

## MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES CREATENYC: A CULTURAL PLAN FOR ALL NEW YORKERS

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By Office of the Mayor of the City of New York

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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#### MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES CREATENYC: A CULTURAL PLAN FOR ALL NEW YORKERS

*Following months of public engagement with nearly 200K New Yorkers, CreateNYC provides a framework for achieving greater cultural equity, inclusion, and access for every resident*

NEW YORK – Mayor de Blasio today joined NYC Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl and Council Majority Leader Jimmy Van Bramer to release CreateNYC, New York City's first-ever comprehensive cultural plan. Building on feedback from nearly 200,000 New Yorkers, CreateNYC lays out a blueprint for expanding on the unparalleled strengths of the city's cultural sector, while targeting investments to address historically underserved communities across all five boroughs. CreateNYC also reaffirms the City's commitment to cultivating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive cultural workforce that reflects New York City's residents. CreateNYC is the result of Local Law 46 of 2015 sponsored by City Council Majority Leader Jimmy Van Bramer and Council Member Steve Levin and signed by Mayor de Blasio in May 2015.

"This is a city of unmatched cultural richness that expresses itself on sidewalks, in storefronts, in museums, theaters and parks in every single corner of the five boroughs. New York City is the world capital of art and culture," said Mayor de Blasio. "If we are going to continue to live up to that title we must use every tool we have to ensure that every resident, in every neighborhood, has the same access to cultural opportunities. CreateNYC is the first comprehensive roadmap to lifting up arts and culture across the city – now it's time to roll up our sleeves and get to work."

"This is an exciting moment for everyone who cares about culture in New York City – and as we discovered throughout this process, that's virtually everyone," said Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl. "We are proud to be the largest local funder of art and culture in America and with CreateNYC in hand, we can make sure that our investments in this singular asset help to address concerns, opportunities, hopes, and priorities that residents voiced loud and clear. Getting out to communities in all five boroughs for CreateNYC has been a transformative experience for my agency, and we are so grateful for everyone who contributed their time, voices, and efforts to creating this groundbreaking plan. With our colleagues throughout the de Blasio Administration, our most pressing priorities are increasing support for culture communities that have for too long have gotten less than their neighbors, and ensuring that the staffs and boards of our iconic institutions reflect the diverse and vibrant public they serve. We have our marching orders from the residents of this great city. Now it's time to get back to work."

"CreateNYC will open many doors for cultural life in New York, revealing untapped creative potential and new ways of approaching the issues of the 21st century. And, as our City continues to grow, it has never been more important to be able to provide culturally appropriate resources for our underserved communities," said New York City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito. "I am proud that CreateNYC came to life after the Council passed legislation two years ago to require the City to come up with a comprehensive cultural plan, and I look forward to continued partnership with the Mayor and the Department of Cultural Affairs to make New York City a more inclusive for all."

"The completion of the first cultural plan for New York City is a profound and historic achievement," said City Council Majority Leader Jimmy Van Bramer. "With nearly 200,000 New Yorkers weighing in, we've built a plan that will guide our efforts to make art and culture more accessible to all, to empower and train the next generation of artists, and to fully support established and emerging cultural organizations in every borough, especially in areas that are traditionally underserved. From the beginning of this journey, the development of the cultural plan has been a deeply democratic process, drawing on the perspectives of people from every neighborhood and all walks of life. As the Chair of the Committee on Cultural Affairs and Libraries and proud author of the legislation that called for this plan, I'm honored and proud to present a plan that boldly renews New York City's dedication to arts and culture."

"To the tens and tens of thousands of New Yorkers who took time to share their vision for future of culture in this city – thank you," said Council Member Stephen Levin. "Our city draws strength from its diversity. No matter who you are, what language you speak, or how much money you have, you have a right to take part in the city's rich cultural resources. Through CreateNYC, NYC Cultural Affairs has created more than just a document – it is an open commitment to inclusive arts and culture. I applaud the tremendous effort of Cultural Affairs and Commissioner Finkelpearl for once again setting a standard that can make all New Yorkers proud. I look forward to working with NYC Cultural Affairs, the Mayor's Office, and my council colleagues on implementing this comprehensive plan."

The full plan can be found at [www.CreateNYC.org/ThePlan](http://www.CreateNYC.org/ThePlan).

