



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

**New York City Council Committees on Finance, Cultural Affairs,  
Libraries and International Intergroup Relations, and the Subcommittee on Libraries**

**Fiscal Year 2018 Executive Budget Hearing**

**May 19, 2017**

Good morning, Chairpersons Ferreras-Copeland, Van Bramer, King, and members of the joint committees. My name is Dennis Walcott, President and CEO of the Queens Library. Before I begin, please allow me the opportunity to thank Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and each of you in this esteemed legislative body for your unwavering support of libraries. Including our full Expense and Capital requests in the Council's official response to the Mayor's Preliminary Budget is just the latest example of your commitment to libraries. At Queens Library, we enrich lives and empower communities on a daily basis. However, without your steadfast support and leadership, none of it would be possible. Therefore, it is with a profound sense of gratitude that I appear before you today to tell you how much your support means not only to me, but also to every person who works at or visits Queens Library.

More than any other institution in the City of New York, our libraries are open to everyone, no matter their immigration status, economic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, race, ethnicity, religion, disability status or political persuasion. As libraries, we need to make clear that we are here for the communities we serve. We started to do this at Queens Library last month, when we launched our "Queens Library is for Everyone" campaign to actively engage all our customers to let them know that everyone is welcome in our facilities. Next month, we are going to take the campaign to a new level and keep our **Corona community library open for 31 hours straight** to offer services and programs at hours when people are typically unable to access them because of their work schedules or other reasons. This is just one of many exciting new initiatives we will be undertaking throughout this campaign.

This fiscal year continues to be a busy one at Queens Library. Through April 30<sup>th</sup> we have welcomed over 9.3 million people through our doors, keeping us on pace with our gate count last fiscal year. Over 1.1 million people have attended programs, surpassing last year's record total with two months still left in the fiscal year. We have addressed over 2.3 million reference inquiries, which represents a 7% increase year-to-date. Our overall gate count increased 13.8% on Saturdays when compared to the same time the year before. Our Saturday program sessions increased almost 600%, and attendance increased 400%. Children's program attendance on Saturdays rose 523%, and program attendance for adults and seniors rose 357%.

These numbers indicate that more and more people are taking advantage of the programs and services that we offer, particularly on Saturdays. Allow me to provide you with some examples, highlighting only some of what Queens Library currently has to offer.

Our Adult Learner Program (ALP) provides ESOL, Adult Basic Education and pre-High School Equivalency instruction at seven Adult Learning Centers (ALCs). Case management and technology training are provided. Thus far, in FY 2017, the ALCs have served 7,148 customers including:

- 3,520 students participating in ESOL classes;
- 1,031 students participating in ABE classes;
- 448 students participating in pre-HSE classes;
- 2,159 students received other services.

In total, students received 312,262 hours of instruction. On May 16<sup>th</sup> over 750 of our students graduated from our program at a wonderful ceremony held at our Flushing Community Library. I could not have been more proud of these students, as well as the library team that helped them along their way.

The Young Adult Literacy Program (YALP) provides pre-High School Equivalency instruction, case management and workforce readiness to young adults between the ages of 17 and 24. YALP is funded by DYCD. Thus far in FY 2017:

- 138 students have enrolled in classes at three sites (Jamaica, Astoria and Far Rockaway);
- Those students received 18,423 hours of instruction in reading, writing and math;
- Students have received 3,636 hours of case management services through individual sessions and workshops;
- 83% of students made educational gains in math (numeracy);
- 74% of students made educational gains in literacy (reading and writing);
- Ninety-seven students participated in community service projects.

During Fiscal Year 2017, our Job & Business Academy (JBA) served more than 20,000 participants, providing over 30,000 instructional hours. JBA facilitated over 500 technology workshops, over 500 workforce development workshops, approximately 120 small business workshops; and 40 job skills training workshops.

Our Jamaica FEASTS (Food Entrepreneurship and Services Training Space) program provides training and shared commercial kitchen space for aspiring food entrepreneurs with the overall goal of promoting economic development and food sector development in the downtown Jamaica area. After receiving more than 150 applications, FEASTS recently graduated its first eight participants who have all completed their business plans and begun legally selling their products and services.

Our Job Skills Training program has provided more than 530 participants with formal training. During this fiscal year, 242 customers took part in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 10-hour training course, 75 with the OSHA 30-hour training, 15 participants with Home Health Aide training, 79 participants with our 8-hour Security Guard Training program and 70 participants with 16-hour Security Guard Training. More than 60% of our customers reported receiving a better paying job, a raise, or became employed.

The Queens Library's New Americans Program (NAP) provides important services to the area's many new immigrants. NAP organizes workshops in the languages spoken by Queens' immigrant communities that assist new immigrants in pursuing their dreams in a new country and offers programs that celebrate the culture of the diverse ethnic groups in Queens. The program works closely with the Adult Learner Program, the Job and Business Academy, and community libraries to assess local needs and link residents with existing system-wide library and social services to enhance civic engagement. Approximately 48% of the residents of Queens County are foreign born, making this program a vital resource to many. Initiatives such as our New Americans Corner, in partnership with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services and the NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, dedicates a space in every single one of our facilities where immigrants can visit and find information and resources to become a U.S. citizen.

Queens Library has offered over 7,100 programs for teens, with a to-date attendance of 105,000, and over 30,000 programs for children, with a to-date attendance of 470,000. Over 35,000 children and 17,000 teens participated in our Summer Reading Program, reading a combined 754,991 books.

For those families looking forward to starting school, we have developed a school readiness program called Kick off to Kindergarten (K2K). This program, for children ages 2½-4, is hosted three times a year at 15 locations. K2K is available entirely in English and Spanish, and translated into Bengali. Families attend eight classes designed to raise a child's pre-literacy skills, and to give caregivers tools to help develop these skills throughout their child's school years. We have seen immense success with this program, including a 70% improvement in the pre-literacy skills of children who attend. This class had been so popular and helpful to families that this Spring, we launched an advanced version of the course. This five-week program designed for families that have already gone through K2K delves deeper into the techniques that parents had been

previously taught. Queens Library also offers Universal Pre-K at two locations: Woodhaven and Ravenswood, enrolling a combined 30 students for the 2017-18 school year.

Queens Library also provides a free, evidence-based afterschool program called STACKS, which enhances students' learning experiences through structured and unstructured age-appropriate activities that build emotional, social, and academic skills. During the 2017-18 school year, we served 713 students, ages 6-14, at eighteen Community Libraries. Each STACKS session begins with structured homework help, facilitated by qualified and caring staff and supervised by children's librarians. During the month of March for example, 95% of the enrolled students completed all of their homework during this time in the program. The second half of the program features a variety of enrichment activities that are informative, hands-on and fun. These activities include weeklong learning projects that allow students to use all the resources Queens Library has to offer, as well as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) and literacy-based activities that complement school curricula, including Google Computer Science (CS) First, and a Global Citizenship curriculum created in partnership with the Asia Society.

Today's libraries are often able to pursue innovative and unconventional projects, and few of them are as ingenious as Queens Library's Hip Hop Programs & Culture. Started in 2014, Hip Hop Programs & Culture is dedicated to creating programs and events that examine the five core elements of hip hop (MCing, DJing, Breaking, Graffiti, and Knowledge), while recognizing, documenting, and celebrating the positive evolution of Hip Hop culture. Spoken Word, DJ/Mixing Technology, Break Dance, panel discussions, lectures, art exhibitions and artist talks are just a few examples of what this program has to offer. The average daily attendance is from 75-100 customers. 50% are youth and 50% are between the ages 45-60. In the past fiscal year, more than 2,575 customers have attended Hip Hop programs.

As we continue to develop innovative programs for our customers in Queens, we have seen the desire for community partnerships on a citywide level. Thanks to the City's First Readers grant, we are able to support the Queens Library-initiated New York City Early Learning Network. This is a network of providers and support organizations that are focused on families with young children. Our participants range from city departments such as the Department of Mental Health and Hygiene (DOHMH), Department of Education (DOE), and the Administration for Children Services (ACS), to cultural institutions like the Children's Museum of the Art's, Children's Museum of Manhattan, and New York Hall of Science, as well as direct service organizations such as Jumpstart, Reach out and Read, LINC, and our sister institutions, The New York Public Library and Brooklyn Public Library. We are working with the NYC Departments of Homeless Services (DHS), Education, and our community partner, Breaking Ground, to reach and serve families and individuals experiencing homelessness. This has included: information and support for teachers in the DOE's Afterschool Reading Clubs; working closely with DHS on the libraries in their award-winning Library Pilot Project; connecting our Community Libraries with outreach staff from Breaking Ground to build networks for referrals for customers in need of services; and co-hosting "Queens Connections," an informal "coffee and conversation" program with DHS and the library to encourage people who might need additional information about housing and other services to ask in a relaxed environment.

As part of Mayor de Blasio's initiative to engage 10% of NYC teens in Youth Leadership Councils by 2017, Queens Library has developed youth leadership councils at the Far Rockaway Teen Library and at Flushing Library. The goal of both councils is to give teens a voice in what is going on in their communities.

Another partnership we are proud of is the Video Visitation Program initiated by Speaker Mark-Viverito and the Administration. Queens Library provides free live video services for families who wish to visit with their incarcerated loved ones. We operate three sites for the program: Central, Far Rockaway and Long Island City. Additionally, a site at Ridgewood will be launching in June 2017. All video visits are free, one-hour sessions in semi-private rooms within these select libraries. Each visit is specially tailored to meet the needs of the family, and books, toys and other resources are provided to make each visit as comfortable and successful as possible. Families have come to celebrate birthdays, to have their incarcerated parent help with homework, and to ensure that their children are still connected with their parent. As of April 30<sup>th</sup> sixty-seven families have been reconnected through this program, including sixty-three children from ages two months to thirteen years. The program has been so popular, it necessitated the addition of a second video unit at the Central Library.

