York City culture. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in front of you today.

Submitted by Cathy Hung
Executive Director

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New Yorkers for Culture & Arts
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Lucy Sexton, Executive Director
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City Council Preliminary Budget Hearing on Culture
March 11, 2019

Good morning Chair Van Bramer and City Council members---and thank you for your critical and greatly appreciated work supporting culture in our city. My name is Lucy Sexton and in addition to being a choreographer, director, and lifelong New Yorker, I am the head of the cultural advocacy group New Yorkers for Culture & Arts. We are a coalition of groups and individuals across the five boroughs working to ensure every New Yorker has the right and opportunity to engage in culture, express their humanity, and strengthen their community.

I thought it was interesting that in Speaker Johnson's state of the city, he closed by listing all the things that make NYC great---and $\frac{3}{4}$ of the things he mentioned were cultural, from the Mermaid Parade to Spike Lee. So we

know culture makes our city great. Today I want to emphasize the proven data that shows how engagement with culture improves nearly every aspect of the many challenges facing New Yorkers. It's a fact: when kids have access to culture in school more of them stay in school and out of the criminal justice system. When neighborhoods have spaces to gather to share music, stories, dance, ideas, community is created and strengthened. When seniors have access to classes in gardening, painting, movement, theater they live longer. Fact.

Last week's NY Times had yet another article detailing the proven impact of arts on learning. The article reports:

In the study, the effect arts made in overall learning was largest among the children who were less strong academically, the "lower performers." The study's director, Dr. Hardiman said "We found the biggest difference with children at the lower level of achievement,". "Could this be at least one lever for closing an achievement gap?"

I've included a copy of the article in my printed remarks. I hope you take a look.

Too often people talk about NY's culture—going to a museum or botanic garden or poetry reading-- like the decorations we put on a tree. But the truth is that culture is at the very roots of what makes this city great. And we know that not all of the roots are getting the water they need to survive and thrive. So there is work to do to sustain, increase, and expand culture in every community in this city. That takes funding---which is why we are here today. New Yorkers for Culture & Arts is asking that funding for culture be held harmless at \$20m for 2020. We ask that the \$10m put in last year's budget be baselined—including the \$2.25m that was baselined for the CIG. And that there be an additional investment of \$10m to go evenly to the CIG and the program groups delivering culture to citizens throughout the city. It's an enormous job and you know as well as I do that the groups do it on a shoestring. We ask that you support the groups that are doing so much with so little. By supporting culture you are supporting better education, better aging, improved mental health, stronger communities, and a city that respects the dignity and humanity of every one of its citizens.

NY TIMES: THE CHECKUP

Using Arts Education to Help Other Lessons Stick

The arts can be a source of joy in a child's day, and also come in handy for memorizing times tables.



By Perri Klass, M.D.

- March 4, 2019

In “A Tree Grows in Brooklyn,” Betty Smith’s 1943 autobiographical novel about growing up poor in the early 20th century, the public school that the heroine attends is a pretty bleak place. But “there was a great golden glory lasting a half-hour each week when Mr. Morton came to Francie’s room to teach music.”

He taught them classical music, the book continues, without telling them what they were learning, setting his own words to the great works. “Little boys whistled part of Dvorak’s New World Symphony as they played marbles. When asked the name of the song, they’d reply ‘Oh, “Going Home.”’ They played potsy, humming ‘The Soldiers’ Chorus’ from Faust, which they called ‘Glory.’”

Francie also looked forward to the visits of the drawing teacher; “these two visiting teachers were the gold and silver sun-splash in the great muddy river of school days.”

Arts education in schools has introduced many children to great painters and great music, and helped them through their first dance steps or tentative musical endeavors. It can serve as a bright spot in the schoolchild’s day or week, a class that brings in beauty, color and joy, and which is not about testing.

These subjects are often under threat either from budget cuts or from the inexorable demands of academic testing and “accountability,” but insights from neuroscience suggest that arts education can play additional important roles in how children learn.

Paul T. Sowden, a professor of psychology at the University of Winchester in England, warned that in Britain, as in the United States, arts and humanities subjects have suffered in recent years as the emphasis shifted to science and technology. It’s important, he said, that arts education be available equally to everyone. But arts education, he said, is a chance to build resilience and determination in children, as well as to help them master complex skills.

Arts education encompasses many disciplines: “I’m talking about everything from music, drama, dance, design, visual arts,” Dr. Sowden said. And the goal goes beyond the specific subjects, he said: “You’re looking for opportunities in the arts education context to encourage children to ask questions, to use their imaginations, but also to approach their work in a systematic, disciplined way.”

