

Dear Senator Krueger,

On behalf of the New York State Council on the Arts, I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to have provided testimony on Thursday, February 9, and discuss the incredible return that the arts and culture delivers on the robust investments made by the Governor and Legislature over the past two years. Arts and culture organizations of all sizes across the state are powerful economic engines; they strengthen our local ecologies, create positive health outcomes for all New Yorkers, and ensure our state's position as a global beacon for arts and tourism.

Your historic FY2023 arts appropriation resulted in 3,600 grants totaling almost \$98 million to 1,600 organizations and 426 artists across all 10 regions of the state. Additionally, NYSCA is proud to have prioritized support for small and mid-size organizations:

- 31% (507) NYSCA grantees have budgets under \$250,000
- 51% (813) of our direct grantees have organizational budgets under \$500,000
- 84% (1,348) of grantees have organizational budgets under \$3 Million

NYSCA is committed to the continued support of our state's vibrant arts and culture sector, which is at a critical juncture in its recovery. Doors have reopened and programming is well underway, however new areas of challenge have emerged, including:

- **Significant reduction in workforce.** In my testimony, I shared the most recent NEA/BEA data with you, which reflects a decrease of at least 70,000 arts workers during COVID from the previous year's report. Additionally, supply chain delays have created significant challenges for the vendors who play a vital role in our local arts ecosystems.
- **Decreased audiences in a shift towards more hybrid arts experiences.** Organizations that rely on in-person attendance are in the midst of a paradigm shift, and it is unclear at this time whether these audience shifts are permanent or temporary. These shifts have implications on technology investment and could result in the total reinvention of organizations' entire operating model.
- **Decreased revenue,** both earned and contributed, particularly as the tourism economy has not fully recovered.
- **Dramatically increased operating costs** that are consistent with many sectors such as much higher staffing costs, shipping/freight, and more expensive materials and supplies. Unique to the arts sector and public venues are the ongoing expenses from COVID cancellations, rescheduling, and health and safety upgrades to older facilities.

I am pleased to share that NYSCA has just completed a robust 2023 COVID Impact survey with over 1,300 responses from organizations of all sizes— from the smallest community-based organizations to larger institutional cultural centers. The findings are clear – the arts and culture sector is still in a state of recovery. Per the survey:

- 63% of respondents expect between 25-50% fewer visitors in 2023 vs 2019 (pre-pandemic)
- 53% of respondents project less FY23 income than their last full fiscal year before COVID-19
- 43% of respondents are not currently offering the same level of programming as pre-pandemic

We look forward to continuing to share the list of NYSCA grantees in your district, including the forthcoming FY2023 Capital Projects grants and all future FY2024 grants. We are immensely grateful for the work of you and your office in sharing the news of arts and culture funding across your district!

Additionally, NYSCA plans to launch our FY2024 opportunities in Spring 2023, and we highly encourage all prospective applicants to sign up for our mailing list to receive important updates, [here](#).

It is a tremendous privilege and honor to support the incredible breadth of New York's artists and organizations, who make our lives richer. Their determination in the face of immense challenge has delivered an outsized return on New York State's investment.

We welcome any questions you, your office, and your constituents may have, and we look forward to continuing this vital work, together.

With regards,

Mara

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