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## **New Transparency in City Cultural Spending**

**November 24, 2025** – The [New York City Department of Cultural Affairs \(DCLA\)](#) is the largest municipal funder of arts and culture in the United States, with an operating budget of \$300 million in fiscal year 2026. The agency is funded almost entirely by the City, with about 1% of its budget coming from the State or federal government.

At the request of Candice Anderson, Executive Director of [Cool Culture](#), IBO [analyzed](#) the last decade (2017-2026) of DCLA spending by budget area. The second part of this [report](#) shows how, beginning in fiscal year 2025, the DCLA budget structure more clearly delineates two government funding streams that flow through DCLA.

1. **Mayoral funding**
2. **City Council [discretionary funding](#).**

Reviewing both streams allows New Yorkers to see not only a breakdown of DCLA spending, but also which branch of City government is responsible for which funding. The ability to distinguish City Council discretionary funding from other DCLA funding provides policymakers and the public with greater transparency into how arts and cultural resources are allocated across the City and by whom.

Clearer visibility into local cultural funding comes at a time when the federal government has identified arts and cultural programming as a potential area for budget and policy changes, making it important for the public to understand how New York City currently funds cultural institutions. [Nearly all federal arts and cultural funding flows directly to nonprofit organizations, bypassing City government entirely.](#)

DCLA's largest program areas are the [Cultural Development Fund \(CDF\)](#) and the [Cultural Institutions Group \(CIG\)](#). From 2017 through 2025, CIG payments made up more than half of DCLA spending each year, while CDF grants made up 20% on average. Council





discretionary funding makes up about 18% of DCLA's spending and budget (19% of spending in 2025 and 18% of the agency's budget in 2026).

As federal arts and culture programs face potential cuts, cultural institutions may look to secure City or State funding. Understanding how targeted or broad those investments are will allow the City to better prepare for actions that reduce current federal funding allocations to New York City's cultural sector.

