

# 2021 Candidate Survey Responses

## City of Buffalo Mayoral Candidates

Name: India Walton Democrat

No response received

## Erie County Legislature (All districts)

District 1

Name: Howard J. Johnson Democrat

Current Occupation: Erie County Legislator District 1

Cultural agencies currently receive \$6.9M total from the County (funding is spread across 102 total organizations). Would you support continued, and steadily increased funding for arts and culture through the County Arts Funding process?

Yes.

Optional comment: I support a steady increase of County funding for the arts and culture.

In 2021, there were 10 newly funded arts and cultural organizations (out of 102 in total) in the County Arts Funding process. Every year new organizations in our County become eligible to apply for funding (due to how many years they have been a nonprofit, or other qualifying requirements). Therefore, this increases the need for overall increased County support. Would you maintain the current County art funding levels (\$6.9M total) and maintain a historic annual increase of 5% each budget year so that arts organizations in the entire County can provide accessible arts programs for all of its residents?

Yes.

Optional comment: I support a annual increase as the arts organization has become an important component of the WNY community.

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District 2

Name: April Baskin Democrat  
Current Occupation: Retired teacher

Cultural agencies currently receive \$6.9M total from the County (funding is spread across 102 total organizations). Would you support continued, and steadily increased funding for arts and culture through the County Arts Funding process?

Yes.

Optional Comment: Erie County's Arts & Cultural Institutions are the lifeblood of our county. As funding for roads, parks, and libraries grows, so must the funding for arts & cultural organizations.

In 2021, there were 10 newly funded arts and cultural organizations (out of 102 in total) in the County Arts Funding process. Every year new organizations in our County become eligible to apply for funding (due to how many years they have been a nonprofit, or other qualifying requirements). Therefore, this increases the need for overall increased County support. Would you maintain the current County art funding levels (\$6.9M total) and maintain a historic annual increase of 5% each budget year so that arts organizations in the entire County can provide accessible arts programs for all of its residents?

Yes.

Optional Comment: I believe 5% is a reasonable increase. There are many arts & cultural organizations that do not currently receive County funding. An increase on an annual basis would create space for more organizations to be funded.

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District 3

Name: Lisa Chimera Democrat  
Current Occupation: Retired teacher

Cultural agencies currently receive \$6.9M total from the County (funding is spread across 102 total organizations). Would you support continued, and steadily increased funding for arts and culture through the County Arts Funding process?

Yes.

In 2021, there were 10 newly funded arts and cultural organizations (out of 102 in total) in the County Arts Funding process. Every year new organizations in our County become eligible to apply for funding (due to how many years they have been a nonprofit, or other qualifying requirements). Therefore, this increases the need for overall increased County support. Would you maintain the current County art funding levels (\$6.9M total) and maintain a historic annual increase of 5% each budget year so that arts organizations in the entire County can provide accessible arts programs for all of its residents?

Yes.

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District 4

Name: John Bargnesi Democrat

Current Occupation: Self Employed

Cultural agencies currently receive \$6.9M total from the County (funding is spread across 102 total organizations). Would you support continued, and steadily increased funding for arts and culture through the County Arts Funding process?

Yes.

Optional Comment: As my wife is an art teacher, I have attended many art shows, and cultural events and support continued and increased funding. They are vitally important for sustained growth in our area, and welcoming to visitors.

In 2021, there were 10 newly funded arts and cultural organizations (out of 102 in total) in the County Arts Funding process. Every year new organizations in our County become eligible to apply for funding (due to how many years they have been a nonprofit, or other qualifying requirements). Therefore, this increases the need for overall increased County support. Would you maintain the current County art funding levels (\$6.9M total) and maintain a historic annual increase of 5% each budget year so that arts organizations in the entire County can provide accessible arts programs for all of its residents?

Yes.

Optional Comment: I am encouraged by increases in cultural organizations seeking county funding. If elected I will support continued increases in county funding for culturals.

Name: Spencer Kowal Republican

No response received

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District 5

Name: Jeanne Vinal Democrat

Current Occupation: Attorney at Vinal & Vinal, P.C.

Cultural agencies currently receive \$6.9M total from the County (funding is spread across 102 total organizations). Would you support continued, and steadily increased funding for arts and culture through the County Arts Funding process?

Yes.

Optional comment: I wholeheartedly support fund the arts and cultures in Erie

County. I've attended many meetings, including the board meetings for the Jewish Repertory Theater, Alleyway Theater and other arts groups to encourage them to seek county funding. I am currently working with Visit Buffalo Niagara to include more options in their coupon books that support the arts in Erie County.

