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MAYOR’S GRANT FOR CULTURAL IMPACT TO SUPPORT 10 PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN CITY AGENCIES AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

Through over $830,000 in direct and in-kind funding, partnerships address civic issues from public safety to immigration to literacy

The grant program, now in its second year, is an outgrowth of CreateNYC, which found major potential for new and expanded collaborations between City government and arts organizations

New York – Today, NYC Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl announced the selection of ten new and expanded partnerships for funding under the Mayor’s Grant for Cultural Impact (MGCI). Each grant supports a programming partnership between a non-profit cultural organization and a New York City agency. An outgrowth of the CreateNYC cultural plan, MGCI seeks to enhance public services through cultural and creative programming, bringing the unique benefits of arts and culture to help address pressing civic issues including public health and safety, domestic violence prevention, aging, literacy, homelessness, and immigration.

“The Mayor’s Grant for Cultural Impact brings support to cultural groups whose work innovatively addresses our city’s most urgent challenges,” said Deputy Mayor Alicia Glen. “Engaging through art, performance, and creativity, these ten grantees are building stronger and more resilient communities across NYC.”

“In its first year, the Mayor’s Grant for Cultural Impact demonstrated what is possible when government and community work together through the arts on areas as diverse as literacy, immigration, domestic violence prevention, and criminal justice,” said Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl. “This year we’re expanding this successful experiment – both building on pilot efforts and tackling new challenges. These collaborative projects promise to bring innovative arts programming to underserved communities, and to help move the needle toward a more just, equitable city for all New Yorkers.”

Today’s announcement includes funding for 10 partnerships: five first-time MGCI grantees selected through an open call and application process, and five renewals of awarded projects from the pilot year. Each collaboration will receive $50,000 in cash support from the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA), and an additional $25,000 minimum match of either in-kind or cash award from the partnering agency, for a total of over $830,000 in City support. Programs must conclude by the close of the fiscal year on June 30, 2019.
The ten grants were announced by Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl today at an event at Lehman College in the Bronx, which will be a host site for the Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment’s partnership with PEN America. Photos from the event are available upon request.

The five first-time MGCI partnerships are:

- **PEN America** and the **Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment** will collaborate to expand **DREAMing Out Loud**, a tuition-free writing workshop for undocumented immigrants led by award-winning authors. The expansion includes new CUNY sites in the Bronx at Lehman College, Flushing at Queens College & Central Brooklyn at Medgar Evers College; recruitment in Chinese, African, and Eastern European communities; and strengthened professional development. The program helps to build a diverse talent pipeline for the publishing industry, and empowers DREAMers to use their voices to counter misinformation about immigrants.

- **Concerts in Motion**, an organization that combines arts programming with human services, will partner with the **Department for the Aging**, whose network includes hundreds of community organizations serving older adults. They will expand the successful **Concert Series for Homebound and Other Isolated Adults**, which provides first-rate music performance to low-income, older adults, a growing population that typically has limited access to the city’s cultural offerings. The concerts will reach homebound individuals, dementia caregiver groups, and others in the DFTA network, in all boroughs.

- **Irondale** and the **New York City Police Department** will expand **To Protect, Serve and Understand**, a program that uses theatrical improvisation to bring police officers and civilians to a place of greater empathy and understanding. Officers and civilians will “step into each other’s shoes” and by doing so, decrease tensions between them. Following the workshop series, two public performances will be held at Irondale.

- **Society for the Preservation of Weeksville & Bed-Stuyvesant History** will work with the **New York City Commission on Human Rights** to create **Meals as Collective Memory: Black-owned Restaurants in a Changing Central Brooklyn**. Food is a significant and distinctive cultural marker of Central Brooklyn and its people. Through the collection of oral history interviews, this project seeks to document, share and debate what happens to a community’s cultural identity when gentrification threatens the primacy and viability of local restaurants, particularly those owned by African Americans, long the largest segment of this region’s residents.

- **Willie Mae Rock Camp for Girls** and the **NYC Department of Homeless Services** will partner to bring **Rhythm & Voice**, a free afterschool music and mentoring program, to homeless youth residing at Flatlands Family Residence, a DHS-operated family shelter in Canarsie, Brooklyn. Working with experienced teaching artists, participants will meet weekly to learn percussion, vocal, and
performance techniques and address topics at the intersection of music and social justice.