When children are younger, arts education helps develop their capacity for collaboration, for creativity, and even for asking questions. As they get older, he said, “their executive function is much more developed, their ability to sustain attentional tasks is much greater.” For them, arts education can offer the chance to refine and polish a skill over time, or revise a project until it is as good as it can be.

Sometimes the arts are taught in a very set curriculum, Dr. Sowden said, but there are real advantages to teaching in a more exploratory way, where children can experiment. And both parents and teachers can encourage children to explore, he said; “that’s the way you get the biggest benefit, not just learning to reproduce a particular work by Monet or dance sequence.”

The skills that children master in arts education, he said, may be transferable to other curricular areas.

Mariale Hardiman, a professor at the Johns Hopkins School of Education, where she directs the neuro-education initiative, was interested in how children do —



Dance Coalition

Home of Arthur Aviles Typical Theatre, the AATT Academy & the Bronx

2474 Westchester Avenue, Bronx, NY 10461 ■ 718-917-2110 ■ joseph@baadbronx.org

City Council Hearing – Cultural Budget – March 11, 2019

Hello, my name is Arthur Aviles. I'm the co-founder and Artistic Director of BAAD! The Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance. An organization that has been holding space in the Bronx for artists and audiences by providing works that are empowering to women, people of color and the LGBTQ community for the past 20 years.

Through our festivals and events we support the presentation and development of work by over 200 artists per year. For example, we support Barbra Herr, an artist, performer and advocate for the queer and transgender community who lives in the Bronx. In her words, "BAAD! is an essential creative home for me and many other artists who are trans, who are Latinx and people of color and who are women. It's not easy to find places where I can create and present work, but BAAD! has provided a stage and support for me and pays me as an artist for my work."

BAAD! has presented her cabaret shows, she acted in our annual Los Nutcrackers holiday show and she has been featured in our unique program, the TransVisionaries Performance Series, where we work with South Bronx restaurant owners to present transgender artists. We will also present her latest show, Transmissions, this year.

BAAD!, like others testifying today, serves the public, and serves New York City. We are a performance space that is involved in the life of the Bronx, the life of the city and the life of the artists and audiences we serve. From participating in today's hearing to organizing a vigil on the steps of the Bronx County Courthouse for our community to speak after the Orlando Pulse tragedy, we are an organization that cares and is involved.

BAAD! values Barbra Herr and the hundreds of artists who work in our space each year, and the thousands of people who experience their art. Our audiences are 87% people of color, 65% women and 74% identify as LGBTQ. We stand with fellow cultural warriors who care deeply about this city to ask that the FY20 cultural budget be kept at \$20 million, and for the council to consider additional funding for both CIG and our program group partners.

- We ask that the \$10 million total that Culture has previously received be baselined, inclusive of the \$2.25 million that was baselined for CIGs in the budget last year.
- We support using the same distribution model for that \$10 million that has been used for the past three years which breaks out as \$4.5M to CIGs, \$5M to program group colleagues, \$0.5M to CUNY Cultural Corps, and that the additional \$10 million, plus any enhanced culture funding allocated in FY20, be divided evenly between the CIGs and our program group partners to enact the goals in the City's Cultural Plan in all 5 boroughs.

BAAD! loves New York City, our artists, our people and we love the Bronx. Thank you for your dedication to keep this city strong, and we thank this committee for your fierce work at increasing funding for the arts, and for all the support New York City gives to the arts.



Green-Wood Cemetery

March 11, 2019

Testimony for the New York City Council Budget and Oversight Hearings

Good afternoon Chair Van Bremer and members of the Committee.

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

Of all the cultural institutions you'll hear about today, I feel pretty certain this is the first and only time you'll hear about a cemetery.

But this cemetery is a National Historic Landmark. It is Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn. It spans 478 acres and borders Sunset Park, Windsor Terrace, Boro Park, Kensington, Park Slope, Prospect Park South, and Ditmas Park.

Green-Wood Cemetery has been in Brooklyn since 1838, and you know it as the final resting place for hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers.

But what you may not know is that we present over 200 public programs, **tours and events** every year. Last year alone, over 280,000 people came to Green-Wood to attend a program, to visit a loved one, or just to stroll the historic landscape and get away from it all.

A few of our favorite programs? One is in workforce development; we train young people - from low income communities - in masonry restoration for jobs in restoring historic buildings, with a direct path to union apprenticeships and union jobs. We run an environmental justice program in Sunset Park, which involves street trees and Green-Wood's horticulture staff.