In 2021, there were 10 newly funded arts and cultural organizations (out of 102 in total) in the County Arts Funding process. Every year new organizations in our County become eligible to apply for funding (due to how many years they have been a nonprofit, or other qualifying requirements). Therefore, this increases the need for overall increased County support. Would you maintain the current County art funding levels (\$6.9M total) and maintain a historic annual increase of 5% each budget year so that arts organizations in the entire County can provide accessible arts programs for all of its residents?

Yes.

Optional comment: Absolutely, as aforementioned, I actively encourage arts organizations to ask for more funding so that we can provide it for them in our annual budget. In the creation of my Christmas Markets Program that I've initiated, I am hoping it will employ many performing artists and create avenues for artisans and artists to make sales.

Name: Richard Wilkinson Republican

Current Occupation: General Manager Emerling CDJR

Cultural agencies currently receive \$6.9M total from the County (funding is spread across 102 total organizations). Would you support continued, and steadily increased funding for arts and culture through the County Arts Funding process?

Yes.

Optional comment: The arts are a valued part of our community and its support is mandatory.

In 2021, there were 10 newly funded arts and cultural organizations (out of 102 in total) in the County Arts Funding process. Every year new organizations in our County become eligible to apply for funding (due to how many years they have been a nonprofit, or other qualifying requirements). Therefore, this increases the need for overall increased County support. Would you maintain the current County art funding levels (\$6.9M total) and maintain a historic annual increase of 5% each budget year so that arts organizations in the entire County can provide accessible arts programs for all of its residents?

Yes.

Optional comment: The legislators should also have active engagement with our Arts organizations and be actively involved with their functions.

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District 6

Name: Ronald Schubert, Esq. Democrat

Current Occupation: Phillips, Lytle LLP – Partner Attorney

Cultural agencies currently receive \$6.9M total from the County (funding is spread across 102 total organizations). Would you support continued, and steadily increased funding for arts and culture through the County Arts Funding process?

Yes.

Optional comment: Absolutely!!

In 2021, there were 10 newly funded arts and cultural organizations (out of 102 in total) in the County Arts Funding process. Every year new organizations in our County become eligible to apply for funding (due to how many years they have been a nonprofit, or other qualifying requirements). Therefore, this increases the need for overall increased County support. Would you maintain the current County art funding levels (\$6.9M total) and maintain a historic annual increase of 5% each budget year so that arts organizations in the entire County can provide accessible arts programs for all of its residents?

Yes.

Optional comment: We must!!

Name: Christopher Greene Republican

No response received

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District 7

Name: Timothy Meyers Democrat

No response received

Name: Michael Zachowicz Republican

No response received

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District 8

Name: Frank Todaro Democrat

Current Occupation: Founder/President Collision Masters; Erie County Legislator

Cultural agencies currently receive \$6.9M total from the County (funding is spread across 102 total organizations). Would you support continued, and steadily increased funding for arts and culture through the County Arts Funding process?

Yes.

In 2021, there were 10 newly funded arts and cultural organizations (out of 102 in total) in the County Arts Funding process. Every year new organizations in our County become eligible to apply for funding (due to how many years they have been a nonprofit, or other qualifying requirements). Therefore, this increases the need for overall increased County support. Would you maintain the current County art funding levels (\$6.9M total) and maintain a historic annual increase of 5% each budget year so that arts organizations in the entire County can provide accessible arts programs for all of its residents?  
Yes.

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#### District 9

Name: John Gilmour Democrat

Current Occupation: Erie County Legislator, District 9

Cultural agencies currently receive \$6.9M total from the County (funding is spread across 102 total organizations). Would you support continued, and steadily increased funding for arts and culture through the County Arts Funding process?

Yes.

Optional comment: I support the County's commitment to arts and cultural organizations and continued funding.

In 2021, there were 10 newly funded arts and cultural organizations (out of 102 in total) in the County Arts Funding process. Every year new organizations in our County become eligible to apply for funding (due to how many years they have been a nonprofit, or other qualifying requirements). Therefore, this increases the need for overall increased County support. Would you maintain the current County art funding levels (\$6.9M total) and maintain a historic annual increase of 5% each budget year so that arts organizations in the entire County can provide accessible arts programs for all of its residents?

Yes.

Optional comment: Depending on the County's financial status, I am amenable to annual increases, but cannot commit to an annual increase of 5% every year; it will have to depend on the County's financial standing.