The five collaborations receiving renewals are:

- **Bronx Documentary Center (BDC)** will work with the [Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice](https://mayor.nyc.gov) to expand **Claremont Illuminated**, a series of nocturnal artworks and programming seeking to promote community safety and connection in the Claremont Village neighborhood of the South Bronx. Site specific artworks will literally light up underutilized open spaces in the community, including Butler Houses public housing. Artists from BDC’s network will hire local young people and collaborate with residents and area organizations to locate, plan, and install media-, light-, and sound-based projects.

- **Carnegie Hall** and the [Department of Probation (DOP)](https://nyc.gov) will continue their successful partnership centered on DOP’s Neighborhood Opportunity Network (NeON) arts initiative by expanding the [NeON Arts Apprenticeship Program](https://nyc.gov). Through paid apprenticeships, the project will connect young people with robust training in arts disciplines, generating new pathways to employment in NYC’s arts economy in areas known for high levels of poverty and unemployment. This year, MGCI funding will support work in three NeON neighborhoods – East New York, Bedford-Stuyvescent, and the South Bronx.

- **Gibney Dance** will expand [Hands are for Holding (HAFH)](https://gibneydance.org) in a continued collaboration with the [Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence (ENDGBV)](https://nycgovparks.org). The interactive school-based program uses dance as a tool for preventing teen dating violence and promoting healthy relationships. The expansion will enable Gibney to offer 90 HAFH assemblies in schools this year, a 20% increase over last year. Further, based on last year’s pilot, four organizations will host intensive ten-week HAFH residencies to explore more in-depth strategies for engaging students and increasing dating violence awareness through dance.

- The [National Book Foundation](https://www.bookfoundation.org) will again collaborate with the [Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD)](https://nyc.gov) to continue [Raising Readers: Books are for Everyone](https://nyc.gov), an initiative dedicated to cultivating a love of reading in adults around the city and the young people in their lives. The program will reach DYCD provider staff via professional development training; establish “reading circles” for parents served by DYCD-funded agencies; and offer microgrants to ensure continuation of books clubs for several Raising Readers sites. Over 1,000 free books will be distributed to DYCD constituents, who often come from underserved populations.

- **People’s Theatre Project** will partner with the [Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA)](https://mayor.nyc.gov) to further develop [Teatro Inmigrante Comunitario](https://peoplestheatreproject.org), an effort to build trust between community and government by amplifying shared experiences and
stories. PTP’s Youth Ensemble will be comprised of young people ages 18-24 of varying linguistic and cultural backgrounds. They will come together to create an original interactive theater event to be performed in immigrant communities in Northern Manhattan and across the city. These young people will be placed in leadership roles within their communities and, through artistic practice, they will become connectors between MOIA and the populations it serves, focusing on programs such as IDNYC, ActionNYC and NYCitizenship.

"We are delighted to expand NeON Arts with the addition of paid apprenticeships. NeON Arts, a public-private partnership between the Department of Probation and Carnegie Hall’s Weill Music Institute, has been connecting young people with training in a variety of arts disciplines as well as creating pathways to employment in NYC’s creative economy,” said Ana M. Bermúdez, Commissioner, New York City Department of Probation. “This expansion comes at the heels of an independent evaluation which found that highly engaging arts opportunities provide a unique opportunity for self-expression and learning new skills, while also serving as a prevention for those not involved in the justice system. I applaud Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Finkelpearl for DCLA’s continued partnership in fostering access to arts.”

“At the Department of Homeless Services, we are committed to raising the bar for families experiencing homelessness as they get back on their feet,” said Department of Homeless Services Administrator Joslyn Carter. “The Willie Mae Rock Camp’s joyful programming and mentorship reinforce our dedication to encouraging creativity, confidence and learning—and exemplify how innovative collaborations are helping us transform a haphazard shelter system decades in the making. We are thankful to the Department of Cultural Affairs for awarding the Mayor's Grant for Cultural Impact to Willie Mae Rock Camp, reaching even more families and helping more ambitious young New Yorkers reach for the [rock]stars.”

“DYCD firmly believes that the love of reading empowers individuals and families and our funded programs strive to promote the joy of reading to young people and adults. Raising Readers: Books are for Everyone is a wonderful opportunity for DYCD to enhance our longstanding collaboration with the National Book Foundation on initiatives such as BookUp and STORYTELLERS, which put the gift of literacy in the hands of New York City youth and their families,” said DYCD Commissioner Bill Chong.

