

Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and
International Intergroup Relations

Brenda McKinney, *Counsel*

Cristy Dwyer, *Policy Analyst*

Aliya Ali, *Principal Financial Analyst*



The Council of the City of New York

COMMITTEE REPORT OF THE HUMAN SERVICES DIVISION

Jeffrey Baker, *Legislative Director*

Andrea Vazquez, *Deputy Director for Human Services*

**COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES
AND INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS**

Hon. Jimmy Van Bramer, *Chair*

June 22, 2020

Oversight: DCLA, COVID-19 and Cultural Organizations in New York City

INT. NO. 1967:

By Council Members Cumbo and Van Bramer

TITLE:

A Local Law in relation to a report regarding post-COVID-19 reopening plans for art and cultural institutions in New York city

ADMINISTRATIVE CODE:

None.

INTRODUCTION

On Tuesday, June 9, 2020, the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations, chaired by Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer, will conduct an oversight hearing on “DCLA, COVID-19 and Cultural Organizations in New York City.” The Committee will also hear Introduction No. 1967, sponsored by Council Members Cumbo and Van Bramer, in relation to a report regarding post-COVID-19 reopening plans for art and cultural institutions in New York city. Witnesses invited to testify include representatives of the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA), advocacy groups, various arts and cultural organizations and foundations and other interested stakeholders.

BACKGROUND

COVID-19

On February 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced an official name for the disease that is causing the current novel coronavirus outbreak: coronavirus disease 2019, abbreviated as COVID-19.¹ The first confirmed case in New York State (NYS) was identified on March 1, 2020, in the borough of Manhattan in New York City (NYC).² According to data provided by the NYS Department of Health, as of June 4, 2020, there have been a total of 374,085 positive cases³ in NYS and 24,079 fatalities in NYS since the onset of the pandemic.⁴ On March

¹ United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (hereinafter “CDC”), *Frequently Asked Questions*, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#Coronavirus-Disease-2019-Basics> (explaining that the disease originated in Wuhan, China and that scientists believe that COVID-19 is spread from human to human through the respiratory tract when a person coughs or sneezes).

² Melanie West, First Case of Coronavirus Confirmed in New York State, *Wall Street Journal* (Mar. 1, 2020), available at <https://www.wsj.com/articles/first-case-of-coronavirus-confirmed-in-new-york-state-11583111692>.

³ See New York State Department of Health COVID-19 Tracker, available at <https://covid19tracker.health.ny.gov/views/NYS-COVID19-Tracker/NYSDOHCOVID-19Tracker-Map?%3Aembed=yes&%3Atoolbar=no&%3Atabs=n>.

⁴ See New York State Department of Health COVID-19 Fatality Tracker, available at <https://covid19tracker.health.ny.gov/views/NYS-COVID19-Tracker/NYSDOHCOVID-19Tracker-Fatalities?%3Aembed=yes&%3Atoolbar=no&%3Atabs=n>.

7, 2020, New York’s Governor Andrew M. Cuomo issued Executive Order Number 202, declaring a state disaster emergency for the entire state.⁵

Closing Cultural Institutions

On March 12, 2020, in response to COVID-19 and in an effort to curb the spread of the disease, Governor Cuomo barred gatherings of more than 500 people and placed restrictions on other gatherings,⁶ prompting Broadway to close all 31 of its current shows and NYC’s cultural institutions—including the Metropolitan Museum of Art (The Met), the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Guggenheim, the Metropolitan Opera, Carnegie Hall and the NY Philharmonic—which shut their doors and postponed all programming.⁷ In a press conference the same day, NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio stressed the importance of the restrictions, which he conveyed as “difficult but necessary.”⁸

While many performance spaces had already closed in Asia and Europe,⁹ also due to COVID-19, venues across the United States followed NYC’s lead—with theaters from Los

⁵ See No. 202.31: Continuing Temporary Suspension and Modification of Laws Relating to the Disaster Emergency (May 14, 2020), available at <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/no-20231-continuing-temporary-suspension-and-modification-laws-relating-disaster-emergency>.

