

ADVOCACY ALERT: COVID-19 CULTURAL RELIEF LETTER

Monday, March 23, 2020

Advocacy Alert: COVID-19 Cultural Relief Letter

By Jimmy Van Bramer and Laurie Cumbo

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March 23, 2020
Honorable Bill de Blasio
Mayor of the City of New York
New York City Hall
New York, New York 1007

Dear Mayor de Blasio,

We thank you for your leadership during this time of great uncertainty, when bold action and transparency is needed most. We applaud the support and efforts that you have immediately set into place to support New York City's small business community and those forced to shut their doors to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

As you know, the arts community is vital to the economy of New York City. There is no industry that brings more revenue into the City of New York than the arts and culture sector. The artists and arts organizations that make New York City the place it is are often surviving on the margins, without much in savings or reserves, and are greatly threatened by this state of emergency. Forced to shut their doors and cease all programming, exhibitions, and events, many are unsure when or if they will be able to open again.

We are asking for New York City's cultural institutions, arts non-profits, artists, and creative workers to be supported by current relief efforts and included in the Business Stimulus package, which would include:

- 1.) Immediately providing all of New York City's cultural institutions that were awarded funding for fiscal years 2019 and 2020 to be immediately advanced funding for programs and general operating support for the year.
- 2.) Allowing organizations to utilize all of their DCLA, DYCD and discretionary funding for general operating support.
- 3.) Commit to the same level of funding for all DCLA, DYCD AND discretionary funding in FY2019/20 for FY 2020/21.
- 4.) Waiving all space rental and utility costs for organizations on City-Owned property.
- 5.) To provide relief funding up to 50% for organizations who have lost earned income through admissions, planned galas, space rental, memberships, touring exhibitions, and educational programs.
- 6.) Commit to rolling over and preserving all capital commitments into the following Fiscal year and committing to provide additional contingency costs as a result of delays caused by COVID-19.

We know that we will get through the challenges that the COVID-19 virus has brought to the City of New York and through your leadership we are confident that the arts and cultural community will be there to assist through this hard time as only the arts can do and we will be proud to welcome back New Yorkers and our global visitors back to their cultural home.
Stronger Together,

Jimmy Van Bramer
Chair, Committee on Cultural Affairs,
Libraries, & International Intergroup Relations
District 26 - Queens

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Majority Leader
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