

UPDATE STATE BUDGET FOR NYSCA & ARTS DAY

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By Norma Munn

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Arts Day on Tuesday, Feb. 8, in Albany attracted around 160 advocates from all over the state to let the legislators know what Gov. Cuomo recommended for NYSCA in his budget last week, and to ask for restoration of his proposed decrease.

Sixty people joined with the NYC Arts Coalition and worked as teams to see and/or deliver our message in to every office of the 94 Assembly and Senate members from NYC.

The response in almost every office was supportive. Many were startled to see the level of proposed cuts to NYSCA. Some pledged to fight to restore the funding. We also seem to have been the first advocacy group to show up with our analysis and budget numbers, so many offices were appreciative of the information.

Here is the message we took to Albany:

RESTORE FUNDING TO THE STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

The State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) budget is cut 10%.

We do not find any other state agency with a 10% total reduction in its entire allocation.

The 10% reduction in the grants category of funding at NYSCA reduces funding for arts groups across the state. This is far more than the 2% reduction that the Cuomo administration says it proposed for this portion of the state agencies.

NYSCA has seen a steady reduction in grant dollars since 2008 and with this additional decrease, the agency will have 36% less than it did in 2008 for grant awards.

These losses are not due to the end of Federal stimulus funds. They are real dollars lost from state revenues.

We are requesting that the decrease to the NYSCA grants allocation category be only the 2% reduction proclaimed by the Cuomo administration. Sharing the burden is expected. Being penalized is not.

This will require a restoration of \$2.8 million.

Attached are several items to help you make your case as an advocate.

1. Charts, which show the impact of state budgets on NYSCA over the past ten years. One in particular seems to have been very effective on Tuesday. It shows the state budget has increased by 74% over ten years, but during that same period, funding for NYSCA declined by 27%. Another shows the decline in per capita funding over that ten-year period. The third has funding levels for NYSCA back to 1990 with some notable points up to today.

2. Talking Points from the Arts NYS Coalition (of which the NY City Arts Coalition is a member). You should add the impact of NYSCA funding on your own organization and treat the Talking Points as a framework.

WHAT YOU CAN DO IN THE NEXT TWO WEEKS:

Go to the web site for the statewide coalition www.artsNYS.org <<http://www.artsNYS.org>> and send an email letter to Gov. Cuomo.

Contact your NYS Assembly and Senate members and make an appointment to talk directly with them about this budget. (They are not in Albany the week of Feb. 21 so you may find it easier to obtain meetings that week.) If you can't get a meeting, write a letter reiterating our message for restoration.

Have your Board members write letters to their Assembly and Senate members.

(If you don't know who represents you, go to the Board of Elections for NYC.)

LONGER TERM:

Visits to Albany by small groups of people will continue. The statewide coalition will develop email blasts for legislators after the efforts with Gov. Cuomo. And, as the process of this budget develops, you will receive updated information from the NYC Arts Coalition. Right now the challenge is to keep the momentum from Tuesday moving forward.

THANKS FOR THE HELP.

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