CreateNYC examines a range of issues that are critical to sustaining and growing the cultural community as well as expanding connections

among New Yorkers and the city's cultural assets. Some issue areas were spelled out in the legislation requiring the creation of the cultural plan, while others emerged through the public input process. The issue areas, each of which is addressed by an individual chapter of the plan include:

- Equity and Inclusion
- Social and Economic Impact
- Affordability
- Neighborhood Character
- Arts, Culture, and Science Education
- Arts and Culture in Public Space
- Citywide Coordination
- Health of the Cultural Sector
- Artists in New York City

#### *Immediate Action*

CreateNYC includes strategies, goals, and recommendations with both short term outcomes, and goals up to ten years or more into the future. Based on research and public input, the City is announcing a number of immediate steps toward addressing pressing needs identified in the plan, including funding from the Mayor's Office listed below, with an additional \$5M from City Council to be allocated:

- Increase support for the cultural life of low-income communities and underrepresented groups (\$1.5M) Cultural participation is 20% higher among New York City's highest income earners than the lowest earners. 75% of New Yorkers say that they wish they could attend arts and cultural activities more often. 72% of New Yorkers say they would participate more in cultural activities if they were located closer to home. A report from the University of Pennsylvania's Social Impact of the Arts Project revealed that the presence of cultural assets in low-income communities is correlated with improved outcomes in education, health, and safety. DCLA is committing to increased funding for cultural programming in low-income communities and for underrepresented groups through direct grants and through increased support to re-grant partners.
- Promote greater diversity, equity, and inclusion in the cultural workforce (\$740K) 67% of New York City residents identify as people of color, yet only 38% of employees at cultural organizations are people of color, according to DCLA's 2016 survey of its grant recipients commissioned for the agency's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiative. But junior positions at these groups reflect greater diversity: 45% of junior staff identify as people of color. To help junior level staff grow into the next generation of cultural leadership, DCLA will pilot a professional development program for cultural workers. The City will also commit to continue support for CUNY Cultural Corps, placing undergraduate students in paid internships at cultural organizations. Since the diversity study was published last year, the City has activated more than \$4M toward promoting diversity among the City's cultural groups. These and a range of other efforts will focus on promoting greater inclusion of people with disabilities and transgender and gender non-conforming individuals.
- Increase support for members of the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG) in low-income communities, and continue to support the CIG as a whole (\$4.5M): The 33 members of the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG) employ 13,700 full and part-time workers, including 4,500 union employees. The CIG offers free and affordable educational opportunities for hundreds of thousands of public school students. These organizations include some of the most renowned cultural groups in the world, as well as some of the most community-engaged organizations that bring nature and science to all New Yorkers across all five boroughs. This unique public- private partnership that started in the 19th century and continues to enrich the lives of New Yorkers in all five boroughs in the present day. In response to CreateNYC, DCLA will direct \$1M in additional support to under-funded members of the CIG, helping to grow their role as anchors for communities citywide, and will continue its long term commitment to the CIG as a whole.
- Support increased language access for communications and cultural programming to reach broader, more inclusive audience (\$100K): About half of New York City's residents speak a language other than English at home. DCLA will establish a fund to support translation services—including for print and online communications and live programming translation—at cultural organizations across the city.
- Provide support to individual artists (\$750K): Finding ways to keep our city a place where artists live and work is essential to the long term vibrancy of New York. 75% of arts and cultural workers support their art practice with income from sources other than their artistic practice. 40% of arts and cultural workers are unable to afford art supplies. DCLA will increase support for individual artists through its re-grant partners.
- Expand cultural access for people with disabilities and for disability arts (\$2.2M) An estimated 10% of New York City residents are people with disabilities. There are physical barriers to their full participation in the arts and cultural world, exacerbated by prejudice and ignorance. DCLA is increasing its considerations of disability and disability arts and artists through its grant programs, and will create a new fund to support people with disabilities as cultural workers, artists, and audiences. In addition, DCLA will set a goal in its capital spending to create spaces that are physically accessible.
- Work with cultural organizations to achieve the City's sustainability goals (\$5M) Over 25% of DCLA's support to cultural organizations goes to fund energy costs—over \$43 million each year. According to OneNYC, buildings account for nearly three- quarters of all emissions in New York City. That's why OneNYC's goal for an 80% reduction in all emissions by 2050, while creating green jobs and generating energy savings for building owners and tenants, focuses on the city's more than 1 million buildings of all sizes, types, and uses. A commitment to a greener New York City is a commitment to a healthier, more equitable city. DCLA is creating a new position specifically to work with cultural organizations to help them to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions to create a more sustainable city. This position will work with the organizations and DCLA's Capital Projects Unit to expand the use of DCLA capital resources to reduce energy consumption.
- Establish a Culture Cabinet of agencies to coordinate and promote engagement between the City and New York City's cultural community: The Department of Cultural Affairs is not the only City agency that supports arts and culture in New York City. The establishment of a Culture Cabinet comprised of representatives from a range of City agencies will coordinate and drive forward the City's cultural efforts. Central to the CreateNYC vision for the future is the coordination of our City's investments in our cultural community. The City will further enable this vital work with a new fund that will enable agencies to pilot or scale up programs that engage underserved or vulnerable populations through cultural programming. For CreateNYC, the City is also announcing \$225K for a new fund to support collaborations between City agencies and cultural organizations.

