

GBCA Erie County Cultural Funding ADVOCACY PLAN 2014
11.14.13

These next weeks 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 a recommended organization, please be sure to send letters to the County Executive thanking him for his increase in overall funding for the arts and culturals. Please also send letters to the 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.

Send letters to your legislator

Send letters to Chair Betty Jean Grant, Majority Leader Thomas Mazur, and Minority Leader John Mills

If you need contact information for the County Executive or the Erie County Legislature, a database can be found at ASI's website:

<http://www.asiwny.org/resources/advocacy/>

More information and the entire 2014 Proposed Budget can be found at:

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

Also important is letters that get in front of the community. Let us know if you or someone from your organization can write this kind of letter.

Letters to the Buffalo News Editor/My View/Another Voice; and letters to other local papers

Send letters to the editor talking about your organization's important work and linking to the talking points.

View submission guidelines: <http://corp.buffalonews.com/services/contact/guidelines.asp>

Examples from last year:

Buffalo News Another Voice Column

Anne Y. Taylor, Just Buffalo Literary Center Vice President
110412

Budget must support region's cultural organizations

<http://www.buffalonews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20121104/OPINION/121109518/1117>

Letter to the Editor: Culturals boost quality of life, economy

Jeff Paterson, Executive Director Community Music School
110512

<http://www.buffalonews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20121106/OPINION/121109601/1074>

Buffalo News Opinion

Cori Wolff: Cultural organizations are cornerstones of growth

11/12/12

<http://www.buffalonews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=%2F20121112%2FOPINION%2F121119801%2F1074>

#2 Attend the Budget Hearing

Attend the budget hearing on Monday **November 25** at **5 pm**. The meeting will take place in Chambers of the Legislature, 4th Floor at Old County Hall, 92 Franklin St., Buffalo, NY 14202.

Please plan to attend with others from your organization. Especially valuable is getting board members/patrons/volunteers/beneficiaries to participate.

#3 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.

Key Talking Points

- REQUEST - Urge support for the county executive's recommended funding for cultural organizations (\$5,647,967).
- 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 that important core funding, the rest is often imperiled. In addition, the DIVERSITY of programming and communities served are an important community strength.