We give school tours to over 4,000 students a year. Our renowned high school summer internship program in research and restoration has been in the press recently for its work on Green-Wood's Freedom Black burial ground in the five boroughs.

On the arts and cultural front, we host outdoor theater, film screenings, twilight tours, classical music and opera concerts in our catacombs, contemporary art installations on the grounds and more. Between May and September our trolley tours always sell out, including our annual Gay Green-Wood tour, which highlights the accomplishments of the many LGBTQ notables buried at the Cemetery.

At Green-Wood, we have a bold vision. It is to establish Green-Wood Cemetery as a major cultural institution in New York City within the next ten years. And we're well on our way.

Green-Wood is a giant greenspace in the middle of Brooklyn that is a huge resource to the community. We want to serve more New Yorkers with public programs, serve more students, and welcome more tourists.

It is a capital project directly across the street from the Cemetery's main entrance, at the corner of 25th Street and Fifth Avenue between Sunset Park and South Slope.

Its budget is \$34M. One third of the funding will come from private philanthropy, one third will come from the Cemetery itself, and we are targeting city and state funding for the last third.

Our FY20 capital ask of the Brooklyn Delegation is \$1M.

Green-Wood has been in Brooklyn for 181 years, but is **an entirely new cultural asset** in a part of the borough that is, culturally, significantly underserved.

We hope very much to work with the City Council on this important initiative.

I am happy to answer any questions . . . about cemeteries, about life and death, or even about our capital project.

Thank you for your time.

Lisa W. Alpert

Vice President of Development and Programming

Green-Wood

718-210-3011

lisa_alpert@green-wood.com

Green-Wood Cemetery, Front Entrance
Fifth Avenue and 25th Street, Brooklyn



Planned Education and Welcome Center

Directly across Fifth Avenue from Green-Wood Front Entrance, on 25th Street



Second Floor with views of the historic greenhouse and the Gothic Arch



First Floor, for visitor orientation, classroom space and public space for community meetings



Restoration of the 1895 Weir Greenhouse will be complete in summer 2019.



Exploring the Metropolis, Inc.

Workspace Solutions for NYC's Performing Arts Communities

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New York City Council
Cultural Affairs, Libraries & International Intergroup Relations Committee
Council Chambers – City Hall
Preliminary Budget Hearing Testimony FY20
Monday March 11, 2019 11:30 AM

Since 1982, Exploring the Metropolis (EtM) has focused on solving the workspace needs of New York City's performing artists. Currently, we administer the EtM Con Edison Composer Residencies and the Choreographer + Composer Residency in partnership with the Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning.

In the last decade, our residency programs have:

- **Provided more than \$1,000,000 worth of no-cost rehearsal space and cash awards to New York City artists**
- **Supported 98 composers, choreographers and performing artists with free space**
- **Provided more than 40,000 hours of free rehearsal space**
- **Supported 80 free public programs for thousands of New Yorkers**
- **Supported the creation, development and completion of 79 new works for music and dance.**

Previous EtM Artists-in-Residence have gone on to win recognition from the Jerome Foundation, the Kleban Foundation, the Guggenheim Foundation, Baryshnikov Arts Center Cage Cunningham Award, American Composers Orchestra, New Music/USA, MacDowell Colony, Larson Foundation and the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

- Chris Cerrone, a 2013-14 Composer-in-Residence, was named a Pulitzer finalist for "Invisible Cities," a work he developed during his EtM residency.
- Mary Kouyoumdjian, 2014-15 Composer-in-Residence, has been recently commissioned by Roomful of Teeth, the Kronos Quartet, Metropolitan Museum of Art and the New York Philharmonic.

- Jen Shyu developed “Song of the Silver Geese” with choreographer Satoshi Haga while in residence in Jamaica in 2015-16; the recording of this work was named one of the New York Times Best Albums of 2017.
- Choreographer Pam Tanowitz used her time in Jamaica in 2015-16 to prepare for her season as the Joyce Theater, and was recently named the first Choreographer-in-Residence at the Bard Fisher Center.

Artists at all career stages in NYC need this support. It’s not just emerging. Workspace can be prohibitively expensive even for those at a more advanced level.

Last year, we were happy to receive an increase in Cultural Development Fund awards from the NYC DCA. Stable funding sources are crucial for this field and the constituents we serve.

For FY 20, we ask that consideration be given to additional funding for both the CIG and our program group partners, organizations like EtM that receive CDF grants.

We ask that the \$10 million total that Culture has previously received be baselined, inclusive of the \$2.25m that was baselined for CIGs in the budget last year

We request that the additional \$10 million, plus any enhanced culture funding that can be allocated in FY20, be divided evenly between the CIG and our program group partners so we can continue to provide needed programs and services to New Yorkers in all 5 boroughs.