⁶ Jesse McKinley and Michael Gold, *Ban on Large Gatherings in N.Y. as Coronavirus Cases Rise Sharply* (Mar. 12, 2020), available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/12/nyregion/coronavirus-nyc-event-ban.html>; See Executive Order 202.31 (May 14, 2020), available at <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/no-20231-continuing-temporary-suspension-and-modification-laws-relating-disaster-emergency> (describing previous orders); Michael Paulson, *Broadway, Symbol of New York Resilience, Shuts Down Amid Virus Threat* (Mar. 12, 2020), available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/12/theater/coronavirus-broadway-shutdown.html>.

⁷ Robin Pogrebin and Michael Cooper, *New York’s Major Cultural Institutions Close in Response to Coronavirus* (Mar. 12, 2020), available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/12/arts/design/met-museum-opera-carnegie-hall-close-coronavirus.html>.

⁸ Transcript: Mayor de Blasio Holds Media Availability on COVID-19 (Mar. 12, 2020), available at <https://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/137-20/transcript-mayor-de-blasio-holds-media-availability-covid-19> (“That’s really, really painful for the many, many people who work in that field, let alone so many New Yorkers and people all over the country who really look forward to these events, these sports events, and it’s really going to be kind of a hole in our lives and it’s painful,” he said. “It’s not something we would ever want to do but it’s something we have to do.”); Michael Paulson, *Broadway, Symbol of New York Resilience, Shuts Down Amid Virus Threat* (Mar. 12, 2020), available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/12/theater/coronavirus-broadway-shutdown.html>.

⁹ Ben Sisario, *Coachella, Influential Music Festival, Is Postponed Amid Virus Fears* (Mar. 10, 2020), available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/10/arts/music/coronavirus-coachella-postponed.html>.

Angeles's famed Center Theater Group¹⁰ to the Kennedy Center¹¹ in Washington, DC¹²—and large concert organizers like Live Nation Entertainment and AEG Presents suspending all national tour engagements, including the California music festival Coachella.¹³ On March 20, 2020, Governor Cuomo announced an executive order creating "New York State on PAUSE" restrictions, an effort assure uniform safety for the state.¹⁴ This 10-point policy plan¹⁵ included a new directive that all non-essential businesses statewide close in-office personnel functions, and temporarily banned all non-essential gatherings of individuals of any size for any reason, resulting in a de-facto shelter in place order.¹⁶ At the same time, museums began pivoting to provide programming, materials and concerts online,¹⁷ with artists, institutions, cultural groups and galleries exploring creative ways to keep people engaged with art, culture and commerce while observing safety precautions.¹⁸

The Economic Impact of Cultural Closures and Uncertainty Around Returning from PAUSE

The cultural sector in NYC is one of the largest industries in NYC,¹⁹ employing nearly 400,000 workers, paying them \$31 billion in wages and generating \$110 billion in economic

¹⁰ BWW News Desk, All CTGLA Theatre Closed (Mar. 12, 2020), available at <https://www.broadwayworld.com/article/All-CTGLA-Theatre-Closed-Over-COVID19-Concerns-20200312>,

¹¹ Jane Recker, The Kennedy Center is Closing Through March 31 (Mar. 12, 2020), available at <https://www.washingtonian.com/2020/03/12/the-kennedy-center-is-closing-through-march-31/>,

¹² Michael Paulson, Broadway, Symbol of New York Resilience, Shuts Down Amid Virus Threat (Mar. 12, 2020), available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/12/theater/coronavirus-broadway-shutdown.html>,

¹³ Ben Sisario, Coachella, Influential Music Festival, Is Postponed Amid Virus Fears (Mar. 10, 2020), available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/10/arts/music/coronavirus-coachella-postponed.html>,

¹⁴ Governor Cuomo Signs the 'New York State on PAUSE' Executive Order (Mar. 20, 2020), available at <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-signs-new-york-state-pause-executive-order>.

¹⁵ See New York State on Pause, available at <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/new-york-state-pause>

¹⁶ Governor Cuomo Signs the 'New York State on PAUSE' Executive Order (mar. 20, 2020), available at <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-signs-new-york-state-pause-executive-order>.

