



**New York City Council
Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations
Fiscal Year 2019 Preliminary Budget Oversight Hearing
Friday, March 16, 2018 – Council Chambers, City Hall**

Testimony Presented by New York City Department of Cultural Affairs
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 2018 preliminary budget proposal for the Department of Cultural Affairs. I am joined today by a number of my staff from the agency.

First, I will review the numbers. The agency's baseline expense budget for FY2019 in the preliminary budget proposal is \$142.1 million. This includes:

- \$28.5 million for the Cultural Development Fund;
- \$106.7 million for the Cultural Institutions Group;
- \$6.9 million for agency operations and other expenses.

This is the preliminary budget proposal. These figures do not include any initiatives or other one-time additions typically added at budget adoption.

For the current fiscal year, our budget is \$186.4 million. This is DCLA's largest-ever allocation. This remarkable investment in the cultural life of our communities is thanks to our strong partnership with the City Council, led by the Speaker and Chair Van Bramer. It also reflects a real commitment to the goals of CreateNYC. I'll discuss these in more detail later in my testimony. I'd also like to highlight that my agency's operating expenses represent just 3.5% of our overall budget. This means 96.5% of funds flow directly to the cultural organizations and neighborhoods that make our city a cultural powerhouse.

Applications for the FY 2019 Cultural Development Fund were due last month. The panel review process starts next week, and will run through June. As always, we appreciate the Council's consistent support and involvement in this important process. For the current year, we are providing more than \$40 million to 900+ cultural groups across all five boroughs. Thanks to our partnership with the City Council, this is the largest-ever CDF allocation.

Turning to capital, DCLA's four-year capital budget currently allocates \$933.84 million to projects for 250 cultural groups citywide. These projects are essential to cultural organizations and audiences in all five boroughs, ensuring access to the best and most

efficient facilities and equipment. If you have entered the New York Botanical Garden through its recently opened East Gate or climbed aboard the gloriously restored tall ship Wavertree at the South Street Seaport Museum, you've encountered a City-funded DCLA capital project. Some current highlights from our portfolio include:

- Replacing outdated HVAC, boiler systems, and fire safety systems at the Dance Theatre of Harlem;
- Renovating a new administrative facility for the Louis Armstrong House Museum;
- Upgrading the south wing atrium at the Bronx Museum, including new energy-efficient windows, HVAC upgrades, and enhancements allowing for improved access and multi-use programming year-round;
- Improving the aquarium at the Staten Island Zoo, resulting in both a better visitor experience and greater energy efficiency.
- Phase three of Brooklyn Botanic Garden's South Garden Redevelopment project, which will enhance the garden's sustainable operations and improve connections to surrounding neighborhoods.

As you know, CreateNYC has influenced DCLA's priorities, programs, and budget this year. There was a cultural plan oversight hearing held by this committee in September 2017. Here's an update on a few recent announcements and markers of progress toward the goals of this far reaching plan.

- In January, we announced the winners of the **Mayor's Grant for Cultural Impact**, which provided \$500,000 for seven partnerships between City agencies and cultural organizations to fund programs benefitting underserved and vulnerable New Yorkers. These programs respond to CreateNYC recommendations to better integrate culture into City services. They include a partnership between ARTs East NY and the NYC Department of City Planning to enliven Success Garden, an underutilized community garden in East New York; and expanding the partnership between Carnegie Hall and the Department of Probation to bring the Free Verse Poetry Apprentice Project to Neighborhood Opportunity Network (NeON) centers in Northern Staten Island and Jamaica, Queens.
- DCLA launched **Public Artists in Residence** – or PAIR – in 2015 to embed artists at City agencies, where they work alongside staff and constituents. CreateNYC called for more such collaborations, and so last month we announced new artist residencies with four City agencies – the Department of Probation, Department of Correction, the NYC Commission on Human Rights, and the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence. We are excited to work alongside these four artists and agencies to bring creative practice to help solve some of our City's most difficult and pressing issues.
- Last month, we kicked off the **Building Community Capacity** program in three new neighborhoods: Morrisania in the Bronx; Far Rockaway, Queens; and Bushwick, Brooklyn. We've also started a related effort in East Harlem, building on the Arts & Culture chapter of the East Harlem Neighborhood Plan. As I've testified in the past, this program provides support to organizations in low income

communities that are engaged in broader planning and development efforts. Through funding and technical assistance, BCC helps to ensure that local cultural groups and artists are represented as neighborhoods plan their futures. The previous cohort included East New York, Mott Haven, Jamaica, and Inwood. They concluded the run of the two-year program in January.

- **Affordable Real Estate for Artists (AREA):** Mayor de Blasio first announced the City's commitment to create 500 affordable artist workspaces in his 2015 State of the City address. CreateNYC reinforced the importance of cultivating affordable workspaces for artists to maintain NYC's creative vitality. Last month, DCLA and the New York City Economic Development Corporation launched an effort to identify new nonprofit partners that are interested in developing or operating affordable artist workspace in City-led development projects. We also released a survey to broadly assess the demand for artist workspace citywide. If you want to learn more or promote these opportunities among your constituents, I'm happy to connect you with my appropriate staff.
- During cultural plan public engagement, we started the **"CreateNYC Office Hours with the Commissioner."** This series provides an opportunity for us to listen to residents about what matters to them in an open, audience-led format. To date, we've had engaging conversations on topics including DIY art spaces, arts and disability, immigrant artists, and much more. These events have shaped our understanding of so many critical issues facing residents and the cultural community in particular. They've also sparked new collaborations among participants. We promised to continue hosting these events after the plan was released. The next one will take place on March 26 at the Whitney Museum, where we'll be hosting a conversation about sexual harassment in the cultural community. Colleagues from the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence and the Commission on Human Rights will join us for this important conversation. More information is available on the DCLA Facebook page.
- Thanks in part to our partnership with Council, CreateNYC provided a big boost in funding to individual artists and small organizations in low income communities. Our largest-ever CDF allocation included \$6.5 million to support cultural plan objectives, including a \$4 million boost from the City Council to CDF funding, with a greater increase allocated for smaller organizations; \$1.5 million from the Mayor to support organizations in neighborhoods identified by the Social Impact of the Arts Project; and another \$1 million from Council for individual artists, provided through the local arts councils. We believe that culture is essential to healthy communities, so we're proud and grateful for this increased funding.

The cultural plan contains over 90 recommendations, including eight "immediate actions." Of the eight, I'm glad to say, we've achieved substantial progress on all of them, from moving ahead with creating a new position at our agency dedicated to promoting greater energy efficiency at cultural institutions, to establishing a "Culture Cabinet" of City agencies to coordinate and drive forward cultural efforts across multiple portfolios.

Another long term commitment identified in CreateNYC – and reinforced by the Mayor himself at the release of the cultural plan in July – is DCLA’s effort to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the cultural workforce. Prior to the release of the plan, we directed millions of dollars toward promoting equity and diversity in hiring. This includes support for the CUNY Cultural Corps, which provides paid internships at cultural institutions for CUNY students, and over \$2 million through the Theater Subdistrict Council to fund programs aimed at diversifying theater jobs. Theater is a discipline our 2016 survey found to have particularly tough challenges with regard to diversity, so we’ve been excited to see the TSC programs unfold and hope to report some of the outcomes in the near future.

With the release of the plan, we also committed to building an emphasis on diversity into our agency’s funding at every level. To this end, the Cultural Development Fund applications included new questions about each applicant’s efforts to hire diverse staff and reach diverse audiences. The Cultural Institutions Group, given their greater share of funding, are being required to produce full diversity plans that set benchmarks and increase accountability. These will be due next fiscal year. In the meantime we’re working with them closely to figure out how to produce plans that translate into concrete improvements toward cultivating a more inclusive cultural sector.

Another commitment in the cultural plan was to look carefully at how we could support engagement and inclusion of people with disabilities in the arts community as artists, cultural workers, and audience members. To this end we have created a new position at the agency, Disability Inclusion Associate. We are also planning an announcement about disability focused funding in the near future. There is amazing, innovative work being done by people in the disability community citywide, and we want to be part of making this more visible, better funded, and more central to the ongoing conversation about diversity, equity, and inclusion in New York City.

This year, we’ve also implemented far-reaching legislation passed by City Council and signed by the Mayor. One piece of legislation pertaining to the Percent for Art program adjusted funding formulas that hadn’t been updated since Mayor Ed Koch signed them into law in 1982. Thanks to the leadership of Chair Van Bramer and Majority Leader Cumbo, this law went into effect last month, modernizing the formula and providing more funding for individual public art commissions. As the Mayor said when he signed the legislation: “The improvement of the Percent for Art program strengthens the City’s ability to invest in public works of art and the local artists who create it.” As of today, there are already 15 Percent for Art projects in the pipeline that will benefit from the new legislation, and the first artist selection panels will take place later this year.

In January, 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. While similar issues have long been relevant here in New York, the

events connected to monuments in other cities placed a new emphasis on ensuring that our public realm is inclusive and welcoming to all. The commission was comprised of members with expertise in history, art and antiquities, public art and public space, preservation, and diversity and inclusion. A small number of City agencies with relevant roles and skills provided additional technical and policy expertise.

During the public engagement process last fall, New Yorkers spoke up in a variety of ways: nearly 200 offered verbal testimony, and an online survey received more than 3,000 responses. Broadly speaking, the commission laid out a process for evaluating City-owned monuments and markers on City property that are the subject of significant public debate. The commission also provided recommendations on four monuments in particular. The Mayor largely embraced the commission's recommendations for these four monuments. In general, the commission emphasized additive measures and public dialogue. This includes commissioning new permanent artwork honoring the histories of people not currently represented on public property – starting with Indigenous Peoples - supported by \$10 million in DCLA capital funding. The Mayor also committed to relocate the statue of J. Marion Sims from its current location on the edge of Central Park to Green-Wood Cemetery, where Sims is buried. In addition, the City will take steps to inform the public of the origin of the statue and historical context. The input from members of this Committee, the broader Council, and the general public continue to inform our approach to cultivating public spaces that are welcoming to all New Yorkers and representative of the rich histories of the city's residents.

No review of the activities of the Department of Cultural Affairs would be complete without a nod to one of our most popular programs: Materials for the Arts, which provided a fitting location for the release of CreateNYC in Chair Van Bramer's district last July. This year we are celebrating 40 years of MFTA (#MFTAturns40). In each of the last two years, we have pushed very close to the \$10 million mark in the value of materials donated to this creative reuse program. We are on our way to reaching this milestone during the current fiscal year. Along with our partners at the Department of Sanitation and the Department of Education, we are providing free materials to hundreds of organizations and public schools, creating great educational opportunities, and diverting tons of useful materials from our landfills.

We appreciated the opportunity to testify last month at your hearing on the role of cultural organizations in the current political climate. We are proud to support the transformative work our cultural community is doing and we thank you for your leadership on these issues.

I'm happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.



**NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
FISCAL YEAR 2019 PRELIMINARY BUDGET AGENCY OVERSIGHT HEARING
CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES & INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS
COMMITTEE**

Friday, March 16, 2018

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. My colleagues and I would like to extend a warm welcome to new Committee members Francisco Moya, Karen Koslowitz, and Joe Borelli. We look forward to working with each of you in the coming year. Thank you for your steadfast support of libraries. We are grateful for the opportunity to testify on behalf of our millions of patrons and to emphasize the importance of the Fiscal Year 2019 budget in our ability to successfully deliver all the programs and services we offer.

INDISPENSABLE SERVICES FOR ALL NEW YORKERS

Our public libraries have been an essential presence in every neighborhood across the city for more than a century, providing a safe and reliable space for all New Yorkers regardless of age, background, or economic means. From our youngest readers to seniors, immigrants, teens, and incarcerated individuals—the indispensable services we provide would be otherwise unattainable for many families. As wealth disparity and inequality grow across the country, we continue to serve our communities in new and innovative ways through partnerships with the City and others. There is no doubt that our public libraries are for everyone, and their services



and the role they play in bringing communities together and making our city stronger is more important than ever.

We know that you understand how vital libraries are and we thank you for your commitment in working to address the more than \$1 billion in capital needs of our three systems. Thanks to your leadership, we were included in the City's 10-Year Plan for the first time and secured a large increase in funding. The funding we received in the 10-Year Plan was instrumental in our ability to fully renovate five historic Carnegie branches in high-need neighborhoods. Without your help, Hunts Point and Melrose in the Bronx, Fort Washington and 125th Street in Manhattan, and Port Richmond on Staten Island would have continued to slowly fall into disrepair. We hope to remain part of the City's 10-Year capital planning process and to build on the progress we have made over the last two years. Our capital portfolio also includes 60 additional active projects, to which the City contributed over \$140 million in fiscal year 2018. For all this and more, we want to say thank you.

Today, I am also excited to tell you about some of our programming with the deepest impact and how we have worked hard to be an essential community partner in service delivery. Despite national downward trends, circulation of NYPL's materials increased by over 5 percent in the last fiscal year. This increase is due in large part to our early literacy programming for our youngest readers, which we rolled out in 87 branches and expanded in availability to accommodate over 747,000 attendees in fiscal year 2017— a 105% increase from the prior year. This upward trend has continued in the first six months of fiscal year 2018, as we have already seen a 27% increase in children's material circulation compared to the same time period last year. We know that developing a love of reading and literacy begins at birth, so our



programming starts with Baby Story Time for 0- to 18-month-olds. Parents and caregivers bring their little ones to enjoy story time, lively songs, and rhymes and to meet other babies in the neighborhood. All of this builds vital social and play skills and expands support systems among families. Once children begin to walk, we graduate them to Toddler Story Time where they learn to sing and move, begin to recognize letters, and develop pre-reading skills until they turn three. At pre-school age, librarians use the latest books and old favorites to introduce new vocabulary and build language and literacy skills. Through funding from the City Council's City's First Readers initiative, NYPL was able to distribute over 105,000 early literacy kits in eight different languages over the past three years. These kits create a foundation for literacy that is reinforced across a lifetime.

We also partner with the Administration for Children's Services to provide presentation space and outreach for the agency's Family Literacy Workshops, and with the Department of Education's (DOE) Pre-K and 3-K for All Initiatives. The New York Public Library provides direct services in pre-K classrooms, creates supplemental booklists for the city-wide curriculum, and serves as an important partner in the City's curriculum creation. Our DOE partnership also extends to over 500 schools through the MyLibraryNYC program. For eligible schools, this means we provide special library cards that don't accrue fines, supplemental materials for teachers, electronic resources, and professional development. In the last fiscal year, we circulated over 9,000 specially curated, high-interest book sets directly to teachers at their schools, while library branches lent over 1.5 million items to educators and students with MyLibraryNYC cards.



Literacy begins in childhood, but is a lifelong endeavor, as we've witnessed by the 500 percent spike in enrollment of our English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes over the last five years. Whether newly arrived or living here for many years, our communities' immigrants crave more opportunities to learn and improve their ability to read and communicate in English. As the third largest free provider in the city, we offer two types of classes at 41 branches in a documentation-free zone each year. Our ESOL classes are for non-native speakers to improve listening, speaking, reading, and writing and our Adult Basic Education classes are for students who already speak some English but want to improve their reading and writing. In March 2017, we expanded our services and launched ESOL classes at two Rikers Island correctional facility locations, for adolescent men and adult women. This is key to reducing recidivism and workforce training after release. Beyond classes and programming, each of our branches maintains collections in languages that serve their particular community's needs. These materials include books, newspapers, magazines, and other media. For example, at Bronx Library Center, materials are now available in Arabic, Chinese, Bengali, Turkish, and French to name a few, reflecting the ever-changing population of the community.

In addition to the ESOL classes, we have partnered with the Department of Corrections to provide library services to our incarcerated patrons. In 2016, we opened the first dedicated library space at the Rose M. Singer facility at Rikers Island, with plans to open a second dedicated library space at the Manhattan Detention Complex this spring. Due to the support given by the Council to NYPL and our colleagues at Brooklyn and Queens, we were able to expand video visitation services to two new Bronx locations where demand was highest. In fiscal year 2017, we supplemented in-person visits by bridging the family divide with technology for 879 individuals in 22 branches. Council Member Cumbo's district is one of the most frequent



users of the program, as well as those of Council Members Salamanca and Ayala. Children under the age of 12 accompany a caregiver or parent nearly 40 percent of all visits, allowing for special reading and play time for families while they are most in need. None of this would be possible without the Council's support and leadership, and for that we say thank you.

MAINTAIN SIX-DAY SERVICE FOR ALL COMMUNITIES

Early literacy, ESOL classes, and video visitation represent only a glimpse into our more than 20 agency partnerships and countless department collaborations each year. Currently, NYPL offers seven-day service at seven branches and the Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, and six-day service at our 88 branches across the Bronx, Manhattan, and Staten Island. This is impossible without sustainable funding. The cost of materials, staff, and operating expenses for non-eligible capital projects has risen substantially in the three years since we received an increase in funding. Continual increases in these areas could result in the possible loss of these vital programs for our most vulnerable patrons and communities. This is why we are asking today for the support to maintain six-day service at all of our branches. With an additional \$16 million investment for the three library systems, we would be able to continue to provide the same level of service we delivered during the nearly 37 million collective visits last fiscal year.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

In addition to ensuring our hours and services are maintained at current levels, we must continue to invest in the physical infrastructure of our branches. Time and again, we have seen the return on your investment in our branches' circulation, program attendance, and visits, and for that we thank you. Following our Stapleton branch renovation on Staten Island, we saw a 177 percent spike in program attendance, a 33 percent increase in visits, and a 51 percent



increase in circulation. And after our Washington Heights Library was renovated, we saw a 105 percent increase in program attendance, a 47 percent improvement in visits, and a 45 percent increase in circulation. Having witnessed the impact of newly renovated, welcoming spaces, we aspire to provide this for all communities we serve. This can only be achieved with continuous funding provided by sustained inclusion in the 10-Year Capital plan.

As a first step towards sustainable funding, the \$60 million capital ask for our three library systems would allow NYPL to continue our critical maintenance work including mechanical systems and energy conservation improvements, preservation work, and—most importantly—ADA compliance. At NYPL, the average age of our libraries is 67 years old, with many branches dating back more than 100 years. All branches should be accessible to all New Yorkers all the time, yet without these upgrades, access will continue to present an insurmountable challenge for some of our buildings and patrons.

CONCLUSION

At The New York Public Library, we understand how closely access, education, and opportunity are woven together throughout our patrons' lives. We seek to enrich all New Yorkers' lives at every age and in every life stage, and to eliminate the barriers between our communities and the information and opportunities they seek. We do this because we truly believe that libraries are for everyone. 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. 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 ARE FOR EVERYONE

FY19 PRELIMINARY BUDGET HEARING

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



New York
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Library

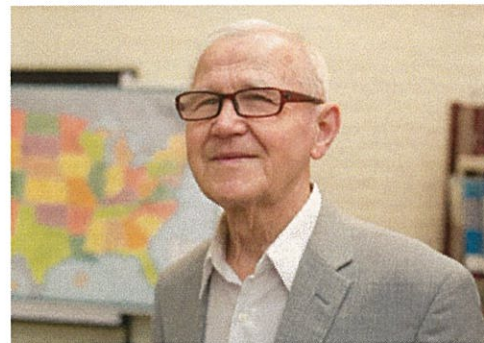
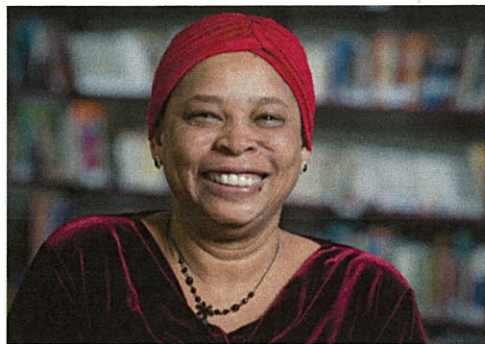


Queens Library

#INVESTINLIBRARIES

INVEST IN LIBRARIES

Libraries Are for Everyone



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LIBRARIES ARE FOR EVERYONE



New York
Public
Library



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NYC's 3 Library Systems: FY19 Needs

OPERATING

\$16 MILLION IN FY19

- Brooklyn Public Library: \$4.5M
- The New York Public Library: \$7M
- Queens Library: \$4.5M

CAPITAL

\$60 MILLION IN FY19

For Critical Needs

- Brooklyn Public Library: \$20M
- The New York Public Library: \$20M
- Queens Library: \$20M

BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY
FY19 Operating Needs



OPERATING
\$4.5 MILLION IN FY19

BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Immigrant Services



- Free culturally & linguistically appropriate legal services
- **14** branches offering citizenship classes
- **18,200** participants in English-language conversation groups at 2,500 sessions
- Story times for children in **12** languages

Citizenship Class,
Brooklyn Public Library

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BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Technology



- **14** branches participated in our 8-week robotics league
- Expanded to all **59** branches in February 2018
- **24** branches participated in competitive virtual bowling league “Library Lanes”

Brooklyn Robotics League,
Brooklyn Public Library

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BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Teen Programs



- **5,500+** programs for teens in 2017, with 74,000+ attendees
- **16** teen-focused programs launched by *Bklyn Incubator*

Bookmatch Teen,
Brooklyn Public Library

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BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY
FY19 Capital Needs



CAPITAL

\$20 MILLION IN FY19

For Critical Maintenance

BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Critical Maintenance



Pacific Library



Saratoga Library

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FY19 Operating Needs



OPERATING

\$4.5 MILLION IN FY19

QUEENS LIBRARY

Immigrant Services



- Nearly **4,000** students participated in ESOL classes
- **4,018** patrons attended premier coping skills workshops
- **6,983** patrons attended 66 cultural arts programs

Corona Community Library,
Queens Library

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Bklyn
Public Library



New York
Public
Library

 **Queens Library**

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QUEENS LIBRARY

Workforce Development



- **25,000** attendees received 41,000 hours of training & 1-on-1 assistance
- Nearly **700** tech training classes
- **700** job search workshops
- **175** small business & entrepreneurship workshops
- **80+** job skills training workshops

Far Rockaway Community Library,
Queens Library

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Public Library



New York
Public
Library

 **Queens Library**

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QUEENS LIBRARY

Adult & Older Adult Programs



- **219** ABE classes served 1,282 students
- **168** pre-HSE classes served 484 students
- Mail-a-Book delivered **50,152** items to 5,552 homebound individuals

Flushing Community Library,
Queens Library

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Public Library



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 **Queens Library**

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FY19 Capital Needs



CAPITAL

\$20 MILLION IN FY19

For Critical Maintenance

- Roof replacements
- Heat, ventilation & AC replacements

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

FY19 Operating Needs



New York
Public
Library

OPERATING

\$7 MILLION IN FY19

- Total Branches: \$5.9M
- Total Research: \$1.1M



THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Early Literacy



- **747,000** attendees in FY17
- **105,000** early literacy kits over 3 years
- **582%** increase in circulation of special children's materials since 2016

Hamilton Grange Library,
The New York Public Library

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Public Library



New York
Public
Library

 **Queens Library**

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THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

English for Speakers of Other Languages



- **500%** increase in enrollment since 2013
- **3rd** largest provider in the city
- **41** branches

St. Agnes Library,
The New York Public Library

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New York
Public
Library



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THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Incarcerated & Formerly Incarcerated Individuals



- **1st** dedicated library on Rikers Island
- **30,000** books & magazines circulated yearly
- **234** families served by video visitation
- **13,000** copies of *Connections* distributed

Rikers Island,
The New York Public Library

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Library

 **Queens Library**

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THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

FY19 Capital Needs



New York
Public
Library

CAPITAL

\$20 MILLION IN FY19

For Critical Maintenance

- Mechanical system & energy conservation upgrades
- Building envelope & facility preservation work
- ADA improvements
- Information technology infrastructure



THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

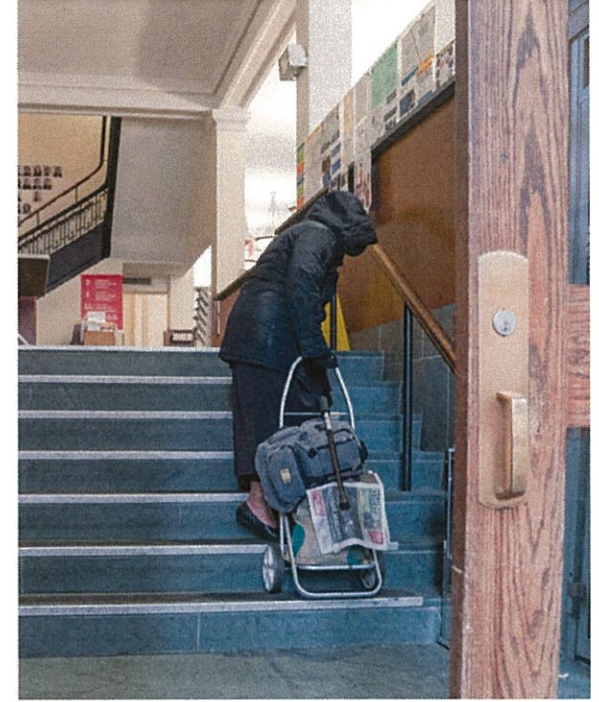
Critical Maintenance



St. George Library Center, Staten Island



Tremont Library, Bronx



Columbus Library, Manhattan

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New York
Public
Library



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NYC's 3 Library Systems: FY19 Needs

OPERATING

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- The New York Public Library: \$7M
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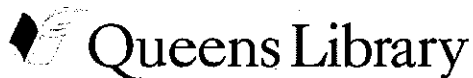
CAPITAL

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For Critical Needs

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

**New York City Council
Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations
Fiscal Year 2019 Preliminary Budget Hearing**

March 16, 2018

Good morning. My name is Dennis Walcott, President and CEO of Queens Library. It is a pleasure to be here. Thank you, Chair Van Bramer, for the opportunity to speak with you and your colleagues about our budget priorities for the next fiscal year.