Thank you to Councilmember Jimmy Van Bramer and the Cultural Affairs Committee for the opportunity to testify today, and for your support of the cultural community.

Testimony of Matthew Zadrozny
Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations
City Council of New York City
March 11, 2019

Chairman Van Bramer, Councilmember Borelli, Councilmember Cumbo, Councilmember Koslowitz, Councilmember Moya, thank you for holding this hearing.

My name is Matthew Zadrozny. I am a data scientist and a member of the Committee to Save the New York Public Library, also known as, SaveNYPL.org. I've used the NYPL for 25 years, as a student, freelancer, and recently to research NYC history. I donate money to NYPL through its Young Lions program and attend board meetings as a member of the public.

Earlier today you heard Tony Marx, NYPL's president, request additional funds for longer hours. I support this. But there's more to the story.

The leadership of NYPL wants longer hours for the branch libraries. However, they have resisted longer hours at NYPL's Central Research Library at 42nd & 5th Avenue. For sixty years after its founding, the main library was open around 87 hours per week. Now it is open only 56 hours. Most days, today included, the main library closes at 6pm — before working New Yorkers can get there. On Sundays, the library is only open for four hours. And last summer it was closed on Sundays.

Historically, longer, later hours allowed New Yorkers to come after work and stay till 9 or 10 in the evening, researching, studying, and bettering their lives. NYPL reduced hours in the 70s due to a budget crisis. Now the library's endowment is at a record high of more than \$1 billion. The obstacle is not money but leadership's addiction to corporate events and weddings.

SaveNYPL has been protesting this. We want NYPL to give priority to the public and readers, not parties and rentals. We have collected some 2,000 signatures from New Yorkers who need the main library to be open late. These include high school kids, college students, researchers, writers, and freelancers — people who are the engine of NYC's economy and culture.

Over the library entrance are the words: "The City of New York has erected this building for the free use of all the people." The 42nd street building is owned by the City of New York and it belongs to all New Yorkers. It is the greatest publicly accessible research library in the world. Closing the library for private events during prime time is *de facto privatization* and unbecoming of a great city.

What is more important: Cocktail parties for the connected? Or a quiet space for students, scholars, startup founders, and job seekers?

The City Council should tell NYPL's leadership that the best way to help the public is not through expensive and unnecessary capital projects. Instead, keep the central library, and all libraries, open longer.

**VOICES of PUBLIC
LONGER HOURS at THE 42nd STREET LIBRARY
Comments on the Petition at www.SaveNYPL.org**

The Library can't accomplish its primary mission if it's only open 56 hours a week. Millions of dollars in improvements won't help if you can't get in ...

—Rory Aylward

Great writers of the 40s and 50s used to work until midnight in the library almost every day. People were able to educate themselves in the evenings after work. The library is a great resource, mostly unavailable to working people. Education is vital to a democracy.

—Lois Sturm

I come to work on homework in the library every day after school. It's the only place where I don't get distracted. Keeping the library open later allows people to access a valuable resource.

—Eugene Toth

Writing a doctoral dissertation was possible for me only because the Library used to be open late. Plenty of other aspiring scholars need expanded hours now, as I did in the 1960s.

—Carol Krinsky

When I was working during the day and a student at night, late hours and weekends were the only time I could use the library. I don't think my case is unusual in NYC, the city of hard work and opportunity. I urge the NYPL to extend library hours for the 42nd St. Library back to what they used to be!

—Nancy Sheran

I wouldn't have been able to write my first book, shortlisted for the Pulitzer Prize in Biography, with the present day hours.

—Deborah Baker

I am a high school student in a rigorous program who has several research papers due at the end of each semester. It would really help to have the resources that are available at this library at any given time of the day, but sadly most of the things that are useful can only be used here. It is important that I have more access to this public institution, as I can only come on the weekends from 10-5

—Nerissa Wright

Evening hours are one of the MOST important ways that the NYPL fulfills its public mandate to working New Yorkers. The attendance would increase dramatically if the NYPL were open later.

—H.M. Hoogenboom

I don't reside in the city, but I go to NYPL to study after work every day. I get off of work at 5pm, but the library closes at 5:45 3/5 weekdays, allowing me only 30 minutes to study. I get to study until 7:45 on Tuesday and Wednesday, but I struggle to find any other public place to study. NYPL isn't just a landmark for tourists to take pictures of. It is a place that promotes learning and community. Supporting NYPL is the same as supporting the youth and community of the city - it sends a message that everyone is entitled to the ability to gain knowledge and that New York wants to give its people the opportunity. Instead of closing the doors early, keep the doors wide open and allow people to embrace NYPL for what it is: a haven of comfort, community, knowledge and history.