Name: Frank Bogulski Republican

No response received

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#### District 10

Name: Peter Schwan Democrat

No response received

Name: Joseph Lorigo Republican

Current Occupation: Attorney in private practice/County Legislator

Cultural agencies currently receive \$6.9M total from the County (funding is spread across 102 total organizations). Would you support continued, and steadily increased funding for arts and culture through the County Arts Funding process?

Yes.

In 2021, there were 10 newly funded arts and cultural organizations (out of 102 in total) in the County Arts Funding process. Every year new organizations in our County become eligible to apply for funding (due to how many years they have been a nonprofit, or other qualifying requirements). Therefore, this increases the need for overall increased County support. Would you maintain the current County art funding levels (\$6.9M total) and maintain a historic annual increase of 5% each budget year so that arts organizations in the entire County can provide accessible arts programs for all of its residents?

Yes.

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District 11

Name: John Mills Republican

No response received

### **Niagara County Legislature (All districts)**

District 1

Name: Joseph S. Conti III Democrat

No response received

Name: Irene M. Meyers Republican

No response received

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District 2

Name: Jamie L. Symmonds Democrat

No response received

Name: Rebecca J. Wydysh Republican

No response received

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District 3

Name: Mark J. Grozio

No response received

Name: John L. Szczepczenski  
Current Occupation: Retired

Will you support dedicating a portion of the County's annual budget to annual operating grant funding for Arts & Cultural Organizations beyond individual Legislative Appropriations to ensure continued growth and success of these economic and tourism drivers in Niagara County?

Yes

Will you work to include Arts & Cultural leaders in county efforts such as appointing them to groups and commissions both within and outside of county government?

Yes

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District 4

Name: Jeffery Elder Democrat

No response received

Name: Owen T. Steed Republican



No response received

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#### District 5

Name: Christopher A. Robins

Current Occupation: Niagara Falls Board of Education

Will you support dedicating a portion of the County's annual budget to annual operating grant funding for Arts & Cultural Organizations beyond individual Legislative Appropriations to ensure continued growth and success of these economic and tourism drivers in Niagara County?

Yes

Will you work to include Arts & Cultural leaders in county efforts such as appointing them to groups and commissions both within and outside of county government?

Yes

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#### District 6

Name: William D. Kennedy II Democrat

No response received

Name: Christopher P. Voccio Republican

No response received

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#### District 7

Name: Jesse P. Gooch

Current Occupation: Self

Will you support dedicating a portion of the County's annual budget to annual operating grant funding for Arts & Cultural Organizations beyond individual Legislative Appropriations to ensure continued growth and success of these economic and tourism drivers in Niagara County?

Yes

Will you work to include Arts & Cultural leaders in county efforts such as appointing them to groups and commissions both within and outside of county government?  
Yes

Name: Daryl T. Bodewes

No response received

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District 8

Name: Richard L. Andres Jr.

No response received

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District 9

Name: Randy R. Bradt

No response received

Name: Joseph J. Kissel

No response received

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District 10

Name: David E. Godfrey Republican

No response received

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District 11

Name: Anthony J. Nemi Republican

No response received

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District 12

Name: William J. Collins Sr.

No response received

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District 13

Name: Anita Mullane

No response received

Name: Richard E. Abbott

Current Occupation: Alderman City of Lockport, retired

Will you support dedicating a portion of the County's annual budget to annual operating grant funding for Arts & Cultural Organizations beyond individual Legislative Appropriations to ensure continued growth and success of these economic and tourism drivers in Niagara County?

Yes

Optional Comment: Extremely important that they remain a part of our community for MANY reasons!!

Will you work to include Arts & Cultural leaders in county efforts such as appointing them to groups and commissions both within and outside of county government?

Yes

Optional Comment: We have promote through inclusion

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District 14

Name: Shawn Foti

No response received

Name: Sara L. Beilein Capen

Current Occupation: Executive Director / Niagara Falls National Heritage Area

Will you support dedicating a portion of the County's annual budget to annual operating grant funding for Arts & Cultural Organizations beyond individual Legislative Appropriations to ensure continued growth and success of these economic and tourism drivers in Niagara County?

Yes

Optional Comment: I would like to research additional ways to generate revenue for Niagara County to support arts and cultural organizations. I am not sure that Niagara County has the existing infrastructure to administer grants.

Will you work to include Arts & Cultural leaders in county efforts such as appointing them to groups and commissions both within and outside of county government?

Yes

Optional Comment: Absolutely!

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District 15

Name: Michael A. Hill Republican

No response received