The Queens Public Library system consists of 65 locations across the borough, including a stand-alone teen center in Far Rockaway, a Universal Pre-K program at the Ravenswood public housing complex, and a technology center at Queensbridge Houses. Our libraries have never been more important to our borough or our City than they are today.

Public libraries play a critical role in a free democratic society, providing opportunities for growth and empowerment to all at no cost. The public depends on us for programs, services and access to reliable and unfiltered information that improve the quality of their daily 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.

Fiscal Year 2017 was another extremely busy and productive year for us as one of the largest public library systems in the nation. We welcomed 11.2 million customers and saw substantial increases in visitors at several of our locations. For example, the Court Square community library had a 17% increase in visitors, the Lefrak and Bellerose community libraries each had a 14% increase and the Peninsula community library had a 13% increase.

More than 1.4 million customers participated in a Queens Library program during Fiscal Year 2017. This number represents an all-time high for our system, surpassing last year's record high by 27%.

The Library circulated more than 12.7 million books, DVDs, magazines and other materials, and three million people used our computers to access the internet. Queens Library alone maintains a collection that consists of print and digital materials in 223 languages and our total circulation of materials in languages other than English last year was 1.3 million. While our numbers are impressive, they are vulnerable to stagnation or decline unless we keep pace with the ever-changing learning needs of the most heterogeneous city in the world.

For example, in a recent survey of Queens Library customers as part of the process for developing our strategic plan, we heard repeated calls for additional investment in the number and variety of print and electronic books, job skills and training programs for immigrants and resources to provide meaningful learning experiences for teens.

Queens Library provides classes, workshops and services in the languages spoken by the borough's immigrant communities, which assist new immigrants in adapting to life in America and offers programs that celebrate the cultures of the diverse ethnic groups in Queens.

Last year we offered 126 English for Speakers of Other Languages classes at 36 sites across our system to nearly 4,000 individuals, with 7,100 sessions and attendance of nearly 90,000. We presented citizenship classes, citizenship application assistance and confidential financial counseling to 2,000 people.

Queens Library has long been the primary destination for immigrant New Yorkers. With the establishment of the New Americans Program in 1977, we became the first public library in the nation to provide comprehensive programs and services to newcomers. The goal was to help them adjust to their new home and keep them connected to what they left behind by building a multilingual collection and creating relevant programming, such as coping skills workshops, native-language coding classes, and cultural events.

To keep pace with the ever-changing communities of Queens, members of our staff scan federal and local demographic data to pinpoint where the borough's newcomers live and where they are from. This information is enhanced by what our community librarians see on the ground. They reach out to their communities to understand who is living in the diverse neighborhoods of Queens and look out for telling details, like new restaurants and newspapers in languages other than English on the newsstands.

Through the New Americans Program, we presented coping skills workshops to more than 4,000 people in Spanish, Mandarin, Bengali, Korean and Russian, the five most spoken languages in Queens aside from English. Professionals including lawyers, social workers, doctors, and business experts guide them through immigration law, citizenship, housing, worker's rights, starting a business, finding a job, parenting and health.

The program works in close partnership with organizations such as United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, the Queens Borough President's Immigration Task Force, Women for Afghan Women, the New York Tibetan Services Center and many others.

It helps people and gets real results for them. People like Robert Melbourne, a recent immigrant from Jamaica. Seeking to improve his reading skills, last July Robert enrolled in literacy classes and went from a 2nd grade reading level to a 5th grade reading level with less than 20 weeks of instruction. He also sought employment opportunities. The Library helped him create a resume and referred him to another of our signature initiatives: The Job & Business Academy (JBA). Through its services, Robert received security guard training and certification, recently obtained his Employment Authorization and a NYS driver's license and was hired by a major shipping company.

The Job & Business Academy provides specialized training and learning opportunities, with an emphasis on technology training, to job seekers, aspiring entrepreneurs, and business owners. In FY 2017, JBA staff served 25,422 customers with 41,366 hours of training and individual assistance. In total, JBA offered nearly 700 technology training classes, 700 job search workshops, 175 entrepreneurship and small business workshops and 84 job skills training workshops.

JBA prepares Queens residents to thrive in the modern workforce. Individuals seeking to access JBA services get started by using Job Map, an innovative online job skills assessment tool developed by Queens Library. Based on assessments and one-on-one interviews with JBA staff, customers are enrolled in structured job search classes, workshops and technology training classes.

JBA also runs a free incubator for aspiring food entrepreneurs in conjunction with the New York City Economic Development Corporation called, "Jamaica FEASTS" (Food Entrepreneurship and Services Training Space). The program was created to provide resources to those who are looking to start and run their own food business in Queens. Those who participate in this program learn the fundamentals of getting a start in food business with hands-on workshops, access to a commercial kitchen, and a one-on-one session with industry experts.

The program is the only one of its kind in Queens. Workshops cover a range of topics, including: financial planning, marketing, and food industry best practices. It is ideal for neighborhood cooks seeking to expand their experience, new Americans looking to start a business and recent culinary school graduates who want to learn the business side of the food world.

The program has achieved some amazing outcomes for its participants, like a woman named Tress Walker, founder of "Mum's Kitchen," in Jamaica, which sells West Indian cuisine and baked goods. Her vision was to create a space where "mums" like her from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds could cook together and sell their goods. Through the program, she gained all of the legal, financial and logistical

knowledge needed to build her business. Next month, “Mum’s” will be debuting next month at the night market in Flushing Meadows Park.

Our Adult Learner Program (ALP) provides services, resources, and lifelong learning opportunities to the changing communities of Queens. We operate seven Adult Learning Centers with full-time professional staff and volunteers who tutor literacy groups and facilitate ESOL conversation groups. Centers also offer Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes, video groups, writing groups, technology-assisted instruction, and ongoing tutor training provided by professional staff. In Fiscal Year 2017, we administered over 200 ABE classes serving nearly 1,300 students. For our Pre-High School Equivalency courses, we administered 168 classes serving nearly 500 students.

For our older adults, Queens Library offers a wealth of free programs and resources that include:

- Book-discussion groups
- Intergenerational Creative Arts programs
- Live performances and readings
- Talks and panel discussions
- Film screenings
- Drama clubs, chess clubs and arts and crafts workshops
- Our Stay Well Exercise Program, which introduces adults age 60 and older to special exercises, relaxation techniques and principles of good nutrition
- Computer Training Courses, where we offer a range of classes appropriate for older learners, including beginning classes on using computers, the Internet, email, Microsoft programs, Google, Facebook and other technologies and social media
- Our Mail-A-Book Program, which offers homebound individuals free delivery of library materials right to their door.

Materials include books in large print, audio books, e-books, e-readers, movies and games. Mail-A-Book also offers lectures, classes, book discussions, music and theater, debates and chats by teleconference, video and live stream. In FY 2017, we delivered over 50,000 items to over 5,500 homebound individuals.

Over 250 families have participated in our Video Visitation program, which allows incarcerated individuals to remain connected to their children and loved ones.

We launched our “Queens Library is for Everyone” campaign this past fiscal year, making clear that we serve and welcome all no matter their background or circumstances. Through two, 31-hour overnight events – one at our Corona community library in June 2017 and another at the Peninsula community library in August 2017 – we opened our doors to all with educational workshops and programs, a pop-up library on the Rockaway Beach boardwalk, music and film programs after midnight, sunrise yoga, and regular library services around the clock for those who might not otherwise be able to access them. The participation and feedback from the public were tremendous.

The extensive amount of resources Queens Library provides to our customers is crucial and allows individuals to be the best version of them. When a customer enters our doors, they know we are ready and able to help, whether it is through offering an ESOL class, a Home Health Aid course, to simply find a newly published book or to learn how to create an email account. **In order to continue to provide free and high quality materials, programs and services, we are requesting \$4.5 million in Operational funding in Fiscal Year 2019.** This funding will allow us to; increase our collections and materials; continue to offer our expanded programs and services six-days a week; and to address emergency capital repairs to our libraries.

We had two major re-openings in the past 15 months at the Elmhurst (Dec. 2016) and Kew Gardens Hills (Sept. 2017) community libraries. We are looking forward to breaking ground on the new Far Rockaway community library this year, and to opening the Hunters Point community library early in 2019.

We will soon be opening a Central Operations Center in Jamaica, which will house custodial and maintenance staff and supplies. This will free up approximately 10,000 square feet in various community libraries that had

been used for such purpose, but will now be used for valuable programs and services for our customers. Additionally, we plan on increasing our Internet bandwidth by three times the current capacity, which will improve the speed of customer-accessed computers in our libraries and significantly improve Wi-Fi performance for customers' devices.

We are proud of all we have accomplished this year in partnership with each of you, and we are optimistic about the work ahead. We recently completed a comprehensive strategic planning process through which we engaged people across the borough, library and non-library users alike. Informed by thoughtful and impassioned feedback, focus groups, strategy sessions, and an analysis of demographic data and trends, our blueprint for the next five years positions Queens Library to secure the promise of people's lives and strengthen this incredibly diverse borough. I am happy to report that, thanks to each of you, your colleagues in the City Council and Mayor Bill de Blasio, we have significant capital projects planned throughout the borough. Here are several examples:

- We have interior renovation projects planned for our Richmond Hill, Steinway, Bay Terrace and Glendale community libraries.
- We have security system upgrades scheduled for our Broadway, Court Square, Ridgewood, Middle Village, North Hills, and Lefferts community libraries.
- We have an expansion project in progress at the East Elmhurst community library, and expansion and renovation projects have been funded for our Briarwood, Rosedale, Laurelton, Corona, Douglaston and Jackson Heights community libraries.
- We have roofing, accessibility and critical infrastructure projects set for our Seaside, Broad Channel, South Jamaica, Astoria and Flushing community libraries.
- And, as announced this past summer, a brand new library will be built at Rego Park.

While we have enjoyed great support over the last few years, it is important for everyone to understand that we still have unmet needs.

Maintaining our 65 locations and aging infrastructure is a short- and long-term challenge for us. The average community library is 61 years old. More than a third of our buildings are over 50 years old. They are heavily used, and most were not constructed to accommodate the traffic that we experience on a daily basis due to the growth in demand for our services. The Library has identified a capital need of nearly \$173 million over the next 10 years to modernize all of our facilities and bring them into a state of good repair, with a \$46 million need in Fiscal Year 2019. **Therefore, we are requesting \$20 million in unrestricted Capital funding to address the challenges we are facing.**

Queens Library transforms lives by cultivating intellectual and personal growth. As the center of community life, we build strong neighborhoods through the multitude of free 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 continue to address our operating and capital needs.

Chair Van Bramer, thank you, and all the Members of the Committee, for the opportunity to testify today.

BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY
PRELIMINARY BUDGET HEARING
Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries & International Intergroup Relations
March 16, 2018

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.

We appreciate all you have done to ensure our libraries remain welcoming institutions, open to everyone nearly every day. We rely on your commitment to our libraries, so we can help the many communities who depend on us. Your support has helped reverse years of underfunding— but our job is far from done.

As well, thank you to all the library workers who came to city hall today, including our partners at DC37, and Brooklyn's local 1482. I'm certain you will appreciate their eloquent testimony. It is due in large part to our staff that libraries can be counted on as a safe, welcoming space for all. This aspect of our mission has never been more important. We know that you and the City Council share this core value.

Our doors are open wide to accommodate everyone; from the new American practicing English at a conversation group in Bay Ridge, to the senior bowling with a virtual league in Bed-Stuy—from the toddler enjoying Saturday Storytime, to the parent on Riker's Island reading to his child via teleconference to Coney Island Library. There is no question that public libraries are truly here for everyone.

We need the city's increased support to fulfill this mission. Today we submit our FY19 Tri-Library budget request—an increase of \$16 million in operating funds to be split among the three library systems, coupled with an increase of \$20 million in capital dollars for each system.

For Brooklyn Public Library, the \$4.5 million we are requesting an increase in expense dollars to provide the exceptional library service our patrons deserve. It is imperative that we maintain our physical spaces. We need funds to cover repairs and upkeep that are not capitally eligible, and to invest in highly trained staff and up-to-date materials and collections. The cost of providing six-day service has increased, and it is all the more challenging to remain nimble and responsive to the changing needs of our patrons.

Just last month for example, our Immigrant Services team hosted its first Legal Clinic to help patrons renew Haitian Temporary Protective Status (TPS), a benefit that the Trump Administration has recently terminated. Every day, families who are facing uncertainty about immigration status in the United States turn to the library for free legal services and reliable information. In many cases, the library is the only institution they trust.

You can also see what a difference six-day service has made by visiting one of our standing room only Storytime programs. We offer them every week, in every library—and in multiple languages as often as possible. Cortelyou Library for example, provides Storytime in English, Spanish, Urdu and Russian *every single week*, and they are seeking

ways to add Nepali to their repertoire. To sustain this incredible work, we must continue to support our staff and ensure our materials and collections budget, particularly in world languages, are increased to a level commensurate with expanded service. In a borough of 2.6 million, we should be spending at least \$10 million on our collections, but we are not there yet.

Brooklyn Public Library finds new and inventive ways to engage communities that might otherwise be isolated or overlooked. Our Services for Older Adults launched Senior Debate last week, which gathers Seniors in the library for lively discussions about pressing issues with their peers, while learning and practicing the art of debate. Earlier, I mentioned BPL's popular virtual bowling league for senior patrons, Library Lanes. An incredibly popular program, it has 24 teams around the borough who compete virtually for the league trophy—while making friends and becoming technologically adept.

Technology at the library is a lifeline for all our patrons, but children and teens in particular appreciate BPL's new technology resources. Last year, BPL launched its first ever Brooklyn Robotics League. Young adults throughout the borough were invited to join one of a dozen teams to learn the value of teamwork and problem-solving while building, coding and programming robots. At the end of the eight week program, we held a competition and judged their creations. This teen tech STEM program is in such high demand we expanded the league to all our branches just last month.

Our focus on teen engagement has grown stronger thanks to the library's *Bklyn Incubator*, a process that supports innovative programming by providing mentorship and resources to library staff with creative new ideas. Bookmatch Teen, for example, is based on the premise that teen library services are most successful when they are spearheaded by the teens themselves. This series involves training participants in readers' advisory group skills, including interviewing, writing book reviews, and curating book lists. The popular Remix Academy is a six-week DJ and music production workshop for Bed-Stuy teens, culminating in a final product presented in a teen showcase. Likewise, Brownsville Excerpts: Teen Podcasting is a 10 week instructor-led program in partnership with the Brownsville Community Justice Center, which builds broadcasting skills for young adults who record and edit their own podcasts about life in Brownsville.

In these and so many other ways, BPL has strengthened our commitment to community engagement, which is at the center of our recently completed Strategic Plan. We are determined to be responsive to the different needs of the neighborhoods our libraries serve, and will continue to prioritize community input for all major capital projects over the next several years.

Indeed a cornerstone of our Strategic Plan is to provide inclusive and inspirational places. Providing a welcoming environment to our patrons is vital, but so many of our libraries are plagued by maintenance issues, equipment failures, and drab, uninspiring interiors. We spend upwards of one million dollars of our operating funds every year on infrastructure upkeep that is not capital eligible: maintaining old boilers, replacing dilapidated furniture, and funding temporary heating and cooling solutions while we wait for a capital project to replace non-working systems. These costly needs compete for our treasured operating dollars, and ultimately steal funds from our critical programming

needs. We are forced to spend limited operating dollars treating the symptoms of our capital crisis.

Just a few years ago, BPL carried \$300 million in unfunded capital needs for the 59 libraries in our system. With the help of the City and our Brooklyn Councilmembers, the state, and creative capital projects partnerships, we have reduced the need to \$240 million. You have helped BPL enter its most significant era of rebuilding in recent memory. Over the next five years, one third of BPL's system will have been rebuilt or renovated.

While we are turning the ship in the right direction, the bad news is we still have \$240 million in unmet capital needs system-wide. Approximately one-third of those needs are emergency infrastructure projects like boilers, HVACs, roofs, and security upgrades. We are facing a deferred maintenance crisis that still impacts many neighborhoods in the borough.

We are not alone in this crisis. Together, our three library systems are requesting a total of \$60 million in funding this year, \$20 million for each system. For BPL, this funding will address our most critical capital needs, including failing infrastructure and equipment that has long exceeded its useful life.

While we have begun to make progress for libraries, our overall funding level continually forces us to 'triage' only the most serious projects and leave countless critical infrastructure needs and preventative work unaddressed. We spend much of our time and resources responding to emergencies. The lack of a reliable source of recurring funding also makes it impossible for us to manage capital projects efficiently.

That is why the undercurrent of this year's request for \$20 million each in capital—the request that we implore you to remember after this budget is finalized—is to push for library inclusion in next year's ten-year plan. At our present level of funding, we cannot perform necessary preventative maintenance, we cannot ensure that projects that encounter a shortfall can continue to move forward, and we cannot manage our program—largely city owned buildings—in the most holistic and efficient way possible.

New York City's libraries are and always will be for everyone. We are a haven for immigrants; a provider of hope to the unemployed; a source of endless wonder for children; a place of discovery and learning for whoever has the inclination to walk through our doors.

There has never been a better time for the city to stand with us and proclaim ***everyone is welcome here.***

Help us fulfill our mission by supporting libraries and the people who need us most.

Thank you.



Good afternoon. I would like to thank the Cultural Affairs and Library Committee for the opportunity to testify. My name is LaMeane Isaac and I am the branch Manager for Macon Library in Bedford Stuyvesant Brooklyn. I am also a resident of Brownsville Brooklyn that is just a few minutes away from my work location.

Nearly 18 years ago, I was a recent college graduate and unemployed. My job search led me to my local public library. The same library I used as a child and young adult and had worked part-time while in high school. I knew that the library had resources that would help me find work. To my surprise, the branch librarian who I had a great rapport suggested that I apply for to work for Brooklyn Public Library as a library associate. I did just that and I'm sure you know how that turned out...

The library has had a tremendous impact on my live just has it has on the lives of its many users. Every day, people visit libraries all over New York City in search of jobs, books, computer access, story times and more and library staff is there to help them. Committee, I thank you for your support of libraries which makes our ability to help library users possible. With your support, Macon Library is able to open its doors 53 hours and 7 days per week. During that time, we are able to conduct programs to help meet the needs of our patrons at almost every stage of their lives with programs such as; Library Lanes for Older Adults, 5 programs a week for children birth to 5, Kid & Teen Tech Time & Lego Robotics, Computer and Career help classes, Artists in Residence, Genealogy workshops, Hosting local writers and film-makers and many more

We are able to collaborate with individuals, groups and organizations to increase our reach in the community we serve. For instance, the Divas for Social Justice has a STEAM program geared to middle school children. Or, our partnership with Shop Healthy Brooklyn which have brought together several other organization to conduct workshops that teach residents how to eat well and advocate for healthy foods in their committees.

The library is not only a place where individuals, groups and individuals are able to meet using meeting room spaces, or where children come afterschool or people who attend programs. The library is also place for some of New York City most vulnerable... It's a cool place in the summer and a warm place in the winter. With increased staff and hours of service the library is able to support others in their communities.

We are fortunate at Macon Library, to have so many public service hours and to be able to do so much but there is more work to be done at our libraries and other libraries throughout the city. With your continued and increased support, library staff will be able to increase their reach in the communities they serve and the library will continue to be a place of life-long learning, opportunity and discovery.

Thank you!



First and foremost, I'd like to thank the Cultural Affairs and Library Committees for giving me the opportunity to testify this afternoon. My name is Eke Williams. I am a Technology Training Supervisor at Brooklyn Public Library. I have been with the library for over 12 years. In the past four years, I've been working out of the New Lots library in East New York. East New York is a community which has been faced with many adversities; some of them including the addition of numerous homeless shelters; continuous socio-economic issues that continue to plague individuals and their families. In addition, the neighborhood continues to be burdened by crimes that occur as a result of the aforementioned issues.

In communities like East New York, the library plays a pivotal role in the livelihood of its residents. According to the Social Research Council, East New York, Brooklyn has the second highest rate of Youth Disconnect, meaning a large number of Youth who are not enrolled in School or employed. As a library professional, I had the opportunity to address this issue when I piloted a new program, Documentary Photography Bootcamp. My team and I were able to teach new skills, provide a caring, nurturing and positive environment for Youth in East New York.

The goal of the program is to provide teens with professional photography skills and serve as a safe and constructive alternative to hanging out on the streets. The program's success gained national attention just this month, when we won the 2018 Innovative Librarians Award from Georgia's Gwinnett County Public Library System. Through this library based program, we were able to address a big issue which continues to be a problem in East New York.

I would like to thank our elected officials for their continued support in our communities. The generous digital inclusion grant of laptops from Councilmember Barron for her New Lots, East Flatbush and Cypress Hills, and Spring Creek Libraries are greatly appreciated and continue to bridge the gap by providing accessible technology education to underserved residents free of cost.

Although libraries are continuing to serve their populations in new and innovative ways, we cannot do it alone. We NEED YOUR SUPPORT! Please provide us with funding to maintain our six-day service and continue to provide groundbreaking programs that touch the lives of our youth and their families.

THANK YOU



Y. Orengo's Testimony for the New York City Council Preliminary Budget Hearing at City Hall 3/16/18

Good afternoon members of the Cultural Affairs, and Library Committees. I would like to begin by thanking you all for allowing me the opportunity to speak before you today. My name is Yosenex Orengo and I am the Young Adult Librarian at Brooklyn Public Library's Stone Avenue Branch in Brownsville, which is also the area I reside in. In two months, I will be celebrating my one year anniversary with BPL. As a YA librarian, I provide programs and services primarily to teens. Some of my programs include Japanese language instruction, STEM activities such as game design and robotics, and recreational programs such as board games and video games.

Growing up in Brownsville myself and sharing similar interests in technology, and all things Japanese with the teens who reside in our community, has allowed me to make our branch a desirable place to be for our youth.

The library is an important pillar of our community, especially in an area like Brownsville, which has many low-income households. It provides a safe environment for individuals of all ages and backgrounds to take part in. We help bridge the digital divide in our community by providing access to desktop computers, laptops, tablets, gaming consoles, and of course wi-fi.

Our library provides many services beyond books and library cards. We actively are involved in recreational programs for adults with special needs, provide computer lessons for seniors, and are a go to place for individuals seeking employment, housing, and TASC resources. On a weekly basis, I assist several individuals of all ages with steps towards earning a high school equivalency diploma. It has become my favorite question to answer since it gives individuals hope to broaden their career options, and they often leave with a smile as a result.