These immediate actions respond to CreateNYC research and public input, and lay the groundwork for long term collaboration toward the goals of the cultural plan. Additional announcements related to the findings of CreateNYC are expected in the coming months.

#### *Research & Public Engagement*

The release of CreateNYC follows months of intensive public engagement spearheaded by the Department of Cultural Affairs and project partner Hester Street Collaborative. Since the kickoff of the planning process in fall 2016, nearly 200,000 New Yorkers participated in the CreateNYC process, including 30,000 residents who showed up to more than 400 live events, and over 150,000 who participated online.

Groups from across the city organized events and feedback sessions to make sure that their communities' voices were heard in the process. A number of groups and coalitions formed to also submitted formal proposals and research to DCLA to inform the plan, including the NYC Artist Coalition, Dance/NYC, the Disability/Arts/New York Taskforce, the Cultural Equity Group, and more.

Throughout engagement process, New Yorkers repeated loud and clear that they value the role that culture plays in their communities, and they want to see greater support for it. A Siena College Research Institute phone survey conducted for CreateNYC found that:

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

Assembly Member Daniel O'Donnell said, "One of the most amazing things about New York City is the abundance of different cultures. As one of the most diverse places in the world, New York City has plenty to offer in terms of varying cuisines, vibrant ethnic enclaves, and cultural institutions of every kind. As the New York State Assembly's Chair of the Arts and Tourism committee, I am excited to see CreateNYC further interweave our culture in an equitable way - providing us all the opportunity to discover cultural institutions we may have never heard of before."

"Materials for the Arts is a wonderful program, as are so many local western queens artists groups" said Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan. "I would like to commend Mayor de Blasio, Commissioner Finklepearl and my colleague Jimmy Van Bramer for making arts and culture a priority."

"The Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities is heartened to see this City support artists, culture workers and audiences with disabilities as a strategy to strengthen New York City's cultural community," said Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities Victor Calise "Disability arts is an important cultural form and an essential part of our city's cultural landscape. The "D" in Diversity stands for Disability and we applaud CreateNYC for embracing that."

"Parks are not just green spaces, but also public places. That's why free, accessible arts and cultural programming is core to NYC Parks' mission - and it's why we are thrilled to welcome CreateNYC," said NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP. "Cultural opportunities should be equitable and available to New Yorkers across all five boroughs, and with this exciting new tool, they'll be easier to access than ever before. We are grateful to Mayor de Blasio and the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs for recognizing this need and addressing it in a way that is fun and simple to use. We will continue to do our part to bring art to New Yorkers of all ages through this partnership and through our own public art program, Art in the Parks, now in its 50th year. Art is not just for the select few, but for all of us."

"CreateNYC will ensure that all New Yorkers have the same access to institutions, and that institutions across the city are supported at similar levels," said Health Commissioner Dr. Mary T. Bassett. "The connection between art, health, and wellness is well studied. It's one of the reasons we launched the community-based Mural Arts Project to increase awareness about mental health and reduce the stigma surrounding mental illnesses. We will continue to work with our sister agencies to ensure that all New Yorkers have the same opportunity to participate in such meaningful projects and arts citywide."

"The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs is proud to help champion our city's magnificent cultural diversity, from IDNYC to CreateNYC," said Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs Commissioner Nisha Agarwal "CreateNYC epitomizes a commitment to making NYC more inclusive and uplift the contributions of immigrant communities. We're proud to partner in this work, assisting institutions on immigration issues and supporting organizations on their work with new American communities, cultures and artists."

"The creative sector is a vital part of our city's identity and economy," said Media and Entertainment Commissioner Julie Menin. "I applaud the release of this timely report, and the valuable insights and feedback it provides from city residents about how much they value a flourishing arts scene. It has never been more important to expand both access to the city's amazing cultural offerings, and opportunities for more New Yorkers to work in the creative fields."

The Department of Cultural Affairs conducted an impressive process to inform this cultural plan, with unprecedented levels of public engagement. They listened to a broad cross section of the cultural community and the general public, who responded readily and creatively. I look forward to working with DCLA in the coming years as they advance the blueprint offered," said Chair of the Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission Susana Leval.

