

# How Dependent Are Members of New York’s Cultural Institutions Group on City Subsidies?

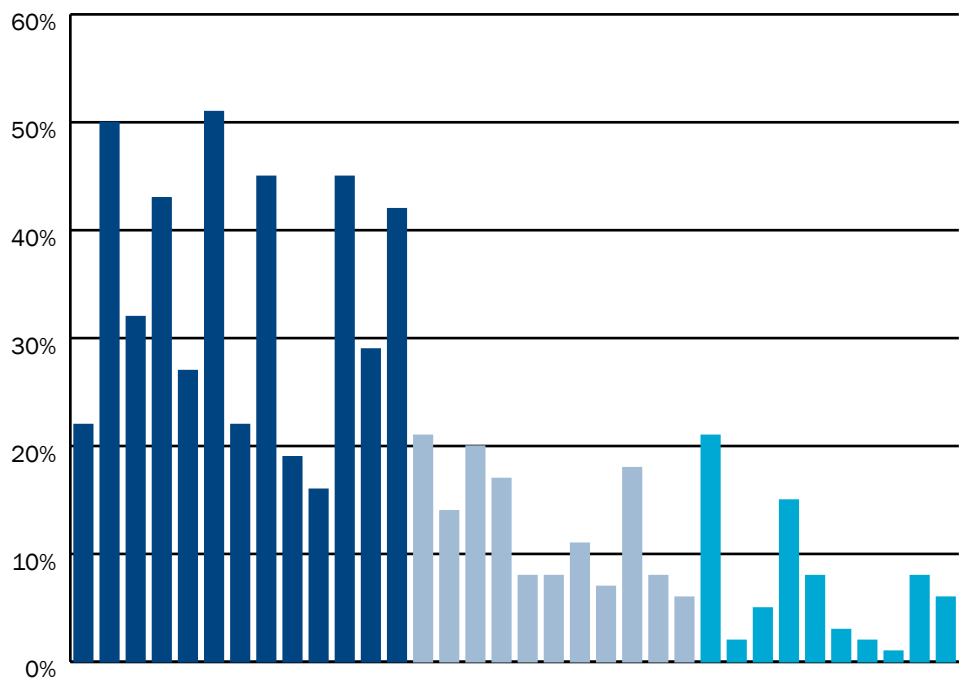
New York City’s Cultural Institutions Group consists of 33 arts and cultural organizations that are located on city-owned property and receive annual operating subsidies and funding for heat, power, and light from the city’s Department of Cultural Affairs.<sup>1</sup> Some of the members of this group are among the most renowned cultural organizations in the city such as the American Museum of Natural History and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Others are less well-known such as Flushing Town Hall and the Staten Island Museum (complete list [here](#)). Along with renown, attendance and the level of city subsidies received also vary widely. In fiscal year 2018, annual attendance among the organizations ranged from nearly 34,000 to almost 7.4 million. City subsidies in 2018 ranged from about \$189,000 to \$25.2 million.

Some of these cultural organizations are more reliant on city subsidies than others. IBO looked at the amount of money each organization received from the Department of Cultural Affairs in 2018 relative to the institution’s total budget. To do this we divided the institutions into three groups according to the size of their total budgets. There were 13 in the smallest group, with total budgets under \$5 million (this included all five of Staten Island’s members); 11 medium-sized institutions, with budgets from \$5 million to \$26 million; and the 10 largest, with budgets of more than \$26 million.<sup>2</sup> This last category included four organizations with budgets over \$100 million.

## Smaller Organizations Tend to Rely More Heavily on Subsidies From the Department of Cultural Affairs

■ Small Organization (13)    ■ Medium Organization (11)    ■ Large Organization (10)

Subsidy as a Share of Total Budget



- Cultural Institutions Group members welcomed a combined total of nearly 23.3 million visitors and received operating and related subsidies from the city totaling \$108.9 million in 2018, an average of \$4.68 per visitor.<sup>3</sup>
- Budgets for the Cultural Institutions Group members totaled \$1.4 billion in 2018, with the city’s subsidies comprising about 8 percent of that total.
- But there was a wide variation among the organizations based on size, with the smallest institutions receiving about a third of their total budgets on average from the Department of Cultural Affairs, the middle group an average of 11 percent, and the largest organizations an average of 6 percent.

SOURCES: Mayor’s Office of Management and Budget, Department of Cultural Affairs, Wildlife Conservation Society Consolidated Financial Statements and Schedules  
 NOTE: Based on total organization budget and level of city subsidies in 2018.

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Prepared by Katie Hanna  
 New York City Independent Budget Office

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>A 34<sup>th</sup> organization, the Weeksville Heritage Center in Brooklyn, is currently going through the process to become part of the Cultural Institutions Group.  
<sup>2</sup>The Wildlife Conservation Society is an umbrella organization with two Cultural Institutions Group members—the New York Aquarium in Brooklyn and the Bronx Zoo. The city counts the conservation society as a single institution but for the purpose of this analysis these two entities have been treated separately.  
<sup>3</sup>The Studio Museum closed temporarily in January 2018 and its attendance used for this report is from fiscal year 2017. Based on the six months the Studio Museum was open in 2018, total Cultural Institutions Group attendance would be just under 23.2 million.