I would like to personally thank you all for the support that libraries have received from you. It really goes a long way towards serving the community. I would like to request that you continue to provide financial support to all three systems in New York City to better serve our dense population. Additionally, I would like for this financial support to be increased further for the upcoming fiscal year so that our resources can continue to remain up to date in our ever evolving society.

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

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

March 16, 2018

John F. Calvelli, Executive Vice President, Public Affairs – Wildlife Conservation Society

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 Co-Chair of New Yorkers For Culture and Arts. I am here today to provide testimony on behalf of the CIGs – 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 of the City. 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.

I also want to acknowledge our non-CIG colleagues, with whom we have worked alongside several years to increase our resources for culture and the arts. Our joint advocacy is not merely strategic; it is borne out of holistic, longstanding, and growing relationships shared between and among CIGs, program groups, and the constituents we serve. Our program group colleagues—such as Chocolate Factory Theater, who joins me today—help us achieve the goals laid out in the City's Cultural Plan. As City supported organizations, we appreciate the investment that has gone into the Cultural Plan because it has cemented the reasons as to why we exist and affirmed the work that both the CIG and program groups do.

As the City's partner in culture this sector is a unique ecosystem that is vibrant, creates a healthy network for communities as well as engages and inspires New Yorkers, including the 63 million visitors that take part in various aspects of CIG offerings each year. As in any ecosystem, diversity is essential to make the system thrive: it relies on individual artists, big and small groups, mid-size entities, living museums, the sciences 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 organizations and the challenges they face. Each CIG inherently is aware of their responsibilities to serve the people of New York and to integrate the communities in which they live and work. They are fully aware that they provide safe places for youth and families, serve as examples of accessibility, and remain the go-to organizations that the City calls upon to pilot programs like PlaNYC and IDNYC—which have been major successes. While we are aware of the services we provide, and the Culture Plan affirms the necessity of this work, we still need to continue making the argument for support of what we do well.

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. Regardless of what happens with funding we have to operate on the understanding that CIGs are owned by the People of New York, and that our resources are being accessed by hundreds of thousands of New York City schoolchildren, teachers, and families, as well as international audiences. Just as important is the fact that we are also major employers of New Yorkers and

small businesses, who in turn contribute to the economic vitality of the City. For us, the pillars set forth in the Culture Plan reflect what we are already doing, what we want to keep doing, and the critical funding that we need to keep meeting our own very high standards.

One of the pillars that is integral to our existing work is Equity. For example, because a significant percentage of Bronx Museum visitors are Spanish speaking only, object labels and gallery texts are bilingual (English/Spanish) throughout the museum, and educator-led tours for visiting school and community groups are offered in Spanish upon request. Another integral pillar is Access. For example, both the Staten Island Zoo and the Staten Island Children's Museum offer free space to local arts groups. Carnegie Hall partners with the NYC Department of Probation to deliver NeON Arts at seven community-based probation offices called Neighborhood Opportunity Networks (NeONs).

While the CIGs vary in scope, service, and size, we all reflect the goals and intentions of the Culture Plan; and as the City's partner, we aim to enhance current programming to achieve the Plan's objectives. The Culture Plan is ambitious and requires a significant investment from the City of New York. We also understand that this will require a phased funding approach. As the Council determines its budget priorities for FY 2019, we do ask for your support of a \$30 million increase to the DCLA budget, to be split evenly – just as it was distributed last year—between the CIGs and the program groups to support our continued efforts to enact the goals laid out by the City in the Cultural Plan. Included in this \$30 million, we ask that the City consider baselining the \$10 million increase we received last year, using the same distribution model it has for the past two years (\$4.5M to CIGs, \$5M to program group colleagues, \$0.5M to CUNY Culture Corps).

Thank you for this opportunity to testify today. I've included a copy of the CIG's response to the Culture Plan that was provided to DCLA last year, which both addresses the pillars set forth by the Plan and highlights existing CIG examples. We deeply appreciate the Council's unwavering support and ask you once again to ensure that Culture remains viable in New York City.

“What We Heard:” The CIG Response

The Cultural Institutions Group (CIG) thanks the City of New York for the opportunity to comment and make recommendations on the “What We Heard” report and proposals. We appreciate the vision and leadership by Mayor De Blasio, Commissioner Finkelppearl, DCLA staff, Hester Street and James Lima. Together, New York City’s cultural sector can find synergies, deepen collaborations and advance the goal of making culture more accessible, meaningful and relevant to all New Yorkers with support from the City.

Looking across the broad scope of recommendations in “What We Heard,” we see a great amount of emphasis on the types of programs and services we currently provide. It is heartening to see that the vision of CreateNYC is on target with the CIG member institutions’ missions. We support the range of issues outlined in the report, and want to reiterate and highlight multiple examples of current CIG programs and functions that address the needs identified. We would also like to emphasize that given the current climate of our federal government, the uncertainty of international visitation to the City, and the impact on immigration, as well as the potential defunding and/or elimination of federal programs that support our work, we look to the City’s leadership to maintain their cultural assets and services which are critical to New York. Our shared public-private partnership has been beneficial in enriching the lives of countless New Yorkers. We hope our response provides the City with tangible examples of success that can be replicated and expanded upon by providing a broader scale with an even wider reach. As partners with the City, artists and arts organizations, and community stakeholders, the CIG members alongside our program group colleagues, can continue to have real immediate impact limited only by the resources brought to bear.

The “What We Heard” document has allowed the CIG to reflect on our current work, reaffirm the areas where we are succeeding and demonstrating leadership, and embrace the opportunity to consider even more deeply the issue areas identified as key concerns through the CreateNYC process.

Many of the issues identified by “What We Heard” exist in areas we would like to address in partnership with our program group colleagues. We appreciate the opportunity the City has created for the CIG to think critically about “What We Heard,” and to now provide specific data and examples where an additional investment from the City would have the most impact. When the Cultural Plan is available, we welcome the opportunity to respond with our program partners, and will continue to advocate for an increased investment by the City into the cultural sector.

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Equity

The CIG represents some of the most renowned arts and culture institutions in the world as well as institutions that are integral to the stability and growth of their neighborhoods. Our members include museums for children, art, “living” collections, history and natural history, science and performing arts and film. We have a shared commitment to providing all New Yorkers, and tourists, of all ages access to vibrant cultural, history, and science programming. Each institution, small and large, expands its reach through partnerships with City agencies and community-based organizations to provide a host of services that complement their core missions.

The members of the Cultural Institution Group recognize that there are neighborhoods and communities in NYC that are under-resourced and we are committed to redoubling our efforts to foster innovative collaborations and programs to better serve these areas. Given the resources, talent, relationships and best practices that both program groups and the CIG have developed, we recommend that DCLA not redirect current CDF or CIG funding from some NYC neighborhoods. Instead, the development of a plan to significantly increase DCLA's overall expense budget with an allocation emphasis on service to under resourced areas of New York City would tackle, in great part, the equity and inclusion that the Culture Plan strives to address. This is of particular concern now given the uncertainties of Federal funding in the future.

Create a More Equitable Distribution of Funding for Arts, Culture and Science

- **Example:** Each year since 1980, the Bronx Museum has offered its Artist in the Marketplace (AIM) career development program for 36 emerging New York City-based artists. To date, nearly 1,000 artists have benefitted from a 12-week seminar program led by guest experts that culminates in an exhibition. Half of participating artists are born outside of the United States.

Increase Diversity in Staff and Leadership of Arts, Culture and Science Organizations

- Members of the CIG have been working in many of these areas for decades, and like the City, recognize the need to increase diversity and equity for all New Yorkers.
- Each of our institutions invests in building a more diverse field through internships, apprenticeships, and workforce development programs for future curators, researchers, educators or scientists, and non-profit administrators.
- CIG participation in the CUNY Cultural Corp created opportunities for nearly 100 CUNY students to work in the City's cultural sector in a 24-week program.
- **Example:** In partnership with the Humanities Department of LaGuardia Community College, Theatre and Fine Arts major students are recruited to work in MoMA PS1's Gallery Associates program. In this part-time paid position, students work in the Visitor Engagement department to ensure a positive experience for Museum visitors, providing art interpretation and direction.
- **Example:** As a significant percentage of Bronx Museum visitors are Spanish speaking only, the Museum presents bilingual (English/Spanish) object labels and gallery texts, and educator-led tours for visiting school and community groups are offered in Spanish upon request.

Support People with Disabilities at All Levels of NYC's Cultural Life

- **Example:** In 2016, Flushing Town Hall offered its first arts education program for children on the Autism spectrum. We invite disabled and developmentally disabled groups to attend our arts education programs, and make special accommodations to include them and facilitate their presence in our space.

What We Heard: CIG Response

- **Example:** In Spring 2017, Queens Theatre worked with The Apothetae, a young theatre company dedicated to the production of works that explore and illuminate the “Disabled Experience.” They presented *Spirits of Another Sort*, a fascinating workshop adaptation of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, featuring a dynamic cast of able-bodied actors and performers with physical, developmental and cognitive disabilities. There were three free student matinee performances as well as three public performances.

Support Arts, Culture and Science Institutions as Safe Spaces for New Yorkers of All Immigration Status

- **Example:** IDNYC is a great example of not only access to the CIG but one that provides much needed identification for daily life.
- **Example:** The Bronx Museum hosted an African Town Hall with the Mayor's Office of Immigration Affairs and an Immigration Forum convened by Congressman Jose E. Serrano. The Bronx Museum also collaborates with a host of partners to engage and celebrate the cultural traditions and expressions of immigrant communities. Partners have included African Film Festival New York, Bangladeshi American Creative Collective, Bombazo Dance Co., and New York Chinese Cultural Center, among others.

Ensure that All New Yorkers have Access to Affordable, Arts, Cultural and Science Programming

- Many CIG institutions offer free days, suggested admission prices, and discounted admission; this year the median ticket price was \$10 across all institutions.
- **Example:** The Bronx Museum has offered Free Admission since 2012 to eliminate financial barriers to entry, and free and subsidized tours and workshops to 70% of visiting school groups and community organizations. Since Free Admission, attendance has nearly quadrupled to 100,000 annual visitors.
- **Example:** Queens Theatre offers free student matinee performances in conjunction with its theatre and dance engagements. Queens schoolchildren attend an exclusive performance and engage with the performers in a Q & A session.
- **Example:** AMNH's newest education program, “BridgeUp: STEM”, offers young women, high school girls, and disadvantaged middle school youth unique learning experiences at the intersection of computer science and science research, positioning them to succeed and lead in high-growth fields.

Social & Economic Impact

The CIG play a vital role in maintaining and developing New York City's communities by adding to the economic growth of the City and enhancing the quality of life of all New Yorkers. The shared relationships of these 33 organizations with the City of New York makes their diversity and thriving cultural and scientific resources they offer the public possible —a unique resource that no other North American City can display, and only a handful of cities in the world can aspire to. The City of New York has been an invaluable partner in supporting a thriving cultural community and over the past decade the number of cultural groups that receive funding from the City has doubled.

CIG member institutions are strongly committed to supporting the growth and development of the arts, culture, and science fields to provide New Yorkers with quality jobs. Over 9,000 employees are NYC residents and positively impact the wellbeing of their neighborhoods.

What We Heard: CIG Response

Support the Growth and Development of the Arts, Culture and Science Fields to Provide New Yorkers with Quality Jobs

- CIG organizations are job creators with more than 15,700 full and part-time employees, including 5,800 union employees that have an average union salary of \$49,000.
- With 63% of staff at cultural institutions being NYC residents, from all five boroughs, wages paid to employees are spent within surrounding communities that provides a slew of neighborhood economic benefits.
- **Example:** At BAM, more than 25% of full time staff has been promoted from an intern or a part time position. More than 50% of staff has been promoted from a more junior position since they arrived at BAM.
- **Example:** Through an extensive suite of more than twenty training courses, WCS's Professional Development program informs the practice of more than 1,200 teachers annually from across the U.S. and throughout the World. In turn, hundreds of thousands of New York City students have benefited from enhanced science education.

Build on NYC's Long History as a Vibrant Center for the Arts, Culture and Science

- The basic framework for the public-private partnerships between New York City and its 33 cultural institutions was established in the 19th century. The original concept of the partnerships has succeeded beyond its founders' most ambitious expectations.
- These CIG comprise the cultural backbone of New York City.

Make the Case for Arts, Culture, and Science as Essential Components of a Thriving & Equitable City

- The CIG could not agree more that children and teachers deserve the highest quality education in the arts and sciences. The development of this human capital is pivotal to the growth of the City.
- CIG members support emerging and established artists through per diem employment opportunities and programs that provide space, professional support, access to the institutions' collections and presentation opportunities. We employ 6,000 per diem staff members (teaching artists, musicians, explainers, educators, and other professionals).
- **Example:** The current Space Show, Dark Universe at the American Museum of Natural History uses advanced 3D animation and visualization techniques to explore the Big Bang and the mysteries of space, dark matter, and dark energy. Since Fall 2014, it has attracted more than two million visitors of all ages.
- **Example:** In 2011, WCS launched the Future Leaders Program that combines employment, training, and mentoring to traditionally underserved communities. Between 40 and 50 participants are involved in this program each year.

Make the Case for Arts, Culture and Science as Essential Components of a Resilient & Sustainable City

- The CIG includes national and international leaders in their fields, attracting millions of visitors and billions in visitor spending, making them essential to sustaining and growing tourism and industry in New York.
- The CIG also supports the City's resilient and sustainable ecosystem through its environmental and conversation work, its educational programming, and in great part through its tourism that fuels other industries throughout the five boroughs and empowers a workforce throughout the City.
- CIG institutions have a strong and direct impact on the City economy, spending more than \$490M on local vendors on goods and services from throughout the five boroughs.

What We Heard: CIG Response

- **Example:** The Met is an economic driver and major tourist destination, providing an economic impact of \$5.41 billion in visiting spending each year and bringing over 7 million visitors in calendar year 2016. It is the second most visited art museum in the world.

Affordability

Through the CIG's own assessment, and through Create NYC's "What We've Heard," we continue to look for ways to make art and culture more accessible to all New Yorkers. Listed below are a few ways our institutions remove financial barriers to cultural access. We look forward to continuing to have conversations with DCLA, City agencies, and not-for-profit organizations to look for additional ways of addressing affordability concerns that do not cause a financial burden on the institutions and, most importantly, meet the goal of access and affordability.

Affordability for New York City Audiences

- CIG institutions are affordable, with many offering free days, suggested admission prices, and discounted admission.
- In 2013, before ID NYC free memberships, 35% of visitors attended for free and the median ticket price was \$10 across all institutions.
- **Example:** New York City Center is proud to offer deeply discounted space to not-for-profit companies and individual artists. City Center's three state of the art studios are offered from \$10-\$37.50 per hour, making us a home for those who create.
- **Example:** The Brooklyn Museum offers free space to numerous community organizations each month to share their work and resources with tens of thousands of audiences at our "Community Resource Fair."
- **Example:** Both The Staten Island Zoo and the Staten Island Children's Museum offer free space to local arts groups. Staten Island Children's Museum partners with Sundog Theater to support rehearsals, call backs for actors, and auditions as well as for children's theater classes.
- **Example:** Carnegie Hall partners with the NYC Department of Probation to deliver NeON Arts at seven community-based probation offices called Neighborhood Opportunity Networks (NeONs). NeON Arts is a free program that brings the arts to NeONs through creative projects open to all young New Yorkers. Carnegie Hall manages the program's grant-making process and works with arts organizations and NeON stakeholders to ensure that each project is a collaboration that benefits the entire community.

Citywide Coordination

CIG institutions partner with City agencies to deliver essential services to NYC residents, which in turn helps these agencies to do their work more effectively and allows for greater visibility of cultural organizations to participate in the life of the City. Partnerships with the CIG supports culture across City agencies and in turn strengthens interagency and intergovernmental collaborations that can potentially serve a greater number of New Yorkers. The City of New York looks to the CIG to carry out and serve as successful models of its initiatives.

What We Heard: CIG Response

Support Culture Across Agencies

- CIG organizations offer 37,600 on-site programs to 5,100,000 participants as well as 5,900 off-site community programs with 480,800 participants. These educational and scientific programs integrate with other City agencies and help achieve broad objectives.
- **Example:** Through a 13 year partnership with 8 CIG science institutions in NYC and the NYC Department of Education, the Urban Advantage: Middle School Science Initiative has become the largest model science program in the country.
- **Example:** Queens Botanical Garden works with non-felony offenders referred by the Queens District Attorney's office to fulfill alternative sentencing requirements. In FY16, 150 people fulfilled their community service requirement at QBG, picking up litter in the Garden, weeding, and cleaning under the supervision of QBG staff.
- **Example:** The American Museum of Natural History provides a free Family Science Program for residents of NYC Public Housing across the five boroughs. It provides breakfast and transportation in order to ease any burdens of travel and cost that these families may incur.

Strengthen Interagency and Intergovernmental Collaboration

- CIG institutions have an important role in collaborating with agencies on a range of initiatives, including: IDNYC; CUNY Cultural Corps; the Summer Youth Employment Program; and various institution-specific partnerships with City agencies.
- **Example:** The Brooklyn Museum works with the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) on free Museum tours for seniors and summer camp children.
- **Example:** Brooklyn Children's Museum is working with Brooklyn Public Library to establish a family library branch within Brooklyn Children's Museum and created the Sensory Room – an inclusive sensory space that meets the particular needs of children on the Autism Spectrum.

Arts, Culture and Science Education

The Cultural Institutions Group is proud of its members' efforts to support, sustain, and increase arts, culture, and science education for all New York City students and teachers both in and outside of the classroom. Member institutions are deeply committed to providing culturally relevant educational programs that are inclusive, accessible, and diverse in subject matter and audience. From museums and theaters to gardens and zoos, CIG members allow New Yorkers of all ages and backgrounds to experience the City's rich cultural opportunities through robust educational programming intended to provide participants with experiences that supplement school curricula and build the skills and resumes needed to succeed in a 21st century workforce.

Opportunities for lifelong learning at institutions Citywide include the CUNY Cultural Corps program, professional development opportunities for teachers ranging from one-day workshops to semester long programs, deep partnerships with the NYC Department of Education to develop classroom lesson plans on everything from the arts to STEM programs, one-of-a-kind class trip opportunities to engage students and bring what they learn in the classrooms to life, test-prep services, internships and fellowships for students who lack access to employment opportunities, and much more.

What We Heard: CIG Response

Strengthen and Promote High Quality, Diverse, and Sequential Art, Culture, and Science Education for Every Child in NYC Public Schools

- Each year 2,500,000 children visit a CIG and 761,700 of those attend on-site programs. An additional 258,500 school children attend off-site programs offered in partnership with local community organizations.
- **Example:** Working with a network of more than 15 schools, New York Hall of Science engages with more than 10,000 elementary and middle school students and their families. Through the new Science Ambassadors after-school initiative, they are providing families with free access to the museum throughout the year, with opportunities for students to engage with science and become inspired by engineering and design.
- **Example:** Over 126,000 NYC school-aged children visit the Metropolitan Museum of Art each year, including 42,000 from a Title I school. Additionally, The Met provides professional development to nearly 4,000 teachers and school administrators through workshops and events and with online, print, and other resources.

Increase Access to Inclusive, Culturally Relevant, and Culturally Responsive Programming for Students, Older Adults, and their Families

- **Example:** The Brooklyn Children's Museum opened *Our City*, which was the first contemporary art exhibit for children and families. Nine emerging artists featured, seven of whom were Brooklynites. *Our City* was later featured as a pop-up exhibit at Industry City in Sunset Park.
- **Example:** New York City Ballet conducts free customized programming for 800 children, young people, and families with physical and cognitive disabilities such as cerebral palsy, autism, Down Syndrome, joint diseases, and brain trauma.

Diversify Available City Resources for Arts, Culture and Science-Based Organizations

- **Example:** SPARK is Brooklyn Children's Museum art and play space for early learners in Brooklyn Bridge Park. SPARK features art classes, STEAM based block play and teaching artists presenting art and music. A SPARK partnership with P.S. 307 features an enriched STEAM based block play program in-school and at SPARK.

Invest in the Longterm Diversification of the Arts, Culture, and Science Fields

- **Example:** Since 2012, the Internship in Museum Education Program at the Museum of the City of New York has introduced young adults to the study and practice of museum education. This program has provided participants with valuable professional experience working in a museum that focuses on their city's history. The program targets young adults ages 18 - 24 who come from underserved communities in New York City.
- **Example:** At The Met, the Multicultural Audience Development Initiative (MADI) Mentoring Program is designed to encourage college students from diverse backgrounds to pursue museum careers. Since its inception in 2005, 55 students have successfully completed the Mentoring Program internship and approximately 90% are enrolled in museum programs throughout the country or have obtained positions within the museum/art industry.

Health of the Sector

The cultural sector of New York City is a complex ecosystem, interdependent and interrelated. Our cultural ecosystem has made our City the vibrant and exciting place it is for New Yorkers, in addition to the 63 million visitors that take part in various aspects of our cultural offerings.

Like an ecosystem, diversity is essential to make a system thrive: individual artists, big and small groups, mid-size groups, and the public—including visitors from all corners of the globe. The health of the cultural ecosystem needs to be considered holistically – interrelated and interdependent with the state of tourism as well.

The 33 CIG institutions, in partnership with individual artists and cultural organizations of all sizes, are critical contributors to the ongoing health of the cultural sector, and in particular, within the three areas that the “What We Heard” has focused on: employment, particularly through local jobs; interdependence and collaboration; and resources.

Support Expanded Employment Opportunities for Local Artists and Arts, Cultural, and Science Workers

- **Example:** Since 1968, The Studio Museum in Harlem has earned recognition for its catalytic role in advancing the work of visual artists of African and Latino descent through its Artist-in-Residence program. The program has supported over one hundred graduates who have gone on to highly regarded careers.

Support Interdependence and Collaboration

- **Example:** For the last 30+ years, Brooklyn Museum has partnered with the West Indian Day American Carnival Association’s Festival and Labor Day Celebration in its parking lot and Glass Pavilion free of charge.

Resource Arts, Culture, and Science Organizations for Success

- The CIG embraces the importance of general operating support that is both stable and multi-year for organizations of all sizes.
- City government support for the CIG enables us to leverage private dollars and effectively fundraise. Together, public and private support allows the CIG members to meet their missions and prosper.
- Capital support is also a critically important component of a healthy cultural ecosystem. Making sure our cultural facilities are safe, accessible, and relevant to city residents is very important to the future health of the cultural ecosystem as a whole.

Arts and Culture in Public Space

The CIG members work with local artists, businesses, and cultural partners to bring arts and culture into public spaces for the public to access. We understand the value and integrity that varying perspectives, including that of the immediate community that the program is displayed, brings to the work itself and how it is revered and engaged with. We do not see ourselves as the sole experts on such programming, but instead as a driver that is the liaison among many voices.

What We Heard: CIG Response

Increase Opportunities for Artists to work in New York City Government and Public Space

- **Example:** This past year, El Museo del Barrio played a pivotal role in the commissioning of a Tito Puente statue by Percent for Art. El Museo was integral in doing outreach to local artists for the RFP, had representatives on the panel that would select the artist for the project, and housed a community exhibition of the finalists' submissions. During that exhibit, community members voted and commented on their favorite pieces. The socially engaged practice resulted in the selection of local artists Manny Vega and Ogundipe Fayomi.

Actively Encourage, Support, and Strengthen Public Spaces as Vital Places for Creative Expression and Community Building

- **Example:** The BAM Karen, the latest addition to the BAM Campus, will be part of a cultural space located in the Brooklyn Cultural District "South Site." In partnership with the Brooklyn Public Library, MoCADA, and 651 Arts, the other cultural tenants of the South Site, the surrounding South Site Plaza will offer diverse outdoor programming to activate the area, engage both patrons and passersby, and reflect the vibrancy of the growing Brooklyn Cultural District.
- **Example:** In October 2016, the BCHS partnered with the Bronx Council on the Arts to produce a show titled *From Poe's Porch*, a new social justice-driven poetry reading and workshop series at Poe Park. Featured poets read from the cottage's porch and workshops, panel discussions, and lectures were held in the adjacent Poe Park Visitor Center. *From Poe's Porch* was designed to create greater awareness of local history by drawing parallels to the issues addressed by Bronx poets today, including LGBTQ equality, immigration, gentrification, and racism.

