

TESTIMONY TO CITY COUNCIL ON THE FY 2019 BUDGET FOR CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Friday, March 16, 2018

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

By Dance/NYC

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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:

- 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.

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