

May 23, 2020

NYC Council Finance Committee
Via financetestimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: proposed NYC budget cuts to DYCD

Dear Finance Committee:

PortSide New York is an award-winning, maritime non-profit located in Red Hook, Brooklyn founded in 2005. We provide programs in culture, education (K through graduate school), job training (youth, individual adults and via a partnership with the union District Council 9), resiliency/community mutual aid and historic preservation. We program on and off an 82-year old historic ship, the MARY A. WHALEN which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Last school year, we inspired Red Hook's PS 676 to become a maritime-themed elementary school, the 1st in Brooklyn and only the 2nd in NYC.

We are testifying about the DYCD budget because we think that funding is ESSENTIAL to NYC as a whole and to neighborhoods like ours. We are not major beneficiaries of DYDC funding, though we did apply this year.

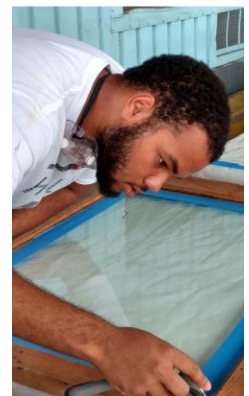
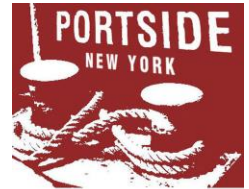
We accept that COVID19 impacts will take a huge bite out of the City budget.

What we do not accept, nor should you, is that DYCD suffer a radically steeper budget cut than other City departments – NEARLY 5X THE CUTS TO OTHER AGENCIES.

DYCD funds community arts programs, youth programs, and summer jobs for youth via SYEP (Summer Youth Employment Program). Those are cultural and educational programs that benefit the entire community of the recipient organizations.

Further, a fair COVID19 budget does not gut the programs that serve those most affected by COVID19.

The people served by DYCD are the people most affected by COVID19, black and brown communities who are dying from coronavirus at 2x the rate of whites, who have a higher level of “essential workers” risking their lives than whites, and who are overwhelming over-targeted by NYPD police enforcement of social distancing where arrests, often violent ones, of people of color equal over 80% of total arrests.



PortSide New York, aboard the tanker MARY A. WHALEN
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We see a lot of merit to the proposal to cut the NYPD budget by 1% to support DYCD.

We also see merit in proposals to use SYEP funds to hire and train youth to be ambassadors about social distancing and health safety practices that prevent getting COVID19. We do NOT think that using the NYPD for such functions will be effective.

NYC needs #NYCBudgetJustice. We need to #SaveSYEP. DYCD should not be the cash cow pillaged to support the budgets of other agencies.

Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carolina Salguero', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Carolina Salguero
Founder and Executive Director
PortSide New York