Queens Library has been able to offer additional services and expand our reach at Rikers Island. Some highlights include:

- Approximately 2,000 inmates serviced with almost 1,500 books circulated;
- Ten Families referred to programs (Universal Pre-K, Job and Business Academy programs, Pre-HSE programs, entrepreneurship, and afterschool programs;
- Seventy inmates participated in the first cohort of the *Queens Library Creative Outlet Series* program; and
- Over 500 families seen in the Rikers Island Family Visit Center.

Regarding Capital, we are sincerely grateful to Mayor de Blasio for including libraries in the City's Ten-Year Capital Plan. With a pledge of \$100 million over ten years, Queens Library finds itself in a better position to plan effectively. While we have made much progress, there is more to be done. Our challenge is to modernize our facilities, maintain our critical infrastructure and to expand our public spaces in order to thrive in the 21st century. Because of these challenges, **Queens Library, the New York Public Library and Brooklyn Public Library are collectively seeking \$150 million in capital funds from the City in Fiscal Year 2018, of which Queens is seeking \$50 million.**

We have a Capital need of \$253 million over the next 10 years to modernize all of our facilities and bring them into a state of good repair. With \$50 million in additional funding this year, we would be able to address additional outstanding challenges, such as the one we face at the Rosedale Community Library. Unfortunately, this library is reaching the end of its useful life—just as the surrounding neighborhood needs it more than ever. One of the three smallest branches in Queens, the aging library simply cannot keep up with the community's growing demands on its space and resources. In particular, the branch is plagued by its proximity to the marshlands surrounding JFK Airport, which has created a chronic flooding problem dating back to its opening in 1962. Indeed, years of water issues have caused significant damage in the basement.

All of our communities deserve better. Rosedale is a glaring example of where we must do more.

**With \$34 million in additional Operating funds that the three library systems are requesting from the City, Queens Library will:**

- Provide seven-day service at 14 of our community libraries (one per Council District);
- Expand our STACKS afterschool programming and Google CS First computer science clubs to every community library in the system;
- Purchase and make available 2,000 mobile hotspots to our customers;
- Provide robust translation and interpretation services to our customers; and
- Provide more resources to our New Americans Program and Jobs & Business Academy.

This funding will allow us to provide Sunday service at 12 additional libraries; new and much-needed materials for our customers to add to our collection of materials in over 30 languages; more programming for the immigrant community; job skills training for those looking to reenter the workforce or advance their careers; homework help for our children and young adults, and much more.

Libraries are an indispensable institution and the cornerstone of a strong democratic society. Our mission is to provide quality services, resources, and lifelong learning opportunities through books and other formats, in safe and comfortable facilities, to meet the informational, educational, cultural, and recreational needs and interests of anyone who visits us. I am proud to say that Queens Library does an outstanding job in meeting the needs of our diverse constituents. **Please keep investing in libraries. Please keep investing in all New Yorkers.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

**Brooklyn Public Library testimony to the  
Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup  
Relations, jointly with the Committee on Finance and the Subcommittee on  
Libraries**

**Executive Budget Hearing**

**May 19, 2017, 11:00 AM  
Council Chamber – City Hall**

Thank you, Tony, and thank you Speaker Mark-Viverito, Majority Leader and Cultural Affairs and Libraries Chair Van Bramer, Finance Committee Chair Ferreras-Copeland, Libraries Subcommittee Chair King, our Brooklyn delegation, and the entire City Council, for supporting New York City's libraries.

As Tony said, it is imperative that we build on the progress set in motion two years ago, when you made it possible for us to provide universal six-day service.

More people are coming to the library than ever before—and their needs are more diverse and more complex than at any time in recent memory.

Unfortunately, our ability to serve the public is greatly compromised by the physical state of our buildings, most of which are plagued by maintenance issues and equipment failures—not to mention dismal interiors.

The capital budget request we submit today—\$150 million for the three library systems in fiscal year 2018—is \$30 million larger than the request we submitted in March.

We have increased our request by \$10 million for each system because thus far, the administration has not included additional funding for libraries in the current ten-year capital plan.

Our inclusion in the last ten-year plan, two years ago, was encouraging, and we remain very grateful to the administration and to council. But that investment amounted to less than one-quarter of our total capital need.

Each library system needs \$50 million this year to fix failing infrastructure and replace equipment long past its useful life.

You have heard us speak many times about the specific challenges in our branches. In fact, you have seen these challenges yourselves, and have tried with your own discretionary funds to help us fix them—and for that, we are also grateful.

If you have read the Time to Renew report published earlier this week, you know, for example, that at Pacific Library in Boerum Hill, staff and patrons shout over noisy portable chillers—a makeshift replacement for the branch’s failed air conditioning system. Pacific is also virtually inaccessible to people with mobility impairments—not to mention parents and caregivers with strollers.

Time to Renew also highlights Saratoga Library in Bushwick, where patrons who cannot negotiate stairs must ride a rickety lift barely big enough for two.

And I am sure you have encountered similar issues at branches in your own districts.

At our current level of capital funding, it is difficult for libraries to address any but the most urgent problems. We spend much of our time and resources responding to emergencies.

Chronic underfunding also makes it impossible for us to manage capital projects efficiently.

Urgently needed improvements are often delayed over the slightest change in scope, because we are not able to address routine adjustments and overruns with dollars budgeted for the coming year. We simply do not have that kind of flexibility.

As a result, even funded projects cannot be completed within a remotely reasonable timeframe. This is currently the case at three branches in need of new heating and cooling systems.

Projects at the Bushwick and Ryder libraries that were funded in 2015 have stalled due to shortfalls of \$1.3 and \$1.1 million, respectively—while at the Cypress Hills branch, an HVAC replacement funded in 2014 has been delayed because of a nearly \$2 million gap.

In total, we face shortfalls of more than \$34 million on 40 projects throughout the borough. We have projects planned for nearly half of our libraries that are on hold or in danger of being delayed. And the problem worsens with each passing day.

Brooklyn Public Library receives approximately \$10 to \$15 million in discretionary capital funds annually to care for an aging physical plant of over 1.1 million square feet.

This is not enough to cover half of what we need to finish work that has been funded for years—though as it turns out, not sufficiently funded.

In Brooklyn, we are responding to capital challenges with creative solutions.

New library projects in Sunset Park, Greenpoint, Brower Park, and Brooklyn Heights will wipe out tens of millions in unfunded capital needs. Revenue from the sale of Brooklyn Heights Library will allow us to improve several branches that are badly in need of repair.

But there is a limit to what we can do on our own. Libraries need your help—and we have proven that with sufficient resources, we can care for our buildings and enhance the quality of our patrons’ experiences.

At Kingsbridge Library in the Bronx, circulation is up 76% and program attendance has increased 90% after a full branch renovation.

In Queens, teen program attendance has nearly doubled with the opening of a new teen center at Cambria Heights Library. Young adult book circulation is up 29%.

In Brooklyn, we partnered with Spaceworks to renovate the second floor of Williamsburgh Library to build affordable artists' studios and performance spaces.

More people are coming to the branch, taking advantage of programs offered by the resident artists—and circulation is up as well. By offering non-traditional library services in a beautifully renovated space, we are able to reach more people with core services like book-lending and literacy programs.

We have seen similar success at Arlington Library in Cypress Hills, where overall attendance increased by one-third and program attendance rose by an astonishing 163% with the opening of a passport office and a new adult programming space.

In all five boroughs, and across all three systems, libraries are an excellent investment.

By supporting our capital request for \$150 million for the three library systems this year, you will be investing not only in our buildings, but more importantly, in the people who use them.

As you consider requests from many worthy organizations and agencies, I hope you will remember the millions of New Yorkers who visit our branches every year.

We are their representatives, and therefore, it is our responsibility to advocate for them.

Our patrons need libraries that are open seven days a week.

They should be able to check out books and attend programs in buildings with functional HVAC systems and water-tight roofs.

They deserve spaces and collections that inspire them to do their best thinking.

And most of all, they deserve to love coming to the library.

We thank you on behalf of the patrons who are here with us today, and the millions more who will benefit if the city supports our requests.

Thank you.



**New York City Council Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International  
Intergroup Relations  
Fiscal Year 2018 DCLA Executive Budget Hearing**

Friday, May 19, 2017, 12:30 PM – Council Chambers, City Hall  
Testimony Presented by New York City Department of Cultural Affairs  
Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl

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Good afternoon, Chair van Bramer and members of committee. I am here today to present testimony regarding the Mayor's executive Fiscal Year 2018 budget for the Department of Cultural Affairs. I am joined by a number of DCLA staff.

I will start with a brief look at DCLA's FY 2018 executive budget. A total expense allocation of \$143.1 million includes \$106.5 million for the Cultural Institutions Group, \$28.56 million for the Cultural Development Fund, and \$6.3 million for agency operations. These figures do not include Council Initiatives and other one-time items that are typically added at adoption. Altogether, this funding flows to nearly 1,000 nonprofit cultural organizations every year. These groups in turn support a vast range of programming that reaches communities in every part of every borough. With just around 4% of our executive budget allotted to agency overhead, we're also a very lean operation. The vast majority of DCLA funding goes straight to the organizations doing work in our communities.

I'm pleased to announce that this funding includes \$1 million in new funding to provide energy support for organizations that operate in City-owned facilities under my agency's jurisdiction but are not members of the Cultural Institutions Group. This is the second year we have been able to provide this funding. This is a diverse group of organizations that have deep roots in their communities, such as Weeksville and BRIC in Brooklyn, to Harlem Stage and Clemente Soto Véléz in Manhattan. We're proud to provide this increased investment in these groups

It also includes \$420K of baselined support to continue our Building Community Capacity program. Since expanding BCC last year, the program has increased its support for four underserved neighborhoods across the city: East New York, Brownsville, and Cypress Hills in Brooklyn; Inwood and Upper Manhattan; Jamaica, Queens; and the South Bronx. BCC works with local cultural groups in these neighborhoods to organize, cultivate resources, and develop programming that addresses local needs. For instance, the coalition of BCC groups in Jamaica, called "Jamaica Is..." hosted a community visioning event in March, bringing together stakeholders from across sectors. The goal was to build a "community that highlights arts and culture and that encourages and strengthens broad participation and collaboration through engaging residents, artists, students, and cultural institutions of all kinds." And tomorrow, as part of the citywide NYCxDESIGN festival, the Bronx Culture Collective is hosting "South Bronx Baton: Reflections on Change." This walking tour and panel discussion will highlight the work of four community development corporations that have helped to transform the neighborhoods of South Bronx over the last several decades. This programming, and more like it in the other BCC communities, fosters local collaboration and, as the Bronx Culture Collective puts it, "preserve and amplify our regional culture for generations to follow."



