



**New York City Council
Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations
Fiscal Year 2015 Preliminary Budget Hearing**

Friday, March 20, 10:00 AM – Council Chambers, City Hall
Testimony Presented by New York City Department of Cultural Affairs
Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl

Good morning Chairman Van Bramer and members of the committee. I am Tom Finkelpearl, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. I am pleased to present testimony regarding the Mayor's Fiscal Year 2016 Preliminary Budget. I am joined today by a number of my colleagues from the agency.

Today I will start by reviewing the Mayor's preliminary budget proposal for the Department of Cultural Affairs. For Fiscal 2016, Mayor de Blasio's proposed Preliminary Budget includes a baseline of \$149.7 million for Cultural Affairs, an increase of \$1.7 million over the Fiscal 2015 baseline at Adoption. This is due to collective bargaining and other adjustments. This preliminary proposal would allocate \$28.5 million for programs groups through the Cultural Development Fund and \$109.8 million for operating and energy subsidies at the CIG. The Fiscal 2016 forecast also includes \$5.1 million for CASA. Overall, these figures are largely consistent with the Fiscal 2015 adopted budget, not counting any one time initiatives or discretionary funding that might be added at adoption. DCLA started Fiscal Year 2015 with an adopted expense budget of \$157.2 million, which has since been modified for technical adjustments and is currently \$159.4 million. The Fiscal 2015 adopted figure was the largest budget of the past five years, and the third largest in the agency's history.

Turning to the agency's four year capital budget, we continue to work with our colleagues in City Council and the borough presidents to manage grants to cultural groups through the city. The agency's current four year capital plan includes \$722 million for 418 projects at 218 different cultural organizations. This portfolio allows nonprofits to leverage hundreds of millions of dollars in additional investments, and encompasses a wide range of projects that improve accessibility, upgrade equipment, reduce energy consumption, and provide New Yorkers with access to high quality cultural programming. Some upcoming highlights include upgrades to the Snug Harbor music hall in Staten Island, the complete renovation of Bronx River Art Center, the Jim Henson galleries at Museum of the Moving Image, the Edible Academy facility and family garden at New York Botanical Garden, the opening of St. Ann's Warehouse's new home in the former tobacco warehouse in DUMBO, and the opening of the new Whitney Museum building in Chelsea next month.

By now, many of you are familiar with the programs managed by my agency and my staff keeps you up to date on the application process and deadlines so you can inform your constituents. These include:

- the Cultural Development Fund, which provides grants to around 900 nonprofits each year for publicly accessible arts programming that reflects the incredible diversity of our city;
- Materials for the Arts, which collects donated supplies and provides them, free of charge, to nonprofits, schools, and government agencies with arts programming, and trains artists and educators how creative reuse can improve their programming while maximizing resources; MFTA represents a long-standing successful partnership with Sanitation and the Department of Education;
- the Community Arts Development Program, which builds capacity at small, community-based cultural groups to improve the stability and programming of these groups that are critical to their neighborhoods;
- Percent for Art, the City's public art program that enhances our libraries, courthouses, plazas, schools, and other public spaces with permanent art installations;
- SPARC, or Seniors Partnering with Artist Citywide, a partnership with the Department for the Aging and five borough arts councils that places artists in senior centers, engaging seniors with a wide range of arts programs and providing stipends for working artists;
- and the Cultural After School Adventures program, or CASA, which allows Council members to designate cultural organizations to partner with schools for afterschool programming, providing additional cultural education opportunities in all 51 council districts.

I'd like to point out that my agency manages these expense and capital funds along with these additional programs with an agency head count of just over 60 people and only around 3% of our annual expense budget going to staffing and administration. We may look like a \$150 million dollar agency in the budget, but operating expenses account for only \$5.6 million of our total funding, with the rest going straight to our constituent cultural groups. If you want updates on specific programs, I'm happy to provide more detail during Q & A. We are proud of all of these programs and proud to be the largest municipal funding agency for arts and culture in the U.S. I would like to turn now to a set of new initiatives. These are programs launched in the last year - programs informed by the vision of the new administration and City Council. They represent our efforts to find new ways to open the doors of the greatest museums, concert halls, zoos, and gardens in America; to enrich the lives of the newest New Yorkers; to find new tools of assessment to better understand the value of art on a community level; to see how local institutions enrich the city as a whole; and our conviction that we need to value artists and to look for concrete ways to address the issues of affordability in New York.

