



Erie County Cultural Funding Advocacy Plan 10.09.18

These next weeks & months are critical:

***Show your support for Arts & Culture . . .**

Framing Advocacy

GBCA's goal since its inception has been to take a proactive, positive stance in positioning arts, culture and creativity as critical **community assets** and **priority areas** for public and private investment and engagement. Times when critical funding issues are on the table provide a rich opportunity for us to engage with our elected officials and do direct advocacy. Right now this involves reaching out to Erie County legislators to work for Erie County Cultural Funding to make it through the budget process intact. But equally important is seizing the opportunity to engage our staff/board/patrons/audience to put forward more accurate and potent messages about who we are and what we do as a sector – through writing letters, coming out for hearings, and making personal visits to elected officials. **Our ultimate goal is long term: a community that fully values arts and culture and the integral role we play in our region's future.**

#1 Write Letters

As an organization recommended for funding, please be sure to send letters to:

- County Executive Mark Poloncarz thanking him for funding for the arts and culturals & your organization's recommended funding (if applicable).
- Erie County Legislature (the body which will approve the County Executive's proposal) to encourage them to support and uphold the County Executive's proposed budget.
 - Encouraged to send to ALL, however it is always important to focus on YOUR legislator, Chairman Peter Savage, Majority Leader April Baskin, and Minority Leader Joseph Lorigo.

If you need contact information for the County Executive or the Erie County Legislature:

- <http://www2.erie.gov/legislature/>

More information and the entire 2019 Proposed Budget can be found at:

- <http://www2.erie.gov/legislature/index.php?q=county-budget>

#2 Make Legislative Visits

We are asking the GBCA Steering Committee – and any others willing - to provide essential leadership for this effort by signing up to make personal visits to the legislators. Let us know if you (or a board member/supporter/volunteer/patron) are willing to go with a team to visit legislators during the next 1-2 weeks. Also let us know if you are going on your own & any information you come away with.

GBCA has already met with the caucuses to discuss the arts and cultural sector overall; these additional meetings would be to talk about your organization specifically, or partnerships between your organization and another, etc.

#3 Attend Hearings – Public Budget Hearing in November

This means you, securing an appropriate member of your organization, and especially valuable is getting board members/patrons/volunteers/beneficiaries to participate.

Attend the budget hearing –

Date is pending for either Monday, November 19 or Tuesday, November 20 (once we hear confirmation, ASI will send an email to everyone). 5pm/6pm start.

The meeting will take place in Chambers of the Legislature, 4th Floor at Old County Hall, 92 Franklin St., Buffalo, NY 14202.

Key Talking Points at the Public Budget Hearing in November

- **REQUEST** - Urge support for the county executive's recommended funding for cultural organizations.
- **ASK** for legislator's perspective.
- **TALK** about the essential work your organization does, its impact, and why county cultural funding is a wise investment. Include a story/stories, and relevant statistics, like audience or membership.
- Emphasize **WIDESPREAD PARTICIPATION & SUPPORT** - Erie County's arts and cultural organizations have widespread support and participation from throughout Erie county, and all legislative districts. Quality of Life in Western New York is dramatically enhanced by our rich array of Arts and Cultural organizations.
- **RETURN ON INVESTMENT** – The investment in Erie County's cultural organizations brings a substantial return on investment back to the county. This is demonstrated in: visitors, grants leveraged, national and state profile, economic vitality, community stability and vibrancy, opportunities for residents and youth, and quality of life. The Arts helps to make Erie County an attractive place for people to relocate, bringing NEW DOLLARS to our community, as well as being integral for quality of life for those living and working here. This funding must be seen as an investment necessary to maintain this world class asset here in and for Erie County.
- Without government investment, private investment doesn't happen. Without this important core funding, the rest is often imperiled. In addition, the DIVERSITY of programming and communities served are an important community strength.

ASI's "Arts & Economic Prosperity V" report showed the nonprofit arts and culture sector is a **\$352.1 million industry in Western New York**—one that

- ✓ Supports 10,160 full-time equivalent jobs and
- ✓ Generates \$40.3 million in local and state government revenue