—Andrew Trinidad

Nyc is the city that never sleeps. Please don't put it's opportunities to sleep so early.

—Marilyn Celestine

NYPL libraries are the jewel in NY's crown. Don't reduce it to a corporatized tourism scheme.

—Courtney Adams

These changes are especially damaging to working people -- all artists and researchers who must hold down day jobs while also trying to use the library's resources. Please bring back the previous schedule.

—Jennifer Wollock

I strongly agree with the recommendation to increase the hours of the 42nd Street branch of the NYPL. New York "never sleeps," so the longer hours for research are very much needed. Thank you!

—Elizabeth McCollum

Access to the library's quiet space is critically important in a city where many students and aspiring writers share cramped living quarters lacking privacy and silence.

—SHIRLEY WHITNEY

This is "the city that never sleeps," by the time you get off work it's already 6:30, we need the extra time.

—Andrew Grablewski

Research is, of course, the heart and soul of the 42nd Street library. Longer hours would be a boon to those researchers who need their library work around other jobs.

—Annalyn Swan

Working people need a library that works for them. Expand the hours!

—T F Gogan

Of course the library should have longer hours. Its commitment to the general public, most of whom work five days a week until the evening, requires this. This should be a "no-brainer." The library's priorities continue to be oddly undemocratic.

—Joan Templeton

The current main branch hours make it extremely difficult for people who work regular 9-5 jobs to find time to go to the library. Expanding the evening hours of the branch would ensure that more people have the opportunity to access the knowledge housed in this magnificent institution.

—Boyda Johnstone

I would absolutely spend at least one night a week writing in the Rose Reading Room if it were open until 9 or 10pm!

—Shannon Lumetta

I used to give money to NYPL regularly. I no longer do because I no longer have confidence that the plutocratic board, which overpays the library president, has our interests at heart. I will not give again until the board gives some sign it has heard the public on this and other issues. Bring back the books, too! Shame on this board and management.

—David Hochman

People who work, but are also going to school and working on higher degrees need access to the library AFTER work. Many people work until 6 pm, so closing at 6 or at 8 is NOT good. We the people need to get the NYPL back to what it used to be- for the people to have access. No- everything cannot be done online- so don't even go there! The Library represents advancement to many people who use it- advancement in life, at work and a better quality of individual. The NYPL should be promoting that - not reducing the chances of it happening. Shameful. FIX IT NOW!

—stacy r

The 42nd Street Library is the most useful resource for writers and readers in New York City. It would be amazing to see New Yorkers flooding into it on evenings and weekends to use it, instead of to attend parties and events, as was originally intended. Lengthening its hours would mean children and teenagers would be able to use it after school, working writers (including those who work as writers) would be able to use it after work, and it would be more than just a tourist attraction and party space during its "off" hours. You have no idea how restrict its current schedule is unless you need to use it yourself. Make our most precious intellectual resource useful. Open up its hours!

—Carol Kino

One of the premier libraries in the country, if not the world, should be open to the public as many hours as possible. If small suburban libraries can do it (remain open until 9 or 10pm each night and all year round on Sunday) NYPL should certainly be able to do this, not only in the research branches, but in neighborhood branches as well.

—Melinda Greenblatt

We are being methodically STRIPPED of our earned , and inalienable rights to Information, education , history , science, arts, literature, facts and truths. Please sign this petition.

—Ginger Greenblatt

1969 marked the first attempt to close the Research Libraries for a day but that caused a backlash among scholars, writers, and library users which the trustees had to heed.

—David Beasley

Resistance to the idea of citizens informing themselves is a threat to democracy, right up there with voter disenfranchisement.

—J Campbell

Limiting Library hours is limiting one of the brightest resources in the City's progress. The current hours seems more designed for tourism than for the real interested in reading and research. It's time to extend the hours!

—Rodolfo Zanetti

I strongly agree the proposed hours of NYPL, because it can really really help people who have strong desire to learn and to improve themselves.