Turning to our capital budget, we currently have \$826.6 million allocated for nearly 400 active projects at more than 200 organizations over the next four years (FY17-20). This includes \$152 million that was added at the adoption of the FY 2017 budget. For FY 2018, we have received requests for funding from 132 organizations encompassing 177 projects. This is on par with prior years. We look forward to working with City Council and the borough presidents to allocate funding for important cultural infrastructure projects across the city. Some highlights from our capital portfolio include:

- **Nuyorican Poets Café:** the complete exterior rehabilitation and interior renovation of the existing Café facility located at 236 East Third Street. This DDC-managed project is currently in design.
- **Brooklyn Historical Society DUMBO:** just yesterday, I helped cut the ribbon for BHS's second location at the Empire Stores complex. It's located in a renovated 19th century warehouse on the Brooklyn waterfront that has been vacant since the end of World War II. In fact today is the first day it's open to the public. I encourage everyone to visit as soon as this hearing is over. Admission will be free of charge all weekend.
- **New York Botanical Garden (NYBG) Edible Academy and Family Garden** enhancements, which will improve the existing Ruth Rea Howell Family Garden and allow more families to experience and engage with NYBG's living collections and programming.
- **Queens Botanical Garden education building:** Construction of a new education building and surrounding landscapes that will include a teaching greenhouse, teaching kitchen, space for adult education programs and family programming to better serve its community. Fundraising is still underway for this project.
- **Snug Harbor Music Hall.** The Fiscal 2018 Executive Capital Plan includes \$13 million in City funding for Fiscal 2017 to Fiscal 2021. This 120-year old historically significant structure provides a professional 686-seat venue for concerts, performances, lectures, films, public ceremonies, and symposia.

No other city in America provides capital funding for cultural infrastructure at this scale. Our projects – collaborations with cultural organizations and city agencies – have recently received awards, including:

- Artist Mary Temple's Percent for Art commission for McCarren Park Pool in Brooklyn – mural painted inside the arched entryway – received an Award for Excellence in Design from the City's Design Commission.
- If zipping across the Bronx River wasn't exciting enough on its own, New Yorkers will be able to do so on an award-winning zipline: the Treetop Adventure Zipline and Nature Trek at the Bronx Zoo also won an Excellence in Design Award this year.
- Just last week, the first ship that my agency has ever restored, the Wavertree, received a Lucy G. Moses Preservation Award from the New York Landmarks Conservancy. This 132-year old wrought iron sailing ship was restored right here in New York, at Caddell Dry Dock in Staten Island. We thank our colleagues at the Department of Design and Construction for their excellent management of this unique project. You visit "her" at the South Street Seaport Museum.

Our Programs Unit is hard at work facilitating panels to review nearly 800 applications for FY2018 Cultural Development Fund support. In fact, a big chunk of my agency is currently back in the office right now facilitating the 16<sup>th</sup> of this year's 22 panels. We thank the Council for their participation in this important process.

It is worth mentioning here that our commitment to providing robust support for culture is as strong as ever as we face an uncertain future with regard to federal funding. We will work tirelessly to make the argument that supporting culture means supporting individuals,

communities, and regions as the federal budget is determined. I was proud to join you on the steps of City Hall last month to rally against these cuts. Let's keep up the fight in the months to come.

In other recent news, my agency recently concluded a one-year long Public Artist in Residence, or PAIR, partnership with the Administration for Children's Services: The Lost Collective, a group of four theater artists and activists spent one year in residence at 5 LGBTQ+ youth foster homes in Brooklyn and Queens where they brought theater and inter-disciplinary art practices to 30 youth. The residency ended with a reception and exhibition at the Nuyorican Poet's Café where the youth showed their self-portrait photographs, poetry, original music compositions, and experimental autobiographical short films. The night and the residency were transformative for the youth and all involved. At the end of the residency, Jennifer Gunnel, director of SCO, the organization that facilitates the youth homes, reflected that after this year, she wonders if art is a right for these youth, in addition to clinical services. She said that this residency offered "an element of an antidote to the very heavy trauma that is so much a part of this system, from which the youth and even the staff suffer. We are looking for ways to mitigate that heaviness, open doors; art immediately brought a lightness, making me ask if it is a human necessity the same way other health care processes are; is art a way to decrease everyone's sense of trauma?" This PAIR is an example of the potential for change – personal, systemic, social, political - that artists can bring when embedded in city agencies.

For the last part of my testimony, I'm going to turn to the CreateNYC cultural plan. The Council – and the chair and members of this committee in particular – has been an incredible partner on this project. As I testified back in February, your participation in so many of our workshops and other events sent a powerful message to New Yorkers that their representatives in government are really, truly listening to their ideas and concerns.

This past Monday, we released What We Heard, a look at everything we've learned through the CreateNYC public engagement process since last fall. Over 185,000 residents have participated so far, including more than 25,000 who showed up at more than 400 live events. Our partnership with the city's three library systems also helped us collect more than 10,000 surveys. Outreach also included a phone survey conducted by the Siena College Research Institute, which revealed some eye popping numbers:

- 97% of respondents said that arts and culture are important to the overall quality of life in New York City.
- 92% said that art and culture are important in their lives.
- 77% of respondents wish they were able to attend more arts and cultural activities.
- 90% indicated that promoting arts and culture is a key part of protecting the heritage of all New Yorkers.

We've heard loud and clear that New Yorkers believe that culture is incredibly important to their lives and their communities. Never once in our interactions with tens of thousands of residents did anyone question if our local government should be in the business of supporting art and culture. Some notable takeaways from public feedback include calls for equitable distribution of arts and culture across the boroughs; to continue to support the city's existing cultural institutions; to provide quality arts education for students; to support local organizations to thrive in place; and to promote affordability for all. More information is available at CreateNYC.org. At this time we're asking the public to review these proposals, and take a poll to rate their priorities and help us identify anything we've missed that's important to them. Please help get the word out to your constituents: visit the website and take the poll by May 31 to make sure your priorities are reflected in the plan.

I will also be hitting the road to discuss the contents of What We Heard with the public through a series of Office Hours at library branches in all five boroughs. We had our first one in Staten Island yesterday evening. You can find details on the upcoming events at [CreateNYC.org](http://CreateNYC.org). We hope that you will be able to join us.

Beyond the content represented in What We Heard, the planning process has provided us with a transformative opportunity to reimagine our work based on a close, reciprocal relationship with the public. We will continue to work closely with our constituents in the 1,000 nonprofit cultural organizations we fund annually. But we also want to expand our opportunities for direct feedback from the public. We've seen the power in bringing people together around a common cause. The NYC Artist Coalition formed after we hosted a meeting for the DIY arts community this past January. A meeting with the Art Dealers Association of America, the Department of Small Business Services, and commercial art galleries has opened up new avenues for collaboration between the city and this vital component of our city's art scene. And the Disability/Arts/NYC Task Force (or DANT), formed around the plan, and has had a huge influence, both on the plan itself and our thinking related to disability arts within the agency.

Thank you for your ongoing support for art and culture in New York City. I'm happy to answer any questions you have at this time.

**INVEST IN LIBRARIES**  
**INVEST IN**  
**ALL**  
**NEW YORKERS**

## **FY18 Executive Budget Hearing**

**New York City Council**

May 19, 2017

**Tony Marx**, The New York Public Library

**Dennis M. Walcott**, Queens Library

**Linda E. Johnson**, Brooklyn Public Library



New York  
Public  
Library



Queens Library

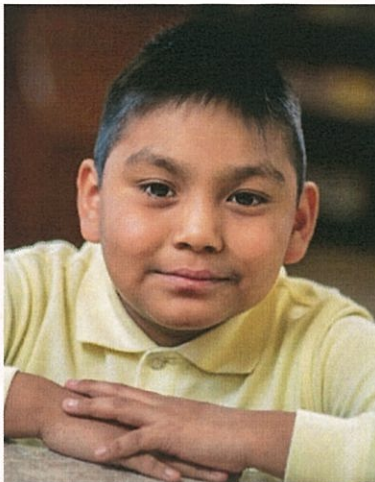
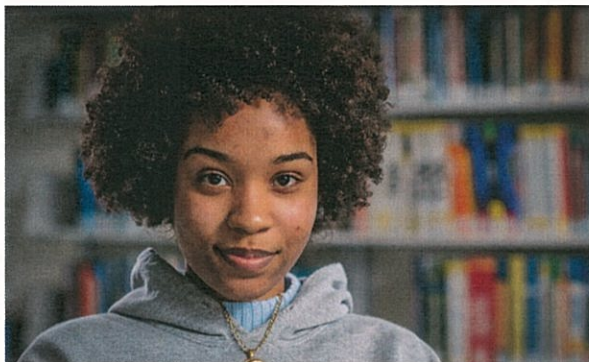
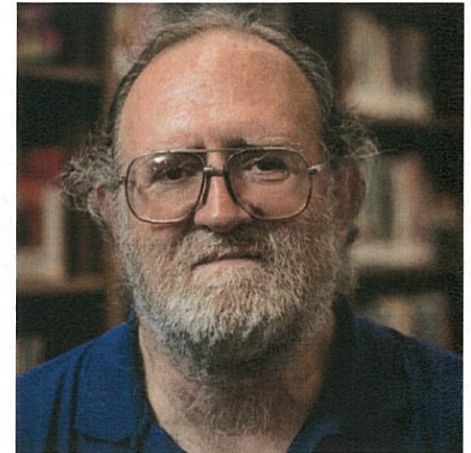
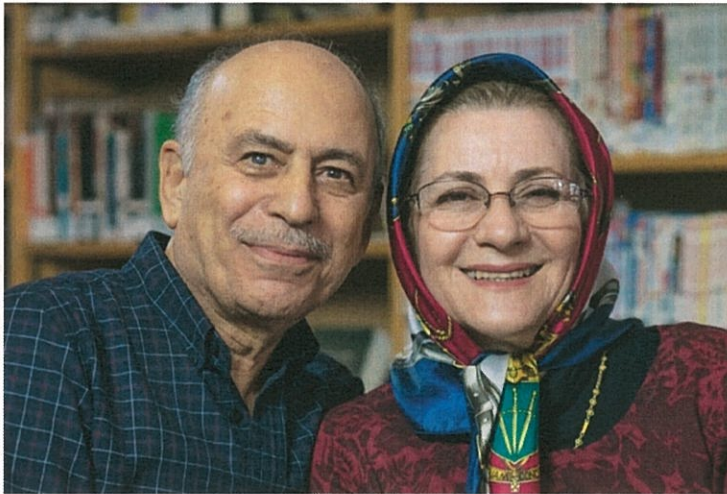
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# Invest in ALL New Yorkers

