

February 13, 2026



Chair Krueger, Chair Pretlow, and Members of Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and Means,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the millions of New Yorkers who create, perform, teach, design, and power our state's creative economy. We respectfully urge you to fund the New York State Council on the Arts at \$210 million, including a lift of NYSCA's Stabilization or Reserve Fund to \$10 million.

This funding is a smart investment with a proven and demonstrable return. New York State's arts and cultural production is a core economic development engine:

- \$164.7 billion in annual economic activity
- More than 482,000 jobs
- 7.58 percent of New York's Gross State Product
- Larger than construction and transportation combined (NASAA Creative Economy State Profiles, nasaa-arts.org, 2023)

NYSCA is one of the most efficient and effective statewide systems we have to translate that economic engine into local impact. To zoom in on a few communities:

- **Western New York: \$381 million** annually, **8,220 jobs**, **\$22.5 million** in state tax revenue, more than six times the region's NYSCA funding
- **Long Island: \$330 million** annually, **\$12.4 million** in state tax revenue, five times the region's NYSCA funding (Arts & Economic Prosperity 6, [Americans for the Arts](#))

Using this same logic, the State's investment in NYSCA comes back at least three times in state tax revenue alone. NYSCA's operating support grants move through local economies by employing local artists and administrators, supporting spending at local businesses, and producing programs that serve audiences throughout the year in communities large and small across New York State.

The arts also support population stability and growth, even where overall population is declining:

- **Mohawk Valley:** artist population up **49.7 percent**
- **Capital Region:** up **41.8 percent**
- **North Country:** up **41.3 percent** ([Upstate Creative Spark Report](#), Center for an Urban Future, 2023)

This is a sustainability moment, not a short term crisis response, but we should be clear about the numbers facing arts organizations across New York State. National sector data show that in 2024, average revenue fell 25 percent while organizations tightened budgets by 23 percent, reflecting higher prices and weaker revenue at the same time (SMU DataArts, [National Trends 2025](#)).

Against that backdrop, demand for New York State's Stabilization or Reserve Fund has been extraordinary. In 2026, NYSCA and NYFA received 1,255 eligible applications and were able to fund only 60 organizations. That gap is a clear statewide signal that reserve building is now a basic requirement for stability. Increasing the Reserve Fund to \$10 million is a practical way to meet the scale of need and sustain year round operations in communities across New York State.

Federal uncertainty adds urgency. New York State's cultural sector relies on an estimated \$40 million to \$65 million in annual federal funding through the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), and the delivery of those funds remains politically fragile (Culture and Arts Policy Institute, [Policy Brief 1](#)).

February 13, 2026



Finally, we support the Governor's proposed NY SPACE program at \$10 million to help nonprofit performing arts organizations at risk of displacement acquire venues. It is a smart complement to NYSCA's operating and capital investments, and it strengthens long term sustainability.

We urge you to fund NYSCA at \$210 million, to lift the Stabilization or Reserve Fund to \$10 million, and to advance NY SPACE. These steps protect jobs, strengthen communities, and secure New York State's cultural infrastructure statewide.

New York State has always set the national standard for arts and culture. We are the State of the Arts because we choose to lead. This investment is how we keep that promise, in every region, and ensure New York State remains a place where artists, cultural organizations, and the communities they serve can thrive. Thank you.