

DANCE WORKER DIGEST | SEPTEMBER 2025

Thursday, September 25, 2025

Dance Worker Digest | September 2025

By Dance/NYC

► [Share](#) | [Print](#) | [Download](#)

Dance Worker Digest

Dance Worker Digest September 2025

This month's Dance Worker Digest covers key updates in the arts, labor, and public health. Topics include the Kennedy Center's firing of its dance programming team amid union efforts, Public Theater workers ratifying their first union contract, a national pledge to protect artistic freedom, and temporary expanded COVID-19 vaccine access for all New Yorkers.

Kennedy Center Terminates Entire Dance Programming Team



On August 21, the Kennedy Center terminated the entire dance programming team, a move that comes amid sweeping changes and increasing politicization at the institution. Earlier this year, President Trump was appointed chair of the Kennedy Center, and launched a "Make Kennedy Center Great Again" initiative, allocating \$256 million of funding.

The terminated staff were involved in efforts to unionize through the Kennedy Center United Arts Workers, a group organizing in response to these changes. Their goals include securing freedom of speech protections for staff, improving wages and benefits, and establishing stronger safeguards against termination.

In response to the firings, workers have circulated a petition calling for the reinstatement of the dance programming team which Dance/NYC has supported in a recent Advocacy Alert. Since the firings, the Kennedy Center has appointed Stephen Nakagawa as the new Director of Dance Programming after he criticized "radical leftist ideologies in ballet."

- [Review coverage on the termination of Kennedy Center dance workers](#)
- [Call for the reinstatement of the dance programming team](#)
- [Learn more about the Kennedy Center United Arts Workers](#)
- [Review coverage on Kennedy Center's new Director of Dance Programming](#)

The Public Theater Production Workers Ratify First Union Contract



Last June, production workers at the The Public Theater voted to unionize and join the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE). On September 1, they ratified their first union contract by a near-unanimous vote, securing meaningful wage increases and benefits that strengthen the sustainability and protection of their work.

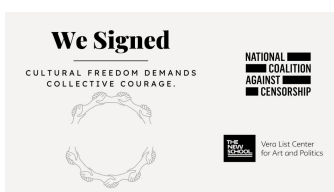
The Public Theater is the latest in a growing movement of unionization at off-Broadway theaters. Their successful, collaborative efforts demonstrate how unions can empower workers to achieve better working conditions and safer spaces for both staff and audiences. This movement has the potential to expand workplace protections for dance workers on and off the

stage at theaters throughout the city.

- [Review the joint statement by IATSE and the Public Theater on the new contract](#)
- [Learn more about the Public Theater's production workers' union](#)
- [Review the Dance Worker Digest Special Edition on Unions](#)

Photo by Alex Lozupone

200+ Arts Groups Pledge to Protect Artistic Freedom



Amidst escalating attacks on arts and culture, Dance/NYC joined over 200 cultural organizations and 700 individuals to sign onto a statement pledging to preserve artistic freedom in spite of political pressure. The statement, organized by the National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC) and the Vera List Center for Art and Politics, reaffirms the ability of arts and culture to promote civic dialogue and challenge dominant narratives. It states that in order for art to continue to serve this capacity, cultural institutions must retain autonomy over their programming. Signees commit to assuring independence and integrity in their work and to support other institutions resisting external pressure.

Having received widespread media coverage, the statement is one of many actions cultural workers and organizations are taking to resist

attempts to redefine collective cultural narratives in support of nationalist political agendas. The statement remains open for signatures.

- [Review the "collective courage" arts and culture statement and sign on](#)
 - [Review Playbill coverage of the collective arts and culture statement](#)
 - [Learn more about NCAC's arts & culture advocacy](#)
-

New Yorkers Can Get COVID-19 Vaccines Without Prescription Until October 5



In August, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued new rules limiting who can get updated COVID-19 vaccines, restricting access to people who are at risk for serious complications because they are age 65 or older or have a high-risk health condition. These changes threaten vaccine access for millions nationwide and have caused widespread confusion amongst doctors, patients, and pharmacists.

In response, on September 5, Governor Hochul signed an executive order allowing pharmacists to keep administering vaccines to all New Yorkers for 30 days. She followed up on September 10 with guidance urging insurers to continue covering all vaccines recommended

by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). State legislators are now exploring further measures to extend access beyond the 30-day window.

Vaccination, masking, and other COVID safety measures remain vital for making public spaces—especially dance spaces—accessible to everyone. Protecting vaccine access is essential for the health and safety of low-income and disabled community members.

- [Learn more about the FDA restrictions on the updated COVID vaccines](#)
- [Review Hochul's executive order extending vaccine access for 30 days](#)
- [Review the guidance to insurers on covering recommended vaccines](#)



[< back](#)

[previous listing](#) • [next listing](#)