¹⁷ Information shared during the daily "Culture @3" call, hosted by the CIG; See NYC City & Co., *VirtualNYC* (n.d.), available at <https://www.nycgo.com/virtual-nyc/>.

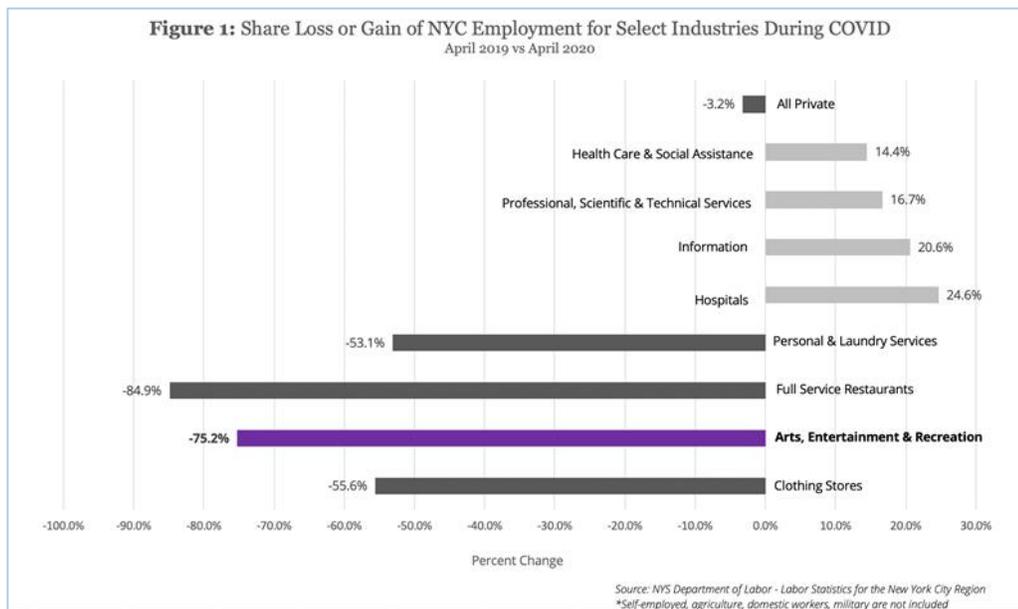
¹⁸ Information shared during the daily "Culture @3" call, hosted by the CIG; See Judd Grossman, Michael Straus, Catherine K. B. Lucas and Sarah E. Schuster, *What Legal Rights Do Artists and Galleries Have During a Pandemic?* (May 13, 2020), available at <https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/artists-galleries-legal-rights-coronavirus-1202687028/>.

¹⁹ NYC Comptroller Scott Stringer, *The Creative Economy: Art, Culture and Creativity in New York City* (Oct. 25, 2019), available at <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/the-creative-economy/>.

activity.²⁰ Last year the theater industry in NYC alone grossed \$1.8 billion and drew 14.8 million patrons,²¹ while the dance sector contributed over \$300 million to the City's economy.²² In NYS, the cultural sector as a whole contributes more than \$120 billion to the economy annually.²³

The economic impact of this mandatory shutdown has been unlike any in recent history.²⁴

The pandemic also has not hit all industries equally (see Figure 1).



As seen in Figures 2 and 3, the arts and cultural communities, in particular, have been disproportionately and negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, as compared with other

²⁰ NYC Comptroller Scott M. Stringer, *New York by the Numbers: Weekly Economic and Fiscal Outlook* (May 26, 2020), available at <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/newsroom/new-york-by-the-numbers-weekly-economic-and-fiscal-outlook-no-2-may-26-2020/>.