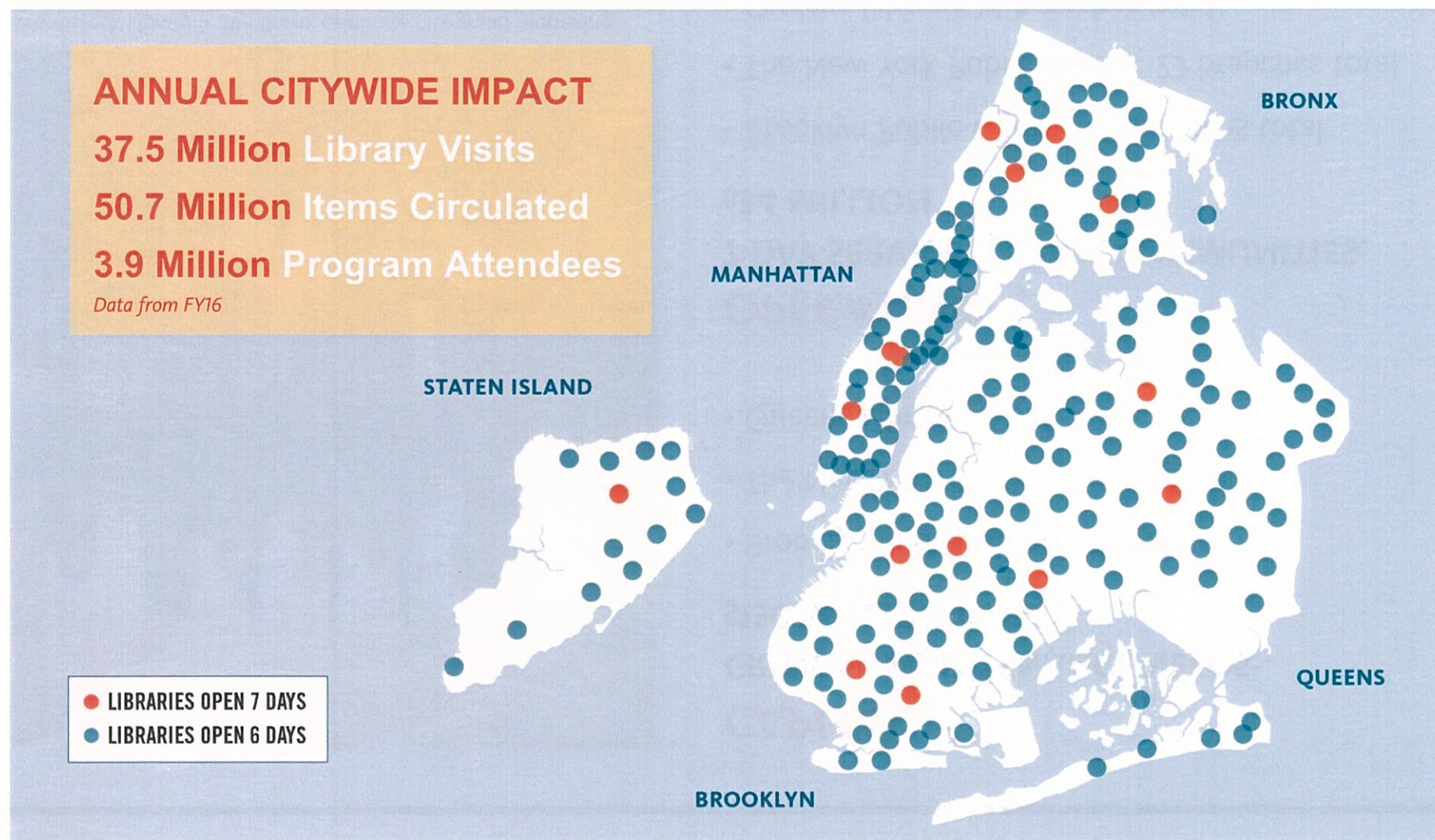


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## INVEST IN LIBRARIES

# Invest in NYC's 216 Branches





# INVEST IN LIBRARIES

## FY18 Budget Request

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Woodstock Library in the Bronx celebrated its grand reopening on May 15, 2017, after a full renovation.

### CAPITAL

#### CRITICAL MAINTENANCE NEEDS: \$150 MILLION IN FY18

- Brooklyn Public Library: \$50M
- The New York Public Library: \$50M
- Queens Library: \$50M

### OPERATING

#### 7-DAY SERVICE FOR ALL COMMUNITIES: \$34 MILLION

- Brooklyn Public Library: 16 branches total
- The New York Public Library: 23 branches total
- Queens Library: 14 branches total



## INVEST IN LIBRARIES

# FY18 Budget: \$1 Billion Maintenance Crisis


AUTHOR	
TITLE	
BORROWER'S NAME	DATE DUE

**DUE**  
JULY 1, 2017

SPECIAL REPORT | MAY 2017

## TIME TO RENEW

### UPDATE ON THE \$1 BILLION MAINTENANCE CRISIS IN OUR LIBRARIES



**INVEST IN LIBRARIES**  
**INVEST IN ALL**  
NEW YORKERS

**Bklyn** Public Library   **New York** Public Library   **Queens** Library

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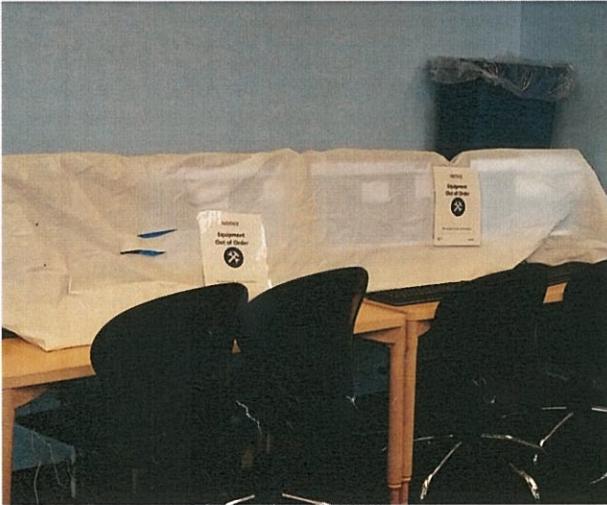
“The city's three library systems are struggling to maintain branches that have gone years without critical infrastructural upkeep—even as they expand programs and services to meet growing needs. **This is unacceptable.**”



## INVEST IN LIBRARIES

# FY18 Budget: Critical Maintenance Needs

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**West Farms** | Bronx

**CHRONIC ROOF LEAKS**



**Countee Cullen** | Manhattan

**OVERLOADED CIRCUITS**



**West New Brighton** | Staten Island

**SEVERE OVERCROWDING**

## INVEST IN LIBRARIES

# Invest in NYC's 216 Libraries

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### 10-YEAR CAPITAL PLAN

- Brooklyn Public Library: \$325M
- The New York Public Library: \$484M
- Queens Library: \$253M

### CAPITAL REQUEST

#### CRITICAL MAINTENANCE NEEDS: \$150 MILLION IN FY18

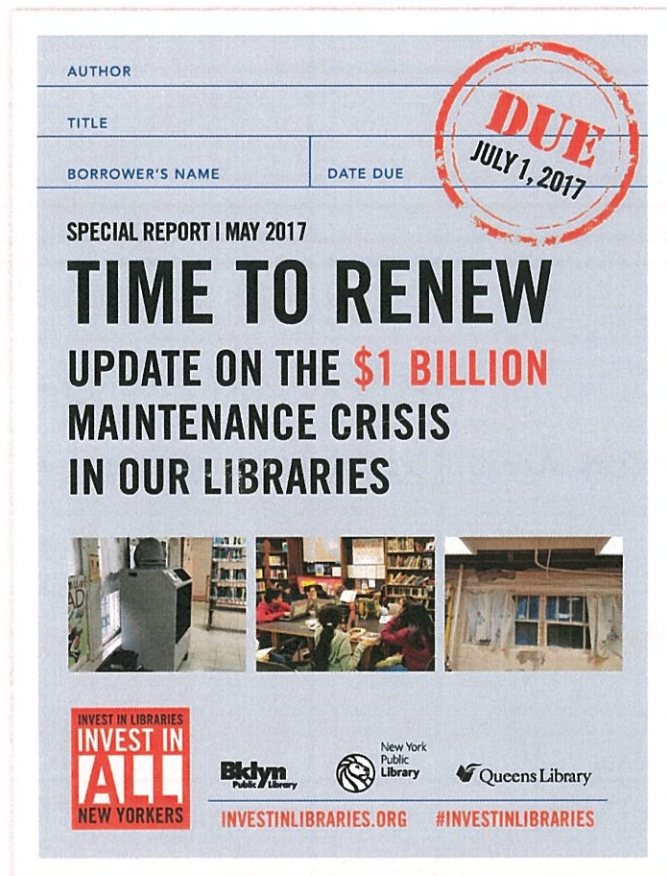
- Brooklyn Public Library: \$50M
- The New York Public Library: \$50M
- Queens Library: \$50M



