

Invest in the arts! Invest in a th State!

Join the call for increased arts funding in NY state by adding your name and signature to the open letter below.

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Dear NY State Legislators,

There is a critical need for support for the arts and culture sector of NY State in the FY24 budget. Investing in culture in every community in every locality will lift our whole state and lead to a robust and equitable recovery. The Executive Budget reflects a major cut compared to the funding of last year. This will be devastating to the sector and must be addressed. We support Assembly Member O'Donnell's and Senator Serrano's call for **\$140M for NYSCA** and **\$50M for capital funding** for cultural projects.

Culture is the core of NY State's economy. For the past decade New York State's creative economy has contributed more than 7% to the GSP** annually, and pre-pandemic it generated 484,000 jobs and \$120 billion in economic activity.* Culture is a jobs multiplier, providing work not just for artists, but for museum administrators, security guards, sound technicians, costume creators, and the myriad other jobs that make up the creative economy.

New York's tourism industry depends on a thriving creative sector.** Culture taken as a whole is one of the top drivers of tourism in New York State. The NYS Comptroller's report found that of the \$74B tourists spend statewide in 2019, 12% went to "arts, culture, and entertainment", and the other 88% went to: hotels, restaurants, retail shops, and local transport.***** If we want to get dollars to the local businesses listed, we need to support the arts sector that attracts the visitors!

Cultural centers anchor communities, improves mental health, and keep residents in NYS. Cultural activity drives street traffic to local businesses, strengthens communities, provides programs for children and youth, and safer streets for everyone. Data also shows arts provide measurable improvements in mental health for children, elders, and all residents. With a more mobile remote workforce nationwide, it is more important than ever to invest in reasons to live in NYS. Arts and culture are what NY excels in and what makes us a great place to raise children.

Fragile recovery. Our state's invaluable arts organizations are slowly recovering from the pandemic shutdown—culture was the hardest hit sector. Attendance is coming back but

still below 2019 levels. And the costs of safety protocols and HVAC improvements continue to drain resources. Now is the time to invest in a continued recovery so that our cultural centers can continue to lead the state to a robust and thriving future.

Arts Education is underfunded and inequitably delivered. With only one associate in the arts at the state education department to serve 2.5M students, arts deserts abound in urban and rural school districts. We are failing to grow our own talent for NY's creative industries.

We ask that the legislature

- **Fund the NY State Council on the Arts at a baseline of \$140M** in order to fully support the thousands of arts organizations doing critical work across the state. The NYSCA baseline hasn't been increased for 15 years, and for decades it has been far below levels of funding in the 1990s. This increase is long overdue and much needed if we are to build a stable cultural economy in every community in this state.
- **Restore \$50M capital funding for culture!** Last year, the state made a visionary investment in arts infrastructure across the state, with \$50M in the budget and an additional program distributing \$100M for cultural capital projects. It was a first step, but the sector is still in a fragile state and needs sustained investment to continue to lead the state's recovery. The Executive Budget cuts cultural capital funding to zero and allocates NYSCA less than half of what it received last year. Now is not the time to cut funding to the arts!

Ensure that there is an equitable funding stream for local decision making in communities and localities It is a fact that cultural organizations in rural communities AND in low wealth urban neighborhoods are both more dependent on public funding, and less receiving of stable state support. With robust funding, NYSCA can fully fund local regranters who know best how to invest their cultural dollars to create thriving arts ecosystems in every community.

Support Arts in Education Arts Education is woefully short-changed at NYSED. We support the Regents request to restore one Associate position. We also ask that you Restore Summer School in the Arts which provides training for arts ed students via teaching positions in local summer arts programs. Finally, we join our colleagues in calling to lift the salary cap for teachers providing career and technical education in the arts.

Sincerely,

New Yorkers for Culture & Arts

Sources

*New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer's 2019 Creative Economy Report

** National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, Creative Economy State Profiles



*** Brookings, Lost Art: Measuring Covid-19's Devastating Impact on America's Creative Economy, August 2020

****Source: Americans for the Arts, Arts & Economic Prosperity 5, 2017

***** [New York State Comptroller, New York City's Tourism Industry - Igniting the Return, April 2021](#)

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