Neighborhood Character

CIG members are an integral part of their surrounding neighborhoods, in many ways becoming de facto community spaces through our support of the artistic and cultural expression of our neighbors and our partnerships with organizations—both small and large. Not only are the CIG part of the neighborhood character of New York's diverse communities, we have also become pivotal in the conversations about the role of cultural institutions when it comes to the preservation of a sense of place and the importance of participatory planning and community development in the face of a changing City. As a coalition, we have shown a commitment to community engagement that reflects the values of celebrating and preserving cultural diversity at the neighborhood level. Partnerships with local community-based cultural organizations enable the CIG to have a Citywide presence that brings art and culture to all five boroughs.

Support Arts, Cultural and Science Programs in all Neighborhoods, in all Boroughs

- The 33 members of the CIG have mapped their programs and partnerships on a Citywide scale. Our coalition cultivates space for cultural participation both inside and outside of our locations' physical spaces.
- **Example:** Lincoln Center was selected by the Rockefeller Foundation to manage a pilot grant program that is engaging local arts councils, community arts organizations and other key stakeholders of Central Brooklyn and the South Bronx. Lincoln Center is working with advisors in the two boroughs to ensure an equitable and strategic rollout of the program, among them: Nos Quedamos and Deirdre Scott from the Bronx Council on the Arts, both in the Bronx, and Tia Powell Harris from the Weeksville Heritage Center in Brooklyn.

Raise Awareness and Promote Belonging in Neighborhood Arts and Cultural Environments:

- **Example:** At Studio Museum, *Harlem Postcards* is an ongoing project that invites contemporary artists of diverse backgrounds to reflect on Harlem as a site of cultural activity, political vitality, visual stimuli, artistic contemplation and creative production. Representing intimate and dynamic perspectives of Harlem, the images reflect the idiosyncratic visions of contemporary artists from a wide range of backgrounds and locations.
- **Example:** El Museo has facilitated meetings between community members and local organizations with the Landmarks and Preservation Commission to present a list of key sites that the community believes should be designated as culturally significant. LPC is now surveying the list. A network of organizations, led by El Museo, will be following-up to ensure that some sites are preserved, ensuring that future generations can share the in the rich history of East Harlem.

Ensure that the Support of Neighborhood-Based Arts and Culture Enables Existing Communities and Cultures to Thrive in Place

- **Example:** In partnership with the District 7 Superintendent, Hostos Community College, and community-based organizations, Lincoln Center Education (LCE) has established a multi-faceted presence in the South Bronx that includes an arts pathway from elementary to middle to high school and monthly workshops for parents, parent coordinators and teachers.

Strengthen and Protect the Existing Cultural Infrastructure of New York City

- **Example:** El Museo del Barrio has been the Arts and Culture Facilitator for the East Harlem Rezoning Neighborhood Plan, a process that included having stakeholders identify culturally significant structures, places, and organizations in the neighborhood; prioritize the arts and culture needs of East Harlem; and build stronger ties amongst the arts and culture sector in East Harlem.

CIG Recommendations To Support the Development of the Cultural Plan

We acknowledge there are changing community priorities and welcome the opportunity to continually assess our needs and implement new programming and strategies to meet the goals that the City has expressed as great importance. To achieve many of these goals, new funding streams and new models of support will need to be identified, therefore, we seek DCLA's support to be successful. Below are some immediate recommendations we ask DCLA, Hester Street, and the Office of the Mayor to take into consideration:

- It is critical to maintain current levels of funding while evaluating additional needs and potential revenue.
- Educational and family-based events are important, but are also often labor intensive, expensive, and do not produce much revenue. The CIG would welcome maintained or increased funding for institutions to produce these events.
- We are committed to diversity and inclusion and welcome investments in pipeline programs and professional development of cultural workers from underrepresented groups combined with a deep commitment to advance staff into leadership positions.

What We Heard: CIG Response

- To better support people with disabilities, cultural institutions recommend sharing equipment to provide captioning and audio description services for audience members. We also intend to work more closely with the disability community to create programming.
- We ask that the City provide support for the continuation and expansion of the IDNYC program, which has yielded over 400,000 free cultural memberships to museums, gardens, theaters, and zoos to date.
- We embrace the need to ensure greater diversity in the cultural sector, especially in senior leadership. To that end, we welcome examining and adopting of best practices to create more equitable hiring models.
- Using current program models, the CIG encourages and supports collaborations among organizations of all sizes.
- Encourage and foster partnerships between cultural organizations and schools to bolster in-school and out-of-school partnerships.
- While recognizing that rental fees are an important part of many organization's budget, subsidies could be provided to allow the CIG's to offer space rental at low or free rates as well as support for budget relief of staff that are required to be present should we provide space to members of the Program Group and Individual Artists.
- Share information with public school students, teachers, principals and families about the resources provided by cultural organizations so more New Yorkers can take advantage.
- Support partnerships among the institutions, program groups, and community members to provide unique, neighborhood-specific programming as well as innovative, capacity-building and technical assistance for the smaller organizations.
- Aid the CIG in supporting smaller cultural organizations through new programs, such as a series of development or funding workshops designed and led by DCLA and hosted in CIG organizations in different boroughs, and funding the CIG to be fiscal conduits for these organizations.
- Maintain a level of unrestricted operating support to all funded organizations.
- Establish new funding streams to increase DCLA's budget for all arts and culture.
- Provide support for NYC & Co. to include more domestic and international culturally specific media in their campaigns and to expand digital capacity.
- Facilitate collaborative partnerships between DCLA and agencies such as Small Business Services and New York City Economic Development Corp. to ensure that local cultural groups and artists are engaged in neighborhood-based design projects.
- Provide funding for a coordinator role in Title 1 schools to help schools hire the additional support staff they need to establish partnerships with artists and cultural organizations and increase their arts education offerings.
- Create a clearing house for arts organizations to access vacant spaces in diverse NYC neighborhoods.
- Establish a central portal listing cultural activities throughout the city.



Preliminary Budget Hearing Fiscal Year 2019
Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations
Joint Testimony of
Brooklyn Public Library Guild, Local 1482
New York Public Library Guild, Local 1930
New York Public Library Quasi-Public Employees, Local 374
Queens Public Library Guild, Local 1321
March 16, 2018

Chairman Jimmy Van Bramer and fellow committee members, thank you for giving my fellow presidents and myself an opportunity to testify at this year Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations' hearing on the three library systems' budgets.

Val Colon, President, Local 1930; Leonard Paul, newly appointed President, Local 374; John Hyslop, President, Local 1321 and I, Ronaldo Barber, President, Local 1482 come before you united in our request for more library funding. This year's request comes after another year of funding stability and security. However, that funding is still insufficient. Our custodians, librarians, drivers, ESOL teachers, clerks, IT workers struggle to meet the ever increasing demands our elected officials and patrons place on us.

In Fiscal Years 2017 and 2018, the City Council and Mayor maintained our library funding, allowing us to plan. In Fiscal Year 2019, we are reassured that the mayor has proposed the same amount of money as last year. This positive development is underscored with the warnings the unions have repeated at these hearing since Fiscal Year 2017, the funding is not enough. New York City's library systems are bursting and our patrons are demanding more from us every day.

At the Brooklyn Public Library, because of the increasing number of buildings reopening, and additional programs and services that we provide, there is not enough staff to manage the ever growing demand for safety, cleanliness and services that the branches in our community provide. There is a great need for more staff in order to service our community branches, such as: custodians and special officers in addition to clerical and IT staff.

At New York Public Library inadequate funding has left many branches suffering from staff shortages. These staff shortages have created, in some cases security issues that need to be addressed. Some branches, at times, are staffed with two people to open and/or close. The Bronx Library Center is one location that is understaffed, and if not for an overtime budget, the branch services would have to be cut. The staff at Staten Island's Todt Hill-Westerleigh Library, invariably must leave the reference desk un-staffed with a sign directing patrons to the circulation desk for help because they do not have enough staff. The hours at the short-staffed Science, Industry, and Business Library were increased. To alleviate some of the strain, Mid-Manhattan Library staff were transferred there while Mid-Manhattan is closed for renovations. Now, some of those staff members have been removed and the hours stayed the same, exacerbating a short-staffing situation even further.

At the Queens Library there are many examples of why more funds are needed. These are just a few. Elmhurst Library, one of the highest circulating branches in the nation, was newly renovated. The branch added two new floors, expanded its footprint, increased the size of the Adult Learning Center, and increased hours. The size of the staff remained almost the same as it was before the renovation. Glen Oaks Library expanded, adding more floors and hours and the staff size remained the same. Hunters Point Library will be a brand new location with many floors and a large collection to maintain. Queens Library does not have the extra money to hire more people to staff for this brand new building.

Our members are contending with all the mandates placed on us: six day service, larger newly renovated or brand new buildings, new programs, more space to clean and maintain, more books, DVDs, newspapers, strong wifi, laptops, desktops, scanners, printers, copiers, mobile wifi, and more.

Our patrons not only appreciate all of this, they demand more. Our members are exemplars of the mission of the public library, they are dedicated to providing free access to information, programs, and services. We have proven that the printed word and the digital space coexist and thrive. We have proven that our programs and services are vital to our communities. We have proven that if a library is renovated or a new one is built, the community flocks to us.

To meet everyone's demand for more programs, newer, larger libraries, more material, more technology, our elected officials must not only maintain our current funding but increase it. Speaking on behalf of the staff; who work so hard to make Library services a reality, we say "Please, help us maintain and enhance the services we so diligently strive to provide our communities."

With the collaboration of this Mayor, the members of this City Council, and our New York City libraries, we have done great things. We need your help to maintain the level of service without exhausting our staff.

You are agriculturists, expert farmers, you know that the libraries are good grounds, and when you sew into these fertile ground we produce much fruit for our patrons and staff and the community at large.

Testimony from Mark Rossier, Director of Grants, New York Foundation for the Arts before the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations, March 16, 2018

Thank you Chair Van Bramer and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify at this hearing and advocate for the highest possible level of funding for the Department of Cultural Affairs and the New York City Cultural Plan.

I am Mark Rossier, Director of Grants at the New York Foundation for the Arts. NYFA is one of the few organizations in the country which supports individual artists at all stages of their careers. We work with artists in every borough and every artistic discipline.

We provide unrestricted grants of \$7,000 to approximately 75 New York City artists each year. We have a website which, among other things, lists 800 new jobs and opportunities for artists every month. We provide fiscal sponsorship which enabled 700 artists and organizations to raise \$4.5 million last year. We provide entrepreneurial training to over 500 artists and administrators annually. And we have myriad programs which serve immigrant artists from nearly 100 countries, including programming in Mandarin and Spanish.

We are able to do all of this - and more - because of the support we receive from the Department of Cultural Affairs. It is not just NYFA - to say the totality of New York's cultural sector is dependant on DCLA is no exaggeration. The value of their support and organizations' ability to leverage it for additional funds cannot be overstated. We hope you will consider a baseline increase of \$10 million along with an additional \$20 million to be split between the programs group and the CIGs.

Additionally, during testimony before this committee regarding the cultural plan, many of us spoke of the need for DCLA to receive separate, additional support to ensure the plan is adequately funded so that its laudable goals, particularly with regard to equity and community-based organizations, are achieved.

New York City's arts and cultural communities are thriving and driving jobs, tourism, and increased understanding within and among the City's diverse communities. The budget of the Department of Cultural Affairs must receive maximum funding to support this growth.

Thank you for your steadfast and visionary support the cultural community and this city we call home.



Associated Musicians of Greater New York

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NY City Council Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations

Testimony regarding Fiscal Year 2019 budget on behalf of the Associated Musicians of Greater New York, Local 802, AFM

March 16, 2018

Good morning Chair Van Bramer and members of the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations. My name is Christopher Carroll and I am the Chief of Staff for the Associated Musicians of Greater New York, American Federation of Musicians Local 802. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on the importance of the city's cultural community and the importance of providing the support that our city's artists and cultural institutions need and deserve. We believe that the City's DCLA budget should be expanded beyond the Mayor's preliminary budget by \$30 million, \$10 million of which should be baselined.

I also want to thank Chair Van Bramer and the entire City Council for supporting our artist community in the Fiscal Year 2018 budget. Music, performance and the arts are a part of our common heritage, part of our past and present, providing the life-blood of our City's culturally diverse communities and helping to drive our economy. The Council's commitment to the arts has been exemplary, and we hope that the cultural community will continue to receive vital support in the coming years, especially in light of the funding priorities currently being indicated by our Federal government.

Local 802 is the largest local union of professional musicians in the world, comprising musicians working in all styles of music, from those who play in the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic, to the musicians on Broadway, the TV show bands and thousands of musicians playing in recording studios, jazz clubs and venues across the city



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every day and night. Our ultimate goal is to strengthen our City's artistic environment and cultural fabric, champion live music in our communities, advocate for fair wages and treatment of musicians, and promote policies that allow musicians to afford to live, work and raise a family.

Music and the Arts, vital to economic and social health

Our Union has seen first-hand that music and the arts have a profound impact upon New York City's economy, bringing direct and indirect economic benefits that are driving our economy, creating jobs and helping New Yorkers and business owners thrive and grow. With over 1,400 cultural organizations in New York City, New Yorkers are gaining access to the vitally important role that music, art, dance, theater, film, museums, science and literature play in our lives and in more neighborhoods, not to mention the hundreds of thousands of jobs directly created and the multi-billion-dollar economic impact these institutions have on local economies and small businesses.

The musicians of Local 802 work each and every day to support these values, performing in all five boroughs, teaching young children in public schools, bringing the therapeutic and social benefits of music to our seniors, partnering on career mentorship events like the Council for Living Music's Jazz Mentors and teaching at workshops that are free to the public, as well as countless social and community advocacy initiatives that they devote their time and energy to every day. In our Country's current cultural, political and social climate, these values are priceless.

Musicians come to New York from across the country and the globe for the opportunity to perform with the most talented artists and be part of the most creative community in the world. As a result, New York City has become a cultural capital of the world, known for its diversity, its creativity, and the unparalleled artistic talent that perform and work here.

The role the arts play in the social and cultural health of our neighborhoods, districts and boroughs cannot be overstated, going far beyond standard economic impact analyses. Music,



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performance and the arts are a part of our common heritage, providing the life-blood of our City's culturally diverse communities by bridging social, economic, educational and lingual divides. In their *Social Impact of the Arts Project*, researchers from the University of Pennsylvania's School of Social Policy and Practice in Philadelphia write that the arts are "a critical resource that people use as part of that quest for a life of value. [The Arts] can provide tools for making sense of the world. [The arts] can provide opportunities to develop one's abilities or to forge connections with people like themselves or not like themselves. (Chapter 6, page 4). Additionally, the team from UPenn found that when controlling for a community's economic "wellbeing, race and ethnicity — we find statistically significant relationships between the Cultural Asset Index and [their] indexes of health, personal security, and school effectiveness (Chapter 6, pg 7)" in a community. This study makes clear that the value of the arts and our cultural institutions is felt far beyond that which can be measured through economic analysis, "enhancing social connection, amplifying community voice, and animating the public environment (Chapter 6, pg 8)," and thus influencing our values and core beliefs by celebrating diversity and encouraging inclusiveness, facilitating interaction and championing creativity, bolstering our education and providing access to new experiences and ideas.

For the city to maintain this vibrant arts community, it must adequately support the artists that create our cultural environment and support the organizations that provide artists, New Yorkers and visitors with the opportunities to experience our city's cultural heritage. Performers in New York City face extraordinary challenges in the five boroughs, and New York City is quickly becoming a place where many artists cannot thrive or afford to support a family. The Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment's *Music in New York* study found that median income for musicians is \$30,000 per year, and the Center for Urban Future has found that musicians and singers make less than the national median income when adjusted for cost of living^[1].

Create NYC

The Mayor and City Council have repeatedly shown a commitment to the arts over the last four years. The city's first comprehensive cultural plan, *Create NYC*, laid out an impressive



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set of recommendations, values and priorities that reflect the needs and desires of artists and New Yorkers. Though it is not a prescriptive plan, *Create NYC* is a vision document and roadmap that must be used to guide future development, policy and legislation if we are to ensure that New York City remains a place where artists can thrive and where the arts are celebrated in our communities.

While the plan is impressive in vision, it at times lacks in specificity, both in policy recommendations and implementation strategies. As a result, it is the responsibility of the City Council and arts advocates throughout the five boroughs to hold the city accountable to these priorities and ensure that the recommendations, objectives and strategies that have been identified are achieved.

These priorities include: determining how to provide sufficient compensation to artists and cultural workers, and what compensation levels are needed to allow artists to make a living; preserving and developing long-term affordable work spaces for the cultural community to advance the AREA initiative; increasing the development of affordable, accessible housing for artists that allows them to thrive; creating new supports for arts and cultural organizations with a primary mission of serving historically underrepresented/underserved communities; continuing to invest in city-owned cultural assets and the Cultural Institutions Group; and partnering with other City agencies to ensure that the needs of the cultural community, including artists, are considered in community and economic development and planning processes. However, the success of this plan will be determined not by its text but by whether or not it receives the funding these priorities need to be implemented and pursued.

Local 802 President Tino Gagliardi was honored to be appointed to the Create NYC Citizen's Advisory Committee by Mayor de Blasio, a role in which he consistently heard one extremely important theme throughout Create NYC's public engagement process: artists can't afford to create art in New York City. Housing and workspace is too expensive, wages are too low, and artists are finding themselves under increasing financial pressure that forces them to



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leave New York or find a career outside of the arts. We must therefore prioritize legislation and policies that address affordability, both the cost of living and the wages with which artists pay for that living, as well as the availability of affordable work and performance space, and equitable access to careers in the arts.

Luckily, the Administration and Council have powerful tools that can be fully leveraged to support these priorities and help our city achieve Create NYC's laudable ideals. These tools include public funding, tax and land incentives, land use regulations, permitting, and public funding and budgetary support, to name but a few. If the city is to follow-through on the Create NYC plan, public support should be provided with the expectation that wages are fair and allow for artists to make a living. Public land should be turned over to private developers only when serious consideration is given to artist housing, work space and the community's ability to preserve neighborhood culture and identity. Zoning regulations should be manipulated and altered so as to encourage the creation of work space, and initiatives should be developed that celebrate and encourage access to artistic expression and the diversity of our cultural heritage. These priorities align with the values expressed by this Council and Administration but must be financially supported if they are to be achieved.

Alarmingly, over the last 5 years, the Mayor's Preliminary Executive Budget Proposals have not reflected the important role the arts play in the city's health and diverse cultural fabric. From fiscal year 2015 to fiscal year 2019, preliminary budget funding fell from \$148.6 million to \$143.8 million, requiring the City Council to make substantial contributions instead. While we applaud the City Council for increasing programmatic funding for DCLA projects and strongly believe this should continue, and though this decrease seems slight, the signal it sends to artists and performers across the city, as well as to the neighborhoods that make up our cultural landscape, is significant. Obviously, this is not a viable way to preserve artistic communities or our unique neighborhood fabric. We must put the budget dance aside and baseline cultural funding at last year's funding level.



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In order for New York City to continue to be a global leader and artistic standard bearer, the City must adequately fund our artists, our institutions, and our initiatives. We ask that the City and Council work together to fund an increase of \$30 million for the DCLA budget, shared between the Cultural Development Fund grants and the Cultural Institutions Groups, as well as be prepared to support and implement the recommendations that are made in the Create NYC plan.

Thank you again for allowing me to speak. I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have now, or at your convenience at any time in the future.

New York Shakespeare Festival dba The Public Theater
City Council Testimony
Cultural Affairs Committee
3/16/2018

I'm Tiffany Bryant, Government Affairs Coordinator at The Public Theater. Thank you to Councilmember Van Bramer for holding today's hearing regarding the intersection of cultural non-profits and libraries.

Conceived nearly 60 years ago as one of the nation's first nonprofit theaters, The Public engages one of the largest and most diverse audiences in New York City in a variety of venues including the Delacorte Theater and its landmark downtown home, which houses five theaters and Joe's Pub. Last year, through all of our programs, we offered more than 1,600 performances and welcomed over 350,000 people many of whom acquired tickets through our free or low cost ticket initiatives including: Free Shakespeare in the Park access through the line in Central Park, our online lottery, and distribution sites in all 5 boroughs; free Mobile Theater performances in the 5 boroughs & at the Public; idNYC; and free first previews.

When Joe Papp articulated the proposition of Free Shakespeare in the Park, he began with the idea that just as a city offers free libraries, free access to literature and knowledge, a city as capacious as New York should also offer free theater, free access to the greatest art of our time. Since 1962, The Delacorte Theater, a city-owned structure in Central Park, has been home to Free Shakespeare in the Park. Since then over 5 million people have attended performances for free. Each year we welcome over 100,000 attendees, and in 2017, we welcomed audiences from every zip code in New York City. Productions have ranged from Shakespeare to a revival of *HAIR: The American Tribal Love-Rock Musical*. Each summer, there are two 5-week productions and a 200-person Public Works civic pageant with community participants performing an original musical adaptation of Shakespeare.

The Public Theater is proud to partner with the New York Public Library, Brooklyn Public Library, and Queens Library systems as Free Shakespeare in the Park ticket distribution venues and sites for our Mobile Unit performances. In 2017, we initiated the first steps of partnership with New York City's library systems as Free Shakespeare in the Park ticket distribution venues. We chose branches in neighborhoods identified by NYC's Cultural Plan as "civic clusters" - neighborhoods the City has identified as high priority for cultural investment and cross-agency partnerships.

Libraries have proven apt partners for free ticket distributions, and we are continuing our relationship with libraries for this year's Free Shakespeare in the Park season. Building a newly deliberate relationship with our public library systems feels very correct to us, and we look forward to the blossoming of this partnership in the coming years.

New York Shakespeare Festival dba The Public Theater
City Council Testimony
Cultural Affairs Committee
3/16/2018

The Mobile Unit tours Shakespearean productions for underserved audiences throughout New York City's five boroughs twice per year. In all we visit 18-20 venues per tour including libraries, New York City Parks venues, correctional facilities, facilities that provide services for the homeless, and community based organizations with whom we partner through our Public Works program.

Through our Public Works program we engage deeply with eight community-based organizations to provide year-round classes, workshops, and community building activity and create annual large-scale, participatory Public Works productions featuring over 200 New Yorkers each year, presented on our largest stage – the Delacorte Theater in Central Park – as the joyous culmination of our oldest, biggest program, Free Shakespeare in the Park. This summer, we will be presenting a 5-week run of our Public Works adaptation of *Twelfth Night* at the Delacorte Theater.

When conceiving the kind of programming we could create to address our founding commitment to access, we agreed it crucial to reach deeply into our community. With the Mobile Unit we serve a rigorous cross-section of New Yorkers – particularly those with little or no access to the arts – by reaching them where they live. And with Public Works we invite the people of New York to make theater together and to actively participate in collaboratively telling a story, not only putting the voices of the people on stage, but also the people themselves.

More than any other programs in recent memory, the Mobile Unit and Public Works represent The Public's most dynamic efforts to dramatically increase access to the theater, both as audience and as participants, for citizens who have not been offered a place at the table of American culture. As a cultural organization dedicated to serving the people, *all* people, we have a responsibility to serve as broad an audience as possible. We have long recognized that Free Shakespeare in the Park is not enough to fully achieve our mission. We're confident, however, that with the Mobile Unit and Public Works we will be that much closer.

At the Public Theater, we are committed to the goals and values of the NYC Cultural Plan through programs like Free Shakespeare in the Park, Public Works, and Mobile Unit. For all of the progress we've made, there is still much to do as we pave the way for the future. A significant and exciting responsibility lies before us: to enact the fullest expression of our mission and ensure that our mission of inclusive, artistic excellence last for the next generation.

New York Shakespeare Festival dba The Public Theater
City Council Testimony
Cultural Affairs Committee
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Baselining \$10 million received by CIGs in FY18, and providing an additional \$20 million in funding this year to be shared between CIGs and program groups, will allow us to expand these programs.