—Zhan Li

Please let us work until night! 5:45 pm is such an early time to kick us out :(
—Natalia Chamorro

Need more hours for poor people
—chengqiang feng

Libraries do not help people when they are closed!!!!
—tamar singer

Many graduate and undergraduate students in NYC love, cherish, and rely on this library! Please extend hours!
—Sharon George

Please increase the library's opening hours -- this is a basic question of democratic access and service to the public.
—Erika Munk

Libraries are essential to literacy which is critical to a democracy. The U.S. has a shameful 30% functional illiteracy rate. Maximizing library access will help us reach 100% literacy in New York City and set a good example for the country.
—Tina Dobsevage

I vote libraries. I vote democracy. I vote literacy. I vote community. And, I vote.
—Paul Peloquin

Expanding hours is the best and most efficient way to provide public access to the great collections and services of the NYPL research library.
—Charles D. Warren

16 March 2019

Re: finance testimony for NYC public libraries FY 2020

To Chair Van Bramer:



Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library. *Exterior* Retrieved from <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47dd-e4b4-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

Thank you to Speaker Johnson, Cultural Affairs Chair Van Bramer, Finance Chair Dromm, Finance Director Latonia McKinney, Mayor De Blasio, Majority Leader Laurie Cumbo and all Council Members and Council staff for all of your work during budget season. We appreciate so much the baselined funds that have been allocated for libraries. Libraries are cultural and learning institutions of New York City. We simply would not be able to continue to operate without your continued generous support.

FY20 Funding Request

The three library systems are asking for \$35 million for operating costs in addition to the baselined funds so that hours and services do not need to be cut. We are also asking for \$900 million for capital funds to repair aging infrastructure of our buildings. As you know, many of our libraries are antiques; some are Carnegie libraries and they date to the early twentieth century. Therefore, we rely mostly on city support to keep the edifices safe for New Yorkers and tourists. We would love to improve the failing HVAC systems and transform our libraries into even more welcoming spaces.

Our Libraries

Each of our 92 locations is unique to the neighborhood or research purpose that it fulfills. I would like to highlight a few of our unique branches and discuss the research libraries.

1. **Terence Cathedral Cook** – this is the only library that I have ever seen in a subway station. It is very small, but very handy since one can drop off and pick up books on their way to and from the train. It is in the 51st Street station of the 6 train on the east side of Manhattan.
2. Pelham Parkway Van Nest – this is in a Russian speaking neighborhood, so it has many items in Russian for the clientele to enjoy. This branch is in the East Bronx.

3. City Island – I visited this quaint library in the peace of the island city. I was delighted by its nautical collection, something that the islanders would be pleased by. This branch is in the northeast Bronx.
4. **Woodlawn** – This small branch in northwest Bronx has a lovely Irish Heritage collection.
5. Parkchester – This branch has a Bengali collection since the neighborhood has many Bengali people. It is in the east Bronx.
6. High Bridge – This branch is in the west Bronx. It sports a fantastic tree of knowledge in the children’s room which the kids can sit underneath to read books.
7. Tremont – This is a gorgeous Carnegie library that is over a century old. The hardwood floors and mahogany wood are beautiful, and the library has a stately look about it.
8. Belmont – This Bronx branch has an Italian heritage collection and a beautiful atrium in the center that is open air up to the second floor, which holds the children’s materials.
9. Battery Park City – This new age southwest branch is the first Manhattan LEED certified green library.
10. Bronx Library Center – This behemoth grand Bronx branch is the largest public library in the Bronx. It serves 800K visitors each year. With six floors, an adult learning center, career services department and a Puerto Rican Heritage room, it provides something for everyone. The fourth floor has the largest Libros en Espanol collection that I have seen in NYPL.
11. Chatham Square in the southeast Manhattan Chinatown has many books in Chinese for the neighborhood residents.
12. **Seward Park** is also in Chinatown in Manhattan. It exists adjacent to a lovely park and it has Chinese materials. I attended a summer reading celebration there one year, and it was a beautiful day in the park. I have also worked there on Sundays.
13. Jerome Park in the Bronx has a very modern look to it.
14. **Jefferson Market** is a former courthouse. It has gorgeous stained glass windows that accompany a spiral staircase. A drone touring video was made of this library.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMmuFsCotTA>
15. 53rd Street branch is a wonderful oasis from the hectic Manhattan energy. It is very spacious and friendly towards patrons who want to use their laptops in an appealing and attractive space. Think of it as an alternative to a coffee shop.
16. Saint George in northern Staten Island has a wonderful enclosed teen space on the lower level. It is set in the most urbanized neighborhood of the borough.
17. **Andrew Heiskell Braille and Talking Book Library** on W. 20th Street and Manhattan caters not only to NYPL but to all of the five boroughs and Long Island. Members can have requested books sent to them on flash drives. Most of the customer service is via telephone since members find it challenging to travel to the library. However, they have many materials in Braille and large print materials. They also have a Braille study group and a book club. I was lucky enough to work there for one day to learn more about the library’s operations.
18. Some Carnegie branches in NYC: Muhlenberg (MN), 96th Street(MN), 67th Street(MN), Schomburg Center(MN), Harlem(MN), Hudson Park(MN), Tompkins Square(MN), Hunts Point(MN), Port Richmond(SI), St. George(SI), Stapleton (SI), Franklin Ave. (BK), Pacific (BK), Park Slope (BK), Walt Whitman (BK), Poppenhusen (Q)