## INVEST IN LIBRARIES

# FY18 Budget: \$150M in Critical Maintenance Needs

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**Chronic Roof Leaks**  
**Overloaded Circuits**  
**Faulty Air Conditioners**  
**Severe Overcrowding**  
**Chronic Flooding & Mildew**  
**Inaccessible & Inhospitable Spaces**  
**Insufficient Heat**  
**Water Damage**  
**Broken Elevators**  
**Inadequate Program Space**

## INVEST IN LIBRARIES

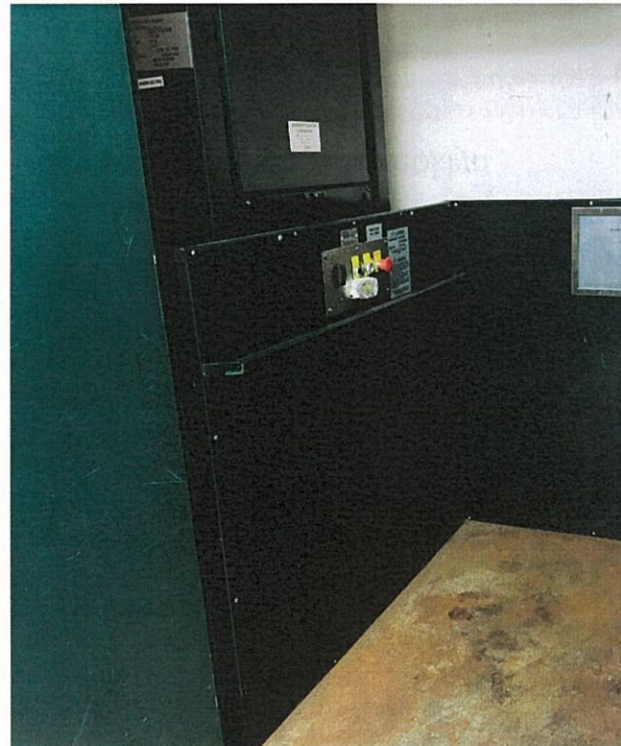
# FY18 Budget: \$150M in Critical Maintenance Needs

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**Pacific Library** | Brooklyn

**FAULTY AIR CONDITIONERS**



**Saratoga Library** | Brooklyn

**INACCESSIBLE SPACES**



## INVEST IN LIBRARIES

# FY18 Budget: \$150M in Critical Maintenance Needs

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**Ryder Library** | Brooklyn



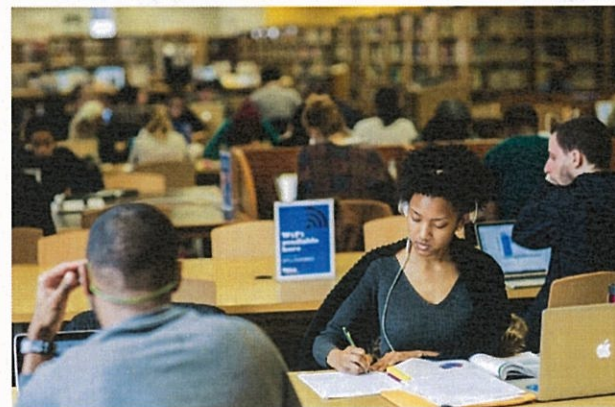
**Bushwick Library** | Brooklyn



**INVEST IN LIBRARIES**

# An Excellent Investment in ALL New Yorkers

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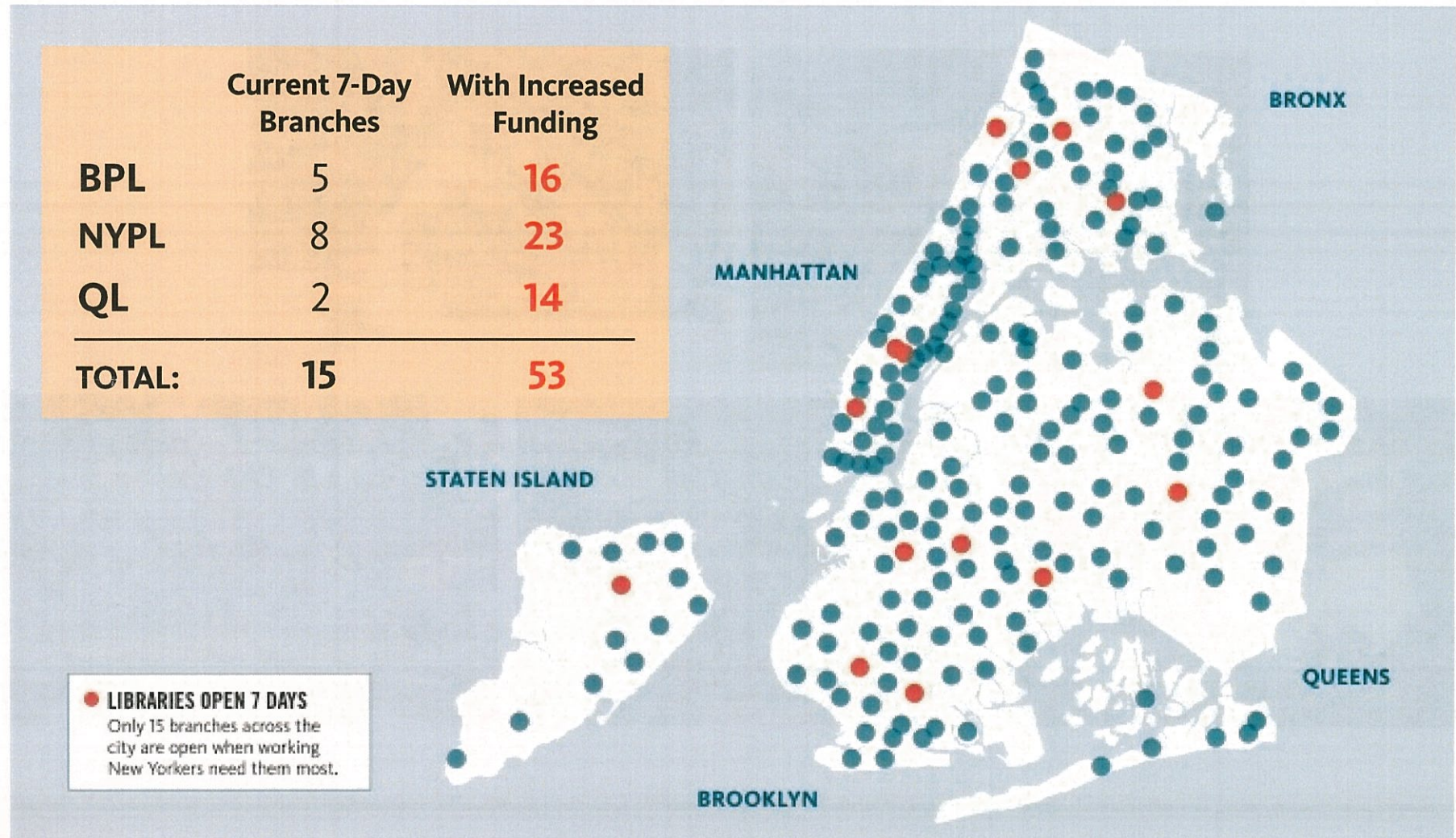


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## INVEST IN LIBRARIES

# Invest in NYC's 216 Branches



## INVEST IN LIBRARIES

# FY18 Budget Request

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### CAPITAL

**CRITICAL MAINTENANCE NEEDS:  
\$150 MILLION IN FY18**

- Brooklyn Public Library: \$50M
- The New York Public Library: \$50M
- Queens Library: \$50M

### OPERATING

**7-DAY SERVICE FOR ALL COMMUNITIES:  
\$34 MILLION**

- Brooklyn Public Library: 16 branches total
- The New York Public Library: 23 branches total
- Queens Library: 14 branches total



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New York  
Public  
Library



Queens Library

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AUTHOR

TITLE

BORROWER'S NAME

DATE DUE



SPECIAL REPORT | MAY 2017

# TIME TO RENEW

## UPDATE ON THE **\$1 BILLION** MAINTENANCE CRISIS IN OUR LIBRARIES



New York  
Public  
Library



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# TIME TO RENEW

## UPDATE ON THE **\$1 BILLION** MAINTENANCE CRISIS IN OUR LIBRARIES

Two years ago, New York City's three library systems released a report detailing the staggering infrastructure crisis in our branches. **Today, this \$1.1 billion crisis is far from over.** While much progress has been made across our 216 branches thanks to the leadership of the Mayor and City Council, there is more to be done. From failing building infrastructure to malfunctioning mechanical systems and outdated technology, the list of critical needs in our libraries grows daily.

More than a century ago, New York City entered into a pact with philanthropist Andrew Carnegie to build a library within walking distance of every New Yorker. Carnegie provided the funding for the buildings and the City agreed to pay for maintenance and operating costs. It is of critical importance that the City renew this historic commitment to libraries, and in so doing, renew its commitment to serving all New Yorkers.

Over the past two years, with the City's restoration and baselining of \$43 million in operating funding, New York City's public libraries were able to secure and sustain 6-day service across all locations. In addition, the City committed to an initial \$300 million capital infusion. **These investments were crucial, but we must go further.** The fact is that libraries are stretched thin—moreover, the City's initial capital funding commitment has been earmarked for a specific set of projects, while pressing needs for infrastructure updates and repairs continue to grow.

