



# ALL THE RIGHT MOVES

Advancing Dance and the Arts in Brooklyn

## BACKGROUND AND IMPORTANCE:

Arts and culture are critical to the economic, educational, mental, and physical growth in the communities of Brooklyn. Specifically, the art of dance has been proven to:

- Increase one's heart rate, which is good for cardiovascular health
- Treat anxiety, depression, and stress
- Help children do better in school by building perseverance, self-confidence, and tolerance
- Boost tourism and foster job opportunities

Dance supports healthy lifestyles through movement, helping to combat the borough's obesity crisis. In Brooklyn, 59 percent of adults are overweight or obese, and only 73 percent of adults participated in leisurely physical activity in the past 30 days<sup>1</sup>. Similarly, dance provides an excellent tool to improve mental health. An estimated 20 percent of children ages 5 to 17 in Brooklyn suffer from a mental health disorder.<sup>2</sup> Dance also has a positive impact on children and can help them succeed in school. Research shows students who are engaged in the arts have higher GPAs, and are more likely to graduate high school and earn bachelor's degrees.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, dance and other creative industries help economic development for the borough. Brooklyn saw a 149 percent growth of creative nonprofits from 2005 to 2015. Attendance at cultural organizations increased 20 percent since 2006.<sup>4</sup>

## CHALLENGES:

Although Brooklyn remains on the avant-garde side of the arts world, our borough still faces many distinct obstacles to sustaining and expanding opportunity. For instance, making housing affordable to individual artists who come to Brooklyn to fulfill their aspirations, rather than stand by and watch them leave for more affordable cities, presents a continuous challenge. We also must work to keep the arts integrated into other sectors and City agencies. This will establish the civic leadership needed to sustain culture in Brooklyn for years to come.

Most dance organizations are in Manhattan, where more than 3,000 staff members are employed. Brooklyn is the next largest borough for dance, with more than 500 employed in that field. Brooklyn is also 53 percent female and dance staff in the borough are 17 percent higher than the residential population. Data from the 2000 United States Census indicates that greater diversity in the dance community is needed. Data shows that 54 percent of the dance workforce is non-Hispanic white, 17 percent is

<sup>1</sup> New York State Department of Health (2013). [health.ny.gov/statistics/chac/chai/docs/obs\\_59.htm](http://health.ny.gov/statistics/chac/chai/docs/obs_59.htm)

<sup>2</sup> Karen Bradley, Jane Bonbright, and Shannon Dooling (July 2013) Evidence: A report on the Impact of Dance in the K-12 Setting. [arts.gov/sites/default/files/Research-Art-Works-NDEO.pdf](http://arts.gov/sites/default/files/Research-Art-Works-NDEO.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, Inc. (January 2012) New York City's Children: Mental Health Prevalence and Gap Analysis of Treatment Slot Capacity. [cccnewyork.org/wp-content/publications/CCCReport.MentalHealthPrevalence.pdf](http://cccnewyork.org/wp-content/publications/CCCReport.MentalHealthPrevalence.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Center for an Urban Future (June 2015) National Center for charitable statistics & Mayor's Management Report. [nycfuture.org/data/info/data-from-creative-new-york](http://nycfuture.org/data/info/data-from-creative-new-york)

black or African American, 10 percent is Hispanic, seven percent is Asian, three percent are two or more races, 0.5 percent is Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 0.3 percent is American Indian or Alaskan Native. In addition, too often excluded from discussions about diversity, equity, and inclusion are socioeconomic status, those who have disabilities, and members of the LGBTQ community.

Furthermore, the lack of funding for the arts is reaching a critical impasse. Since 2008, grants to New York City have decreased by 37 percent from New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), 15 percent from National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and 16 percent from New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA). Whether it is the shortage of funds for operating expenses, capacity building, or singular projects, more funding for existing opportunities, as well as new and innovative funding mechanisms are needed. Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams is supportive of increased funding to ensure that Brooklyn remains at the forefront of the arts world.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Borough President Adams will continue to utilize the Uniform Land Use Review Process (ULURP) to secure affordable cultural and studio spaces for artisans and artists in certain development projects and zoning text and mapping actions.
- The New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), New York City Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), the New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC), and the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) should designate certain vacant or underutilized City/government-owned land and buildings for affordable cultural and/or studio space, where appropriate.
- HPD and EDC should incorporate into Requests for Proposals (RFPs) a preference for the inclusion of space earmarked for affordable cultural and/or studio space, where appropriate.
- The New York City Department of City Planning (DCP) should consider introducing a zoning text change to establish a more widely applicable special permit that enables the maximum community facility floor area ratio to appropriate zoning districts and locations.
- Borough President Adams will continue to support the use of non-traditional venues for studio or work space, including spiritual institutions, schools, libraries, waterfronts, and parks.
- Borough President Adams will continue to support New York City's comprehensive cultural plan, identifying the unique contributions of the arts to economic development, education, health care, and housing.
- DCLA should provide enhanced training at dance organizations on leadership and develop anti-racism training and diversity plans for dance organizations and institutions.
- Borough President Adams will establish an Arts Task Force that will serve as a hub of information for artists as well as a venue for arts organizations to discuss cross-sector issues impacting the arts communities throughout Brooklyn.

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<sup>5</sup> Roger C. Schonfeld and Liam Sweeney, "Diversity in the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs Community," Ithaka S+R, 28 January 2016, [sr.ithaka.org?p=276381](http://sr.ithaka.org?p=276381).



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