"Create NYC sets the stage for a comprehensive and public recognition of the multiple layers that make New York City such a unique cultural destination," said Pregones / Puerto Rican Traveling Theater Artistic Director Rosalba Rolón. "The process of creating our first-ever cultural plan revealed a complex, exciting cultural sector and a need to address fundamental issues. Thousands of artists, production and technical workers, arts organizations, and audience members found common ground as we explored together ways in which we, as a City, must invest in viable strategies to ensure the stability of our cultural production. The City has been a strong supporter of Pregones / Puerto Rican Traveling Theater for many years, allowing us to grow and connect with more audiences and artists. CreateNYC sets the stage for expanded access to culture in communities across New York City."

"Release of this Cultural Plan is a watershed moment for New York City—long the most vibrant, diverse cultural center on the planet. To take a step back and consider collectively what goals we want to advance with our support of the arts sector is a remarkable achievement. DCLA clearly thought deeply about what the plan should include, and listened to thousands and thousands of New Yorkers about our aspirations and priorities. We at BRIC look forward to reading the full plan, congratulate DCLA on this milestone, and commend the City Council Members who so strongly advocated for this initiative," said BRIC President Leslie G. Schultz.

Purnima Kapur, Executive Director of the Department of City Planning (DCP) said, "The arts have been integral to New York City's heritage and diversity throughout its history. They must continue to play a central role in our community planning processes. Through the DCP-led East New York Neighborhood Plan process, for instance, DCLA's Building Community Capacity program connected groups in East New York and Brownsville to provide more support for local artists and arts activities for residents. As reaffirmed in CreateNYC, DCP is committed to thinking innovatively and working with our communities to ensure all New Yorkers have access to engage in the cultural opportunities that define the New York experience.

"The arts have the power to inspire imagination and ambition, and can transform entire communities," said Darren Walker, President of the Ford Foundation. "We believe everyone should have access to exemplary arts and cultural institutions, no matter where they live. The new CreateNYC plan will ensure New York City is a shining light of creativity and artistic expression in all five boroughs."

"The new Cultural Plan represents an opportunity for New York to be an even greater five-borough cultural mecca. If small and large organizations can join forces with an eye towards creative collaborations that reinforce the themes enumerated in this document, we will bring glory to our city's institutions, artists, residents, and visitors," said cultural plan Citizen's Advisory Committee member and President Emerita of

the Brooklyn Academy of Music Karen Brooks Hopkins.

"Musicians and artists are an essential part of New York City's identity and the engine of our diverse and robust cultural and tourism economy. In order for these critical sectors to thrive, artists and performers must be able to live, work and raise families here," said Tino Gagliardi, President, American Federation of Musicians Local 802. "The Create NYC plan makes fair payment and fair treatment of arts workers a real priority, and we view this dynamic plan as a statement of commitment to both nurture the arts across the City and ensure that our world-famous cultural institutions continue to cultivate, attract and retain the best talent in the world. As a member of the Citizen's Advisory Committee, I've been honored to help ensure that the needs of musicians, artists and performers, many of whom struggle to make a living, are included in the City's vision for our creative future."

"Staten Island Arts is proud to have responsibly represented Staten Island's interests through CreateNYC," said Staten Island Arts Executive Director Elizabeth Bennett. "Our staff served as Cultural Plan ambassadors who informed members of the business, public service, and academic communities of the purpose and need for a comprehensive cultural plan for America's capital of culture. We are grateful to have mediated and participated in CreateNYC because of how the information gathered relates to the very mission of Staten Island Arts: to provide resources to the community. By learning more about the perceptions of residents who might not be culturally engaged, Staten Island Arts has had an opportunity to reflect on how to reach them and make them aware of the resources in their own neighborhoods as well as elsewhere on the island."

"It's been a great pleasure for the 33 organizations that make up the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG) to have played a role in the development of the plan, and to make sure that the voices of all New Yorkers in all communities are heard," said Museum of the Moving Image Executive Director and Chair of the Cultural Institutions Group Carl Goodman. "For instance, Museum of the Moving Image hosted a workshop for residents of the four public housing developments with which we work to gather their input. We greatly look forward to partnering with New York City and the thousands of cultural organizations, and the hundreds of thousands of residents, who comprise the City's creative sector, to continue to realize the plan's objectives."

#### *Ongoing Engagement*

The release of CreateNYC marks the beginning of a wider conversation about how to ensure that the transformative benefits of art and culture are equally accessible to all New Yorkers. To maintain the direct line of communication with the public established during CreateNYC, DCLA will continue to host regular Office Hours with the Commissioner where residents can connect with agency leadership on a range of topics that are important to their experience with culture. Engagement will also continue online using #CreateNYC on a range of platforms. Residents are encouraged to visit [www.nyc.gov/culture](http://www.nyc.gov/culture) for more information on how they can stay engaged.

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