The Public is honored to have the opportunity to partner with the City in engaging with all New York communities and I thank all of you for your time.



- 1) Increased grantee volume and funding levels, including funding of individual artists, as recommended by the *Advancing Fiscally Sponsored Artists & Art Projects* report published by Dance/NYC, with nine fiscal sponsor partners;
- 2) An expanded diversity, equity, and inclusion agenda that expressly addresses disability rights, as called for by Dance/NYC's Disability. Dance. Artistry. research and partners such as the Disability/Arts/NYC Task Force; and immigrant rights, as called for by our recent *New York City's Foreign-Born Dance Workforce Demographics* report, part of a New Immigrant Artists initiative we launched last month;
- 3) The development and protection of affordable spaces, with a focus on dance rehearsal space, identified as the top need through our survey research; and
- 4) Increased dance education activity by DCLA grantees and strengthened collaboration with the Department of Education to make possible dance education for every child in every school.

For Dance/NYC, the cultural plan is a significant milestone and a launching pad for strengthened and new advocacy. With the City's vision for a sustainable, inclusive, and equitable sector in place, it is now incumbent on the City to operationalize that vision, fund it at adequate levels, and measure progress over time. As the City establishes its evaluation framework, Dance/NYC strongly advocates for tracking the success of each planning strategy by "creative discipline" to ensure that the art form of dance, as well as all of our peer disciplines, is equitably served.

In requesting increased funding for FY 2019, Dance/NYC thanks Chair Jimmy Van Bramer, the members of the Committee, and the City at large for its partnership.

##



Testimony to City Council on the FY 2019 Budget for Cultural Affairs

Submitted to the New York City Council Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations on March 16, 2018

Prepared by Dance/NYC

On behalf of the more than 1,200 New York City area-based dance makers and companies, the service entity Dance/NYC joins New Yorkers for Culture & Arts and colleague advocates to request:

- 1) The City baseline the \$10 million in new funding awarded in FY 2018; and**
- 2) The City award an additional \$20 million in funding in FY 2019.**

The need and opportunity for funding is urgent. This is a moment when our presidential administration is threatening the rights to creativity and free expression, proposing the elimination of our federal cultural agencies, and implementing a tax code that acts as a disincentive to charitable giving. New York City's increased investment in culture and the arts now will have both symbolic and tangible significance. It will strengthen the City as a beacon for artists and audiences around the globe and ensure New York artists and cultural groups have the resources they need to advance "Art as a Resistance State in Trump's America"—the powerful topic of a recent Committee hearing.

Locally, the increased funding is needed to ensure the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) and our City's arts and cultural institutions are positioned to respond to the pressing recommendations of CreateNYC, the City's new cultural plan. For Dance/NYC and its constituents, the most urgent four priorities are:

Exploring the Metropolis, Inc.

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**New York City Council
Cultural Affairs, Libraries & International Intergroup Relations
Committee
Council Chambers – City Hall
Preliminary Budget Hearing Testimony FY19
Friday March 16, 2018 1 PM**

My name is David Johnston and I am the Executive Director of Exploring the Metropolis. I would like to thank Councilmember Jimmy Van Bramer and the Cultural Affairs Committee for the opportunity to testify today.

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, the Choreographer + Composer Residency in partnership with the Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning, and the EtM Ridgewood Bushwick Composer Residency.

Since 2009, EtM has supported more than 80 composers, choreographers and performing artists.

By mid-2019, EtM will have provided over one million dollars' worth of no-cost rehearsal space and cash awards to New York City artists.

In addition, EtM has provided more than \$130,000 worth of support to NYC's nonprofit cultural and community centers to maximize their space usage, and supported more than 70 free public programs for New York City audiences, ranging from new music premieres to work-in-progress dance showings, composition workshops for visually impaired students, and even a new children's opera.

In the past nine years, 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.
- **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.

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.

On Tuesday the Bureau of Economic Analysis and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) released data that showed the arts and cultural sector contributed over \$763.6 billion to the American economy in 2015—more than the agriculture, transportation, or warehousing sectors.

Last year, we were happy to receive an increase in Cultural Development Fund awards from the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs. Stable funding sources are crucial for this field and the constituents we serve. I am here today to ask for CDF and CIG funding to be held level in FY19 for the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA).

Cultural organizations and artists are essential to our economy, and they contribute to our city's cultural vibrancy which serves all our citizens. It is vital that the city continue to support the full scope of nonprofit culture and we hope that the upcoming Cultural Plan will reflect this scope.

Thank for you opportunity to testify today.

David Johnston
Executive Director
Exploring the Metropolis
david@exploringthemetropolis.org

**TO: Majority Leader Jimmy Van Bramer
Members of the New York City Council Committee on Cultural
Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations**

**FROM: Lucy Sexton, Executive Director
New Yorkers for Culture & Arts
NY4CA.org**

RE: FY19 Preliminary NYC Budget Hearing

DATE: 16 March 2018

My name is Lucy Sexton, and I'm pleased to introduce myself as the new Executive Director of New Yorkers for Culture & Arts (NY4CA), the new citywide advocacy organization, formed by the merger of the New York City Arts Coalition and One Percent for Culture.

I am no stranger to culture and arts here in New York City. I work as a choreographer and also run the NY Dance and Performance Awards, The Bessies. I know firsthand the profound impact of publicly supported culture in this city--- from my first dance training at John Dewey HS in Coney Island to my current gig teaching dance to seniors at the Open Center in Chinatown. In my new position at New Yorkers for Culture and Art, it is my honor and my passion to work for a city in which every New Yorker has their life transformed by a flourishing and vital culture, regardless of background, borough, or economic status.

We will work for sustainable government resources and strong public policy to advance equitable public support for cultural organizations, for artists and for the cultural workforce in every community in the city. New Yorkers for Culture & Arts seeks to address long-standing patterns of funding that have marginalized cultural organizations serving communities and artists of color thereby limiting the city's ability to fully appreciate and celebrate the value of its rich diversity.

Committee Chair Van Bramer and Members of the Committee, we urge you to support culture and arts in the FY19 New York City budget by robustly supporting the Department of Cultural Affairs. We stand with the CIGs in expressing our gratitude for the increases in FY18, particularly the additional support to the borough arts councils and their funding of individual artists, the \$1 million in

utility support to those non-CIG organizations that inhabit city properties, and the increase to the Cultural Immigrant Initiative.

But the need remains great. New Yorkers for Culture & Arts joins our cultural colleagues to request:

- 1.) A baseline of the \$10 million increase to the FY18 budget, which benefits CIGs, program groups and CUNY Culture Corp. This increase helped cultural organizations reach more New Yorkers, and must be sustained.
- 2.) An additional \$20 million in funding for FY19, to be equally shared by the CIGs and the program groups; and
- 3.) Additional funding to support the successful implementation of the city's first-ever Cultural Plan. In particular, NY4CA is deeply invested in issues related to equity and lowering the barriers to access to city funding.

Finally, you may recall that last fall NY4CA planned a forum with candidates for City Council Speaker. More than 600 New Yorkers RSVP'd to attend, demonstrating the enormous interest and concern that city residents have for culture and arts. Council Member Van Bramer, we at NY4CA are grateful for your commitment to that planned forum, and we look forward to working closely with you and the entire Council to ensure that culture and arts can fully thrive in New York and enrich the lives of every resident in every neighborhood.

Thank you for your kind attention and for this opportunity to testify at this hearing on the preliminary budget here. All of us at NY4CA are ready and eager to further this important work together.

Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) March 16 Testimony
Ellen Leszynski, Senior Manager, Institutional Advocacy

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Ellen Leszynski and I am here today on behalf of the Brooklyn Academy of Music, a member of the Cultural Institutions Group. At BAM we collaborate with neighbor organizations on partnerships and programs. We are a proud founding member of the Downtown Brooklyn Arts Alliance, a coalition of more than 35 cultural groups organized to work for the best interests of the cultural sector in Downtown Brooklyn. And we're committed to bringing world class artistic programming and community events to our Brooklyn community. At a time of national tumult and change, it is more important than ever for New York City to be a beacon of creativity and culture, and for cultural institutions to work with the City to promote equity, access, and diversity in arts and culture.

BAM respectfully requests that the city baselines the \$10 million in cultural funding that was allocated in FY18, as well as an additional \$20 million in funding this year, to be divided equally among the CIGs and the program groups in order to support the work we will do under the new Cultural Plan. BAM currently serves its community by addressing many of the priorities of the Plan.

Of particular note is the Fellows in Stagecraft and Production program, which BAM launched through a grant from the New York City Theater Subdistrict Council. This program aims to securely place individuals from underrepresented communities on a career path in the stagehand and production management fields. Through intensive training and hands-on work experience, participants will be able to establish themselves within a professional network, while also helping to increase diversity in the field. The Fellows program offers a much-needed entry point for youth from underrepresented communities such as LGBTQ and low-income young people, as well as African-American, Latinx, and female participants. The program teaches them to become freelance or in-house stagehands, a field that traditionally struggles with recruiting a diverse workforce. This kind of rigorous training can lead to positions in production management. The program will expand the pool of qualified stagehands in the short term and, over time, as graduates gain experience, increase diversity in production positions. For example, one Cycle 1 graduate has secured a job as a lighting board operator at the Jerry Orbach Theater and another has been working as a stage manager at 5th Floor Theatre Company.

This is the kind of program that BAM hopes to expand upon with additional funding.

BAM is excited to work with the Department of Cultural Affairs and the City to be a cultural leader. By presenting world-class, international performances and programming in the heart of Brooklyn, we are able to have a major cultural and economic impact in our local community. As a large, historic institution, we are poised to bring more outstanding programming and services to more neighborhoods and communities, and help our fellow cultural organizations and local artists build capacity and navigate a changing landscape. We hope that you will consider BAM's history and enormous potential when finalizing the cultural budget, and recognize that, with your continued and increased support, we are ready to serve our community even beyond what we are currently doing.

Written Testimony by Bashir Osmani
New York City Council
Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations
Fiscal Year 2019 Preliminary Budget Hearing
March 16, 2018

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to talk about New York City's libraries and its programs and services for the community.

America is built by the immigrants. People come from all over the world including non-English speaking countries. In America, English is the official first language. Therefore, it is very important for immigrants to know English. As we all know "knowledge is the power and the backbone of a civilized nation". Language, this case is English, is the key to learn knowledge and for expanding education. America is a great nation. To keep our pride, we immigrants need to contribute our thoughts, ideas and create a friendly work environment to take this country forward. Without language none of this is possible.

For decades, English learning programs have been offered at New York City's three library systems to the community for free.

As newcomers, we immigrants don't earn much, nor do we get better jobs because of the language barrier.

The Queens Library at East Flushing was where I came to know of the free English language program. I was motivated to enroll myself in the intermediate class of the ESOL program. They taught me a better way of expressing myself through reading and writing. This ESOL program enlightened me, made me feel like I am not alone, I am a part of this diverse cultural great City. It changed my life in many ways. Now I am able to contribute my talent and experience at my work place. They taught me many good things.

This is my humble appeal to the New York City Council: please increase funding for Queens Library so they can continue to help the non-English speaking community to learn English and help them (immigrants) to be a part of this great sanctuary New York City. Such free programs and services that are offered throughout Queens, specifically the intermediate level ESOL class at Queens Library at East Flushing, are needed.

The Nobel Prize winner poet Rabindranath Tagore said "Patriotism cannot be our final spiritual shelter; my refuge is humanity. I will not buy glass for the price of diamonds, and I will never allow patriotism to triumph over humanity as long as I live."

I like to conclude my speech with the hope and belief that the New York City Council will advocate for increased funding for Queens Library so the public can benefit from much needed classes, like the free ESOL program, and can continue to empower newly arrived immigrants.

Chair Van Bramer, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Written Testimony by Joel Ochoa
New York City Council
Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations

Fiscal Year 2019 Preliminary Budget Hearing

March 16, 2018

Good afternoon, my name is Joel Ochoa. I'm currently a Customer Service Specialist at the Woodside community library. I help customers with the public computers, which is part of my job description. I've also put on an inflatable T-Rex costume for our Halloween carnival, dressed up as a Chinese groom as part of our Lunar New Year Celebration (complete with fan), and led kids' Zumba classes. That's just the tip of the iceberg, and I have photos to prove it!

As a Queens Library employee, I've had so many experiences I never expected to have. I've realized how valuable Queens Library is to the diverse communities it serves. Every day, we provide an inclusive and safe environment to customers from all walks of life, including children, seniors, the disabled, and the homeless. Our motto is, "Queens Library is for Everyone", and everyone comes through our doors. Our customers can access free information, programs and services regardless of who they are or where they come from. For instance, at Woodside community library, just like many other libraries across Queens, we provide English classes, computer classes, arts and crafts programs, story time, exercise programs, heritage celebrations, various reading programs, coding classes, homework help and assistance with resume writing, job searching, the navigation of the internet, and so much more.

But honestly, do you know what is most satisfying for me (besides my paycheck, of course)? It is the children, tweens and teens walking in through our doors at 3 pm and greeting me with a big smile on their face and curious to find out what program I'll create next, or that customer that comes in the next day and tells me, "I got the job, thank you", or the students that you can hear speak better English than when they first walked through our doors. These people and their stories prove that Queens Library is an exceptional place.

But I don't just see the positive impact we have in our communities, I also see how challenging it is to maintain, and keep providing and improving our programs and services. From water leaks due to an aging infrastructure, to overcrowded libraries because there is just not enough space, or long waits because there are not enough computers. It is because I'm aware of the desperate need to improve our infrastructure, the need to uplift our facilities with technology and appropriate furniture, and the need to expand our collection, that I'm engaged with our community and take part in Participatory Budgeting. That's the reason I'm here today. While I understand these are difficult decisions to make regarding the allocation of where taxpayer money goes, it is necessary to provide funding to allow Queens Library to keep building strong and vibrant communities. In today's uncertain world, our customers need our help and support more than ever. Help us, help them. Help keep Queens Library the vital public service that it has been, and will continue to be.

Thank you, Chair Van Bramer and the Committee, for the opportunity to testify today.

Written Testimony by Ana Renata de Oliveira Dias
New York City Council
Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations
Fiscal Year 2019 Preliminary Budget Hearing
March 16, 2018

Good afternoon, my name is Ana Dias and I am a student at Queens Library's English for Speakers of Other Languages class.

To find a location where I could access free and quality English language classes was difficult. I needed a group where I felt accepted and could express myself in a safe and trusted environment. When I discovered that Queens Library offers free ESOL classes it was a dream come true. I immediately registered for the class and I am proud to announce that I am currently enrolled in the Intermediate ESOL class at Briarwood community library. It is my great pleasure to be a part of the ESOL group. This is a program with a high level of responsibility and commitment to the participants. I feel privileged to learn English by the highly qualified professionals who teach the class and have such an assertive methodology. Because of Queens Library and their excellent teachers, I am able to give this testimony today.

It is very important for more and more people to get this amazing opportunity to learn. People, specifically new immigrants, rely on these free services to interact with a neighbor, find a job, access resources and more. With every class, I am becoming a more independent and self-reliant individual. I truly believe this program changes lives for the better and we need to keep providing this and similar services. People trust their local library to access crucial services, programs and materials. This is why Queens Library needs more funding—to be able to keep offering classes for newly arrived immigrants, update and improve their international language collections, renovate their buildings and more. Their programs and services empower individuals and improve lives.

I have a deep sense of gratitude toward Queens Library and sincerely appreciate the work they complete. I hope you will consider my personal story when discussing funding for our libraries. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Preliminary Budget Hearing

My name is Sheila Lewandowski, Founder and Director of The Chocolate Factory Theater, a nonprofit award-winning performing arts venue in Long Island City, Queens. I thank you, Chairman Van Bramer and the Committee for this opportunity to submit testimony.

I will submit more extensive written testimony so beg your patience and ask that you accept these two photos as placeholders.

These photos represent our future but only if we adequately fund culture and the arts.

Culture and the Arts is for Everyone.

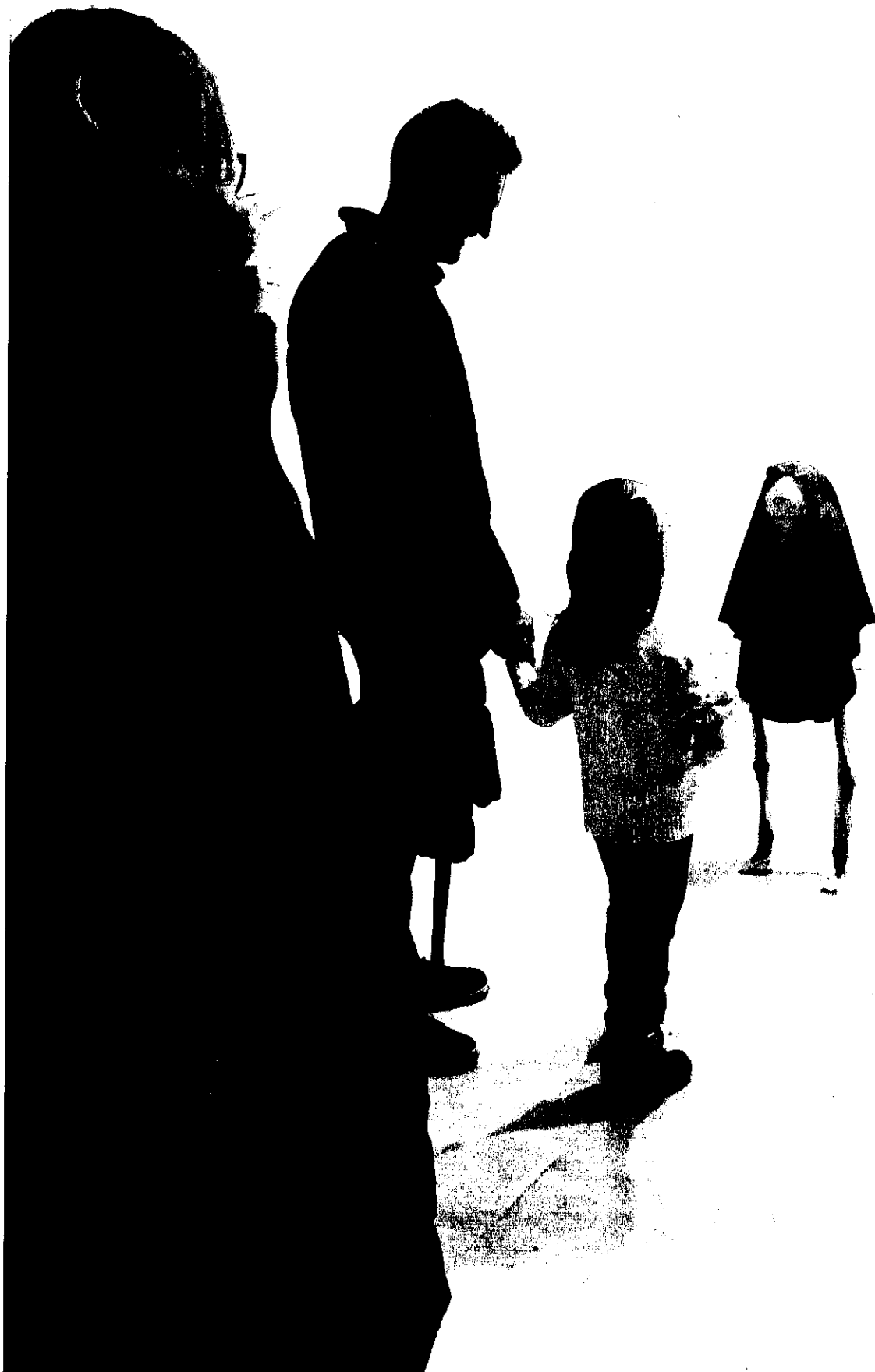
Points to be made:

- Data is limited but culture is not;
- The breadth of Cultural activities supported by DCLA is extensive – public art, monuments, dance, arts education, mental health, etc.
- Culture builds economy
- We must support our libraries and their content for them to fully serve all NYers. Culture is a big part of that content.

So, I close with, please keep supporting the work of the Department of Cultural Affairs to complete the Cultural Plan and please find a way to increase funding for the arts citywide.

Respectfully submitted,
Sheila Lewandowski
Sheila@ChocolateFactoryTheater.org
718-482-7069





Written Testimony by Tress Walker
New York City Council
Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations
Fiscal Year 2019 Preliminary Budget Hearing
March 16, 2018

Good Afternoon. It is an honor for me to be here speaking with you today.

"Every journey begins with a single step" many distinguished people have quoted this. I would like to add my piece: Every journey begins with the understanding that where you are, no longer suits you! The journey begins with the decision that you will no longer stay in your current situation and you take your first step!

My steps lead me here today! To this moment, where I have the opportunity to share with you why the Queens Central Library is a critical part of the Jamaica, Queens landscape, why the Job and Business Academy is vitally important to its residents and why increased funding is necessary.

My journey here began just after what could have been a life ending accident. On my way to physical therapy, one beautiful morning, my phone buzzed as I am locking my door. My brother texted me about a class being offered at the Central Library. As I am reading the information the tears welled up; my pulse quickened; this was it! This was the missing part of the puzzle. I immediately signed up and the rest is a sweet memory.

JamaicaFEASTS [Food Entrepreneurship and Services Training Space] under the Job and Business Academy umbrella is vital to those who want to start a business and are sometimes overwhelmed with all the required paperwork.

The JamaicaFEASTS program, like many programs at the Queens Library, are managed by talented, caring individuals who want to see you succeed; staffed by individuals who have a vested interest in our success. MumsKitchens NYC was fully birthed through The JamaicaFEASTS program! this team brings real world knowledge to this amazing program, they have very discerning palates and many products have been fine-tuned with their assistance.

Mr. Michael Maldonado can find the tiniest needle in a haystack - he will thread it - and point you in the direction you need to go. His world knowledge and research skills are undeniable.

Ms. Tara L. Stanton's drive to see what is now the FEASTS program move from a thought, to a concept, to actually changing lives is a testament, of her commitment to make a difference. Her ideas and insights pointed us in the direction to see our products in a different light; adding depth to a product line.

The students of this program are now business partners as we work on building our individual businesses, while making a difference in the lives of our children and family. We also partner with each other when needed as we work to build up our communities. If the food industry is a path you want to explore you need to be in the Jamaica FEASTS program

In fact, if you are struggling with life issues, work issues, uncertainty about where you belong - the Queens Central Library is a source that is sometimes overlooked; that can no longer be! Queens Library, with an emphasis on the Job and Business Academy, is a treasure trove of skilled personnel who need the necessary resources to have a larger reach into the community and make a significant difference in the lives of many.

Help them to help us so we too can help others and in so doing create a legacy we can all be proud of.

Chair Van Bramer and members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify before you today.

NYC ARTIST COALITION

Testimony on:
**Funding for the Department of Cultural Affairs and
CreateNYC Cultural Plan Implementation**
before the
**The New York City Council Committee on Cultural Affairs
Preliminary Budget Hearing**
by Jamie Burkart
Friday March 16th, 2018

Honorable Council Members,

My name is Jamie Burkart. I am a member of the NYC Artist Coalition and an artist safety advocate.

I am here to support the Department of Cultural Affairs and ask for increased funding to implement the CreateNYC Cultural Plan.

The CreateNYC Office Hours events with Tom Finkelpearl bring together artists, nonprofits, and public officials for conversations where vital information is shared, unprecedented connections are formed, and bridges of trust are built between creative communities and the city. These types of office hours are crucial for helping “underground” artists get access to life saving city services, and for the City of New York to better understand how artists lives work.

My life as a safety advocate began with the loss another, my friend Nick Gomez-Hall who was among the 36 artists killed in Oakland’s tragic Ghost Ship fire at the end of 2016.

I committed myself to organizing for the safety and preservation of community-driven spaces.

Early on, I attended a Department of Cultural Affairs CreateNYC Office Hours event and soon found myself in league with longtime safety experts in the arts. We conducted pre-inspection fire code walkthroughs. We helped artists become FDNY certified Fire Guards. We organized independently as a coalition to understand issues that impact artists the most and to fight for the safety and preservation of community driven spaces.