### INCREASED FUNDING FOR LIBRARIES

In these critical times, there is no doubt that libraries are more important than ever. Yet, offering free access to education, knowledge, and opportunity to all New Yorkers only works if our libraries are operating in safe, inviting buildings—and if we are open at the times New Yorkers need us most. **Therefore, it is of vital importance to increase capital and operating funding for our 216 public libraries in the FY18 budget.** The city's three library systems are struggling to maintain branches that have gone years without critical infrastructural upkeep—even as they expand programs and services to meet growing needs.

This is unacceptable. Buildings plagued by failing HVAC systems, cramped spaces, and overloaded electrical panels simply cannot adequately host the high-quality services that New Yorkers of all ages deserve. Indeed, it is a challenge to serve all New Yorkers when visitors to a branch must endure the stench of chronic mold and mildew resulting from decades of flooding, or when librarians must cover in-demand children's computers with plastic sheets on rainy days because of leaky ceilings.

### FY18 BUDGET REQUEST

- **\$150 Million for Critical Maintenance Needs:**

- Chronic Roof Leaks
- Overloaded Circuits
- Faulty Air Conditioners
- Severe Overcrowding
- Chronic Flooding & Mildew
- Inaccessible & Inhospitable Spaces
- Insufficient Heat
- Water Damage
- Broken Elevators
- Inadequate Program Space

- **\$34 Million for 7-Day Service in Every District**



As libraries continue to develop additional programs and services to engage more patrons than ever, they must ensure that they can accommodate those patrons in safe, welcoming facilities. But when a branch's lone program space is only accessible via a dark stairwell or a dilapidated lift, its reach does not extend to all those who would benefit. Or, if a cold day means patrons cannot access what they need without a coat because the boilers are outdated, then our libraries cannot live up to their mission to improve lives and strengthen communities.

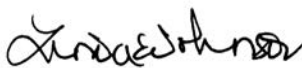
It is therefore imperative that the City honor its commitment to Andrew Carnegie—and to the 40 million visitors to our branches each year. **We ask that the City allocate \$150 million in capital funding in FY18 for critical maintenance needs.** Without the capacity to address crucial infrastructure needs, even our ability to offer basic internet and computer services becomes fraught—just as our city's libraries are being called on to meet the increasingly digital demands of our users.

With free access to learning opportunities and information, libraries have the potential to open doors and change lives—but they can only do that if their doors are open when New Yorkers need them. **This is why we are also calling on the City to increase operating funding for libraries by \$34 million in FY18 to expand 7-day service.** Currently, only 15 of the city's libraries are open 7 days a week. Increased funding will ensure that at least one branch in every Council District is open 7 days. This is particularly important at this moment, when more people than ever rely on our services, from early literacy support to ESOL classes for immigrants and story times for homeless families.

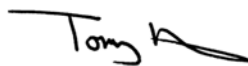
## TIME TO RENEW

New York City's libraries work tirelessly to realize the dream of Andrew Carnegie. They provide unparalleled opportunity for all comers through their essential free services and resources. While this report highlights the array of capital problems plaguing our libraries, it also shines a spotlight on recent projects completed with the help of the City, and their positive impact on New Yorkers. When our libraries are fixed and improved, more people come through the doors, sign up for classes, and check out books, demonstrating that an investment in libraries is an investment in all New Yorkers.

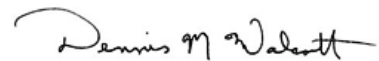
**Now more than ever, libraries are a lifeline for New Yorkers of all ages and backgrounds.** We need City action to ensure we can address our ongoing infrastructure crisis and provide users with the high-quality library service that New Yorkers across this great city need and deserve.



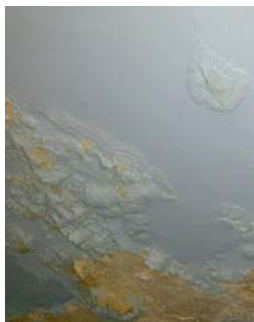
**Linda E. Johnson**  
President & CEO, Brooklyn Public Library



**Tony Marx**  
President & CEO, The New York Public Library



**Dennis M. Walcott**  
President & CEO, Queens Library





# IMPACT: RECENTLY RENEWED BRANCHES

## INVESTING IN LIBRARIES WORKS

These recent renovations at branches across the five boroughs showcase the clear and immediate impact of capital investment in our public libraries.

By providing welcoming, modern spaces, our branches can continue to attract new users who benefit from the array of essential free resources available at our libraries. These examples demonstrate that investing in libraries means improving lives and strengthening communities.

### KINGSBRIDGE LIBRARY, BRONX FULL RENOVATION, 2011



Program Attendance **+90%**  
Visits **+80%** | Circulation **+76%**

### STAPLETON LIBRARY, STATEN ISLAND FULL RENOVATION, 2013



Program Attendance **+177%**  
Visits **+33%** | Circulation **+51%**

### CAMBRIA HEIGHTS LIBRARY, QUEENS NEW TEEN CENTER, 2014



Teen Program Attendance **+84%**  
YA Circulation **+29%** | Teen Programs **+106%**

### WASHINGTON HEIGHTS LIBRARY, MANHATTAN FULL RENOVATION, 2014



Program Attendance **+105%**  
Visits **+47%** | Circulation **+45%**

### WILLIAMSBURGH LIBRARY, BROOKLYN 2ND FLOOR RENOVATION, 2015



Children's Programs **+98%**  
Teen Programs **+76%** | Visits **+44%**



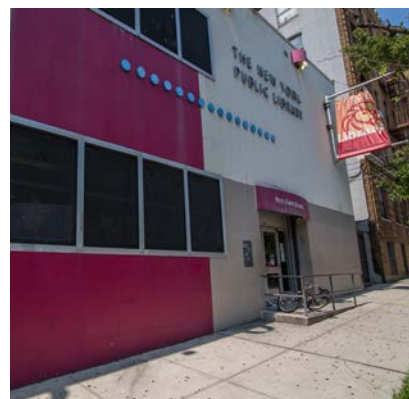
# CHRONIC ROOF LEAKS

West Farms Library | Bronx | The New York Public Library



## RAINED OUT OF THE CHILDREN'S ROOM

On rainy days at West Farms Library in the Bronx, librarians in the second floor children's room know to be prepared with garbage bags. Water from the leaking roof often breaches the ceiling, forcing staff to cover one-quarter of the room's computers. At times, the chronic issue is so severe that the room must be closed completely until maintenance can come to patch the problem. This is just one of the branch's almost \$20 million in renovation and critical maintenance issues. Other problems include: non-ADA compliant bathrooms, inadequate mechanical systems, outdated interiors, and exterior building cracks.



### COMMUNITY NEED

With several schools within walking distance, West Farms Library is a haven for students in the afternoons. Fourth-grader Miguel Pagan (left) is one of countless local children who depend on the branch after school for homework help and much-needed computer access—even when it rains. “The library is a tremendous help to our family,” says his mother, Carmen, adding that Miguel visits the branch nearly every afternoon and is disappointed when many of the computers are unavailable. “We depend on the library,” she notes. “It gives our kids a safe place to go and learn.”

**84%** Students don't meet state ELA standards

**59%** Household incomes below \$25,000

**67%** Speak a foreign language at home





# OVERLOADED CIRCUITS

Countee Cullen Library | Manhattan | The New York Public Library



## LEFT OUT IN THE COLD

Countee Cullen Library provides Harlem locals of all ages with essential free resources, from job-search help to free computer training and even coding classes. But a cold day can disrupt everything: With only one of four boilers in functioning condition, staff must plug in space heaters to keep visitors comfortable when temperatures drop. Yet, the aging electrical panels at the 76-year-old branch, which is in need of a full renovation, cannot handle the strain—causing overloaded circuits and electrical outages. The lack of electrical capacity also means that the branch cannot provide more public computers or outlets for laptops and other devices to meet the growing needs of its users.



## COMMUNITY NEED

Job-seekers such as Elena Tishina (left), a Ukrainian immigrant, rely on the branch for computer training and other resources to help them learn the skills they need to succeed. "It's priceless—it opens your world view," says Tishina, who began taking coding classes in late winter 2017 with the hopes of finding a new job. "This is such an important thing that the library is giving the community." Still, she adds, the branch's maintenance needs make it a challenge at times just to stay focused. "The lab is too cold in the winter, and gets so hot in the summer. It makes it hard to learn when things aren't working properly."

**43%** High school diploma or lower

**39%** Household incomes below \$25,000

**27%** Speak a foreign language at home



# FAULTY AIR CONDITIONERS

Pacific Library | Brooklyn | Brooklyn Public Library



## HOT AND BOTHERED AT THE LIBRARY

Libraries are no longer for shushing—but at Pacific Library, a little quiet would be welcome. Thanks to a failed HVAC system, the branch is cooled by portable chillers that are as loud as they are ugly. In fact, staff must routinely shout to make themselves heard when helping patrons on the telephone. For branch visitors, reading or studying in the hot, noisy environment is just shy of impossible. The malfunctioning HVAC system is just one of the busy library's many challenges: Built long before architects were mindful of people with disabilities, the branch is virtually inaccessible to patrons who have mobility impairments.



### COMMUNITY NEED

The many critical maintenance issues at Pacific Library negatively impact staff and users alike, creating a challenge for the branch to meet the community's needs. Indeed, branch manager Candace Vasquez (left) says that the noise and accessibility issues keep many longtime users away. "Can you imagine trying to read a book or do your homework on the Coney Island boardwalk? That's what it's like here sometimes—hot and noisy," says Vasquez, adding that older patrons in particular have problems accessing the branch. "It's a real shame, because we have so much to offer—great books and programs and a staff that truly cares," she adds. "We just want our patrons to be able to enjoy a nice, comfortable library."

