

TESTIMONY ON THE MAYOR'S EXECUTIVE BUDGET, FY 2015

Friday, June 6, 2014

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By Submitted by Lane Harwell, Executive Director, Dance/NYC, to the New York City Council

Dance/NYC offers testimony for every NYC Council district to support robust allocations in the City's FY 2015 budget to cultural affairs and arts education.

What we are asking for today, with peer advocates including the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG), New York City Arts Coalition, and One Percent for Culture, is the continuance of baseline funding through the Department of Cultural Affairs for the CIG and the Cultural Development Fund (CDF) and an increase of funding to the CDF of \$6 million. With the Center for Arts Education and countless others who have made arts education their priority, we are also asking for the enactment of a new \$23 million allocation to expand arts instruction in the schools.

As City leadership evaluates multiple priorities for this budget, we invite it to consider the priorities of New Yorkers weighing in on the creative sector:



This video offers highlights from a NEW YORKERS FOR DANCE campaign effort, which spotlights local vibrancy by featuring 51 statements from New Yorkers in each of the 51 City Council districts available at the all-new DanceNYC.org. The campaign

results from an open call to New Yorkers to have Dance/NYC film their statements, first come, first in by council district.

So, why do dance and culture matter locally? Those who responded to the Dance/NYC invitation tell us via a survey these are the top 10 key words, in this order of priority: community, life, children/kids, culture, express, learn, body, creativity, audience, and health. And as the data say: community, way above all.

These findings build on research data used as the foundation for previous testimony. Consider, for example, State of NYC Dance 2013, based on the Cultural Data Project, which show us the importance of City funding to eligible 501(c)(3) dance organizations. The City is the most substantial source of government funding for organizations in nearly every budget range, helping to generate thousands of performances locally, millions of paying attendees, and \$251 million in aggregate expenditures.

Dance/NYC invites City leadership not only to study the hard data that demonstrate healthy returns, but also to reflect on the multiple and alternative personal stories of why arts and culture matter to your constituents—in every Council district, in every borough. Today, it offers up 51 statements, but there are countless other stories to be told now and going forward. A financial commitment to cultural affairs and arts education in the year ahead is a commitment to all New Yorkers and the communities arts and culture build.

Thank you for your commitment to the arts and culture in New York.