

LxNY and CECNY Budget Cut Response

Feb 8th, 2024

LxNY | Latinx Arts Consortium of New York and CECNY (The Cultural Equity Coalition of New York) voice our deep concern regarding the three rounds of devastating budget cuts to the cultural sector—\$9.3 million in November 2023, \$11.6 million in January 2024, and an additional cut proposed in April 2024—enacted by Mayor Eric Adams. Many Latinx-serving institutions, BIPOC-serving institutions, and other small community-based institutions in our networks depend on Department of Cultural Affairs funding to serve our communities and address urgent needs in NYC neighborhoods, like housing, food, clothing, and overall health. We are already feeling the detrimental effects of the Mayor's first round of cuts in November and have had to restrict the provision of essential services to our children, elders, and communities at large—including asylum seekers and refugees.

Historically, populations of color in NYC have faced numerous disadvantages due to economic disparities, unequal access to health care, education, and affordable housing, as well as immigration status and language barriers. Our institutions are uniquely equipped to serve these communities and offer the public and the world a glimpse at the BIPOC experience, which contributes substantially to the tapestry of NYC's cultural ecosystem and economy.

These numbers (a total of about \$20 million) represent a drop in the bucket when we consider the city's overall \$109 billion budget—and yet the loss of those \$20 million, and potentially another \$10 million in April, will be catastrophic for our sector, especially for those of us serving communities that have been historically under-resourced across the five boroughs. The impact of these cuts is forcing cultural organizations to close or suspend operations, resulting in the loss of jobs for artists and cultural workers, disruption of education in public schools and after-school programs, the deprivation of cultural enrichment for thousands of families and senior centers, and the denial of opportunities for New Yorkers to access affirming festivals and cultural celebrations and to connect across cultures in one of the most diverse cities in the world.

As collectives of New York City-based Latinx- and BIPOC-serving organizations and institutions, we stand with our communities and with the im/migrant ethos that makes New York City the most diverse cultural capital of the world—and one of the major economic engines in the city impacting hospitality, education, and health sectors among others. We firmly support New York City's "Right to Shelter" policy, which has stood out and is deeply embedded in the city's social fabric. Stemming from a Depression-era New York State constitutional amendment, this policy ensures shelter and board for everyone in need. Hence, we strongly denounce the attempt to blame this community of refugees for the new round of proposed cuts. We also denounce the 20% reduction to the city's migrant services budget, which will see a startling \$1.5 billion cut, further compromising the livelihood and safety of this group. They are an integral part of our community and unfairly blaming them only exacerbates their challenges.

In solidarity with over 5000 cultural organizations that make New York's vital ecosystem, we endorse a prior [letter](#) published on January 16th in response to the first budget announcement**. It is worth emphasizing that government funding comprises a substantial percentage of the overall budget of most of the small and medium-sized organizations of color. This round of cuts will have a proportionally greater impact on the sustainability of thousands of NYC's smaller organizations, jeopardizing our ability to maintain jobs and continue developing a more diverse, creative workforce with living wages and benefits for the city. Organizations will be forced to reduce hours. Freelance workers -from maintenance to tech assistance- will get drastic reductions. Children will lose after-school classes. Programs for the elderly will be cut. Teaching artists will be unemployed. Independent cultural producers will have less subsidies. Public cultural celebrations and festivals will dwindle. Businesses in our neighborhoods will suffer.

Our arts and cultural organizations are essential to our communities and promote civic participation, economic well-being, mental health, and the collective identity of millions of New Yorkers. We partner with mom-and-pop businesses that are equally part of neighborhood character, provide civic and organizing spaces, solidarity fundraisers, early voting sites, and protect the grassroots-level activity any healthy democracy depends on. We seed and cultivate locally grown emerging talent and nurture the heterogeneity and vibrancy in our cultural landscape that major institutions and industries rely on to harvest.

We call on the Mayor to **restore all funding cuts** to culture and arts across over 25 agencies in the New York City budget in FY2024 and fully restore the budgets of cultural programs across these agencies in FY 2025.

SIGNED BY:

LxNY Steering Committee

The Cultural Equity Coalition of New York Steering Committee

In Collaboration with:

A.R.T./New York

Asian American Arts Alliance

BAAD! Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance

BAX/Brooklyn Arts Exchange

Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute

The Clemente Soto Véllez Cultural & Education Center

Dance/NYC

Flushing Town Hall

IndieSpace

Pregones/Puerto Rican Traveling Theater

People's Theatre Project

Repertorio Español

SOURCES:

Mayor Adams Releases Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2025, posted on January 16, 2024:

<https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/040-24/mayor-adams-releases-preliminary-budget-fiscal-year-2025#/0>

NYC Museum and Culture Leaders Implore Mayor Adams to Restore Arts Funding, Press Release posted on January 16, 2024:

<https://www.cignyc.org/fy-24-culture-cuts>

Museum Leaders Urge NYC Mayor to Reverse Budget Cuts:

<https://hyperallergic.com/866639/museum-leaders-urge-nyc-mayor-eric-adams-to-reverse-budget-cuts-dcl-a/>

Facts, Not Fear: How Welcoming Immigrants Benefits New York City:

<https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/facts-not-fear-how-welcoming-immigrants-benefits-new-york-city/>

New Immigrants Arriving in the New York City: Economic Projections:

<https://immresearch.org/publications/new-immigrants-arriving-in-the-new-york-city-economic-projections/>

'Bracing ourselves': Major NYC cultural institutions say cuts will hurt economic recovery:

<https://gothamist.com/news/bracing-ourselves-major-nyc-cultural-institutions-say-cuts-will-hurt-economic-recovery>

New York City migrant services on the chopping block in second round of budget cuts:

<https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/new-york-city-migrant-services-budget-cuts/>

A disproportionately harmful impact': City's cultural groups react to the Adams budget:

<https://www.bkmag.com/2024/01/22/a-disproportionately-harmful-impact-citys-cultural-groups-react-to-the-adams-budget/>

New York Needs "Stronger Management," Not Attacks on Asylum Seekers

<https://www.nyc.org/2023/12/new-york-needs-stronger-management-not-attacks-on-asylum-seekers/>

Facts, Not Fear: How Welcoming Immigrants Benefits New York City

<https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/facts-not-fear-how-welcoming-immigrants-benefits-new-york-city/>

Budget Cuts Force NYC Libraries to Stop Sunday Service:

<https://hyperallergic.com/857649/budget-cuts-force-nyc-libraries-to-stop-sunday-service/>

New Immigrants Arriving in the New York City: Economic Projections:

<https://immresearch.org/publications/new-immigrants-arriving-in-the-new-york-city-economic-projections/>