

Joint Legislative Fiscal Committees Budget Hearings

Testimony provided by

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INTRODUCTION

Chairs Krueger and Weinstein, and members of the committee: thank you for the invitation to address you today. I am Mara Manus, the Executive Director of the New York State Council on the Arts, known as NYSCA. On behalf of our Chair, Katherine Nicholls, and the entire Council and staff, we deeply appreciate the Governor and Legislature's continued support and recognition of NYSCA's role in our state's thriving arts and cultural sector.

NEW YORK STATE'S CREATIVE ECONOMY NYSCA FY20 GRANTMAKING

According to data released in 2019 by the NEA and BEA, the New York State arts sector generated \$120 billion for the State's economy and employed over 460,000 workers.

NYSCA's core focus is grantmaking to non-profit arts organizations and artists. Our grantees range from small community-based organizations like Pendragon Theater in Saranac Lake to large institutions such as the Glimmerglass Music Festival in Cooperstown. NYSCA's support reaches all counties.

For FY2020, we awarded \$41 million to 2,500 organizations. NYSCA has the highest budget of all state arts agencies in the nation, and 98% of NYSCA's support comes from New York State - the highest percentage of any state art agency. We are extremely grateful to Governor Cuomo and the Legislature for this support.

Studies show that the arts teach discipline, focus, cooperation, and creativity – traits that a majority of employers cite they seek when hiring. This year, NYSCA expanded our workforce development support to over \$4.2 million.

For the first time, NYSCA offered our application on a new portal, the NYSCA-CFA, to improve the application process and broaden access.

NYSCA'S CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

I am pleased to share with you our new cross-sector partnerships that are demonstrating the critical role of the arts in our economy and in the health of people and places.

The arts fuel tourism. In 2019, there were 150 million on-site visits to NYSCA grantees. For FY2020, we created a new Arts Impact category to expand public art events that draw millions of visitors. An example is Albany Symphony Orchestra's Trailblaze music festival, which will offer free performances in May and June along the canals and the Empire State Trail.

NYSCA is working with Parks to ensure that arts destinations will be represented on the new Empire State Trail website.

In October we also launched a joint arts event platform with I LOVE NY, reaching 300,000 viewers with a single submission. We are also partnering with Metro-North to create seasonal promotional materials for cultural events.

Working with DOCCS, NYSCA is supporting creative programming in the Hudson and Adirondack youth facilities and the Ulster County Correctional Facility Senior Living Program. This year, programming will expand to OCFS residential sites.

In partnership with NYSOFA, we are launching a 12-site creative aging initiative pilot in the North Country, Capital Region, and Long Island. The goals of creative aging are instructional, the

results are often therapeutic. Researchers have discovered that the aging brain is far more pliable than previously believed, and that structured learning — especially through the arts — can improve cognitive functioning and reduce social isolation.

CONCLUSION

Thank you again for this opportunity to share the impact and the reach of the arts in New York State, and NYSCA's role in supporting the transformative work of our grantees.

60 years after NYSCA's founding, we know that arts and creativity play a central and catalytic role in every aspect of our lives, making New York State healthier, stronger, and creating a future of opportunity and sustainable growth.

I now welcome your questions.