The Coalition’s priorities are to **prevent criminalization** of community spaces, get **access to support**, and **stop displacement**.

Forming a diverse city-wide coalition we engaged in the CreateNYC process. We called for the **repeal of NYC’s discriminatory 1926 “No Dancing” Cabaret Law**. We called for the creation of a task force of **confidential cultural caseworkers** to help community-driven cultural spaces get access to code compliance, safety, and liability help.

NYC ARTIST COALITION

Versions of these recommendations were included in the CreateNYC plan. We were pleased in 2017 when the Mayoral Administration joined the City Council's work by after 91 years signing the **historic Cabaret Law repeal** and by creating **New York City's first ever Office of Nightlife**.

These tangible achievements are felt by artists across New York City and known around the world. These collaborations among communities and the City are made easier by the Department of Cultural Affairs. They send a clear signal that the City of New York values its creative New Yorkers who are often marginalized and must sometimes sacrifice too much for our ideas of tomorrow.

I want to thank Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl and all the Department of Cultural Affairs staff for holding the City's bold torch so it shines underground as well. Thank you for lighting a path into such bright halls as these, and into our democratic franchise. There is still much more work to do.

Please give the Department of Cultural Affairs the resources they need to continue developing innovative civic solutions that make New York City a creative capital where diverse cultures can thrive safely.



**Testimony to the New York City Council
Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA)
March 16, 2018**

I'm Stephanie Wilchfort, President & CEO of Brooklyn Children's Museum, one of the 33 members of the City's Cultural Institutions Group. Brooklyn Children's Museum is located in Crown Heights, and provides early childhood cultural experiences for 275,000 children and caregivers annually, more than half of whom come from our core Central Brooklyn neighborhoods of Bedford Stuyvesant, Brownsville, Crown Heights, East Flatbush, East New York and Prospect Lefferts Gardens.

When the Cultural Institutions Group is strong, institutions like Brooklyn Children's Museum can think BIG about serving our communities, and meeting the issues and strategies identified in the Cultural Plan. I'm here to share just one example of this that speaks to preserving the character of our neighborhoods and ensuring that neighborhood organizations are not pushed out of changing communities.

Two years ago, our friends at Brooklyn Public Library shared a challenge they faced in the Brower Park Branch on St. Mark's Avenue, just 1.5 blocks from Brooklyn Children's Museum. This library is housed in a leased space, built as a low-rise building in a rapidly developing area. It is a small library, but one with enormous passion, relevance, and meaning to our neighbors -- many of whom fought to see it created in 1963, volunteered in the library, and raised their children in the space. Like many branches, the Brower Park Library provides free literacy programs, after-school homework help, services to seniors, and critical access to books, media and information for our community.

Because the space is leased, it is insecure, subject to the interests of private development. Equally challenging, leased buildings are not eligible for significant capital funding from the City, and this library's systems and infrastructure are deteriorating. At the same time, there is little large-scale space to be leased or purchased at reasonable cost in Crown Heights.

Brooklyn Children's Museum, however, is owned by the City and -- because the Department of Cultural Affairs and the Department of Design & Construction had the foresight to build our museum with expansion space in 2008 -- today, we can offer our community's public library a

permanent home in our building of the same size as its current leased space. In 2020, the Brower Park Branch will move to Brooklyn Children's Museum, and it will be there safely and in perpetuity.

The decision to open Brooklyn Children's Museum's space to the Library was an easy one. Our friends at BPL are the very best of program partners, mission-aligned, passionate, thoughtful. Both of our organizations will thrive by cross-pollinating visitors and program. **But Brooklyn Children's Museum could only open its doors because, as a member of the CIG, we are supported by the City.** Because of the City's leadership support, our space can now be an even bigger and better asset for us, for Brooklyn Public Library, and for our community.

That is why we are asking today that the \$10 million allocated for Culture in FY 2018 be baselined, and that an additional \$20 million be added to support arts and culture programming, split between members of the Cultural Institutions Group and our partners in the program group community. When our cultural institutions are supported by public funding, we can be anchors and activists in our communities, creating solutions in partnership with our fellow community institutions, and with the people we serve.

My heart is full of gratitude today, and every day that I come to speak with all of you -- our partners at the Department of Cultural Affairs, our Council Members, and our fellow cultural organizations joining us here today. Your commitment to our work serving families in Central Brooklyn has been extraordinary. Thank you.



Response to the New York Public Library Master Plan

The Committee to Save NYPL

JANUARY 2018

The Library a wilderness of books. The volumes of the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Centuries, which lie so near on the shelf, are rarely opened, are effectually forgotten and not implied by our literature and newspapers. ... Those old books suggested a certain fertility, an Ohio soil, as if they were making a humus for new literatures to spring in. I heard the bellowing of bullfrogs and the hum of mosquitoes reverberating through the thick embossed covers when I had closed the book. Decayed literature makes the richest of all soils.

- Henry David Thoreau

The Committee to
SAVE NYPL

232 East 11th Street, New York, NY 10003 www.SaveNYPL.org

Cover courtesy © Peter Aaron/OTTO

RESPONSE TO THE NYPL MASTER PLAN

IMPROVING A RESEARCH LIBRARY FOR THE 21st CENTURY

On November 15th, the New York Public Library Board of Trustees unanimously [approved a master plan](#) for the 42nd Street Library that no one had seen. Prepared by Mecanoo and Beyer Blinder Belle, the plan is the culmination of a \$317 million project to renovate the central research library. Among its many recommendations, the plan calls for a new entrance on 40th Street, new stairs and elevators, an enlarged gift shop, and a new café. It also proposes renovated restrooms and new uses for rooms on the basement level and elsewhere in the building that have long been closed.

Opening unused rooms and refurbishing those that are worn out should be commended, but many aspects of the new plan erode the connection between researchers and collections. Some of the rooms being refurbished once housed special collections and expert curators where intimate contact between visitors, librarians, and collections was one of the library's celebrated strengths. The vaguely described use of the refurbished rooms, the scarcity of books there, and the slow pace at which new librarians are being hired calls into question the motivations for the master plan.

As these plans were being considered NYPL held two meetings to present their vision for the 42nd Street Library and solicit public comment. At these meetings—not to mention previous charrettes, stakeholder's meetings, and surveys—the audience unequivocally stressed that quick access to all collections was their highest priority. There is little in this plan to advance that objective. Instead, money is being directed to add a gift shop, a café, and redundant stairs while making the renowned map collection more remote from users and librarians. An examination of the library's master plan spending objectives reveals their misplaced priorities: only eight percent (\$14 million) of the combined Phase II & III costs is being allocated towards improving research services.

To date, NYPL has not shared floor plans with the public. There is much we still do not know. But the scope and cost of this master plan vastly exceeds the original proposal to create an “education corridor” on the basement level. From what we have seen, many aspects of this plan raise serious concerns.

THE STACKS

The NYPL stacks, which constitute about one fifth of the building's cubic space, are not addressed by this master plan. Instead, library officials have commissioned a "stacks study" from Mecanoo & BBB, which will not be completed until sometime in 2018 when other work is well advanced. Alarming, NYPL's Mellon Director of Research Libraries William Kelly has stated that all options regarding the stacks are on the table and "we should be able to do a lot of different things."

For over four years, the seven floors of bookstacks that structurally support the Rose Reading Room have sat empty, even after library officials abandoned their controversial Norman Foster plan. Now they are being used for temporary storage for the displaced Mid-Manhattan circulating collection. The stacks have a storage capacity for three million books. Even with the recently expanded storage under Bryant Park, over five million items remain in remote storage in New Jersey. Returning the stacks to their original use would create onsite storage capacity of approximately eight million books, greatly improving access to the collection.

The stacks are critical to the research function of the library. Neither Butler Library at Columbia, nor Firestone at Princeton has emptied its stacks in order to gain access to the expanded (millions) of books made available by participation in the ReCAP shared collection. Why not use the stacks so readers at NYPL can have ready access to more onsite books and access to ReCAP books? It is possible to have both.

Library officials claim the stacks require \$46 million in upgrades to their climate controls. This is a fraction of the cost of the estimated \$517 million that will eventually be spent on Mid-Manhattan and the 42nd Street Library. CSNYPL questions why Mecanoo & BBB have been hired to undertake the study. Rather than waste time and money exploring other uses that researchers do not want, NYPL should solicit bids from engineering firms to upgrade the climate controls so books can be returned to the stacks permanently.

THE MAP DIVISION

The Map Division contains one of the world's unrivaled collections of cartographic materials. Under NYPL's master plan, the storage rooms adjacent to the Map Room (Room 117) would be converted to a café. Library officials insist climate controls in this space are not adequate to protect materials and want them relocated to storage under Bryant Park.

CSNYPL opposes converting the Map Division into a coffee shop. A café will create unnecessary noise and distraction for readers in the Map Room, especially as the

two spaces are connected through two doors. It replaces key library functions with services that are inessential to the library's mission and should be located elsewhere or eliminated altogether. We strongly urge NYPL to keep the map collection near users. Ensuring the long-term preservation of this precious collection is critical, and NYPL should upgrade HVAC, add window shading, and improve artificial lighting. These infrastructure improvements would allow the map collection to remain with proper climate controls and would be equally necessary to convert the space to a café.

VISITOR CIRCULATION

NYPL proposes to cut a new entrance into the landmarked exterior at 40th Street and add a new stair and elevator bank adjacent to the south hall. This is a radical alteration to the structure and design of the building. The stated justification for such significant change is the wish to accommodate future programs for high school and university groups and to provide an employee entrance.

Carrère & Hastings designed a beautiful stair in the south hall, and though it has been insensitively altered and remains closed to the public, it is still there to serve every floor (Fig. 1). Library officials contend this stair is cut off from the rest of basement floor by the freight entrance. A more modest stair connecting the basement to the first floor could overcome this inconvenience while taking advantage of the existing and plentiful stairs in the building (Fig. 2). A master plan with such extravagant and redundant circulation might indicate undisclosed priorities. It may be that the new stairs and elevators are aimed primarily at more efficient access for caterers at the many private functions held at NYPL.

Instead of these costly alterations, CSNYPL urges library officials to give priority to upgrades of the slow and inefficient elevators in the north hall that inconvenience readers and researchers. Additionally, the two unused Astor Hall entrances on Fifth Avenue could be opened to ease congestion, especially as the bag checks there have created bottlenecks.

GOTTESMAN HALL AND CELESTE BARTOS FORUM

The gift shop will be relocated to the first floor of the South Court infill designed by Davis Brody Bond in 2002. And, next to it, Gottesman Hall will house a new rotating exhibition of items from the NYPL collections. Mecanoo proposes cutting a new connection between Gottesman Exhibition Hall and the gift shop.

CSNYPL opposes creating new entrances in Gottesman Hall, which would result in the loss of historic fabric and undermine the design of an interior worthy of landmark status. President Marx has repeatedly promised that renovations would respect these historic interiors, but these alterations flagrantly violate that pledge.

Phase Three of the Master Plan includes the renovation of the Celeste Bartos Forum. The skylights in this room have been severely compromised and many were closed during previous building campaigns. We recommend restoring these skylights to their original appearance and functionality. CSNYPL makes the same suggestion for the closed skylights in other rooms on the third floor.

SECOND FLOOR ROOMS

There are four large, handsome, unused rooms off of the south hall on the second floor, one of them large enough to be used as a film set for the trustees meeting in Frederick Wiseman's promotional film. What is planned for Rooms 201 and 204? When some of these rooms are described as multi-purpose, is it implied that they will not be used to store books, documents and the readers who consult them? Using rooms 200 and 200a for staff does not make them "shared amenities" as described in NYPL documents. Indeed, these spacious, light-filled rooms will remain closed to public use. The plan should specify the purpose of these rooms. Uses for other rooms remain vague or unspecified. What are the plans for the original Shipping Room on the basement's southwest corner? Labeled plans are needed for public discussion.

EXPANDED HOURS

CSNYPL has repeatedly advocated for longer hours of operation in the 42nd Street Library. In 1971, Mayor Lindsay's budget cuts forced the library to slash operating hours in half, from 84 hours a week down to 40 hours. Currently, the library remains open 56 hours per week and is open until 7:45pm on only two weekdays - far short of pre-1970s norms.

In the 2015 Request for Qualifications (RFQ) distributed to architects, NYPL states "70% of visitors to our physical locations cite access to our materials, spaces and technology as the most important reason for visiting the library - and cite extended hours as their number one requested improvement." And the strategic objectives for the programming design brief included in the Request for Proposal (RFP) promises: "We will open portions of the library for longer hours." Yet NYPL

representatives have made no announcement of expanded hours at the two public presentations on the master plan.

NYPL must restore library service in the Rose Reading Room to twelve hours a day, seven days a week. This can be done now; there is no reason to delay expanded hours until other portions of the master plan are completed in 2021.

CONCLUSION

There is little in this plan that advances the goal of providing researchers with faster and better access to NYPL's collections; in fact, the plan to relocate the maps does exactly the opposite. Instead, NYPL concentrates on commercializing the first floor with a larger café and retail store. The questionable need for a third stairway in the south side of the building may also be driven by commercial considerations—the needs of caterers. Smaller second floor rooms once housed expert curators and special collections. The Mecanoo/BBB proposal substitutes unspecified uses for these rooms, but without books and curators, their utility is diminished, and collections remain remote from readers. This grand building can accommodate many uses, but changes should serve the needs of readers and researchers above shoppers and diners.

NYPL's promise of an open, transparent, participatory planning process has a hollow ring when its trustees approve a master plan based on a video and a few renderings without public consent. Where are the actual plans? Why was approval given before any public comment? And when will the modest suggestions that come from researchers who love and use the library be given priority? It is not too late to heed public preferences. The plan could easily be modified to incorporate many of these suggestions without increasing its cost (in fact the opposite would be the case). There is still time for NYPL to avoid unpopular and costly mistakes. CSNYPL will continue to advocate for improved access to collections and restoration of library services. We urge NYPL to give priority to readers and researchers at the 42nd Street Library.

Finally, a master plan that ignores the stacks is no master plan at all. Returning the collections to this great unused asset should be the central feature of any sensible plan.





Fig. 1. The 42nd Street Library's South Staircase. Currently closed to the public, the stairs access every floor and feature a small version of the Rose Reading Room sky mural.

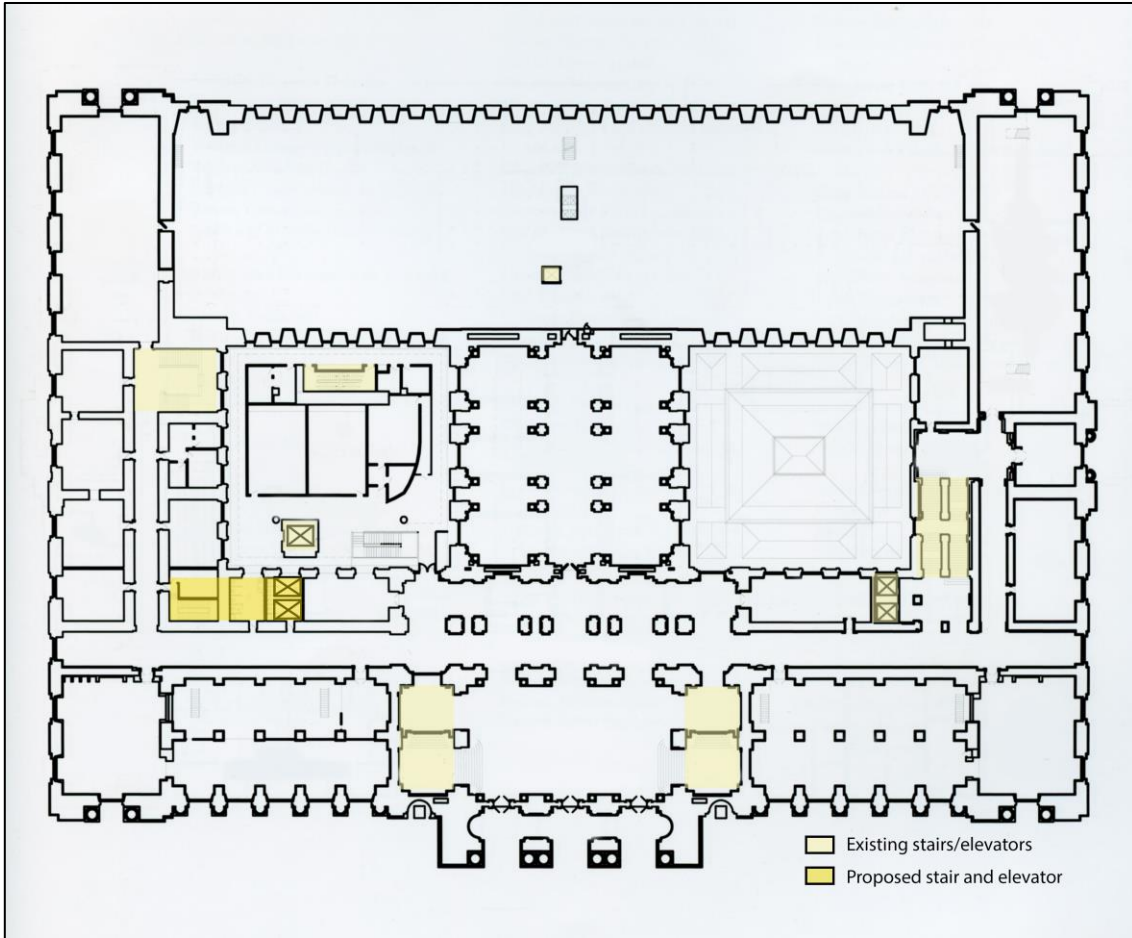


Fig. 2. First floor plan showing existing and proposed major vertical circulation. Three stairways serve the south side (left) and one serves the north (right). Note: NYPL has not provided plans so this diagram is intended to represent what can be assumed from their vague presentation.

Subject: New York Public Library: Mid-Manhattan plans especially

Dear Public Official,

Please pay critical attention to the plans to renovate the Mid-Manhattan and 42nd Street public library buildings. As a historian of architecture, I offer praise for PAST achievements of Mecanoo and of Beyer Blinder Belle, the architects proposing new plans, but there are problems with the PRESENT plans for the Mid-Manhattan and the initial proposals for the 42nd Street Libraries.

Some have to do with rivaling taxpaying businesses.

1. Are nearby cafes and restaurants aware of the future competition between their tax-paying businesses and the cafes planned for the 42nd street and Mid-Manhattan buildings? Probably not, because they do not yet realize the threat to their income and are not reading about the Library's plans. Library users might like a small coffee counter in each library, but neither building needs a whole café, nor should they compete with local businesses. (The one at 42nd Street will actually mean altering the valuable Map Room's services!) It will also cost plenty of money to build the rooftop café, while the Library trustees can't seem to find any funds to air-condition and add sprinklers to the 7 floors of stacks at 42nd street and return over 2.5 million books to the building from costly storage repositories. Does anyone in City government look hard and critically at the way in which the Library spends money?

2. The so called "wizard's hat" on top of the café at Mid-Manhattan is going to cost a lot of money to build. The only reason to have this dramatic peaked ceiling is to make the space appealing for private events such as wedding receptions, which are already held in the 42nd Street building in competition with tax-paying catering facilities. . Even if event revenue is anticipated for the Library, the revenue is uncertain. What is certain is that the City and Library should not be spending money up front on something superfluous. The cafe itself is superfluous. This is a library, not a place of amusement. One needn't cancel out the other---unless money is tight, as the Library claims when the matter of restoring books to the 42nd Street stacks is raised.

3. The idea that the book stacks at Mid-Manhattan are 'flexible' is worrying. The word 'flexible' means that at some point, they could be removed. When you consider that the Library trustees let the Donnell Library shrink beyond

recognition and that 2.5 million or more books were removed from 42nd Street, you might want to ask just what flexibility means in the present case.

4. The new plan for the research book stacks at Mid-Manhattan seems not to provide any shelves or ways for a reader to spread out a book to see if he wants to take it back to his seat across the atrium. A reader doesn't always go to a bookshelf for a specific volume. He browses, he compares, he looks up one thing in an index. For these and other normal activities, he needs a shelf added to the end vertical wall of a stack. Ideally, there might be a desk and chair here and there in case he needs to compare a couple of volumes, or to take a brief note--- not to sit there for more than 5 minutes. This should be a simple thing to fix. Please request this from the architects

5. When people come to a library, they come to find information, not to see vistas. Ms. Houben, the generally admirable Dutch architect hired for Mid-Manhattan, has in a public meeting said that book stacks should not obscure vistas. Perhaps if she were a student or library user, she would be willing to trade some vistas for actual reference materials. I do not want a library to look like a jail cell, but referring to views is irrelevant to functional planning.

Citizens will be grateful to you for looking long, hard, and critically at the Library's plans.

Respectfully,

(Dr.) Carol Herselle Krinsky,

Professor of Art History, NYU College of Arts and Science.

Member: Committee to Save the NY Public Library

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

T2018-1322 FY 2019 Preliminary Budget and Oversight Hearings - Libraries

March 16, 2018, Committee Room, City Hall

Testimony by Veronika Conant, M.L.S.

45 W 54 St, 7C, New York, NY 10019 vaconant@yahoo.com 212 581-1895

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

I am Veronika Conant, a retired academic librarian, member of the Committee to Save the New York Public Library, and past President of the West 54 - 55 Street Block Association, active during the disastrous sale of the Donnell Library. I am writing this testimony in my own name.

I strongly support plans to increase for all three public library systems the operating budgets, to create baseline capital budgets and to support FY 2019 capital funding of much needed repairs and upgrades and invest in preventive maintenance.

Libraries today are more important than ever before, allowing everyone safe, free use of resources, help to develop critical thinking skills and evaluate information.

I would like to address concerns about and recommendations for NYPL's plans for:

1) Master Plan for the 42nd Street Research Library, costing \$317 million, w/o including the seven floors of book stacks for which the City owned building was built in 1911 by the City on land owned by the City. According to the original agreement between the NYPL and City, NYPL agreed to function as the free public research library for the City, develop the research collection and provide free access to research materials for all New Yorkers and visitors in exchange for the City to provide and maintain the building. **This arrangement has worked extremely well for over 100 years and made NYPL into an internationally respected research institution. This arrangement is currently threatened.**

NYPL's current construction priorities are very troubling. There is no overall vision, just expensive and mostly low priority plans. Almost five years after NYPL emptied the book stacks in secret and carted off-site about three million research materials, close to four years after they abandoned the Central Library

Plan (CLP), NYPL is now doing a stacks study, still ignoring the needs of researchers who request the return of the research collection from off-site. There is a large off-site storage in **ReCAP (Research Collections and Consortium), in Princeton NJ**, about 50 miles away, shared with Princeton and Columbia, with over 5.2 million research items from NYPL's collection.

Now NYPL wants this shared consortia arrangement to remain permanent. Our public library has essentially outsourced its unique research collection and hundreds of library jobs to Princeton, NJ, another state. Access to the off-site collection has been taking too long, is poorly organized and is causing research and researchers severe problems.

The Committee to Save the NYPL separately submitted an official Response to the Master Plan, please look at that carefully. The cost of \$317 million for internal renovation of the 42nd Street Library is far too high, especially without doing anything in the stacks. **The empty stacks would need only \$46-47 million one time expense** (cost for about 160,000 sf would be under \$300 per sf) **to upgrade their existing HVAC and sprinkler systems and allow return of the three million research materials into a closed, extremely efficient and functional book delivery system for easy access to researchers in the Rose Reading Room, above.**

I am very strongly against the Master Plan (Central Library Plan in disguise) and ask you to please practice your oversight powers and do not allow any capital improvements in the building until the HVAC is upgraded in the book stacks and the research collection is returned there. This must be PRIORITY ONE.

Only what can not be kept on location belongs off-site.

The cost of ReCAP for each member is according to their size and frequency of use. **In 2016 NYPL contributed about 38.4% of the cost, the largest.** Princeton only contributes about 23.7%, with Columbia in between. NYPL must disclose the annual cost of ReCAP.

