

STATE OF NEW YORK

10592

IN ASSEMBLY

March 13, 2026

Introduced by M. of A. ZINERMAN -- read once and referred to the Committee on Tourism, Parks, Arts and Sports Development

AN ACT in relation to establishing the Bedford-Stuyvesant cultural district; creating the Bedford-Stuyvesant cultural district stakeholders council and youth cultural leadership council; providing for planning, preservation, cultural programming, economic empowerment, and capital development; and making an appropriation therefor

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as
2 the "Bedford-Stuyvesant cultural district act".

3 § 2. Legislative findings and intent. The legislature finds and
4 declares that:

5 1. Bedford-Stuyvesant has been, and remains, one of the most signif-
6 icant centers of Black cultural production, creativity, and community
7 building in New York state and the nation. Historic institutions-includ-
8 ing the Fulton Art Fair, The East, the Billie Holiday Theatre, the Afri-
9 can art museums, community galleries, performance collectives, and inde-
10 pendent cultural workers-have shaped visual arts, jazz, poetry, Black
11 theater, dance, literature, fashion, and political thought for more than
12 seventy years.

13 2. Despite this legacy, generations of artists and cultural organiza-
14 tions have faced displacement, underinvestment, and loss of affordable
15 creative spaces, threatening the continuation of Bed-Stuy's artistic
16 ecosystem.

17 3. The legislature further finds that intentional, community-driven
18 investment will preserve this heritage, promote cultural and economic
19 development, expand opportunities for youth, strengthen public insti-
20 tutions, and ensure that artists and cultural organizations can live,
21 work, and thrive in the communities they helped build.

22 4. It is therefore the intent of the legislature to:

23 (a) Designate NYC assembly district 56 as the Bedford-Stuyvesant
24 cultural district,

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

LBD14506-02-6

1 (b) Establish a governing body-the Cultural District Stakeholders
2 Council-composed of artists, cultural institutions, community partners,
3 and residents,

4 (c) Support a youth council to prepare the next generation of cultural
5 leaders,

6 (d) Provide sustained operational and capital funding to secure Bed-
7 Stuy's cultural infrastructure for decades to come, and

8 (e) Preserve and celebrate Bedford-Stuyvesant's Black culture.

9 § 3. Establishment of the Bedford-Stuyvesant cultural district. 1.
10 There is hereby established the Bedford-Stuyvesant cultural district,
11 encompassing the geographic boundaries of New York state assembly
12 district 56.

13 2. The district shall serve as an officially recognized zone dedicated
14 to:

15 (a) cultural preservation and celebration;

16 (b) arts education and workforce development;

17 (c) creative placekeeping and placemaking and public arts installa-
18 tions;

19 (d) support for cultural institutions, historic sites, independent
20 artists, and creative entrepreneurs; and

21 (e) promotion of local heritage tourism and cultural commerce.

22 § 4. Bedford-Stuyvesant cultural district stakeholders council. 1.
23 There is hereby created the Bedford-Stuyvesant cultural district stake-
24 holders council (hereinafter referred to as "the council"). The Laundro-
25 mat Project shall serve as the founding administrative partner, and the
26 Billie Holiday Theatre shall serve as the fiscal sponsor, during the
27 initial formation period of the cultural district, until such time as
28 the cultural district establishes an independent governance and adminis-
29 trative structure.

30 2. (a) The council shall operate in accordance with a community-led
31 governance model, under which decision-making authority, priorities, and
32 stewardship of cultural district resources are centered in and account-
33 able to Bedford-Stuyvesant cultural institutions, arts organizations,
34 historic cultural sites, and cultural leaders.

35 (b) The council shall consist of the following:

36 (i) founding members, defined as the organizations and cultural lead-
37 ers that convened in two thousand twenty-five to initiate the planning
38 and development of the Bedford-Stuyvesant cultural district and that are
39 representative of Bedford-Stuyvesant cultural institutions, arts organ-
40 izations, historic cultural sites, and cultural leaders. Founding
41 members shall constitute a majority of the council and shall retain
42 exclusive voting authority over the activities, priorities, membership
43 and strategic direction of the cultural district;

44 (ii) government representatives, including:

45 (1) two members appointed by the assembly committee on tourism, parks,
46 arts and sports development;

47 (2) one member appointed by the senate committee on cultural affairs,
48 tourism, parks and recreation; and

49 (3) one representative from the New York city department of cultural
50 affairs, all of whom shall serve in an ex officio, non-voting, advisory
51 capacity. Government representatives may participate in discussions,
52 provide technical assistance, and facilitate coordination with relevant
53 public agencies, but shall not vote on council matters and shall not be
54 counted toward quorum; and

55 (iii) additional council members that may be added upon the recommen-
56 dation of a founding member. Such additions shall be subject to an

1 application process and approval by a two-thirds vote of the council.
2 Applicants shall demonstrate a history of sustained engagement with, and
3 accountability to, Bedford-Stuyvesant communities, and a commitment to
4 ensuring that cultural district resources are directed toward community
5 benefit rather than private or extractive use. New members may include,
6 but shall not be limited to:

- 7 (1) independent artists and cultural workers;
- 8 (2) preservationists, historians, and community archivists;
- 9 (3) representatives from community-based organizations;
- 10 (4) local business and economic development partners; and
- 11 (5) faith-based and intergenerational cultural leaders.