**92,819** Annual visits

**19%** Increase in annual visits

**13,347** Program attendees





# SEVERE OVERCROWDING

West New Brighton Library | Staten Island | The New York Public Library



## A TIGHT SQUEEZE

Just walking through the doors of West New Brighton Library, it is clear that neighborhood demand has long outgrown the building's capacity. With its open floor plan and limited space for public programs, meeting the many needs of users of all ages is a daily challenge: Adults seeking a quiet place to work or read jostle for space just steps from boisterous students at one of the branch's much-needed after-school programs. Meanwhile, with a nearly 270% increase in school visits alone last year, the branch's program space is nearly always booked, making it difficult to add new services to meet the surging community demand.



## COMMUNITY NEED

Neighborhood teens in particular flock to the branch after school to do homework, use the computers, and find a safe place to relax. Yet, without space for a dedicated teen zone, students are forced to squeeze into an open area behind the circulation desk—sparking frequent complaints from patrons about the noise. “We’re constantly being told to quiet down,” says Olaitan Okeowo (left), 16, a regular at the library after school. “On most days it’s packed beyond imagination,” he adds. “Despite all the great things at the library, space is a major issue,” says the teenager.

**129%** Increase in early literacy attendance   **94%** Increase in overall program attendance   **41%** High school diploma or lower



# CHRONIC FLOODING & MILDEW

Rosedale Library | Queens | Queens Library



## FEELING SWAMPED

Rosedale Community Library has reached the end of its useful life—just as the surrounding neighborhood needs it more than ever. One of the three smallest branches in Queens, the aging library simply cannot keep up with the community's growing demands on its space and resources. In particular, the branch is plagued by its proximity to the marshlands surrounding JFK Airport, which has created a chronic flooding problem dating back to its opening in 1962. Indeed, years of water issues have caused significant damage in the basement, while the repeated flooding has left behind years of accumulated mold and mildew.



## COMMUNITY NEED

Some libraries are known to be a port in the storm during bad weather—but not Rosedale. In fact, longtime neighborhood residents such as Guy Bernard Lalanne (left) know to avoid visiting the branch after bad weather. “Sometimes after a rain, one can smell something unpleasant,” says Lalanne, referring to the strong odors that seem to emanate from the basement after a storm brings more flooding. Branch staff try their best to use disinfectants and deodorizers to mask the smell, he adds, but they can only do so much until the problem is addressed. “It’s a funky odor,” adds Matthieu Jean-Pierre, another regular patron.

**30%** Increase in program sessions

**138%** Increase in annual visits

**172%** Increase in program attendance



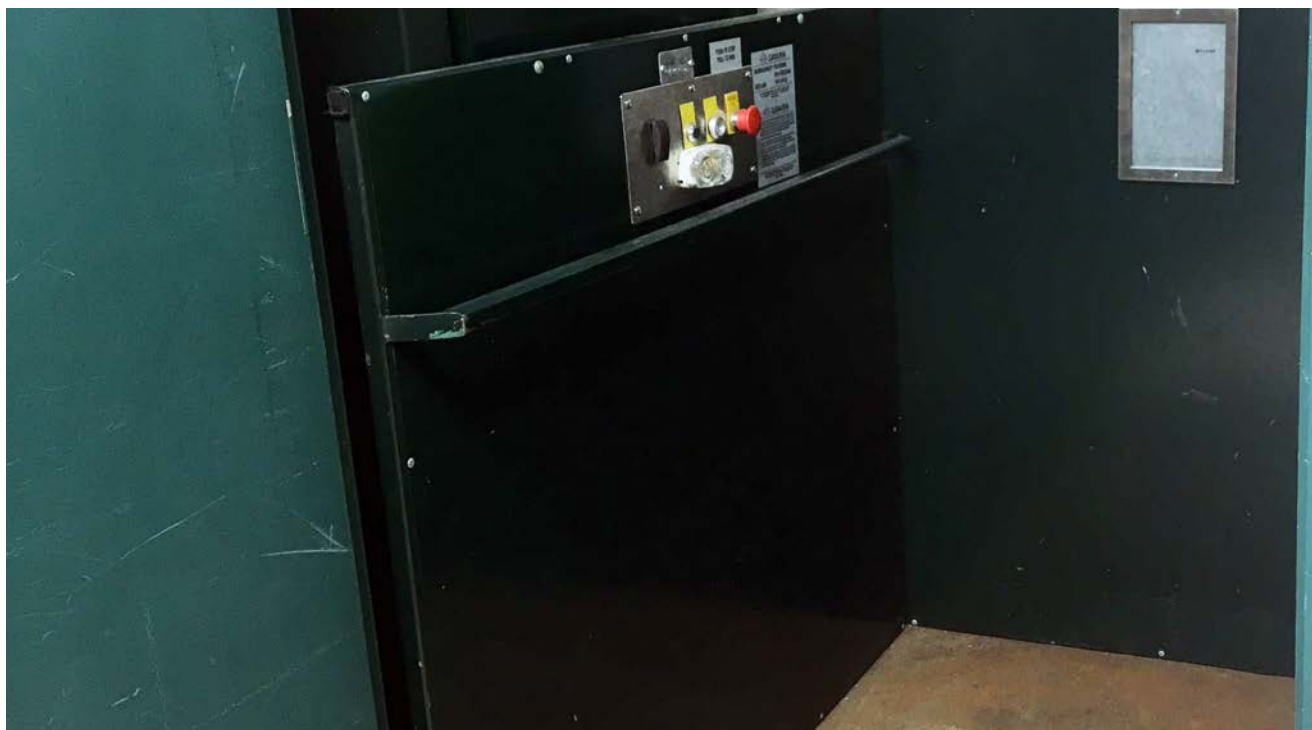
**TIME TO RENEW: SPECIAL REPORT**

**UPDATE: MAY 2017 | PAGE 9**



# INACCESSIBLE & INHOSPITABLE SPACES

Saratoga Library | Brooklyn | Brooklyn Public Library



## IN NEED OF A LIFT

From teen tech classes to job-search and resume help, Saratoga Library hosts a wide range of activities in its downstairs program and meeting spaces—for those who can get there. The branch, which opened in 1908, has no elevator, only a rickety lift. Barely big enough for two, it is prone to frequent breakdowns. The only other option for the branch's patrons—many of whom are elderly—is to descend a steep and poorly lit staircase. Among the more-than-100-year-old branch's other critical maintenance issues is a severe lack of ventilation in the first floor bathrooms, which creates an unwelcome atmosphere for people browsing nearby shelves.



## COMMUNITY NEED

Library user Claire Walsh (left) is one of countless local residents who rely on the historic Saratoga branch to borrow books and use the public computers. She is also one of many regular users who are frustrated by the branch's critical maintenance issues, including its lack of accessibility and the persistent odors emanating from the aging bathroom on the main floor. "The public restroom has no ventilation," explains Walsh. "No vents, no windows, nothing." The smell, she adds, frequently reaches across the branch to the customer service area, keeping some users from taking greater advantage of the library. "It is overbearing. If you need help or you're looking for a book, you don't want to go over there," she says.

**24%** High school diploma or lower

**38,000** Annual computer sessions

**15%** Increase in annual visits

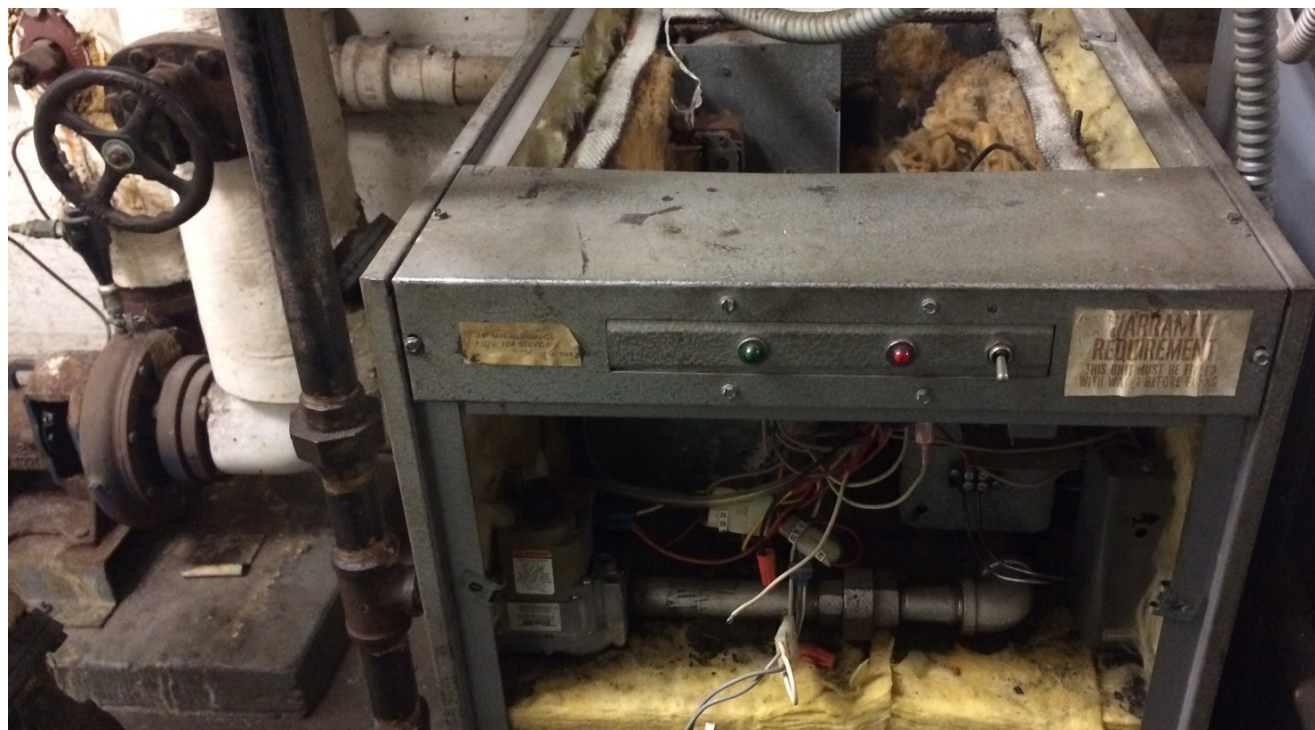


**TIME TO RENEW: SPECIAL REPORT**

**UPDATE: MAY 2017 | PAGE 10**

# INSUFFICIENT HEAT

Andrew Heiskell Library | Manhattan | The New York Public Library



## BRAVING THE COLD

Andrew Heiskell Braille and Talking Book Library is the only place in the city where vision-impaired patrons have free access to talking book machines and other assistive technology. But in the winter, the branch's malfunctioning heating system can cause the temperature inside to plunge to a bone-chilling 58 degrees. Patrons huddle around a small space heater to wait for help from staff, or else endure the cold to access the services they need. In addition to insufficient heating, other improvements must be made to ensure that Heiskell is safe for its visitors, including an accessible circulation desk and updated furniture.



