

# LINCOLN CENTER

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**Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc.**  
**FY24 State Budget Testimony**  
**NYS Legislature hearing on Economic Development, and Arts**  
**February 9, 2023**

Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and Means Chairs Krueger and Weinstein, and Committee members, thank you for accepting written testimony to address the critical public funding needs in support of the arts.

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts was established to be an artistic and civic cornerstone for New York City, founded for the purpose of cultivating, fostering, and centering socially engaged arts programs within civic daily life. Lincoln Center is home to 11 nonprofits in the arts and education, host to emerging and established artists, a civic partner to community-based organizations, and an iconic New York destination. Lincoln Center makes free and low-cost cultural programming accessible for all New Yorkers.

We as an institution are part of a state-wide ecosystem of cultural organizations, creative workers, and educators woven into all aspects of the daily life of New Yorkers. The cultural sector and all the creativity and artistry it produces is the secret to New York's success. The cultural sector is critical to our state's economic health, contributing nearly \$130 Billion to New York State's economy and more than 7% of the state's annual GDP according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (National Assembly of State Art Agencies, 2020). Funding culture brings state-wide economic resiliency and growth, invests in tourism, and lays the foundation for an equitable, educated, and safe state.

Culture is a job generator, supporting a vast network of cultural organizations, creative workers, and small businesses. From our stagehands to construction workers, we work to support union jobs. At a time of high unemployment, Lincoln Center accelerated its timeline for the new David Geffen Hall to get New Yorkers back to work by supporting 6,000 jobs, awarded 43% of construction contracts to MWBEs and developed a workforce development program with Turner Construction that put 30 local residents on track for full-time union positions in construction trades. David Geffen Hall is an example of the power of the State, City and arts sector successfully working together to deliver this renewed venue as a symbol of New York's resilience.

We join our colleagues across the cultural sector in asking the legislature to advocate for:

- An FY24 allocation of at least \$100 Million in expense to support arts organizations and arts programming that are critical for the sector to continue to rebound across the state, and
- Ensure new funding is incorporated for public investments in New York's renowned arts organizations both big and small by allocating a new FY24 allocation of at least \$50 Million in capital funds, in addition to drawing down the FY23 funds.

The funding allocated to education across the state is encouraging. As students are continuing to catch up post-pandemic, the arts and arts education should be part of the solution in re-engaging in the classroom. We ask the legislature to advocate for a portion of this funds to be allocated to revive statewide school programs in the arts.

The arts are interwoven in social service and civic life, supporting local communities, and welcoming the newest New Yorkers. At Lincoln Center we strengthened our commitment to positioning arts at the core of daily life as a civic hub through presenting socially engaged artistic works while being responsive to needs within our community. During the pandemic we hosted food distributions, outdoor community graduations, and served as a vaccine site. Last year, we welcomed over 320,000 people to campus for free and choose-what-you-pay programming, saved more than 3,000 lives through Community Blood Drives with the New York Blood Center, hosted our second naturalization ceremony with USCIS for 300 new Americans representing 80 countries, and locally partnered with our neighbors on initiatives, including celebrating the NYCHA (New York City Housing Authority) Amsterdam Houses 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

In and out of the classroom, exposure to culture and the arts nurtures the whole student. Lincoln Center has partnered with the City's Department of Education since 2014 to host Middle School Arts Audition Camp, and annually welcomes over 50,000 New York City students across the resident organizations on campus. Public investment is imperative to guarantee arts education is available to all New York students whether you live in the five boroughs or in the Finger Lakes region. State funding allows the cultural sector to thrive across the state by supporting healthy communities as spaces for convening, learning, healing, supporting, and uplifting all New Yorkers.

We look forward to continuing the dialogue with members of the State Legislature to explore continued support for the arts and arts education.

Respectfully submitted,

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