12 3. The council shall:

- 13 (a) develop a ten-year cultural district master plan, including:
 - 14 (i) cultural facilities mapping and infrastructure needs;
 - 15 (ii) affordable artist housing and creative workspace strategies;
 - 16 (iii) preservation of historic and cultural assets;
 - 17 (iv) arts education and youth workforce pipelines;
 - 18 (v) public arts and creative placemaking plans;
 - 19 (vi) cultural tourism and small-business development strategies; and
 - 20 (vii) annual investment and sustainability forecasts;

21 (b) administer annual cultural investment grants to artists, cultural
22 institutions, and collectives;

23 (c) recommend capital priorities for state and city investment;

24 (d) advocate for local, state, federal, and philanthropic funding; and

25 (e) publish an annual state of the district report to the legislature
26 and the public.

27 § 5. Bedford-Stuyvesant youth cultural leadership council. 1. The
28 council shall establish a youth cultural leadership council, composed of
29 youth aged fourteen to twenty-four residing in the cultural district.

30 2. The youth cultural leadership council shall:

31 (a) advise on youth arts programming, workforce development, and
32 cultural education;

33 (b) co-design youth-led creative placemaking projects;

34 (c) participate in budget recommendations and master planning; and

35 (d) serve as cultural ambassadors for the district.

36 § 6. Funding and appropriations. 1. From funds appropriated for the
37 purposes of this act for fiscal year 2026-2027, the sum of five million
38 dollars (\$5,000,000) shall support:

39 (a) council administration and staffing;

40 (b) community planning processes;

41 (c) grants to cultural organizations and artists;

42 (d) youth cultural leadership council stipends, leadership training,
43 and programming; and

44 (e) economic empowerment and technical assistance to cultural entre-
45 preneurs.

46 2. From funds appropriated for the purposes of this act, the sum of
47 twenty million dollars (\$20,000,000) shall support:

48 (a) rehabilitation and expansion of cultural institutions;

49 (b) creation of affordable artist housing and workspaces;

50 (c) preservation of historic and cultural landmarks;

51 (d) public art installations and cultural corridors; and

52 (e) development of new cultural and community spaces.

53 3. State funds may be used to leverage:

54 (a) city capital investments;

55 (b) federal cultural preservation grants;

56 (c) philanthropic and private contributions; and

1 (d) community development financial institution support.

2 § 7. Interagency collaboration. The New York state council on the
3 arts, empire state development, the department of state, and the office
4 of parks, recreation and historic preservation shall collaborate with
5 the council to:

- 6 1. provide technical assistance;
- 7 2. support cultural tourism development;
- 8 3. offer arts workforce and small-business programming;
- 9 4. facilitate designation of cultural landmarks; and
- 10 5. promote statewide visibility of the Bedford-Stuyvesant cultural
11 district.

12 § 8. Reporting requirements. The council shall submit an annual report
13 to the governor, the speaker of the assembly, the majority leader of the
14 senate, and the chairs of relevant committees on:

- 15 1. cultural district activities;
- 16 2. grant recipients and impacts;
- 17 3. capital investments;
- 18 4. youth cultural leadership council programming;
- 19 5. economic and cultural development outcomes; and
- 20 6. recommendations for further legislative or budgetary action.

21 § 9. The sum of twenty-five million dollars (\$25,000,000), or so much
22 thereof as may be necessary, is hereby appropriated to the council on
23 the arts out of any moneys in the state treasury in the general fund to
24 the credit of the Bedford-Stuyvesant cultural district, not otherwise
25 appropriated, and made immediately available, for the purpose of carry-
26 ing out the provisions of this act. Such moneys shall be payable on the
27 audit and warrant of the comptroller on vouchers certified or approved
28 by the chairperson of the council on the arts in the manner prescribed
29 by law.

30 § 10. Severability clause. If any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdi-
31 vision, section or part of this act shall be adjudged by any court of
32 competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such judgment shall not affect,
33 impair, or invalidate the remainder thereof, but shall be confined in
34 its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section
35 or part thereof directly involved in the controversy in which such judg-
36 ment shall have been rendered. It is hereby declared to be the intent of
37 the legislature that this act would have been enacted even if such
38 invalid provisions had not been included herein.

39 § 11. This act shall take effect immediately.