

DANCE WORKER DIGEST | MARCH 2025

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By Dance/NYC

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This month's Dance Worker Digest highlights City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams' 2025 State of the City address outlining priorities for the year ahead, news on immigration groups rallying behind legislation to protect immigrant communities, and an update on the pause of anti-DEI and anti-trans changes to NEA grantmaking as legal challenges move forward.

Speaker Adams Conducts Her 2025 State of the City Address



Earlier this month, City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams conducted her State of the City Address for 2025. As the head of City Council, her address outlines the City Council's key priorities and planned actions. She emphasized "education, mental and physical health, housing, public safety, and opportunity for all New Yorkers" as priorities. This includes proposals like expanding seven-day library service to more branches, increasing childcare vouchers, and decreasing the delay in government payments to contracted nonprofits. She also highlighted her support for a number of guaranteed income programs, which provide direct unrestricted cash assistance to their recipients.

In the accompanying report, Speaker Adams highlighted the City Council's support of arts and culture in the City Budget last year. She reaffirmed the importance of arts and culture in strengthening neighborhoods and contributing to the overall city economy.

The dance sector can consider the address a resource to guide our city-level advocacy in the coming year. We can hold the Speaker and the City Council accountable for their stated support of the cultural sector, and we can make the connections to how the arts support the city's broader priorities.

- [Learn more about Speaker Adams' State of the City 2025 address](#)
- [Review Speaker Adams' State of the City 2025 report](#)

Photo credit: Emil Cohen/NYC Council Media Unit

Immigration Groups Rally Behind NY for All Act and NY Dignity Not Detention Act



In response to national attacks on immigrant communities, community groups are mobilizing around a few pieces of proposed state legislation:

The New York for All Act would prohibit all local law enforcement and state agencies from conspiring with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Patrol (CBP). This includes preventing local law enforcement from enforcing federal immigration laws, limiting ICE and CBP access to state and local property, and increasing government data protections.

The NY Dignity Not Detention Act would end immigrant detention in New York State. It would prohibit anyone from owning or operating immigrant detention facilities in New York State and require the termination of any government contracts with immigration detention centers.

These two laws, together, would represent important steps to keep immigrant families in all their forms safe and together.

- [Learn more about the New York for All Act](#)
- [Contact your representatives to support the New York for All Act](#)
- [Check out the campaign for the NY Dignity Not Detention Act](#)
- [Take action to support NY Dignity Not Detention](#)

Anti-DEI and Anti-trans Changes to NEA Grantmaking Paused as Lawsuits Unfold



As of early March, some changes to the National Endowment for the Arts' (NEA) grantmaking guidelines have been paused as they undergo court challenges. This includes requirements to comply with anti-DEI and anti-trans executive orders. For now, applicants to NEA Grants for Arts Projects no longer need to certify that they do not promote "gender ideology" or diversity, equity, and inclusion.

This follows two lawsuits:

- In February, the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education and others challenged two Trump-issued anti-diversity executive orders. A district judge temporarily blocked the orders, which led federal agencies, including the NEA, to stop enforcement.

- On March 6, several arts organizations, represented by the American Civil Liberties Union, sued the NEA over its anti-trans requirements. A hearing was set for March 18. In response, the NEA paused parts of the new rules, allowing organizations to apply without certifying they will not promote "gender ideology." However, the NEA may still deny funding to specific project proposals that they view as doing so.

This pause may encourage more arts organizations to apply, but these changes are still temporary and limited in scope. Both lawsuits are ongoing.

These legal challenges are a part of a broader resistance to censorship in the arts. In February, 463 arts workers sent a letter to the NEA calling for the reversals of the new requirements, and 34 dancers staged a protest at the Kennedy Center through a performance of *The Nelken Line*. These actions show that opposition efforts can influence policy, but continued advocacy is crucial to protect resources for BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and other marginalized arts workers and organizations.

- [Learn more about the pause of anti-trans NEA grantmaking requirements](#)
- [Learn more about the block on anti-DEI executive orders](#)
- [Check out more for information on the initial NEA changes](#)
- [Complete Dance/USA's survey on the impact of changes to NEA grant requirements](#)
- [Explore coverage of the artists' letter to the NEA](#)
- [Explore coverage of the dancers' protest at the Kennedy Center](#)



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