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Contact: Laurie A. Cumbo
Tel: 718.230.0492
Email: lcomcada@hotmail.com

Unprecedented City Wide Coalition of Underfunded Arts Organizations Unite to Demand Fair and Equitable Funding from the City of New York

BROOKLYN, NY, JANUARY 2, 2008 – The Executive Directors of cultural institutions, serving primarily Black, Latino and Asian communities from all five Boroughs have united to demand equitable funding from the City of New York. **The Cultural Equity Group (CEG)** is a coalition of cultural arts organizations and artists working for the equitable distribution of funds and resources to assure that under resourced and underserved emerging and mid-sized organizations grounded in the culture and arts of their communities are fairly funded. Although the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, under the leadership of Kate Levin, secured an unprecedented amount of funding for cultural institutions in FY07, organizations headed by leaders of color continued to lag behind. The objective of the Cultural Equity Groups is to stabilize the field, providing necessary technical assistance and program management resources to assure the continued growth of the cultural arts field.

DCA's funding process is limited to project support only; that is, support from DCA can only underwrite 50% of the project expenses with very little funding allocated for management and administration. A reform of the grants process to allow organizations to receive a combination of project and general support would go a long way to stabilizing arts organizations of color. Similarly, special allocations are needed to "jump start" organizations of color so they can realize their potential as cultural anchors in their communities. Additional support is also needed to secure health insurance for cultural workers who lack basic benefits from their organizations. Lastly, organizations that own/rent their facilities are being driven to the brink of bankruptcy because of the escalating costs for fuel and liability insurance. To that end a special allowance for owners/renters to offset financial pressures is needed. The aforementioned is a sample of some of the issues.

The New York City Council Black & Latino Caucus has recognized that institutions of color have gone far too long without the necessary resources needed to provide opportunities for people that live in communities that are in a state of emergency. **On January 9th, 3pm at City Hall, which is less than one month before organizations all over the City will be applying to the Department of Cultural Affairs, a hearing has been organized by the City Council for over 200 arts leaders to appeal the current process and demand that an additional and more equitable fund be created to address this historical disparity that is destroying the social fabric of New York City. To attend the hearing, please contact Caribbean Cultural Center at 212.307.7423.**