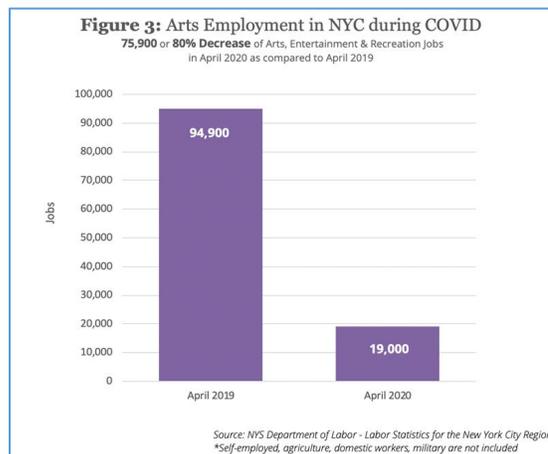
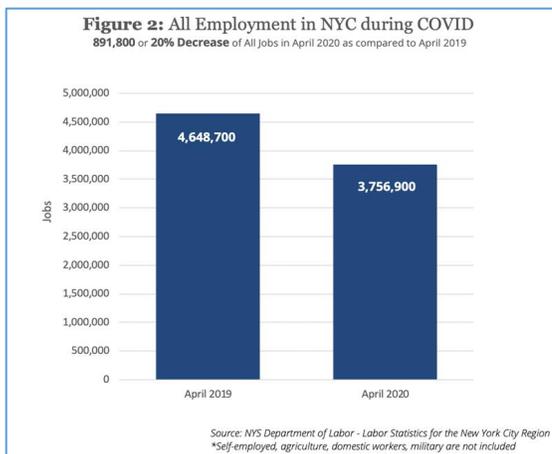
²¹ Broadway's Box Office Keeps Booming. Now Attendance is Surging, Too. (May 29, 2019), available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/29/theater/broadway-box-office.html>.

²² Dance NYC and New York City Dance Makers and Organizations, *Letter to Mayor Bill de Blasio RE: Advisory Council on Arts, Culture, and Tourism* (May 13, 2020), available at <https://www.dance.nyc/news/2020/05/Letter-to-Mayor-Bill-de-Blasio-Re-Advisory-Council-on-Arts-Culture-and-Tourism/>.

²³ National Assembly of Art Organizations, *Creative Economy State Profiles: New York* (n.d.), available at https://nasaa-arts.org/nasaa_research/creative-economy-state-profiles/; National Endowment for the Arts, *State-Level Estimates of the Arts' Economic Value and Employment (2001-2017)* (Mar. 2020), available at <https://www.arts.gov/artistic-fields/research-analysis/arts-data-profiles/arts-data-profile-25>.

²⁴ Abigail Savitch-Lew, Eli Dvorkin, and Laird Gallagher, *Art in the Time of Coronavirus: NYC's Small Arts Organizations Fighting for Survival* (April 2020), available at <https://nycfuture.org/research/art-in-the-time-of-coronavirus>.

sectors. In fact, recent data suggests that the arts and cultural sector in NYC has been the second hardest hit industry with regard to job loss, after restaurants, losing 67,200 jobs in April alone.²⁵



Further, early financial loss projections for the sector were projected to be over \$600 million,²⁶ a number that has likely grown.

When cultural institutions closed their doors in March 2020, the City’s artists, actors, musicians, stagehands and freelancers suddenly found themselves unemployed and severed from their communities and livelihoods.²⁷ No institution or employer was immune.²⁸ On March 19th, the Metropolitan Opera laid off all of its union employees²⁹ and on March 31st, The

²⁵ NYC Comptroller Scott M. Stringer, *New York by the Numbers: Weekly Economic and Fiscal Outlook* (May 26, 2020), available at <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/newsroom/new-york-by-the-numbers-weekly-economic-and-fiscal-outlook-no-2-may-26-2020/> (explaining that “private employers in New York City shed 823,500 jobs in April – one in every five private sector jobs; dine-in restaurants were the hardest hit, dropping by 119,000 jobs – an 85% decline in a single month; and the arts, entertainment and recreation sector saw the largest decline after restaurants, losing 67,200 jobs, or 78%”).

²⁶ Information shared during the daily “Culture @3” call, hosted by the CIG; See New Yorkers for Culture and Arts, *Impact of COVID19 on NYC Art and Culture - Impact Survey Results* (Mar. 17, 2020), available at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NleKgGanBWNq2mB1mXUt83rcBesDUfGx/view>; Sarah Cascone, *In a Surprise Move, the Metropolitan Museum of Art Is Looking to Its \$3.6 Billion Endowment to Cover Costs* (Mar. 31, 2020), available at <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/met-endowment-paying-staff-1820772>.

²⁷ Information shared during the daily “Culture @3” call, hosted by the CIG.

²⁸ See, e.g., Peter Marks and Geoff Edgers, *New York is one of the world’s great cities for the arts — but the damage from the pandemic is proving to be catastrophic* (Mar. 31, 2020), available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/theater_dance/new-york-is-one-of-the-worlds-great-cities-for-the-arts-but-the-damage-from-the-pandemic-is-proving-to-be-catastrophic/2020/03/31/b0f300f4-71e5-11ea-85cb-8670579b863d_story.html.

²⁹ Anastasia Tsioulcas for NPR, Tweet: <https://twitter.com/anastasiat/status/1240645951309701120?s=21>.

Met announced it would look at its \$3.6 billion endowment to cover costs and maintain employees, something the museum had not previously done, even during World Wars, 9/11 or Hurricane Sandy.³⁰ By early April, the Queens Museum had laid off 30 employees, the Whitney Museum of Art laid off 20 percent of its staff and other institutions expressed they may have to lay off staff – in some cases by up to 68 percent.³¹ Further, while some institutions have asked staff to take pay cuts to postpone lay-offs,³² cultural organizations of all types and sizes have expressed the difficulty of planning given the uncertain timeframe and effects of the pandemic.³³ In fact, while culture was one of the first sectors to close,³⁴ cultural institutions are currently not slated to reopen until the final phase of the State’s reopening plan,³⁵ or Phase 4.³⁶

It also remains unclear how groups within the arts and cultural community will need to adapt to safety precautions,³⁷ including with regard to adhering to social-distancing procedures in theaters, which some institutions have said creates a possibility that some groups will never recover.³⁸ Additionally, while NYC and NYS are considering plans for reopening, there is

³⁰ Sarah Cascone, *In a Surprise Move, the Metropolitan Museum of Art Is Looking to Its \$3.6 Billion Endowment to Cover Costs* (Mar. 31, 2020), available at <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/met-endowment-paying-staff-1820772>.

³¹ Information shared during the daily “Culture @3” call, hosted by the CIG.

³² Information shared during the daily “Culture @3” call, hosted by the CIG.

³³ *Id.*

³⁴ Robin Pogrebin and Michael Cooper, *New York’s Major Cultural Institutions Close in Response to Coronavirus* (Mar. 12, 2020), available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/12/arts/design/met-museum-opera-carnegie-hall-close-coronavirus.html?action=click&module=RelatedLinks&pgtype=Article>.

³⁵ According to April 2020 research by the Center for an Urban Future (CUF), nearly “all small and mid-sized arts organizations [in NYC] are facing slashed budgets and reduced staffing, and many are teetering on the brink of insolvency.” Abigail Savitch-Lew, Eli Dvorkin, and Laird Gallagher, *Art in the Time of Coronavirus: NYC’s Small Arts Organizations Fighting for Survival* (April 2020), available at <https://nycfuture.org/research/art-in-the-time-of-coronavirus>.

³⁶ New York Forward: A Guide to Re-Opening New York & Building Back Better (May 2020), available at <https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/NYForwardReopeningGuide.pdf>.

³⁷ See, e.g., Julia Jacobs, *Poll Shows One Hurdle to Reopening Broadway: Fear of Jerks* (May 26, 2020), available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/26/theater/broadway-coronavirus-poll.html>.

³⁸ Abigail Savitch-Lew, Eli Dvorkin, and Laird Gallagher, *Art in the Time of Coronavirus: NYC’s Small Arts Organizations Fighting for Survival* (April 2020), available at <https://nycfuture.org/research/art-in-the-time-of-coronavirus>; Peter Marks and Geoff Edgers, *New York is one of the world’s great cities for the arts — but the damage from the pandemic is proving to be catastrophic* (Mar. 31, 2020), available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/theater_dance/new-york-is-one-of-the-worlds-great-cities-for-the-

currently a lack of representation from sections of the cultural community. Both the City's *Advisory Council on Arts, Culture and Tourism*,³⁹ formed by Mayor de Blasio to consider a sector recovery plan,⁴⁰ as well as the State-level "New York Forward" advisory board do not include comprehensive representation.⁴¹

Strategies for Re-Opening and Assistance from DCLA and Other Sources

During this time of uncertainty, federal, state, and local government have provided some, albeit limited, support to struggling institutions, while cultural groups have come together to support each other in unprecedented ways.⁴² On March 27, 2020, Congress passed a \$2.2 trillion emergency relief package designed to support the U.S. economy and to help communities contend with the COVID-19 outbreak.⁴³ Recognizing that the arts community is struggling, the federal relief package appropriated \$75 million to the National Endowment for the Arts, of which 40

[arts-but-the-damage-from-the-pandemic-is-proving-to-be-catastrophic/2020/03/31/b0f300f4-71e5-11ea-85cb-8670579b863d_story.html](https://www.dance.nyc/news/2020/03/31/b0f300f4-71e5-11ea-85cb-8670579b863d_story.html).

³⁹ See Letter to Mayor Bill de Blasio, Re: Advisory Council on Arts, Culture, and Tourism, available at <https://www.dance.nyc/news/2020/05/Letter-to-Mayor-Bill-de-Blasio-Re-Advisory-Council-on-Arts-Culture-and-Tourism/>.

⁴⁰ This includes any representation from the dance community. See Alejandra O'Connell-Domenech, *Mayor announces more sector advisory councils to help reopening and recovery from COVID-19 pandemic* (May 2020), available at <https://www.amny.com/coronavirus/mayor-announces-more-sector-advisory-councils-to-help-reopening-and-recovery-from-covid-19-pandemic/>.

⁴¹ Governor Cuomo released the names of over 100 individuals who will serve on an advisory board that will help shape the state's reopening policy. Advocates have noted the absence of cultural organizations and leaders from the New York Forward Committee. See New York Forward Advisory Board: <https://forward.ny.gov/ny-forward-advisory-board>; See, e.g., Nicole Goodkind, *Governor Andrew Cuomo is relying on the advice of CEOs and billionaires to reopen New York* (May 12, 2020), available at <https://fortune.com/2020/05/12/governor-andrew-cuomo-is-relying-on-the-advice-of-ceos-and-billionaires-to-reopen-new-york/>.

⁴² Judd Grossman, Michael Straus, Catherine K. B. Lucas and Sarah E. Schuster, *What Legal Rights Do Artists and Galleries Have During a Pandemic?* (May 13, 2020), available at <https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/artists-galleries-legal-rights-coronavirus-1202687028/>.

⁴³ Jacob Pramuk, *Trump Signs \$2 Trillion Coronavirus Relief Bill as the US Tries to Prevent Economic Devastation* (Mar. 27, 2020), available at <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/03/27/house-passes-2-trillion-coronavirus-stimulus-bill-sends-it-to-trump.html>; Judd Grossman, Michael Straus, Catherine K. B. Lucas and Sarah E. Schuster, *What Legal Rights Do Artists and Galleries Have During a Pandemic?* (May 13, 2020), available at <https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/artists-galleries-legal-rights-coronavirus-1202687028/>.

percent is directed to state and regional arts organizations.⁴⁴ Other provisions within the bill that could benefit cultural organizations include loan forgiveness for companies that retain workers and an expansion of unemployment benefits.⁴⁵ In addition, NYS⁴⁶ and various philanthropic organizations have also provided funding opportunities, while others have compiled comprehensive lists of COVID-19 resources for members of the arts and cultural community.⁴⁷

On March 13, 2020, DCLA and the leaders of the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG)⁴⁸ began convening daily calls to discuss concerns and responses to the COVID-19 crisis.⁴⁹ The calls, hosted by CIG representatives, were quickly opened to the wider cultural community and now consist of over 200 individuals and organizations that meet daily.⁵⁰ The group continues to discuss funding, advocacy and ongoing issues related to issues like insurance and technical support.⁵¹ This

⁴⁴ Judd Grossman, Michael Straus, Catherine K. B. Lucas and Sarah E. Schuster, *What Legal Rights Do Artists and Galleries Have During a Pandemic?* (May 13, 2020), available at <https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/artists-galleries-legal-rights-coronavirus-1202687028/>.

⁴⁵ Judd Grossman, Michael Straus, Catherine K. B. Lucas and Sarah E. Schuster, *What Legal Rights Do Artists and Galleries Have During a Pandemic?* (May 13, 2020), available at <https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/artists-galleries-legal-rights-coronavirus-1202687028/>.

⁴⁶ See New York State Council on the Arts, *COVID-19 and the Arts* (n.d.), available at <https://arts.ny.gov>.

⁴⁷ Judd Grossman, Michael Straus, Catherine K. B. Lucas and Sarah E. Schuster, *What Legal Rights Do Artists and Galleries Have During a Pandemic?* (May 13, 2020), available at <https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/artists-galleries-legal-rights-coronavirus-1202687028/>.

⁴⁸ The Cultural Institutions Group (CIG) is a group of 34 institutions throughout the five boroughs that including The Met, MoMA, the Botanic Gardens and the Zoos, that receive 75% of DCLA's annual operating budget. See NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, Cultural Institutions Group (CIG) (n.d.), available at <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dcla/cultural-funding/city-owned-institutions.page>.

⁴⁹ Peter Marks and Geoff Edgers, *New York is one of the world's great cities for the arts — but the damage from the pandemic is proving to be catastrophic* (Mar. 31, 2020), available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/theater_dance/new-york-is-one-of-the-worlds-great-cities-for-the-arts-but-the-damage-from-the-pandemic-is-proving-to-be-catastrophic/2020/03/31/b0f300f4-71e5-11ea-85cb-8670579b863d_story.html; Robin Pogrebin and Michawel Paulson, *The Daily Call that 200 Arts Groups Hope Will Help Them Survive* (May 12, 2020), available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/12/arts/coronavirus-new-york-culture.html>.

⁵⁰ Peter Marks and Geoff Edgers, *New York is one of the world's great cities for the arts — but the damage from the pandemic is proving to be catastrophic* (Mar. 31, 2020), available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/theater_dance/new-york-is-one-of-the-worlds-great-cities-for-the-arts-but-the-damage-from-the-pandemic-is-proving-to-be-catastrophic/2020/03/31/b0f300f4-71e5-11ea-85cb-8670579b863d_story.html; Robin Pogrebin and Michawel Paulson, *The Daily Call that 200 Arts Groups Hope Will Help Them Survive* (May 12, 2020), available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/12/arts/coronavirus-new-york-culture.html>.

⁵¹ Peter Marks and Geoff Edgers, *New York is one of the world's great cities for the arts — but the damage from the pandemic is proving to be catastrophic* (Mar. 31, 2020), available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/theater_dance/new-york-is-one-of-the-worlds-great-cities-for-the-

daily “Culture @3” group has also created volunteer working groups, within the larger group of regular attendees, which track and provide regular updates on various issues areas, including those related to: (1) city & state advocacy, (2) federal advocacy, (3) communications and messaging, (4) data collection, (5) employment / HR, (6) corporate and foundation support, (7) insurance, (8) online programming, (9) diversity and (10) re-opening plans.⁵² Despite this community engagement and aid, cultural leaders and advocates have expressed concern related to financial uncertainty and the unprecedented nature of this period, stressing that the field will likely face challenges beyond the end of the pandemic.⁵³

CONCLUSION

At today’s hearing, the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations will hear from DCLA and the cultural community on efforts to date in responding to closures, implementing remote programming, planning for the future of the sector and how the City can provide support until cultural institutions and organizations are able to resume normal programming, and beyond.

