

## TESTIMONY TO CITY COUNCIL ON THE FY 2020 BUDGET FOR CULTURAL AFFAIRS

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### Testimony to City Council on the FY 2020 Budget for Cultural Affairs

By Alejandra Duque Cifuentes, Executive Director

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On behalf of the more than 5,000 dance makers and 1,200 dance companies based New York City area, the service entity Dance/NYC joins New Yorkers for Culture & Arts and colleague advocates to request:

- 1) The City reconsider the proposed \$6 million cut in funding in FY 2020; and
- 2) The City maintain the \$25 million increase in funding from 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, and New York City's increased investment in culture and the arts now will have both symbolic, systemic, and tangible significance. The current affordability crisis in New York City stems from long-standing systems of oppression and continues to heighten inefficiencies that result from one-time or short-term commitments to funding arts and culture. Healthy ecosystems require sustained, intentional support at every level. In the case of dance, this ecosystem is culture and the way in which culture defines us and advances us as a city, nation, and civilization. It is for this reason that we must commit to continued support for the arts. In doing so, we 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 the role of artistry in justice, equity, and inclusion in a changing United States.

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 as the City continues to implement the cultural plan. For Dance/NYC and its constituents, the most urgent four priorities are:

- 1) Increased grantee volume and funding levels, including funding for small-budget dance makers and fiscally sponsored artists who are impacted by inequitable distribution of resources and, as underscored by Dance/NYC research, are both more ethnically and racially diverse and more likely to include disabled and immigrant workers than larger groups;
- 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 Immigrants. Dance. Arts.: Data on NYC Dance report;
- 3) The development and protection of affordable spaces, with a focus on dance rehearsal space, identified as the top need through our multiple survey studies across various segments of New York City's dance community; 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 ongoing implementation of the cultural plan is a critical time for strengthened and new advocacy. With the City's vision for a sustainable, inclusive, and equitable sector in place, it is 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 2020, Dance/NYC thanks Chair Jimmy Van Bramer, the members of the Committee, and the City at large for its partnership.

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