## COMMUNITY NEED

The only resource of its kind in the city, patrons from across the five boroughs rely on the Braille and Talking Book Library to stay connected to the world. Several times a week, Brooklyn resident Roz McDavid (left) travels for more than an hour to reach the branch, where she attends workshops on adaptive technology and participates in a book club, despite the sometimes uncomfortable conditions. "Prior to losing my vision, I was always a bookworm," says Roz, adding that the library's resources have allowed her to continue to enjoy literature. "The technology training here has been invaluable. It has helped me with things that I didn't think I would be able to do."

**86,575** Annual visits

**434,686** Total circulation

**327** Classes and programs for all ages





# WATER DAMAGE

Great Kills Library | Staten Island | The New York Public Library



## SEEPING PROBLEMS

In the last year, the bustling Great Kills Library has seen its program attendance jump by nearly 40%—but the constant demand on its only community room creates significant issues when it rains. Deteriorated windows and walls allow water to seep into the basement room, forcing staff to scramble to find replacement space for scheduled events until the problem can be dried and patched. Beyond this, the branch struggles with mildew and water damage from the chronic damp, along with an array of other critical maintenance needs, including a failing HVAC system, non-ADA compliant bathrooms, and a damaged facade and roof.



## COMMUNITY NEED

Among the many users who rely on the basement community room at Great Kills Library is a dedicated group of knitters that meets every week to work on projects, trade tips, and socialize. Except, of course, when it rains. On those days, the group is rerouted to the upstairs children's room, disrupting children's programs and forcing the knitters to walk up a steep staircase. "It's a great inconvenience," says longtime knitter Rosalie Dimiceli (left), who values all that the branch offers but wishes the chronic leaks could be repaired once and for all. "The flooding is terrible," she adds.

**56%** Students don't meet state ELA standards

**46%** Increase in school visits

**45%** High school diploma or lower



# BROKEN ELEVATORS

Allerton Library | Bronx | The New York Public Library



## AN UPHILL BATTLE

When the aging elevator stops running at Allerton Library, it's often out of service for months at a time. This makes it challenging for patrons with limited mobility to access needed services, and for parents and caregivers with young children to reach the upstairs children's area. To manage these persistent outages, staff must help carry patrons' strollers up and down the stairs, or leave them clustered in the branch's high-use entryway. It's not just the elevator: Allerton's \$2.4 million in critical maintenance needs also include a failing HVAC system and deteriorated windows and roof.



## COMMUNITY NEED

Early literacy programs are in especially high demand at Allerton Library, where many educators and families rely on the branch's story times to help teach essential pre-reading skills. Margarita Rivera (left), who runs a nearby daycare, is one such regular. "We enjoy going. They like the playtime and the music," says Rivera, adding that when the elevator breaks, she's forced to get as many as nine kids up the stairs. "It's crazy!" Nevertheless, Rivera values how the programs encourage her students to experience new things while developing an early love of books and reading. "It's nice to introduce the kids to the library," she says.

**71%** Students don't meet state ELA standards

**36%** Household incomes below \$25,000

**52%** Speak a foreign language at home





# INADEQUATE PROGRAM SPACE

Douglaston—Little Neck Library | Queens | Queens Library



## NO ROOM TO GROW

Douglaston—Little Neck Community Library has become the heart of the Northeast Queens arts scene. It houses three permanent art galleries and two historical photo exhibits, and offers an ongoing lecture and film series about the area's Native American population. But the bustling hub for books and culture simply does not have the public space necessary to serve the rapidly expanding and changing community. Built in 1961, the branch is one of the smallest in Queens, with only a single program room that seats just 45 people. The lack of space is a constant challenge for staff who struggle to find room to meet the community's growing needs.



## COMMUNITY NEED

Longtime patron Arline Abdalian (left) leads the branch's Friends group, which seeks to enrich residents' lives through the library—but due to the branch's lack of space, the group can only do so much. “The building is too small and inadequate to support the increased use by the community,” says Abdalian, adding that Douglaston Library offers more than 400 programs a year, but could reach many more users if given the chance. “Our meeting room can legally seat only 45 people, yet our events and programs have consistently drawn standing-room-only crowds,” says Arline. “The existing building is too small.”

**5,789** Program attendees

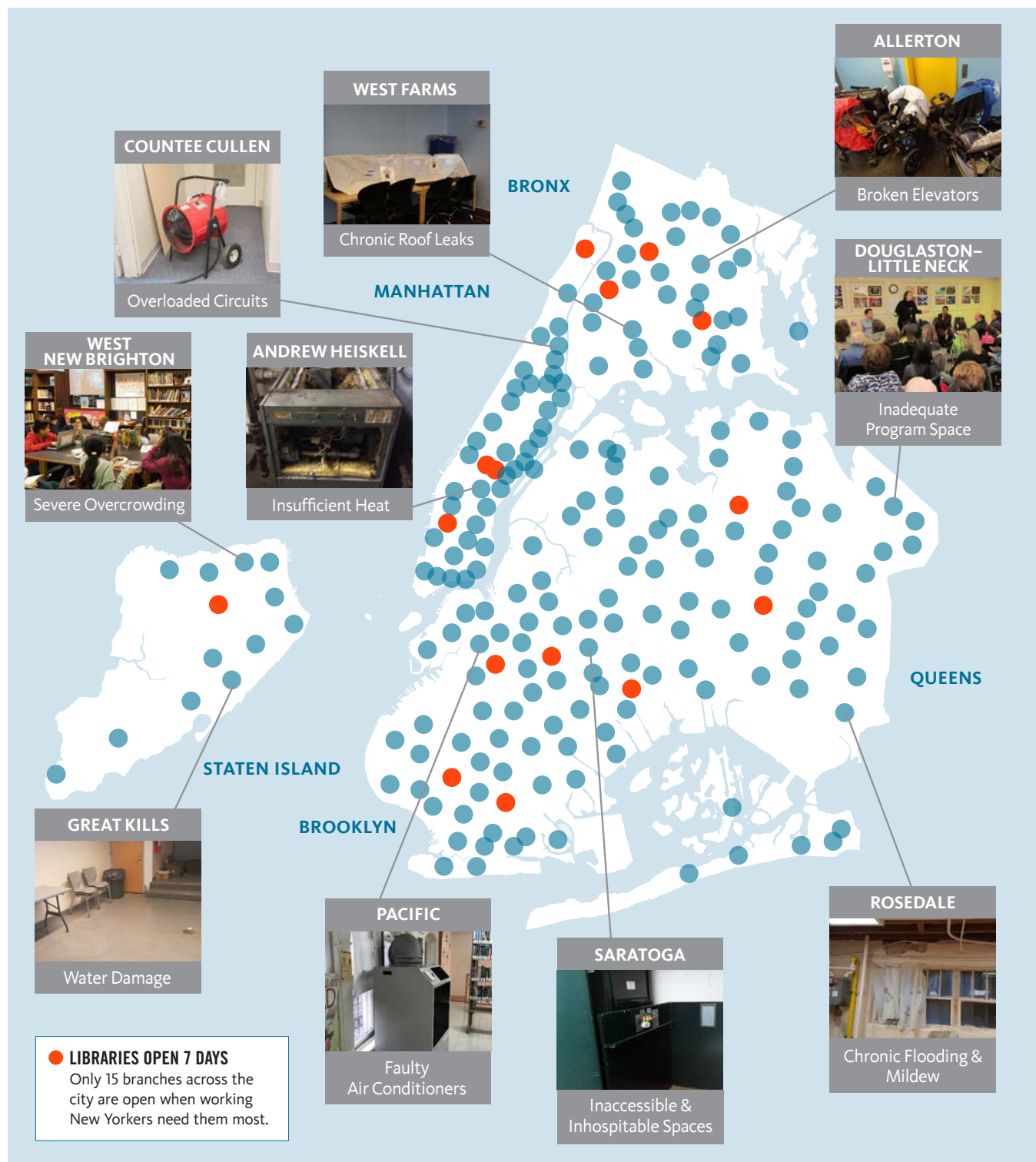
**99,538** Annual visits

**94,000** Books and other materials circulated



# INVEST IN LIBRARIES, INVEST IN ALL NEW YORKERS

As the branches highlighted in this report indicate, New York City's 216 public libraries are plagued by chronic critical maintenance needs due to years of inadequate funding. Meanwhile, only 7% of our branches are open 7 days a week. Increased investment in FY18 would allow us to fulfill our mission by providing our vital services in modern and accessible spaces—and at the times they are needed.





**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: Tom Finkelpaarl

Address: 31 Chambers St.

I represent: NYC Dept of Cultural Affairs

Address: "

*Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms*

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/19/17

**(PLEASE PRINT)**

Name: Tony Marx (President)

Address: 445 5th Ave

I represent: New York Public Library

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms*

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/19/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dennis Walcott (President)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Queens Public Library

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms*

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/19/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Linda Johnson, President

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Brooklyn Public Library

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms*