STATE OF NEW YORK

1378

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

January 9, 2025

Introduced by Sens. SERRANO, ADDABBO, COMRIE, HOYLMAN-SIGAL, JACKSON, LIU, MAY, MAYER, ORTT, SALAZAR, SANDERS, TEDISCO -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and Recreation

AN ACT to amend the arts and cultural affairs law, in relation to providing financial assistance to museums, zoos, botanical gardens, aquariums and other cultural institutions located in low-income urban, suburban or rural communities, or that provide educational services to students from such communities

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

Section 1. Statement of legislative findings and intent. The legislature finds and declares that the state of New York is home to vast educational resources in museums, historical societies, zoos, botanical gardens, aquaria and cultural arts institutions that offer a wealth of ways to engage children and adults and instill in them a lasting love of learning.

The legislature finds that over 1,500 museums, historical societies, zoos, botanical gardens, aquaria and cultural arts institutions in this state now provide instruction to over six million children, and that children in grades pre-kindergarten through twelve and adults enrolled in continuing education programs should have broad and equal access to such services.

The legislature further finds that community cultural arts institutions, in collaboration with teachers and schools, must design new and innovative programs to engage learners in such pressing issues as science, anthropology, history and arts literacy.

It is the intent of the legislature that the state provide financial assistance to cultural arts institutions serving under-resourced urban, suburban or rural communities to expand educational services through access to museum collections, scholarship and virtual learning and

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

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extend their uniquely valuable educational resources to the children and lifelong learners of the state.

§ 2. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "museum education act".

§ 3. The arts and cultural affairs law is amended by adding a new section 61.15 to read as follows:

§ 61.15. Education grants for museums. 1. The commissioner of education shall develop and implement, with consultation and input from representatives from the museum and cultural institution community, a museum and cultural organization education grant program, and shall award, within the amounts appropriated from the general fund for such purpose, competitive grants in accordance with this section for the purpose of establishing or improving education programs in museums and cultural organizations designed to improve student performance in public and nonpublic elementary, middle and secondary schools. Such grants shall be expended to support the production of curricula, acquisition of specialized educational or interpretive skills, acquisition and implementation of technology, and preparation of specialized exhibition or public programs that are tailored to elementary, middle and secondary school students; the development and delivery of continuing education programs; provision of student transportation; and other programs that support the development and delivery of curriculum-based programs in museums with collections.

2. As used in this section, "eligible institution" shall mean: (a) a nonprofit institution chartered by the board of regents, or otherwise incorporated as a museum, historical society, nature center, zoo, botanical garden, arboretum, aquarium or other cultural education institution, or a privately or municipally operated institution that meets the applicable registration standards established by the board of regents for museums or historical societies with collections, and that is located in a low-income urban, suburban or rural community or provides educational services to students and adult learners from low-income urban, suburban or rural communities; (b) a museum authorized by a special charter from the legislature of this state and that is located in a low-income urban, suburban or rural community or provides educational services to students and adult learners from low-income urban, suburban or rural communities; or (c) a private not-for-profit community based organization, including an incorporated institution the sole or primary purpose of which is the support of museums, historic sites or historical societies located in a low-income urban, suburban or rural community or that provides educational services to students and adult learners from low-income urban, suburban or rural communities; except that institutions operated by state or federal government agencies shall not be considered eligible under this section.

3. The governing body or officer of an eligible institution requesting a grant pursuant to this section shall submit an application at such time, and in such form and containing such information, as the commissioner of education may require. Such commissioner shall establish the criteria and standards by which applications for grants to be awarded pursuant to this section will be evaluated and made to eligible institutions. The commissioner of education is authorized to promulgate regulations for the development and submission of applications for cooperative or collaborative grants, provided that a single institution serves as the applicant for such a grant and for multi-year grants.

4. The commissioner of education shall award grants, subject to available appropriations, in an amount not to exceed the allowable costs of

the eligible institution as determined by such commissioner. Allowable costs shall include, but need not be limited to, the reasonable cost of salaries and fringe benefits, materials and equipment. The commissioner of education shall allocate a minimum of twenty-five percent of the amount appropriated for such grants to award to institutions with an operating budget of between ten thousand dollars and one hundred fifty thousand dollars per year. The commissioner of education shall allocate a minimum of twenty-five percent of the amount appropriated for such grants to award to institutions with an operating budget of between one hundred fifty thousand one dollars and five hundred thousand dollars per year. The commissioner of education shall allocate a minimum of twenty-five percent of the amount appropriated for such grants to award to institutions with an operating budget of between five hundred thousand one dollars and one million dollars per year. The commissioner of education shall allocate a minimum of twenty-five percent of the amount appropriated for such grants to award to institutions with an operating budget in excess of one million dollars per year.

5. On or before March fifteenth, two thousand twenty-eight and on or before March first of each year thereafter, the commissioner of education shall submit to the chairs of the senate finance and the assembly ways and means committees, and the director of the budget, a report detailing the implementation of the provisions of this section, the extent of participation by eligible institutions, the relationship of the programs provided to school curricula, and the geographic dispersion of funds and participating institutions.

§ 4. This act shall take effect on the three hundred sixty-fifth day after it shall have become a law. Effective immediately the addition, amendment and/or repeal of any rule or regulation necessary for the implementation of this act on its effective date are authorized to be made and completed on or before such effective date.