Fortunately NYPL is in the middle of a large metropolis. Both NYPL and Columbia are members of **METRO (Metropolitan NY Library Council)**, a 275 member group of local libraries which, through a cooperative agreement, provides access to the collections of all participating libraries either through interlibrary loan of circulating materials with daily deliveries, or by getting a METRO referral card from the originating library for a one-time, on-site use of any of the 275 libraries. This can be repeated as many times as needed. Therefore, instead of losing access to millions of materials from NYPL's

collection stored permanently off-site, if the three million items are returned to the 42nd Street book stacks, where they belong, NYPL users can get a METRO card any time and use Columbia, NYU, etc. much better than access to Princeton's collection would allow, also making the collection easily accessible to all New Yorkers.

2) Branch libraries

Even after the 42nd Street book shelves are again full, construction plans for the rest of the building need careful study of each component. \$317 million for the interior construction is a very steep price. In comparison, **NYPL's Estimated FY 2017 - 2020 total construction needs for 54 individual NYPL libraries, including the circulating branch libraries and more for system-wide work are almost \$332 million.**

I recommend to study the list at the NYS Library's website [Estimated New York State Public Library Construction Needs 2016-2020: Library Development: New York State Library](#)



Estimated New York State Public Library Construction Needs 2016-2020: Li...

State Aid for Library Construction Program;
DRAFT: Estimated New York State Public
Library Construction Needs 20...

and fund the capital needs in those branches before allowing additional funds spent on the 42nd Street Library.

In addition, there are plans to demolish and replace the popular and much used, single standing **Inwood Library** with a new one as part of a large, new, affordable housing development. The community is still fighting these efforts.

3) Mid-Manhattan Renovation

I was delighted to hear in 2014 that NYPL decided not to sell the most heavily used circulating branch library in Manhattan, but renovate it. Plans are for a 100,000 sf, 400,000 volume collection. It is good to open up and reconfigure space in a different way. However, I have major problems with the expensive (\$200 million) and most intrusive plans for the interior renovation of the Mid-Manhattan Library. The architect plans to cut a large atrium out of the middle of the Library, and on one side will be a windowless "long room", filled with book stacks, and on the other side the library users will have seating, computers, etc. The two will be connected by walkways.

From the City's Geographic Information System:

Mid-Manhattan Library: 6 floors, Gross Floor Area: 154,328 sf (estimated), Lot area: 21,190 feet,

Lot Frontage: 112.83' (on Fifth Ave), Lot Depth (on E 40th Street): 175'.

Originally, in 1970 NYPL opened the **Mid-Manhattan Library** on the top three floors of the old Constable department store (the rest of the building only became part of Mid-Manhattan in 1982). In 1970 a Wilson Library Journal article states "the building, whose lower floors house a department store, provides three floors (63,000 square feet), seating for 1,033 and a **book stack capacity of 700,000**". By 1982 the collection was over 500,000. After the Donnell closed in 2008, its World Languages Collection (about 175,000 volumes) went to Mid-Manhattan, so by then it must have been filled to capacity. Mid-Manhattan users know that NYPL removed a substantial part of the circulating collection while expecting it to close, so a 400,000 volume collection is already a low number.

Concerns:

a) Instead of enlarging the space, **creating an atrium means a loss of spacious and precious floor space**. It is not a good design for a library - also what will be the cost of heating/cooling?

b) **100,000 square feet costing in an interior renovation \$200 million amounts to \$2,000 per square feet**, very expensive. Even at 150,000 sf it would cost \$1,500 per sf.

c) **Separating the open stacks** and pushing them into the "long room" **seems very limiting** for all those needing to use the stacks - will there be any seating in that area?

d) **Access to the open book stacks** from the rest of the library **through walkways/ bridges across the atrium seems far**. It can present a problem not only to the elderly, children and the disabled, but also to all those wanting to use the library collection, making it less accessible. **Why not have bookshelves all over on each floor, near people and seating?**

e) **The collection will also include business resources from SIBL, shrunk to fit the space** (SIBL's circulating collection had about 40-50,000 volumes in business, science and technology, and according to an email (March 10, 2017), from NYPL through CM Dan Garodnick's office, there are still 450,000 volumes of research materials there)

f) **Room for the collection:** after renovations there will be 400,000 volumes, but Mid-Manhattan's capacity before the renovations was 700,000.

g) **Rooftop terrace** is a nice luxury, how much does it cost to create?

4) Sale of SIBL is a major mistake - SIBL, the Science Industry and Business Library, a major research library with a small circulating collection, was only completed, fully wired, in 1996, cost \$100 million, 213,000 square feet. Five floors, holding 1.2 -1.6 million research materials sold in 2012 to Church Pension Group for \$60.8 million, and three floors with the library itself sold for \$93.4 million in Dec. 2016 to Vulcan Real Estate for about 100,000 square feet, \$930 per square feet. **The total sale amounted to \$152.2 million, much less than either the \$200 million cost of renovation of Mid-Manhattan or the estimated \$317 million cost of renovation of the 42nd Street Library. Why sell such a beautiful, completely ready, award winning library, loved by many, next to the CUNY Graduate Center, at excellent location? Why not continue to collect research materials in science and technology?**

In my opinion these are bad budget decisions, with serious consequences for the entire NYPL system. Far too much funds are allocated to two library buildings out of 92, as described above. Please do not allow this to happen.

In summary, the library's essence is not how much space is empty but how large and good a collection it contains, how many people can be seated at tables, ease of access to both seating and the collection, having adequate number of computers, laptops and wiring for technology, as well as adequate well qualified

and compensated staff and hours open, and ensuring smooth flow of both materials and people.

Libraries are precious and must be protected and cherished, not sold at a time when more people than ever are needing and using them. We must not allow the power of real estate developers be greater than the power of knowledge. Transparency, accountability and oversight of the entire NYPL System is much needed. Please do not allow the sale of any public library, including SIBL, our major research library.

Thank you.

Veronika Conant M.L.S., retired from Hunter College Libraries
past Pres., West 54 - 55 Street Block Association
Member, Committee to Save the New York Public Library [Save NYPL](#)



Save NYPL

The Actors' City Theater (ACT) Fund

Executive Summary:

For almost 70 years, Off-Broadway has been the epicenter of American theatrical creativity. Hundreds of institutions and producers each year present plays and musicals that experiment with the form, highlight socially important topics, or are simply excellent revivals of old classics. Over the decades, renowned shows that have become part of the national dialogue began in these venues, from *The Fantasticks* and *Hair* to *Rent* and *Hamilton*.

The Off-Broadway theater scene is also an economic engine for the city, contributing over half a billion dollars to our economy in the 2009-10 season, even during the midst of the recession.

And yet, between one and two thousand actors and stage managers who work in the Off-Broadway arena each year find themselves in economic distress. The average salaries are under \$30,000 gross for jobs that often go beyond 50 hours a week. The theaters themselves are stretched thin, also victimized by rising rents and costs in a city that has grown far too expensive for lower and middle class workers.

The end result for this artistic sector in crisis—both labor and management—is a gradual erosion of talent and institutions. Professionally trained artists with advanced degrees who are the best of the best, unable to pay their bills while employed at some of the city's most prestigious theaters, end up debt-ridden and leave the business, the city, or both.

Meanwhile, the federal government has made it all but impossible for working artists to exist, let alone thrive. With the passage of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, Congress and the Trump administration have eliminated what few protections existed in the tax code for middle and working class artists, as much as quadrupling their tax burden, and have disincentivized charitable giving, a blow to the artists' nonprofit employers.

In their own words, New York City's Off-Broadway actors and stage managers address their love for and pride in the Off-Broadway community, vividly express their struggles, and share their fears for their future in the current political and economic climate. They need and deserve the city's help.

Our solution is The Actors' City Theater (ACT) Fund, a concentrated fund within the Department of Cultural Affairs budget that will help subsidize our working stage managers and actors while they are employed at these hundreds of theaters in the Off-Broadway arena. It will help ensure our performing artists do not have to take second and third jobs, pile up debt, or declare bankruptcy; it will help our city's institutions retain the best and brightest talent; and it will fortify our position as a city that values theater and recognizes its importance not only to tourists and the rest of the nation, but more importantly, to local citizens.

Part I. Off-Broadway Artists Are Going Broke...or Worse

Nick Westrate was a recent graduate of Juilliard's Drama Division living in Hamilton Heights a few years ago, when he enjoyed a continuous 52 weeks of employment at some of New York's premier theaters, rare for an Off-Broadway actor. "I was even awarded a special Drama Desk Award for being a highlight of the season, a season in which I performed in four Off-Broadway plays in a row. But, unfortunately, at the end of that season"—three days before the ceremony, which Nick attended in a borrowed suit—"I had to declare bankruptcy. Even with the jobs that I worked during the day before my performances at night, I couldn't keep up financially." Nick, who grew up on a Michigan farm, borrowed money from his father to pay his attorney, but acknowledges, "Others are not so lucky. I don't think you should need a trust fund or be a celebrity in order to work Off-Broadway. I worry that we might lose an entire generation of working class actors like me."

A 2015 study by Center for an Urban Future put the total number of artists living in New York City at 56,268, an all-time high, but the same study showed an increasing outward migration of artists to the city's far reaches: "The city's surging population and economy have made it increasingly difficult not only to find and afford an apartment but also the studio and practice space that have incubated New York's emerging artists for generations."¹ In our theater community, it means many workers like Nick struggle to survive, while their employers struggle to pay a fair wage and produce art, even while being an economic engine for the city.

Like Nick, New York's actors and stage managers often must work additional jobs at the same time they're working full-time Off-Broadway, pile up debt trying to pay for rent and groceries, or declare bankruptcy.

Lucas Caleb Rooney, who won Lortel and Drama Desk Awards for his performance in *The Orphans Home Cycle* at Signature Theatre and an Obie Award for *Red Speedo* at New York Theatre Workshop, says, "I've paid my rent with credit cards on occasion—I've carried debt for decades without being able to pay the minimum payment—all while having a terminal degree, being in the five percent of actors who have made it."

Brandon J. Dirden, who won Obie, AUDELCO, and Theater World awards for his performance in *The Piano Lesson* at the Signature Theater, sees a binary choice. "Do you want to be an Off-Broadway actor, or do you want to, like, do the American Dream thing?" He and his wife **Crystal Dickinson** are raising a family together in New Jersey. "We initially moved to Jersey because it was too expensive for just us," says Brandon. "We were never in a position to save money, so we moved in with Crystal's parents in Jersey. This was before the thought of raising children. Since having a kid, the low wages have definitely prevented us from accepting jobs

¹ Forman, Adam and Matt A.V. Chaban. "Artists in Schools." *Center for an Urban Future*. July 2017. <https://nycfuture.org/research/more-NYC-artists-fewer-studios-schools>

Off-Broadway." Crystal, who won a Theater World Award the same year as Brandon, for her performance in *Clybourne Park* at Playwrights Horizons, says of Off-Broadway jobs, "I've had to say no a lot of times, because I simply couldn't afford to pay for child care for my two-year-old son and work the Off-Broadway contract. And there's a lot of people out there like me, and they're not just worried about child care. There are also single people out there who are just worried about paying the rent, or how they're going to get a MetroCard to even show up at the theater."

Ismenia Mendes, who won a Drama Desk Award for *The Wayside Motor Inn* at the Signature Theatre, recalls, "Sometimes my friends had to buy me dinner because I couldn't always afford to eat."

Unfortunately, the economic stress of Off-Broadway wages leads some of our most acclaimed and talented performers and creators to drastic decisions: to leave the city, or leave the profession altogether.

Keith Nobbs graduated from LaGuardia High School while living with his family in Kew Gardens and went on to a 19-year acting career, winning a Lucille Lortel Award for his performance in *Four* at MTC Stage II. In the 2015-2016 season, Keith says, "I did three Off-Broadway plays, struggled financially, and reached this point where I thought, 'You're not trapped by this.'" At 37 Keith left the business to pursue his undergraduate degree and now studies cultural anthropology, human rights, and history. "Based on my Off-Broadway income, Stanford determined I was impoverished, so they gave me a full scholarship."

François Battiste won an Obie Award for his performance in *The Good Negro* at The Public Theater. "Our creative juices are always satisfied, but financially we find ourselves pretty destitute." While working full-time Off-Broadway at Lincoln Center, François still needed to keep his second job caring for homeless youth at Covenant House. "Two years ago [in 2014], when my wife got pregnant with our second child, we moved to California. We didn't move to L.A.. We moved to Sacramento to raise our kids, because we figured we'd have a better chance of raising them out there than in New York City, one of the most expensive cities."

Part II. Off-Broadway: An Economic Engine and a Force for Social Good

The Mayor's Office plans an economic impact study detailing what Off-Broadway contributes to our local economy today, but the most recent numbers from a few years ago, when the city was shaken by the Great Recession, still impress: according to the Off-Broadway Alliance, in the 2009-10 season, 2.27 million tickets were sold to Off-Broadway shows—**that's more than the number of visitors to the Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building, or Coney**

Island—64% of them at nonprofit theaters, generating over \$100 million in revenue and contributing over half a billion dollars to the local economy.²

Off-Broadway is an artistic incubator for Broadway, for stages across the country and around the world. Of the last three shows to win the Tony for Best Musical, two of them, *Hamilton* and *Fun Home*, started Off-Broadway, and one of them, *Dear Evan Hansen*, included an Off-Broadway stretch before its Broadway transfer. The last two Tony winners for Best Play, *Oslo* and *The Humans*, also transferred from Off-Broadway. Broadway generated \$1.5 billion in ticket sales this past theatrical season.³

Off-Broadway has long shone a light on social problems affecting marginalized populations that sometimes go ignored by elected officials, as in the early days of the AIDS crisis. **Robert Stanton**, of Clinton Hill, an Obie winner for *All in the Timing* at Primary Stages, remembers of his first job, performing free Shakespeare in Central Park in 1985, that director and producer Joseph Papp “would let us go to see the matinees at The Public for free, and I saw a play that changed my life, that, in fact, saved my life: *The Normal Heart* by Larry Kramer.”

Off-Broadway also amplifies diverse voices that are heard infrequently by the culture at large. **Jose Llana**, a Lortel nominee for his performance as Ferdinand Marcos in *Here Lies Love* at The Public: “I’ve learned that the real work, and the most exciting work, and, to be honest, as an actor of color, the most daring work, where people tend to hire people who look like me, is Off-Broadway.”

The term “Off-Broadway” has historically and academically been used to describe professional venues in New York City that specifically house 100-499 audience members. However, when we refer to Off-Broadway, we are referring to shows within the five boroughs from producers and institutions that adhere to certain contracts with our trade union, Actors’ Equity Association. These contracts are all gradated to give producers tiered rights in exchange for corresponding salaries and benefits afforded our union members. The contracts we refer to when we discuss the Off-Broadway arena are: Off-Broadway, LORT (League of Residential Theaters), Mini, Transition, and individually-negotiated Letters of Agreement (LOA), whose regulations are mostly pursuant to the Off-Broadway contract with the major exception of salary.⁴

Producers and institutions entering into these contracts with our union and hiring our actors and stage managers to work under these contracts have acknowledged that our members should be paid at least minimum wage. Unfortunately, current minimum wage in New York City for our

² Off-Broadway Alliance. “Economic Impact Report - 2009/2010.” 2011. If we assume the same 12% growth as Broadway has seen since the ‘09-10 season, we can reasonably expect this number to be 2.54 million tickets for the prior theatrical year.

³ The Broadway League. “Statistics--Broadway in NYC.” 2017.
<https://www.broadwayleague.com/research/statistics-broadway-nyc/>

⁴ Please see our addendum graphic on page 14 for more information on these contracts.

creative professionals is far below what we need to stay financially solvent, and sometimes difficult for producers to meet.

A decent, living wage for Off-Broadway actors and stage managers would ensure that people from all economic backgrounds could contribute their voices and be heard. But now, while these artists contribute so much to the city's wealth—a city with a GDP comparable to that of Canada, a G7 economy⁵—the city's wealth chokes its artists.

Part III. Decades of Deprivation

Francis Jue, who won Obie and Lortel awards for *Yellow Face* at The Public, says, "I'm tired of counting on being thousands of dollars poorer at the end of an Off-Broadway run than I was at the beginning of rehearsal."

Kristine Nielsen of the Upper West Side, whose 34 Off-Broadway credits include *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* at Lincoln Center, for which she received a Tony nomination when it moved to Broadway, agrees: "I'm tired. I'm tired of not being able to keep up in the economic life of this city, New York."

In 2008, because of the Great Recession, Actors' Equity Association, in its negotiations with the League of Off-Broadway Theatres and Producers, the group representing this cluster of commercial producers and nonprofit institutions, agreed to a wage freeze.

But Off-Broadway actors and stage managers had already suffered through decades of substandard wages.

Reed Birney, who, 40 years after his Off-Broadway debut, won the 2016 Tony Award for Best Actor for *The Humans* (which he originated Off-Broadway at the Roundabout Theatre Company), has only felt the pressure intensify with age and experience: "The question always was, 'How will I pay my bills?' It was a huge stress for many, many, many years. And now that I'm older and looking at what retirement might be, I realize that because I've worked Off-Broadway for so long, my pension is equally small and certainly is not enough to support a family, let alone me."

When the Off-Broadway contract came up for renegotiation in 2016, the six wealthiest nonprofit theaters in the group—Atlantic Theater Company, New York Theatre Workshop, Second Stage, Playwrights Horizons, Signature Theatre, and the Public Theater—had operating budgets ranging from \$4 million to \$41 million. And yet actors could expect to make only \$593 per week in many of their spaces.⁶

⁵ Florida, Richard. "The Economic Power of Global Cities Compared to Nations." *CityLab*. 2017. <https://www.citylab.com/life/2017/03/the-economic-power-of-global-cities-compared-to-nations/519294/>

⁶ This \$593 figure was a galvanizing number for our campaign in the Off-Broadway, as it represented a very common number among the multimillion dollar institutions as well as commercial producers for our

\$593 per week was just a six percent increase from the wage in those spaces 30 years earlier, when adjusted for inflation. **Robert Stanton** remembers, “When I first made Off-Broadway minimum in 1985, I made \$250 a week. \$250 a week adjusted for inflation to 2016 dollars works out to \$560 a week. So that’s a raise we’ve been given of about a dollar a year, basically a flat line. Meanwhile, the cost of living in New York City has increased exponentially. My rent alone has gone up 735% in the intervening 31 years, and I have a really good deal.”

\$593 per week is almost exactly what the MIT Living Wage Calculator describes as a mere subsistence wage in the New York metropolitan area⁷: the amount a single person needs to make rent, prepare all meals at home from scratch with the lowest cost ingredients, buy single warm weather and cold weather outfits, and meet their other, most basic expenses, with no prospect of saving money for the future or paying for any of the things that many Americans take for granted—such as cable, cell phone, or internet service, leisure activities, or providing for children⁸—and not taking into account the 2.25 percent unions dues that all Equity members pay, nor the ten percent agent commission paid by the vast majority of actors working Off-Broadway.

In a 2016 union survey, Equity members reported needing an average net income of \$815 per week just to make ends meet⁹; union actors working in many Off-Broadway spaces were taking home, after taxes, *almost \$500 less per week than they needed*.

A group of actors had organized secretly in anticipation of the 2016 negotiations, and they emboldened the union to negotiate more aggressively for higher wages; this group of activists, Fair Wage OnStage, through their social media and press campaigns¹⁰, petitions¹¹, and boots-on-the-ground agitation in tandem with their union, on whose negotiating team they managed to find seats, helped Equity achieve gains of 16% in wages in commercial houses and

salary—a number that comes in under a \$30,000 annual salary. When we extend the theaters to include the other companies that have contracts with Actors’ Equity in New York currently, we calculate that the actual average gross weekly salary was below that—\$584.67, a number to which we’ll return.

⁷ Glasmeier, Amy K.. *Living Wage Calculator: New York County*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. 2017. <http://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/36061>

⁸ Nadeau, Carey Anne and Amy K. Glasmeier. “User’s Guide / Technical Notes.” *Living Wage Calculator*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. 2016. <http://livingwage.mit.edu/resources/Living-Wage-User-Guide-and-Technical-Notes-2016.pdf>

⁹ Shaw, Helen. “‘There’s a real humiliation I feel’: The struggle for fair wages Off Broadway.” *The Guardian*. November 14, 2016.

¹⁰ All of the testimony from actors in this proposal were taken from their own videos, made for the 2016 Fair Wage OnStage Off-Broadway contract campaign, viewable at <http://fairwageonstage.org/history/2016-off-broadway-campaign-video-testimonials/>

¹¹ “Letter to Management.” Fair Wage OnStage. June 27, 2016. <http://fairwageonstage.org/fairwageonstage-petition-to-off-broadway-producers/>

between 32% and 81% in nonprofit theaters Off-Broadway over the five-year life of the new contract, without a work stoppage.¹²

We have further to go.

In 2018, of all the Off-Broadway institutional theaters and independent producers,

- only 4 spaces pay actors \$900-995 per week, a "middle class" wage¹³
- 14 spaces pay \$600-690 per week
- 55 companies pay less than \$600 per week, and
- **the lowest-paid actors, spanning numerous companies and spaces, receive minimum wage.**

Theaters themselves, burdened by the prohibitively expensive cost of doing business in the city, struggle to pay actors and stage managers Equity minimums, wrestling with the ethics of trying both to pay artists a fair wage and to survive as institutions. As the Off-Broadway League's Equity contract matures into the year 2021, the pressure on these institutions will be even greater.

After last year's contentious negotiation, rank-and-file Equity actors from Fair Wage OnStage reached out to their colleagues in artistic leadership of Off-Broadway theaters for a series of conversations about arts funding.

The actors were inspired by their time on Capitol Hill, advocating for the preservation and expansion of the National Endowment of the Arts; while Congress expanded the NEA by \$7 million, the actors were aware of both how precarious the NEA is in the current national climate, and also how little New York's nonprofit theaters can rely on it.

They were also sensitive to the Trump administration's hostility toward unions and indifference to the middle class. Now Off-Broadway and, indeed, all professional theater workers face a new threat from Washington, D.C..

Part IV. Congress and the President Declare War on Working Artists

¹² Paulson, Michael and Jennifer Schuesler. "Off Broadway Equity Actors and Stage Managers Win Pay Increase." *New York Times*. November 18, 2016.
https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/19/arts/off-broadway-equity-actors-and-stage-managers-win-pay-increase.html?_r=0

¹³ Middle class as according to this calculator:
<http://money.cnn.com/interactive/economy/middle-class-calculator/index.html>

Now that the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is law, performing artists, who previously were given special dispensation for unreimbursed business expenses, like the 12.25 percent withheld from their paychecks for union dues and agent commission, will find the new tax code ruinous.

“‘These draconian changes are mean,’ said Equity Treasurer-Secretary **Sandra Karas**, who also is a practicing tax lawyer and has prepared by her own estimate hundreds, probably thousands of entertainers’ tax returns. ‘They slap working people in the face ... workers get the shaft.... I guess that’s the purpose. It will change the math of how long people can stay in the industry.’” Shortly before the bill passed, she “ran four before and after example 1040s using real 2016 returns (with personal information redacted) and provided them to *The Hollywood Reporter* exclusively. It showed that the middle class is expected to suffer hefty increases under the new legislation, and that the poor will get soaked even worse:

- “An actor who earns about \$97,000 (about three-quarters from pension and investments) paid \$12,434 in taxes, but would have paid \$15,579 under the new law, an increase of \$3,145 or 25 percent.
- “Another actor, who earned over \$87,000 paid \$9,665 in taxes, but would have paid \$13,294 under the Republican legislation, an increase of \$3,629 or 37 percent.
- “An actor who earned about \$28,000 paid taxes of \$513 but would have paid \$1,726 if the new law had been in place, an increase of \$1,213 or 236 percent. That means his/her taxes more than tripled.
- “A married couple, both performers, who earned about \$65,000 (or \$32,000 each) paid \$1,228 in taxes but would have owed \$4,535 under the new law, an increase of \$3,307 or 269 percent. In other words, their taxes nearly quadrupled.”¹⁴

Theaters are also in danger: the increase of the standard deduction will disincentivize charitable giving. Previously, the charitable deduction was available to the roughly 35 percent of filers who itemize their tax returns. With the standard deduction doubled, now 90-95 percent of filers will not itemize, thus limiting the charitable deduction to only five to ten percent of filers. The Tax Policy Center estimates this change will reduce charitable giving up to \$20 billion annually,¹⁵ which nonprofit theaters will find no less ruinous. The new tax law further imperils a community at risk and fractures the shaky ground on which they stand.

