

ARTS DAY IN ALBANY

Wednesday, January 25, 2012

Arts Day in Albany

By Norma Munn, Chairperson, New York City Arts Coalition

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It's that time again. The budget dance starts. The tempo may be fast, but I suspect the proposals for the cultural sector will be at last year's pace.

State Budget Schedule:

Jan. 17—Governor's budget released

Feb. 14—Arts Advocacy Day in Albany ([SIGN UP HERE](#))

March 31—Budget approved (if on time, which it will probably be)

Prediction re NYSCA: No increase. (It would be wonderful to be wrong!!!) As for possibility of a decrease, the projections provided last year for the future budget showed another 10% decrease, but those projections showed a 10% decrease for almost everything in the budget. Education is slated for a 4 or 4.5% increase -- supposedly -- in the upcoming budget, and NYSCA has now been moved into area of responsibility for Deputy Secretary for Education, David Wakelyn. (Third change for NYSCA within the Cuomo administration, so let's hope this one stays in place for more than a few months.)

Request: [Sign up for Arts Advocacy Day](#) and help make the case to the legislature that public funding is essential. The lack of support at the state level for NYSCA for past four years is alarming, and we have to reverse this trend. It won't happen through email petitions; face to face meetings, both locally and in Albany, are critical to making our needs real to elected officials.

Note: if you go up on the bus with the NYC Arts Coalition contingent, we make all 91 appointments, provide you with briefings on the bus, background information about the details of the budget, and the "What we want request" to leave in legislators offices. We also put you into a team of people with an experienced team captain.

Current Grant dollars at NYSCA are \$31.6 million. We would like to see that increased by \$4.8 million. It is far more likely to happen with a lot of participation from those working in the arts.

Other ways to support this effort:

Letters to the Chairs (Senator Little and Assemblywoman Markey) of the committees handling the arts from your Board members, your vendors, and near by businesses that benefit from your groups activities are truly helpful. (Addresses below for the two Chairs.) Email petitions are not as effective as real letters. Do both, please.

Local visits with your Assembly and/or Senate member. It might be easier to schedule during the week of Feb. 20th as there will be no legislative session that week so they are in their district the entire week. But try to see them before mid-March. A lot of the decisions are well under way after that time.

Albany addresses for Committee Chairs:

Senator Elizabeth O'C. Little
Chair of Senate Committee on Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and Recreation
310 LOB
Albany, New York 12247
Phone: 518-455-2811 Fax: 518-426-6873

Assemblywoman Margaret M. Markey
Chair of Assembly Committee on Tourism, Arts & Sports Development
712 LOB
Albany, New York 12248
Phone: 518-455-7655 Fax: 518-455-5032

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