“Expanding Claremont Illuminated will increase opportunities to showcase the incredible talent of Bronx photographers, artists and community organizations like the Bronx Documentary Center, and encourage community connection. The Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice is glad to be part of this effort that uses art to create safe, vibrant neighborhoods,” said Elizabeth Glazer, Director, Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice.

“We are thrilled to receive this grant to work with Weeksville Heritage Center on the preservation of Black stories and Black voices in the face of a rapidly changing neighborhood,” said Commissioner and Chair of the NYC Commission on Human Rights Carmelyn P. Malalis. “This grant allows us to support and develop a dynamic oral history project in partnership with Weeksville, documenting the indelible contributions of Central Brooklyn’s Black-owned restaurants and better understand what
the impact of demographic change and gentrification has on community spaces, and the sights, smells, and tastes of a neighborhood.”

“It has never been more important for DREAMers and other undocumented immigrants to have safe opportunities to be heard, counted and to tell their stories,” said Media and Entertainment Commissioner Julie Menin. “We are proud to help PEN America expand the Dreaming Out Loud program which has already successfully empowered Caribbean and LatinX students to develop their storytelling abilities and share their experiences. New sites at CUNY campuses throughout the city will now make it possible for a broader, underserved population to participate and learn from such acclaimed immigrant authors as Lisa Ko, Álvaro Enrigue and Charlie Vázquez. New York City is home to 560,000 undocumented immigrants, including 30,000 DACA recipients, or DREAMers. We want them all to know we are listening.”

“Few things are more fundamental to the human experience than storytelling. Across language and cultural barriers, New Yorkers constantly tell each other their stories of how they got to the city and where they’re headed,” said Bitta Mostofi, Commissioner, Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs. “This year, through the timeless medium of theatre, immigrant youth will continue telling their multilingual, multicultural stories, and continue to inform our neighbors how City services can help them along their journey. This critical work could not be done without our partnership with the People’s Theatre Project, and the support of Commissioner Finkelpearl and our colleagues at the Department of Cultural Affairs.”

“We are thrilled for this opportunity to continue to grow our valued partnerships with Gibney Dance and Hands Are For Holding, and the use of innovative and arts-based tools in our work to address domestic and gender-based violence,” said Cecile Noel, Commissioner of the Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence. “This investment in prevention and healthy relationship education for New York City youth, especially its focus on middle school students, has and will continue to have immeasurable impact on public health and safety for generations to come.”

“Brooklyn’s diverse array of cultural institutions inspire and enrich us, while fostering important dialogues on key neighborhood issues,” said Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams. “I commend DCLA and our City agencies for partnering with non-profit arts organizations in the borough through the MGCI grant, cultivating meaningful projects that make our communities safer and greater places to raise healthy children and families.”

“Art is central to New York City’s identity and Mayor de Blasio’s Grant for Cultural Impact is a powerful new way to engage communities in the arts and culture,” said Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer. “Congratulations to all of the 2019 grantees!”

“I am pleased that New York continues to support the arts and promotes cultural enrichment for its people. Through these grants, we can enrich the lives of New York’s diverse tapestry of people and do so in a way that simultaneously promotes public good and services that are vital to the well-being of our community. I thank the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and the Mayor for implementing these civically engaged
projects and partnerships across the five boroughs,” said NY State Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz.

“I am delighted that several art organizations from New York’s 13th congressional district will have the opportunity to participate in the Mayor’s Grant for Cultural Impact (MGCI) program,” said Rep. Adriano Espaillat (NY-13). “Since its inception, the program has highlighted the importance of arts and culture through various partnerships with city organizations and agencies, as well as help address pressing civic and social issues through the arts. Today’s announcement allows cultural institutions the ability to expand outreach and programing across the five boroughs as well as engage in cultural and civic activities on a regular basis while building arts awareness throughout the community.”

“PEN America stands at the intersection of literature and free expression to celebrate the power of writing to change the world,” said Jennifer Egan, PEN America President. “One of our most dynamic programs giving life to this mission is Dreaming Out Loud. The program began in 2016 with CUNY and novelist Alvaro Enrigue to establish opportunities for young adults with undocumented citizenship through creative writing, to provide access to career development, and to spark important public conversations to counter stereotypes and humanize media reports about immigrants. We extend our deepest thanks to Mayor de Blasio, the Department of Cultural Affairs, the Mayor’s Office on Media and Entertainment, CUNY, Alvaro, the aspiring young writers in the program, and to our newest workshop leaders, authors Lisa Ko and Charlie Vazquez.”