Off-Broadway stage managers and actors took to social media to express the anxiety engendered by the new law. **Carson Elrod** of Bushwick, a two-time Lucille Lortel Award nominee for *The Heir Apparent* at Classic Stage Company and *The Explorers’ Club* at MTC Stage II, wrote in December, “My Facebook feed is full of my friends discussing how to become corporations to avoid being financially destroyed by the GOP tax bill. This is 2017: to survive in America, you have to surrender your humanity, your dignity, your labor, and your personality to

¹⁴ Handel, Jonathan. “Study: New Tax Bill ‘Shafts’ Working Entertainers But Stars Are Untouched.” *The Hollywood Reporter*. December 14, 2017.

¹⁵ Gates, Chris. “Nonprofits are the unintended victims of the new tax bill.” *The Hill*. December 29, 2017.

become a corporation. What shall I call myself when I likely will have to follow course? Once Human Productions? Formerly A Person Productions?”

Part V. Our Proposal: The Actors' City Theater (ACT) Fund

Jason Ralph, a young actor who performed in *Peter and the Starcatcher* at New World Stages, sees an opportunity: “I think these unfair wages are the symptom for the need of a cultural shift in the perception of the value of the arts.”

Having agreed that low wages harm the Off-Broadway community, that the climate makes it difficult for management to rectify the problem, and that the problems plaguing this cluster of businesses and its artistic workers are now even more acute due to changes in the federal tax code, Off-Broadway's artistic workers and artistic leadership have come together to ask the city for help by collectivizing the cost of fair wages among the public.

The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs budget fluctuates according to the constraints of the city's needs, and, to its credit, the city's giving dwarfs that of any other city in the country, as well as sometimes surpassing the size of the NEA. But 70 percent of those funds go to 30 institutions in the city charter, the Cultural Institutions Group, and the rest is dispensed among 1600 others. We don't suggest to take money from the CIG—though, being the canopy of our ecosystem, they do absorb a lot of public funding, and not enough money gets to the floor below, to nurture the roots, the small companies and the artists who work in them.

We suggest that public funds be allocated to the Department of Cultural Affairs to aid the living human matter on the floor of our ecosystem, the professional artists themselves who have dedicated their lives and careers to working in New York City.

We propose the creation of **The Actors' City Theater Fund** to help contracted Equity actors and stage managers living and working in New York City, citizens who contribute so much to the city's life, to live lives of dignity, free of quiet panic.

Administered by the Department of Cultural Affairs, **The ACT Fund** would subsidize Equity workers' wages at and through nonprofit institutions. By subsidizing wages for the artistic labor that feeds the cultural and economic engine of New York, making it a city that values and ensures stability for working artists, **The ACT Fund** could become a model for arts funding across the United States.

In a 2016 union survey, Equity members reported needing an average net income of \$813 per week; as of 2016, they required a Necessary Weekly Gross Salary of \$1300, before taxes. The fund would help nonprofit theaters to pay contracted Equity actors and stage managers the difference between established union minimums and the Necessary Weekly Gross Salary. The Necessary Weekly Gross Salary would be subject to an annual cost of living adjustment based on the cost of living index.

Nonprofit theaters within the five boroughs of New York City using contracted Equity workers (under Off-Broadway, LORT, Transition, and Mini contracts, or Letters of Agreement to Off-Broadway or LORT contracts¹⁶), at which established Equity minimums fall below the Necessary Weekly Gross Salary, would be eligible for the fund. Those theaters are responsible for raising the money for and paying Equity minimum salaries and corresponding pension and health payments. Theaters may only use moneys from the fund to pay Equity workers the difference between the Equity minimum weekly salary and the Necessary Weekly Gross Salary, not to pay the Equity minimum, or for any other production, administrative, or physical expenses.

Ideally, theaters would factor in and submit paperwork for The ACT Fund in advance of rehearsals and performances for a given production, during the process of drawing up a production budget, so that the subsidy would appear directly in artists' paychecks. But theaters could apply retroactively, and funds could be disbursed from the city and distributed to the workers, no later than thirteen weeks after the weekly pay period for which the theater seeks the subsidy. Immediate supplementary payment would free workers from economic strain, but a reimbursement arriving within the annual quarter would still provide Equity workers with relief and enable them to plan financially.

Using figures from the 2015-16 Theatrical Season Report made by Actors' Equity Association¹⁷, we make the rough estimate that in the previous theatrical season, just over 1,500 contracts were issued to Actors' Equity members in the nonprofit Off-Broadway arena we are intent on the fund covering.¹⁸ These workers grossed an average of \$584.70 per week. To fill the gap between this and our ideal wage, the ACT Fund would subsidize our members with, on average, around \$700/week. The average nonprofit theater contract for an actor or stage manager is nine weeks long. This would come out to an average of \$6,300 per contract. For 1,500 contracts over a theatrical year, this would require the fund to disburse roughly \$9,450,000.

With a population of over 8.5 million, that the numbers of either model land between one and two dollars per taxpayer in New York City is somewhat poetic.

Alternatively, a tax of just one dollar on Broadway tickets—grossing almost \$1.5 billion in 2016, with 13,270,000 tickets sold—would easily pay for the fund and establish a surplus.¹⁹

¹⁶ All names of contracts that Actors' Equity Association has agreed upon with theaters and producers, all with slightly different entitlements and rules.

¹⁷ DiPaulo, Steven. "Actors' Equity Association 2015-2016 Theatrical Season Report." 2016. http://www.actorsequity.org/docs/about/AEA_Annual_15-16.pdf

¹⁸ Again, this includes not only Off-Broadway proper, but also non-profit theaters that produce in spaces with 99 seats or fewer in all five boroughs, provided they operate on an AEA contract.

¹⁹ 2016-17 will be the third year in a row that more than 13 million tickets were sold to Broadway shows, according to the Broadway League.

New York City's theatrical offerings draw tourists from the rest of the state, the country, and the world, and those Off-Broadway alone contribute over half a billion dollars to the city's economy. The Off-Broadway arena is a creative incubator where major contributions to our nation's cultural footprint begin. The idea that the artistic laborers inherent to these contributions are scraping by in near-poverty is an ethical nightmare, bodes ill for future creation, and potentially threatens New York's unique position as an artistic capital of the world.

If our nation cannot subsidize our theater workers—and, further, imperils their finances—our city must. The ACT Fund would be a step toward establishing a basic, universal income for professional, working, New York actors and stage managers, and would set a prevailing wage at a level that would enable them to live sustainable lives while they're working Off-Broadway helping the city to retain the workers who contribute so much to its life and wealth.

Part VI. New York City Could Save Us

Lupita Nyong'o of Prospect Heights, winner of the Academy Award for Best Actress for *12 Years a Slave* and an Obie Award for *Eclipsed* at The Public Theater, observes, "These are artists that give their time, their heart, and their soul to their craft, but their wages are anemic and quite frankly unsustainable."

They deserve help.

With the establishment of The ACT Fund to help the community of Off-Broadway stage managers and actors, New York City would be both benefactor and beneficiary.

Marsha Stephanie Blake, an actor with over a dozen Off-Broadway credits, assures us, "In the end, we'll all benefit from it."

Most directly, the artistic labor—almost 2,000 actors and stage managers who work both on and off stage annually, at and out of the theater—will benefit from receiving the financial and figurative backing from the city. 19,000 citizens of New York City are members of Actors' Equity Association, spread out across many neighborhoods, with large pockets in Astoria, Sunnyside, Forest Hills, Kew Gardens, Washington Heights, Crown Heights, Midwood, Prospect-Lefferts Gardens, Ditmas Park, and of course Midtown's Manhattan Plaza.

Liv Rooth, who has had to take a leave from Off-Broadway for financial reasons and was rehearsing in Houston when Hurricane Harvey hit, accumulated "an incredible amount of debt," while working these contracts, "even more than I incurred in my three years of grad school while living in New York, even while working several restaurant jobs. I had to ask a group of very respected artists that I'd worked with before to build into my contract that I was allowed to leave rehearsal early some days to make it to my restaurant.... I was exhausted."

The theaters will benefit by being able to employ the best and the brightest talent, having access to a broad, diverse talent set, and having their workers healthy and able to bring their most productive selves to the workplace without holding down multiple jobs. Creating a richer, healthier ecosystem means that more people from diverse backgrounds can participate in and contribute to the making of theater, and the theater can more accurately reflect and illuminate life in New York City.

Maria Dizzia, a frequent collaborator with playwright Sarah Ruhl on and Off-Broadway, and a Tony nominee for Ruhl's *In the Next Room, or: The Vibrator Play*, reminds us, "The building is not the theater, the theater is the community."

Beyond the theater community, audiences will benefit by hearing the different voices that comprise our city's multiethnic and multiracial demography. The local businesses surrounding the theaters benefit; a strong, vibrant theater scene helps neighboring restaurants and stores thrive. And Off-Broadway will continue to feed Broadway, which generates almost a billion and a half dollars in ticket sales alone.

David Cromer, actor and two-time Obie-winning director of *Our Town*, *The Adding Machine*, and this year's Broadway smash *The Band's Visit*, which premiered at the Atlantic Theater Company: "Off-Broadway is not minor league. It's not a training ground. It's not a place where you work for love. It is one of the central engines of the world theater, and the artists must be paid accordingly."

And finally, the city itself will further cement its status not only as a sanctuary city, but as a global cultural capital and haven for artists striving for the middle class. A thriving theater scene will have tangible benefits—greater audience participation, a healthier working actor demographic, a richer tapestry of faces, voices, and stories to reflect the city, and economic rewards for businesses throughout the metropolis.

Robust and healthy actors and stage managers make up part of a robust and healthy cultural sector. And, as noted by Comptroller Scott Stringer, "A robust and healthy cultural sector supports a robust and healthy democracy and economy."²⁰

Crystal Dickinson: "We make the impossible possible all the time in the theater, and I don't think this is any different."

²⁰ Stringer, Scott M. "Culture Shock: The Importance of National Arts Funding to New York City's Cultural Landscape." March 9, 2017.
<https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/culture-shock-the-importance-of-national-arts-funding-to-new-york-citys-cultural-landscape/>



The faces of Off-Broadway, quoted within our report.

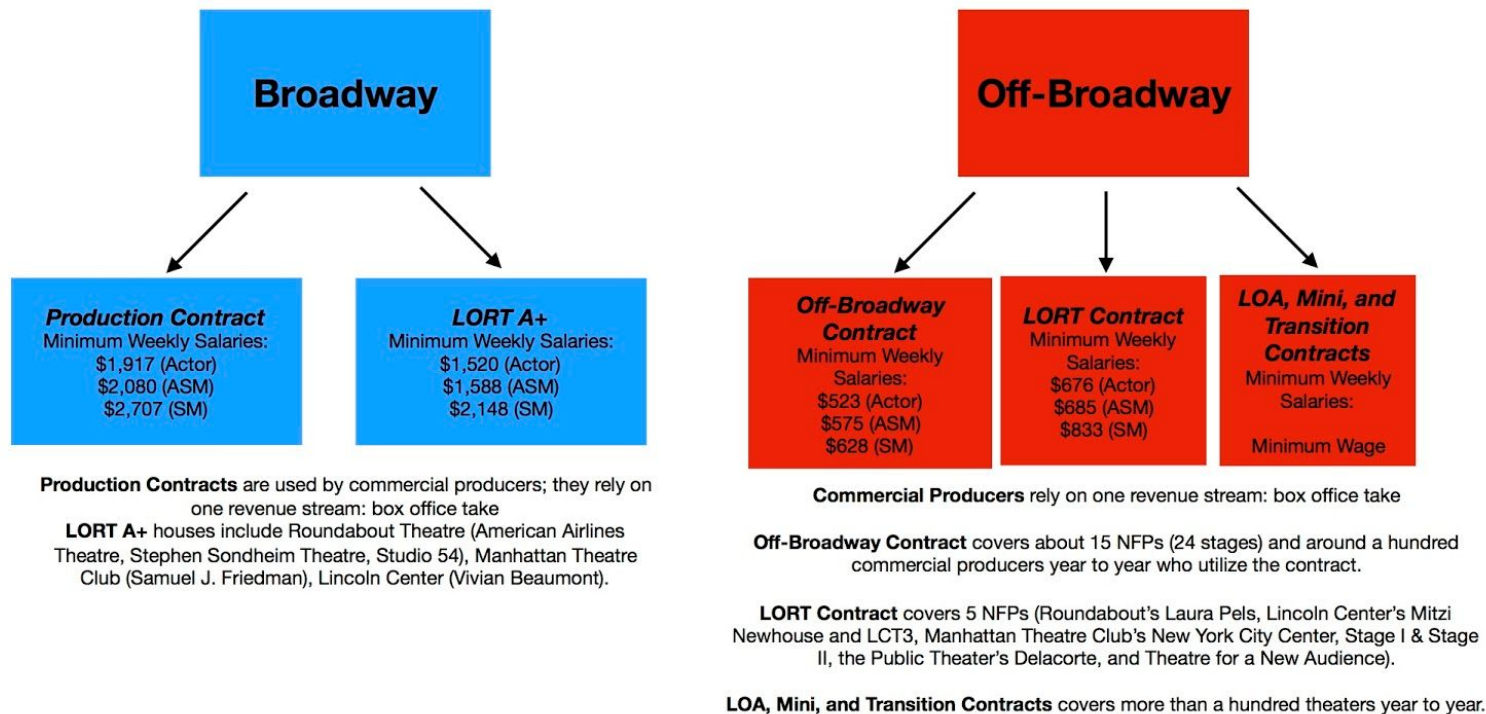
Clockwise from top left: Keith Nobbs, Kristine Nielsen, Francois Battiste, Liv Rooth, Ismenia Mendes, Nick Westrate, Jose Liana, Reed Birney, Crystal Dickinson and Brandon Dirden, Francis Jue, and Marsha Stephanie Blake.



In order to employ actors and stage managers who are part of Actors' Equity Association, which has 51,000 members nationwide and 19,000 members in New York City, Not-for Profit institutions and commercial producers use different contracts, adhering to the contract for either a full season of productions or each production itself.

Each contract affords the institution or producer certain rights — workweek hours, number of weekly performances, etc — at different salary tiers.

- **Broadway** is represented on the management side by the Broadway League, an organization that comprises producers and theater owners; they negotiate with AEA over the Production Contract. (Disney often negotiates its own deals on Broadway.) Broadway shows are eligible for Tony Awards. The houses are located between 41st and 54th Street on the west side, with the exception of the Vivian Beaumont stage at Lincoln Center.
- **Off-Broadway** is represented on the management side by the Off-Broadway League, an organization that comprises the NFPs and commercial producers who utilize the contract; they negotiate with AEA over the Off-Broadway contract.
- **LORT** (League of Resident Theaters) is the largest theater association in America, but is mostly a regional theater organization, meaning outside of New York City. Five NFPs in New York City are allowed to use the LORT agreement.
- **LOA** (Letter of Agreement) is a contract that follows the Off-Broadway rules but is individually negotiated between each institution or producer and AEA. The rules are mostly the same, with some exceptions, most notably, the salaries.



Testimony of C. M. Pyle, Ph.D., to the New York City Council Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations Budget and Oversight Hearing of 16 March, 2018, in the Committee Room, City Hall, on the Fiscal Year 2019 Preliminary Budget, the Preliminary Capital Plan for FY 2019-2022, and the FY 2018 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report.

The Financial and Functional Impact of the Proposed Major Alterations to the Mid-Manhattan and the Main Research Branches of the New York Public Library on Learning and Research.

Cynthia M. Pyle, New York City (Active Independent Scholar, Fellow of the American Academy in Rome; National Science Foundation Individual Grant Recipient; Fellow of the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study; Fellow of the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, The National Gallery, Washington, D.C.; Co-Chair of the Columbia University Seminar in the Renaissance) <c.m.pyle@nyu.edu>

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Council Member Helen Rosenthal HRosenthal@council.nyc.gov

Chairman Van Bramer, Members of the City Council, thank you for holding this hearing.

The recent so-called documentary film by Frederick Wiseman "Ex Libris" is really a feel-good movie about the social roles libraries can play. But it represents a travesty of what a research library is about. It was made at the behest and with the backing of the New York Public Library, by a person who admits to having spent very little of his long lifetime in libraries. In fact, it reminded one of Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*, a cutting social satire, brought to life and applied to the functions of libraries, but without even a hint of irony. While we all credit public circulating libraries for our positive childhood experiences of libraries and their books, adult needs and uses of libraries are quite different. They are centered on research, as the founders of the New York Public Library -- Astor and Lenox -- well knew. Once one reaches the age of about 12 or 14, a library serves a different purpose from a place to read *Mary Poppins*, *Peter Rabbit* or *Dr. Doolittle*, charming and instructive though those books are.

By a child's high school years, in other words, if not before in some cases, libraries take on the function of banks of resources for research. This is true in spite of the growth of the ephemeral digital library resources now used fruitfully by us all. Once one reaches the Age of Reasoned Research, one is in need of more focused materials -- and more than one source at a time, viewable on more than only one screen at a time. One is in need of physical BOOKS, made of paper and ink, preferably bound in boards -- and several at a time on one's desk -- usually a burgeoning number as one proceeds -- for comparison of sources. Most of us cannot afford 10 computers, or even 10 monitors -- which would in any case be extremely cumbersome and would still each require scrolling to elicit information from any given text. As I have pointed out a number of times, the scroll began to dwindle in popularity once the CODEX, the book with separate pages we all know and love (ask Amazon! or Abe Books!), came into existence around the turn of the first millennium.

It is now, therefore, time to ask recent Architects of Research Libraries: WHY ATRIA? **Why hundreds of millions of dollars spent on EMPTY spaces, that could and should be filled by physical BOOKS?** Why are the remarkable stacks in the 42nd Street Research Library, so ingeniously constructed to support the two vastly popular and well-used Reading Rooms, STILL EMPTY of at least 3 MILLION BOOKS, still stored off-site to their and their readers' detriment? The perennial excuse, Air Conditioning, is easy and cheap to fix. (But please note what has happened in Puerto Rico upon the failure of electricity in hermetically sealed spaces in Museums: Mold and Rot. [NYTimes, 15iii18]) The stacks are easily and cheaply connected, as they always were, until recently, to the reading rooms. Renewing or upgrading these facilities is desirable and simple and, I repeat, CHEAP. How on earth did the Board of the NYPL get it into its head to make such a problem of such a simple need? Is there some outside interest (or several) involved? Why has so much money been squandered in this interminable process when such simple solutions are at hand? And what became of the 1999 Architectural Contest Plans to renovate the Mid-Manhattan Branch Circulating Library, with the equally simple addition of income-producing spaces?

I refer you once again to Sebastian Brant's 15th Century social satire, *Ship of Fools*, Chapter 1: "On Useless Books" (i.e., useless, except as ornaments, to the Fool):

I am the firste fole of all the hole
 nauy
 To kepe the pompe, the helm and
 eke the sayle
 For this is my mynde, this one
 pleasoure haue I
 Of bokes to haue grete plenty and
 aparayle
 I take no wysdome by them: nor yet
 auayle
 Nor them preceyue nat: And then I
 them despeyse
 Thus am I a foole and all that sewe
 that guyse.

(Barclay Translation, 1509)



Brant, *Stultifera Navis*, Basel, 1498, fol. XI, Ch. 1 *De inutilibus libris*
 (Bibliothèque Municipale, Colmar)

[Rough modern translation: I am the first fool of all the whole navy / To keep the pomp, the helm and even the sail / For this is my mind, this one pleasure have I / Of books to have great plenty and apparel. / I take no wisdom from them, nor yet avail / Nor them perceive not; And then I them despise / Thus am I a fool and all that assumes that guise.]

Thank you.

C. M. Pyle
 Intellectual and Cultural Historian
 Co-Chair, Columbia University Seminar in the Renaissance
 (Ph.D. Columbia University;
 Fellow, American Academy in Rome 1978;
 NSF Individual Grant 1988-89;
 Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts iii-iv2001;
 Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study 2002-3)

<http://sites.google.com/site/cynthiampyle/>
https://nyu.academia.edu/CM_Pyle

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Name: STEPHANIE WILCHERT

Address: _____

I represent: BROOKLYN CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

Address: 145 BKLYN AVE BKLYN NY 11213

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Name: Jeffrey Omura - Fair Wage on Stage

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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Name: Shila Lewandowski

Address: 539 49th Ave

I represent: The Chocolate Factory

Address: _____

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Name: Jamie Burkart

Address: 196 Clinton Ave #D43 BK

I represent: NYC Artist Coalition

Address: _____

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Name: John O'Reilly

Address: 89-23 70th Ave, Forest Hills, NY 11375

I represent: Concerned Taxpayers

Address: _____

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Name: Tiffany Geigel

Address: _____

I represent: Dance / NYC

Address: 218 E 18th St NY NY 10003

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Name: MARK KESSLER NYFA

Address: 20 Jay St. Brooklyn

I represent: NYFA

Address: 20 Jay St. Brooklyn

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Name: John Calvelli - CIB Chair

Address: Wildlife Conservation Society

I represent: 2800 Southern Blvd

Address: Bronx NY 10462

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Name: Tom Finkelpearl

Address: 31 Chambers St

I represent: NYC Dept of Cultural Affairs

Address: "

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Name: DAVID JOHNSTON

Address: _____

I represent: EXPLORING THE METROPOLIS

Address: _____

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Date: _____

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Name: ANA DIAS

Address: _____

I represent: CUSTOMER - QUEENS LIBRARY

Address: _____

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Name: TRESS WALKER

Address: CUSTOMER - QUEENS LIBRARY

I represent: CUSTOMER - QUEENS LIBRARY

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Name: JOEL OCHOA

Address: _____

I represent: STAFF - QUEENS LIBRARY

Address: _____

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Name: TIFFANY JOHNSON

Address: _____

I represent: CUSTOMER - QUEENS LIBRARY

Address: _____

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Name: BASHIR OSMANI

Address: _____

I represent: CUSTOMER - QUEENS LIBRARY

Address: _____

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Name: ELLEN LESZYNSKI

Address: 30 LAFAYETTE AVE

I represent: BAM

Address: _____

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Name: YOSENY ORENGO

Address: 581 MOTHER GASTON

I represent: BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Address: 10 GRAND ARMY PLAZA

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Name: EKE WILLIAMS

Address: 665 NEW LOTS AVE

I represent: BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Address: 10 GRAND ARMY PLAZA

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Name: La Mear Isaac

Address: 361 Lewis Ave.

I represent: BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Address: 10 Grand Army Plaza

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Name: TRESS Walker

Address: _____

I represent: QUEENS Central Library

Address: Menick Blvd

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Date: _____

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Name: Tony Marx

Address: _____

I represent: President of New York Public

Address: Library

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☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Linda E Johnson

Address: BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

I represent: President & CEO

Address: _____

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Name: Dennis Walcott

Address: _____

I represent: President of Queens Public Library

Address: _____

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Date: 3/16/18

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Name: Ronaldo Barber

Address: 125 Barclay Street, NY, NY 10007

I represent: President, DC 37 Local 1482

Address: Brooklyn Public Library Employees

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Name: Valentin Colon

Address: 125 Barclay St. NY NY 10007

I represent: President, DC 37 Local 1930

Address: _____

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Name: John Huslop

Address: 125 Barclay Street, NY, NY 10007

I represent: President, DC 37 Local 1321

Address: Queens Public Library employees

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Name: Jeffrey Omura

Address: 34 W 65th St.

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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Date: _____

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Name: Christopher Carroll

Address: 35 Crown St. #16, Brooklyn NY, 11225

I represent: Local 802, American Federation of Musicians

Address: 322 West 42nd Street, NY, NY, 10036

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Name: LUCY SEXTON

Address: 160 SIXTH AVE 10013

I represent: New Yorkers for Culture & Arts

Address: NY4CA.org

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Name: Tiffany Bryant

Address: _____

I represent: The Public Theater

Address: _____