



New York State Division of Budget
Town Hall Hearing
On Behalf of the American Folk Art Museum
November 29, 2007

Good afternoon. My name is Pamela Gabourie and I am the Manager of Institutional Giving at the American Folk Art Museum. I would like to thank Governor Spitzer and the New York State Division of Budget for this opportunity to offer comments and request support for the arts and arts education on behalf of the museum and the other 1,900 museums and heritage organizations in this state.

The American Folk Art Museum is the only institution in New York City devoted to folk art and is home to one of the world's finest collections dating from the 1600s to the new millennium. Our collections and exhibitions display work by people from all walks of life, illustrating the same multicultural diversity that defines the population of New York State.

One of the museum's chief priorities is to expand its programs to directly serve greater numbers of schoolchildren and teachers. Currently, the museum reaches 16,000 students in grades pre-K through 12 each year through tours, lesson plans, and other specialized activities that align with State Learning Standards. We also serve more than 300 teachers through professional development courses, a Summer Teaching Institute, and open houses for educators.

Over the next year, the museum will make new strides to connect with the community by presenting offsite programming for seniors, enhancing activities for children and families, and sustaining relationships and initiating new and strategic partnerships with a number of diverse local organizations. In addition, our branch location on the Upper West Side was recently renovated and reprogrammed to introduce new neighbors, community groups, and students and educators to the museum.

Funding from New York State through the New York State Council on the Arts has played a critical role in the museum's ability to educate, expand, and diversify its audience, making it possible for the museum to be a center of engagement for the City and the State. For example, recent awards from the Council have allowed the museum to continue digitization of its collections and begin development on an interactive education website that will make creative learning resources available to students and teachers across the state and beyond.

The American Folk Art Museum and its fellow institutions impact New York City and New York State in a meaningful and significant way. Not only do we offer a wide and diverse range of high quality programs and services to an ever-growing and ever-changing audience, but we also stimulate the local and State economies and enhance the region's attractiveness to tourists, businesses, and skilled professionals.

In conclusion, we are proud of our contribution to the arts and to the State and urge you to strongly support the New York State Council on the Arts and the Board of Regents' proposal to fund the Cultural and Museum Education Act.

On behalf of the American Folk Art Museum, thank you for allowing me this opportunity to speak here today. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

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