19. New libraries at NYPL: **Niarchos Foundation Library** (in construction, to replace former Mid-Manhattan Library), Battery Park City, Kingsbridge, Mariner's Harbor, Westchester Square (in construction)
20. **Schomburg Center** for Research in Black Culture is a beacon of Black history. The exhibits are eye-opening, and there is a lovely gift shop that offers books and other merchandise for sale. The research collections sport materials on the Harlem Renaissance, Green books and more.
21. **Stephen A. Schwarzman Building** – We have our own copy of the Gutenberg bible, though it is not currently on display. We had grey Lego sculptures of our legendary lions, Patience and Fortitude near the Children's Center on the ground floor. We also have the original Winnie the Pooh dolls that Christopher Milne received in 1921 as birthday gifts. There is a café on the first floor where people can sit down and eat. The Rose Main Reading Room on the third floor, site of many films such as *Ghost Busters*, is almost as long as a football field.
22. **Library for the Performing Arts** is nestled amongst Julliard School and other performance venues in Lincoln Center in western Manhattan. The architecture of this library is interesting, the exhibits are great, and no other lending organization that I know of in NYC can rival its circulating music CD collection. I was amazed and impressed by the variety and scope of the materials.
23. Digital locations –
 - A. **digitalcollections.nypl.org** (open source images, both photographs and drawings, paintings)
 - B. nypl.org/databases (free access to awesome research resources, including full-text options)
 - C. Freegal allows downloads of three free songs per day through NYPL portal
 - D. Mango Languages is an auditory language learning tool through NYPL portal
 - E. **PressReader** has many magazines and newspapers available in a full color, full page format) through NYPL portal
 - F. **oldnyc.org** (collaboration between NYPL and Google, map of the five boroughs with dots on many street corners – find your home address and look at historic photographs, I tried my address and the train is conspicuously absent in the early photograph).
 - G. **Kanopy** is a great video streaming database for adults and kids that is available free through the NYPL portal.
 - H. [Ebooks.nypl.org](http://ebooks.nypl.org) – free audiobooks and eBooks with a valid NYPL library card and PIN. Ebooks are returned automatically after three weeks, no need to return. Users must download overdrive.com, a free software, to their ereader, desktop or phone prior to reading e-materials.
24. Information referral to other NYC resources
 - a. **NYC Municipal Library and Archives**
 - b. Stonewall 50th Anniversary – nypl.org/stonewall50 and **Gay Center Library and Archives**
 - c. Foundation Center for grant resources

- d. Many museums have libraries open to public for free (eg, MOMA, MET, NY Historical Society)
- e. **National Archives and Research Administration (NARA)** office in NYC



New York Public Library Archives, The New York Public Library. (1950 - 1959). *Bookmobile, Bronx, 1950s* Retrieved from <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/9283c399-2ea5-7bd5-e040-e00a18066ef5>

Green Infrastructure

With the capital funds that the three library systems are requesting, I hope that they will use the funds to invest in green infrastructure for the good of New Yorkers and the environment. Not only is this a good financial investment for the libraries, it is imperative for us to take action now to the pernicious forces of climate change. Without attention to this issue, none of us may be alive in the future in order to enjoy library services.

Acquiring Diverse Staff

I was glad that Majority Leader Cumbo asked a question regarding Women & Minority-Owned Business Enterprises (WMBEs). Although the city mandate is 30% of contractors, I believe that libraries should strive for 50%. After all, white males do not constitute 70% of the NYC population. Care must also be taken to ensure that WMBE does not simply translate into white women. People of color and other minorities (such as people with disabilities, immigrants, etc.) must be represented in our livelihoods. Having different perspectives only strengthens us. The three systems opined that they do not have control of the subcontractors' MWBE status when they work with EDC and DDC. However, they could inform those agencies that they are particularly interested in working with diverse subcontractors.