“The Weeksville Heritage Center is grateful to be among this year’s recipients of the Mayor’s Grant for Cultural Impact,” said Rob Fields, President and Executive Director, Weeksville Heritage Center. “The ‘Meals as Collective Memory’ oral history project seeks to consume/capture the memory-making utility of food and to document the social/culinary history behind Black-owned restaurants in Central Brooklyn. The project will allow the Weeksville Heritage Center, in partnership with the City’s Commission on Human Rights, to conduct oral history interviews with long-time Black restaurateurs confronting the challenges that gentrification poses to their business identify and viability. It will also provide a rare opportunity to celebrate food culture and history from the perspective of the African diaspora and to explore and defend authenticity as the cultural right to stay put. This will happen through open access programs for community residents and business development workshops and forums for new and seasoned Black restauranteurs alike. We are very excited to see what “Meals as Collective Memory” will reveal.”

“Through being awarded the FY19 Mayor’s grant for Cultural Impact, Concerts in Motion has been privileged with the opportunity to provide monthly concert series for DFTA-funded NORC sites throughout all of NYC through June 30, 2019,” said Jennifer Finn, Founder and Executive Director, Concerts in Motion. “This funding will allow us to reach a minimum of 1,000 additional recipients in 2019 while further expanding our agency partnerships and providing a farther communal reach.”

Clive Gillinson, Executive and Artistic Director of Carnegie Hall, said “Carnegie Hall is proud of our ongoing partnership with the Department of Probation to bring high-
quality arts experiences to young people in all five boroughs. We applaud the City for recognizing the vital role of arts and culture in transforming lives and impacting communities. Through MGCI paid apprenticeships, we will give talented youth a chance not only to explore their creativity but to be leaders and build job skills.”

“Gibney is honored to continue to be a part of this initiative. In addition to working alongside colleagues and city agencies we greatly admire and learn from, we are excited to be part of a larger movement - one that says art is an essential component of a just society. Collectively we are working together to create meaningful inroads to address large systemic issues,” said Kara Gilmour, Senior Director of Community Action, Training, and Artist Services at Gibney. “Art offers perspective, engagement, healing, choice and voice. The opportunity to continue the work we started last year with this grant, and to deepen our collaboration with ENDGBV, allows us to serve thousands of middle school students as we bring concert dance into the schools, alongside conversation around healthy relationships, healthy choices and safe strategies for finding support when needed.”

"We are thrilled to be able to partner with MOIA once again thanks to DCLA’s Mayor’s Grant for Cultural Impact,” said Mino Lora, Executive Director, People’s Theatre Project. “Last year we piloted our Teatro Inmigrante Comunitario program for young Latinx immigrant New Yorkers and this year we are expanding the project reach by working with a more diverse cast of immigrant actors in order to have 3-4 languages represented and be able to create a multilingual play that will truly represent the richness of our immigrant experience, which we will then tour to various immigrant communities across NYC. As an immigrant focused cultural organization that works to build the next generation of leaders in our city, this partnership with MOIA has been a perfect match for People’s Theatre Project!"

"At the National Book Foundation, we approach literature and reading with an eye on the big picture, creating programs and resources that can address community needs holistically,” said Lisa Lucas, Executive Director, National Book Foundation. “Our Raising Readers program does just that, engaging families and affecting positive reading habits in youth by partnering with the adults whose examples will influence those young people well beyond childhood. We are thrilled to be able to again partner with DYCD, continuing this essential program with the generous support of the Mayor’s Grant for Cultural Impact."

"Willie Mae Rock Camp is humbled and grateful to accept this award,” said Vivianne A. Njoku, Educational Programs Director, Willie Mae Rock Camp for Girls. “In partnership with the Department of Social Services, we look forward to engaging with the community at the Flatlands Family Residence in order to provide critical music and social justice programming that seeks to amplify and uplift the voices of their youth.”

About NYC Department of Cultural Affairs

The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) is dedicated to supporting and strengthening New York City’s vibrant cultural life. DCLA works to promote and advocate for quality arts programming and to articulate the contribution made by the cultural community to the City’s vitality. The Department represents and serves
nonprofit cultural organizations involved in the visual, literary, and performing arts; public-oriented science and humanities institutions including zoos, botanical gardens, and historic and preservation societies; and creative artists at all skill levels who live and work within the City’s five boroughs. DCLA also provides donated materials for arts programs offered by the public schools and cultural and social service groups, and commissions permanent works of public art at City-funded construction projects throughout the five boroughs. For more information visit www.nyc.gov/culture.