Int. No. 1967

Int. No. 1967 would require the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) to create a report related to New York City-based art and cultural institutions’ plans for reopening, post-COVID-19

[arts-but-the-damage-from-the-pandemic-is-proving-to-be-catastrophic/2020/03/31/b0f300f4-71e5-11ea-85cb-8670579b863d_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/theater_dance/new-york-is-one-of-the-worlds-great-cities-for-the-arts-but-the-damage-from-the-pandemic-is-proving-to-be-catastrophic/2020/03/31/b0f300f4-71e5-11ea-85cb-8670579b863d_story.html); Robin Pogrebin and Michawel Paulson, *The Daily Call that 200 Arts Groups Hope Will Help Them Survive* (May 12, 2020), available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/12/arts/coronavirus-new-york-culture.html>.

⁵² Information shared during the daily “Culture @3” call, hosted by the CIG; Peter Marks and Geoff Edgers, *New York is one of the world’s great cities for the arts — but the damage from the pandemic is proving to be catastrophic* (Mar. 31, 2020), available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/theater_dance/new-york-is-one-of-the-worlds-great-cities-for-the-arts-but-the-damage-from-the-pandemic-is-proving-to-be-catastrophic/2020/03/31/b0f300f4-71e5-11ea-85cb-8670579b863d_story.html; Robin Pogrebin and Michawel Paulson, *The Daily Call that 200 Arts Groups Hope Will Help Them Survive* (May 12, 2020), available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/12/arts/coronavirus-new-york-culture.html>.

⁵³ Information shared during the daily “Culture @3” call, hosted by the CIG.

closures. The report would be submitted to Mayor, the Speaker of the Council and posted online no later than 60 days after the effective date of this local law, and consider information related to: (1) steps institutions are taking to prepare for reopening; (2) how federal, state, and city safety guidelines related to COVID-19 should be incorporated into reopening plans; (3) strategies for the continuation of digital platforms and remote programming developed during COVID-19 closures; and (4) any other considerations deemed by DCLA to be relevant to reopening plans for cultural institutions. Pursuant to this legislation, the DCLA Commissioner would also be required to include a recommendation to the Mayor and the Speaker of the Council about whether continued reporting on the topic is necessary and appropriate.

Section two of Int. No. 1967 would provide that the local law take effect immediately after it becomes law.

(Intentionally left blank)

By Council Members Cumbo and Van Bramer

A Local Law in relation to a report regarding post-COVID-19 reopening plans for art and cultural institutions in New York city

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

1 Section 1. Report on post-COVID-19 reopening plans for cultural institutions in New York
2 city. a. Definitions. For purposes of this local law, the following terms have the following
3 meanings:

4 City. The term “city” means New York city.

5 Commissioner. The term “commissioner” means the commissioner of the department of
6 cultural affairs.

7 COVID-19. The term “COVID-19” means the disease caused by the severe acute
8 respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

9 Cultural institution. The term “cultural institution” means a New York city-based art and
10 cultural group, organization, gallery, venue, or institution.

11 Department. The term “department” means the department of cultural affairs.

12 b. No later than 60 days after the effective date of this local law, the department shall
13 submit to the mayor, the speaker of the council, and post online a report detailing cultural
14 institutions’ plans for reopening, post-COVID-19. Such report shall document a sample of such
15 reopening plans, and related information, to serve as a planning resource for other such cultural
16 institutions.

17 c. In developing the report required by subdivision b of this section, the department shall
18 consider the following:

19 1. The steps that at least five cultural institutions, of various types and sizes, have taken to
20 prepare to reopen, including example reopening plans from at least one institution from each of
21 the following areas: education arts, performing arts, gardens and outdoor spaces, and museums;

22 2. How federal, state, and city safety guidelines related to COVID-19 should be
23 incorporated into reopening plans;

24 3. Strategies for the continuation of digital platforms and remote programming developed
25 during COVID-19 closures; and

26 4. Any other considerations deemed by the department to be relevant to reopening plans
27 for cultural institutions.

28 d. The commissioner shall include with any such report a recommendation to the mayor
29 and the speaker of the council about whether continued reporting on such topic is necessary and
30 appropriate.

31 § 2. This local law takes effect immediately.

BM
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