Another question that I would have liked to have seen asked is regarding the diversity of the libraries' senior management. This issue has previously been discussed in Cultural Affairs committee budgetary hearings. Unfortunately, the racial and gender diversity in NYPL's senior management is alarmingly low. Also, the organization has been led by a white male since its inception in 1895. Different perspectives help inform more culturally competent services. Care must be taken to ensure that diverse panels of interview candidates are assembled and considered.

Thank you! Thank you!

Thank you again to the city for all that you do to support the libraries and New Yorkers and tourists to this megalopolis. Good luck with budget negotiations. We have confidence that you will do your best to ensure the stable future of New York City's cultural and learning materials.



The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Picture Collection, The New York Public Library. (1939). *Guarding the library--New York* Retrieved from <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/9456c620-e2b6-0135-e671-59c1d918a427>

Sincerely,

Miranda J. McDermott

**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: LISA ALPERT

Address: _____

I represent: GREEN-WOOD CEMETERY

Address: _____

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Appearance Card

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Date: 03/11/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Katie Cox

Address: 317 Webster Ave

I represent: Exploring the Metropolis

Address: 205 Lexington Ave

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Appearance Card

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Date: 3/11/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lameane Isaac

Address: 361 Lewis Ave

I represent: Brooklyn Public Library Macra

Address: 361 Lewis Ave. Brooklyn, NY 11233



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Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: KOKILA FRANK

Address: 4201 4th AVENUE

I represent: BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Address: _____

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Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tom Finklepearl

Address: _____

I represent: DCLA Commissioner

Address: _____

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Appearance Card

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in favor in opposition

Date: 3-11-2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: FRANCINE GARDER-COHEN

Address: 599 E. 7th ST. (1-A) BROOKLYN 11218

I represent: REGINA OPERA COMPANY, INC

Address: c/o FRANCINE GARDER-COHEN

599 E 7 ST (1A) BROOKLYN 11218

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Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Michael D. D. White

Address: 62 Montague Street

I represent: Citizens Defending Libraries

Address: 62 Montague St. Bklyn NY 11201

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Appearance Card

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in favor in opposition

Date: 3/11/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rocky Bucano

Address: _____

I represent: Universal Hip Hop Museum

Address: _____

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Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 16

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/11/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Cathy Hung - Behalf of CLG

Address: _____

I represent: Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning

Address: _____

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C16

Appearance Card

[Empty box]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 11/14

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/14/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: John Cavelli - Behalf of C16

Address: _____

I represent: Wildlife Conservation Society

Address: _____

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Appearance Card

[Empty box]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/11/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: VICTORIA KOWANETZ

Address: _____

I represent: QUEENS LIBRARY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
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Appearance Card

[Empty box]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3-11-19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: TAMES ASIAN

Address: _____

I represent: New York Historical Society

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor in opposition

Date: March 11, 2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Danielle Shapiro

Address: 205 Oakwood Ave SE NY 10301

I represent: The Brooklyn Public Library - Highdown Library

Address: 1164 W 12th St Brooklyn NY 11223

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/11/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sarita Daffany

Address: _____

I represent: Just Leadership USA

Address: 1900 Lexington Avenue

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Appearance Card

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in favor in opposition

Date: 3/11/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dennis Walcott

Address: _____

I represent: Queens Library

Address: _____

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Anthony Marx

Address: _____

I represent: New York Public Library

Address: _____

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Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: March 11/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MART FISSIRE

Address: 547 W. 157th St, NY, NY

I represent: NYFA

Address: 20 Jay Street, Brooklyn

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LINDA E JOHNSON

Address: Prospect Ave

I represent: BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Address: 10 GRAND ARMY PLACE

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor in opposition

Date: 11 March 2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Matthew Zadrozny

Address: 14 Butler Place Brooklyn, NY 11238

I represent: Save NYPL

Address: East 11th St New York, NY 10003

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: MARCH 11, 2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: demetries morrow

Address: 251 STOCKHOLM STREET, APT 3L BROOKLYN, NY

I represent: THE CITICULATEFACTORY THEATER

Address: 5-40TH AVE, LONG ISLAND CITY, NY

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor in opposition

Date: March 11th 2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Arthur Aviles

Address: 861 manida St.

I represent: The Bronx Academy of Arts + Dance

Address: 2474 westchester Ave Bronx N.Y.

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Appearance Card

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in favor in opposition

Date: 3/11/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Traci Lester

Address: 102 Broadhurst Ave, NYC 10039

I represent: National Dance Institute

Address: 217 West 147th St, NYC
10039

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor in opposition

Date: 3/11/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LUCY SEXTON

Address: 160 SIXTH AVE 10013

I represent: New Yorkers for Culture & Arts

Address: 75 Broad St 10004
#304

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