

DANCE WORKER DIGEST | MAY 2025

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By Dance/NYC

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This month's Dance Worker Digest covers covers major updates to public funding and policy including the finalized New York State budget, new laws to protect transgender New Yorkers, major arts and culture wins in the NYC budget, and funding cuts from the NEA.

New York State Budget Finalized for 2026 Fiscal Year



After a long negotiation process, the New York State Budget passed in mid-May, over a month past its deadline. The final budget includes key affordability measures such as the launch of the Housing Access Voucher Program. Notably, it also determines funding for the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), a vital source of financial support for arts and culture organizations statewide.

In response to Governor Hochul's initial proposal to cut NYSCA's budget by nearly a third, Dance/NYC joined sector leaders in calling for \$200 million in funding. The final budget allocates approximately \$172 million—a modest decrease of less than 2% from last year. While

this year's state budget reflects some stability, broader national trends of funding insecurity for the arts and culture sector highlight the continued need for strong and sustained public investment at the state and local level.

- [Review coverage on what's in the Fiscal Year 2026 state budget](#)
- [Learn more about the New York State Council on the Arts](#)

New Legislation Passed to Protect Transgender New Yorkers



On April 24, the New York City Council [passed a series of laws](#) to support transgender, gender nonconforming, and nonbinary (TGNCNB) New Yorkers.

The new laws include:

- Making it illegal to physically interfere with someone's access to gender affirming care and reproductive healthcare facilities
- Requiring the city to develop a TGNCNB health agenda
- Having the city develop a plan to support newly arrived TGNCNB youth
- Requiring city agencies to offer an "X" gender option on certain forms

The Council also passed resolutions calling on New York State to pass laws that would protect the medical privacy of trans patients and and require NYC hospitals to adhere to World Professional Association of Transgender Health Standards of Care.

This win comes at a time of heightened threats to trans rights on a national level, namely [executive orders](#) targeting trans individuals, gender-affirming healthcare, and trans-inclusive organizations including arts organizations. In this landscape, it is even more important to strengthen protections at the local and state levels.

- [Review an overview of the new legislation](#)
- [Learn about trans rights protections in New York with NYCLU's guide](#)

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Arts and Culture Secure Historic Wins in the NYC Budget



New York City is in the midst of its annual city budget process, which will decide funding for essential public services for the next fiscal year. On May 2, the Executive Budget was released announcing:

- a \$45 million addition to the baseline for arts and culture funding the first increase to the baseline in 16 years
- \$41 million baselined for arts education with an additional \$4 million for programming in the 2025–26 school year.

These will serve as the basis of negotiations for the final budget, which must be finalized by June 30. They represent major wins for the stability of the arts and culture landscape and for the students and teachers across our city. They also reflect the impact of advocacy. Dance/NYC is continuing to advocate for a \$75 million baseline increase in arts and culture funding and full arts education funding for every student as the budget process continues.

- [Review the FY26 Executive Budget press release](#)
 - [Take action to protect arts and culture in the city budget](#)
 - [Learn more about arts education in the city budget](#)
 - [Learn more about arts and culture funding in the city budget](#)
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NEA Pulls Funding from Hundreds of Arts Groups



Beginning May 2, hundreds of arts organizations across the US [received emails](#) from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) announcing that their funding had been cancelled due to the agency's new priorities as directed by the administration. This included the termination of active grants and the withdrawal of pending grant offers.

These notifications coincided with sweeping staffing resignations at the agency and a 2026 federal budget proposal that [calls for the elimination of the NEA](#). They also follow an ongoing [legal battle over recent restrictions](#) placed on NEA funding in compliance with anti-DEI and anti-trans executive orders.

These cuts are a [devastating blow to many organizations](#) prompting urgent fundraising efforts to replace lost income and sustain current projects.

While NEA spending accounts for just 0.003% of the FY25 federal budget, its impact on the national arts ecosystem is vital. The NEA is the largest public funder of the arts in the US, [reaching 678 counties](#) not served by the 1000 largest private foundations. We must continue to push for robust, stable, and inclusive federal funding for the arts.

- [Review our Advocacy Alert on the NEA cancellations](#)
- [Explore Americans for the the Arts 'Protect the NEA' resources](#)
- [Call Congress to demand they support the NEA](#)
- [Email Congress in support of the NEA](#)



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