

CUOMO PROPOSED BUDGET FY13 FOR NYSCA

Wednesday, January 18, 2012

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Cuomo Proposed Budget FY13 for NYSCA Money for Grants:

\$31,855,000 (Local Assistance in State jargon)
\$ 1,413,000 (Federal Funds, i.e., NEA state mandated grants)
\$ 196,000 (Special State funds)
\$33,464,000 TOTAL

Money for Administrative costs:

\$4,119,000 (State purposes in State jargon)
\$ 100,000 (Federal funds)
\$4,219,000 TOTAL

AGENCY TOTAL = \$37,683,000.

This is a decrease of \$1 million in Federal funds, and a decrease of \$235,000 in State purposed money for administration. Otherwise it is level funding.

COMMENTARY and CONTEXT:

The total state budget in this plan is \$132.5 Billion. The projected budget deficit of \$3.5 Billion was closed by three actions:

Tax increases voted on several weeks ago = \$1.5 Billion new funds
State offices of Governor, Attorney General, Comptroller and the
Judiciary were kept to zero increases = \$1.3 Billion in savings
Aid to localities, projected originally at 3.9%, was limited to
2.6%, which provided the remainder of the savings.

This budget is \$225 million less than the current year budget. News reports say that Medicaid funding is \$54 Billion and Education funding is \$53 Billion within this budget. Both received increases within the budget of 4%.

The Governor spoke in his speech about the need for growth and economic development in a dormant economy as the greatest question facing government. He also asked a question; how do you create business opportunities for the private sector without spending state money?

WHAT WE NEED TO DO:

This is not a terrible budget for NYSCA. It is not, however, even remotely what is needed.

At this stage, any changes will have to come from the legislature, which means that we simply have to make a better case to them about our needs.

Step 1:

ARTS DAY in Albany is Feb. 14, and appointments are being made with all of the NYC legislators. Please sign up and join with others for this effort. Deadline is Feb. 7. Right now this is critically important as we need to make our arguments early in this process.

Step 2: (from now through mid March)

Make an appointment to see your Assembly Member or State Senator locally, and/or write to him or her about how you use NYSCA funds. Do not consider email a substitute for real letters. Both are needed.

If you can join with another arts group for a local meeting, it is even more effective. Or go to any public meetings they are holding and ask questions about the NYSCA funding and their position.

Have your Board or local vendors write letters pointing out the increased business they have a result of your activities. If you know parents of children who benefit from your group's programs, ask them to send a note. Suggestion to not do this in a school setting, however.

(Social media and email campaigns have made all this visiting and letter writing old fashioned. But they are still the essential tools of substantive communication. Social media is important, but it does not eliminate the need for these basics.)

Step 3:

Use your web site, Facebook page, etc. to spread the word and engage others. Funny and entertaining is good.

The NYC Arts Coalition is working on a short compilation of the videos- [Fifty Years, Fifty Stories](#)- put together for NYSCA's 50th Anniversary, which was 2011. It is not completed. Will update when it is able to be used.

WHAT DO WE WANT:

The moon, the stars and a real increase in funding!! Seriously, level funding is better than another cut, but we have lost too much over the past four years.

The informal statewide coalition, of which the NYC Arts Coalition is an active partner, asked the Governor in December to restore the 10% cut (\$3.6 million) from his prior budget and to increase the funding by \$1.2 million for inflation. Total increase requested therefore was \$4.8 million.

The question of whether that is the stance to be taken as we move into this advocacy effort with the legislature is in discussion with the other partners in the statewide coalition, whose web site is www.artsNYS.org.

However, as you think about what you can do and how to do it, keep in mind that every elected official is deeply concerned about jobs. How to increase them, how to keep those we now have, and how to move the unemployed into jobs. The arts do not exist first and foremost for economic development, but we are a critical element in the fiscal health of both NYC and NYS. And local arts are time and time again, an integral force in re-vitalizing a neighborhood or keeping one steady in times of economic difficulty. (Broad statistics are available on the statewide web site, but local data is very important.)

Arts groups are also tremendously understaffed, and could hire people if there were funds. The arts are also an outstanding example of a public/private partnership that seems to be the latest flavor of the month in political discourse. Being a non-profit does not exclude from being part of the private sector, and we match public dollars several times over with a combination of earnings and private fund raising. That is an important point to get across.

But ultimately, you must also speak and write about the personal transformation that takes place in the heart and head of someone from experiencing dance, theatre, music, film, painting, sculpture, photography, poetry, song or whatever art form has moved you to be part of this life.

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