- In July 2014, I was proud to join the Mayor many of you to announce increased funding for the arts in our schools. Thanks to this funding, allocated by Mayor de Blasio in partnership with the City Council, the City has been able to hire borough arts directors to better coordinate cultural activities and fund additional certified arts teachers. We look forward to continuing this work to create a quality, sequential arts education curriculum for public school students. This is the foundation for all arts activity in our city and a top priority for the Administration.
- Last September, many of you joined Mayor de Blasio at the Bronx Zoo to announce that our partners in the CIG had agreed to offer free one year memberships to IDNYC card holders. I think it's no coincidence that demand for the card has been off the charts, and we have received our first reports of hundreds of card holders redeeming their memberships. I'd like to emphasize for everyone who has yet to have their appointment for their own IDNYC card, the yearlong memberships begin from the day you sign up. For year two of the IDNYC program, we are eager to begin conversations with CDF groups on future partnerships.
- The Social Impact of the Arts Project, which I've updated this committee on once before, has started its work in compiling a comprehensive report on what cultural services are provided and where, and what impact they have on the communities in which they occur. This report will capture the impact of not only the 1,200 or so nonprofits that are eligible for City funding, but thousands of more cultural service providers that engage New Yorkers in the neighborhoods where they live each and every day. SIAP measures the impact of the arts on a range of benefits for community vitality and social wellbeing, an excellent complement to economic impact studies. We can expect early results from this report in the coming months and a full report next year.
- The Fiscal 2015 budget included \$1.5 million for the Cultural Immigrant Initiative, a new program imagined and funded by the New York City Council and administered by my agency which supports arts and cultural activities that serve immigrant New Yorkers. There are a total of 88 Cultural Immigrant Initiative designations going to 72 organizations in Fiscal 2015. I look forward to making site visits to these programs in the spring!
- In January, my agency announced an initiative to examine the diversity of staffs, boards, and audiences at cultural organizations that receive city funding. We hosted two discussions on this topic, the first at Ford Foundation in January and a second at BRIC in February. These forums were attended by hundreds of cultural organizations throughout the city, and I was thrilled that you were able to join us at Ford, Chair van Bramer. Having a cultural sector that reflects the community it serves is critical to the future of the arts in our city. Following these kickoff events, my staff has

worked to form a diversity committee consisting of representatives of the field that will help to design a survey that will examine race, gender, disability, and other factors. We hope to distribute the survey this summer with results expected in the fall.

- In his State of the City address last month, the Mayor announced our plan to build 1,500 affordable housing units and 500 affordable workspaces for artists. This unprecedented commitment demonstrates just how serious this administration is about retaining the city's creative talent and making sure that New York – which benefits in so many ways from its cultural community - remains a place where artists of all backgrounds can live and work. The program is still in the very early stages, but my staff has already started the work of identifying sites, and we expect HPD to issue an RFP by the end of the year.

I'd like to point out that we've been working with partners from the philanthropic sector – including Ford Foundation, New York Community Trust, Lambent Foundation, David Rockefeller Fund, The Surdna Foundation, The Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and the Mertz Gilmore Foundation - to underwrite many of these initiatives. It's important to us that we build coalitions for more sustainable impact and find ways to better serve the cultural field and maximize our City investments.

- I'm happy to report that you can follow updates on all of these programs on our recently-launched social media channels. You can follow us on Twitter (@NYCulture), Instagram (@NYCulturalAffairs), Facebook, where you can search for "New York City Department of Cultural Affairs," and our Percent for Art Tumblr blog that showcases permanent public art around the city. So after this hearing, if you're left craving more conversation on all things culture, you can find us there.

My colleagues and I have also been pleased to continue working with you on proposed legislation to create a cultural plan, which we discussed at a town hall at MoMA PS1 on Wednesday evening. I think this is part of a valuable process of working together to find ways to better serve New Yorkers. In closing, I would like to thank Chairman Van Bramer for his leadership, Committee members, and all your colleagues on the City Council for your continued support.

I'd be happy to answer any questions that you have.