

# NeON Arts

A program of the NYC Department of Probation  
in partnership with Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS ANNOUNCE FUNDING TOTALING \$230,000 FOR AWARD-WINNING NEON ARTS A PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP WITH NYC DEPARTMENT OF PROBATION AND CARNEGIE HALL'S WEILL MUSIC INSTITUTE**

*The funding, which was allocated by the City Council in this year's budget, will support cultural programming in seven NeON Neighborhoods across all five boroughs*

**NEW YORK** – New York City Department of Probation Commissioner Ana Bermúdez Esq., and City Council Member Keith Powers, Chair of the Criminal Justice Committee and Cultural Affairs Committee Chair Jimmy Van Bramer announced \$230,000 in funding to support NeON Arts programming in seven neighborhoods across all five boroughs.

A public-private partnership between the New York City Department of Probation and Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute, NeON Arts brings together diverse communities in a participatory decision-making process while providing those communities access to the arts, which results in improved wellness and greater equity in our City.

The announcement comes on the heels of **The Road to Joy**: a showcase of original songs, films, beats, poetry, and more as part of NeON Arts, a program of the NYC Department of Probation (DOP) in partnership with Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute. The theme is the journey to self-acceptance, happiness, and joy, with young people contributing their voices and art to the spaces around them. The final event, held throughout Carnegie Hall's Resnick Education Wing, featured work from arts

organizations that led creative projects at the NeONs this summer, open to people under probation supervision and all other community residents.

“NeON Arts is a transformative experience for individuals and communities and many, it truly creates a Road to Joy,” states **Commissioner Bermúdez**. “The additional funding awarded by the City Council will support a range of programming in seven NeON Neighborhoods, engaging more young people, fostering their social-emotional development, and giving them what may be a new way to define themselves – as artists. Thanks to City Council Members Keith Powers and Jimmy Van Bramer for casting a much-deserved spotlight on this innovative partnership, along with City Council Members Alicka Ampry-Samuel, Vanessa Gibson, Robert Holden, and Debi Rose for their unyielding support. We also thank the Young Men’s Initiative and the Department of Cultural Affairs for their support for NeON Arts.”

“Neon Arts offers a wide variety of high-quality, free artistic projects for young people in all five New York City boroughs, providing opportunities for them to explore their passions and showcase their creativity,” said **Clive Gillinson, Carnegie Hall’s Executive and Artistic Director**. “We are thrilled the City Council has committed to providing additional funding for this important program so more New York City youth will have access to creative experiences that enable them to nurture their talents and make meaningful connections within their communities.”

Launched by DOP and Carnegie Hall in 2014 NeON Arts offers free creative projects at seven community-based probation offices called Neighborhood Opportunity Networks (NeONs). Creating art with fellow community members promotes community integration, decreases stigma, highlights creative talent, and develops the social and professional skills of all participants’ youth. The seven NeON neighborhoods are Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brownsville, East New York, Harlem, South Jamaica, Staten Island, and the South Bronx.

Through a commitment to arts programming in justice settings and as an ongoing partner of DOP, Carnegie Hall’s Weill Music Institute manages the grant-making process, coordinates citywide NeON Arts events, and works with arts organizations and NeON stakeholders to ensure that the planning and implementation of each project are a collaboration that benefits the entire community.

In a recent study, researchers found that the arts programs offered through NeON Arts were highly engaging, providing opportunities for participants to express themselves while learning new skills, and taking creative risks. The study also found that participation in the program had a destigmatizing effect on people involved in the criminal justice system.

“NeON Arts engages young people and has a track record of diverting them from the criminal justice system,” said **Council Member Keith Powers**. “I am proud to join my colleagues in investing in a program that will help support creative solutions in criminal justice. I want to commend the Department of Probation and Commissioner

Bermudez for her work that allows young people to thrive in their social and professional lives, as well as Carnegie Hall for recognizing the value of NeON Arts."

"NeON Arts is an innovative program that connects youth and adults on probation with invaluable opportunities in the arts and culture. I am proud to have helped secure \$200,000 for NeON Arts in this year's budget," said **Council Member Van Bramer**. "Access to the arts is a right for all, and engaging youth in disenfranchised communities is so important. We must continue to invest in new and creative ways to foster cultural career development and reduce recidivism."

"Since my time began in the City Council, there has been no program more successful, inspiring and important than NeON Photography," said **Council Member Holden**. "Under the great leadership of Catrina Prioleau and Chelsea Davis, the student-artists are motivated and have found a direction in life to showcase their talents."

**Council Member Vanessa Gibson** said, "I am always proud to support the NeON Arts program as part of the NYC Department of Probation. This program allows adults and youth on probation an opportunity to foster deep community ties while developing social and career-building skills through arts, poetry, spoken word, and much more. With enhanced funding from the City Council this year, NeON Arts will be able to expand the wonderful productions, showcases, and features that stem from the creative minds of all of their participants."

"The arts are an integral piece of the puzzle when we are seeking to transition New Yorkers who are at a high risk of falling back into the criminal justice system. NeON Arts' innovative approach to programming opens up outlets of creativity that are too often stigmatized," said **Council Member Alicka Ampry-Samuel**. "We are pleased to have NeON involved in the 41<sup>st</sup> Council District, and we look forward to celebrating the lives it will help shape and change."

"The arts have the power to transform people and communities in ways that cannot be measured but are surely felt. By engaging young people in the arts and giving them a venue to perform, NeON develops in them social, creative and professional skills that will have lasting impact. I thank the Department of Probation and all stakeholders for their innovative vision in executing this program and bringing it to one of New York City's grandest venues," said **Council Member Debi Rose**.

Because of the power of NeON Arts, the New York City Department of Probation has received both the American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) Award for Excellence in Community Crime Prevention and the American City and County's Crown Communities Award.

For more information about how young people can participate, visit [carnegiehall.org/NeONArts](http://carnegiehall.org/NeONArts).

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### **About the New York City Department of Probation**

The New York City Department of Probation (DOP) helps build stronger and safer communities by working with and supervising people on probation, fostering positive change in their decision-making and behavior. DOP expands opportunities for them to move out of the criminal and juvenile justice systems through meaningful education, employment, health services, family engagement, and civic participation.

### **About Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute**

Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute (WMI) creates visionary education and social impact programs that embody Carnegie Hall's commitment to music education, playing a central role in fulfilling the Hall's mission of making great music accessible to as many people as possible. With unparalleled access to the world's greatest artists, WMI's programs are designed to inspire audiences of all ages, nurture tomorrow's musical talent, and harness the power of music to make a meaningful difference in people's lives.

### **About The Mayor's Fund To Advance New York City**

The Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City is a 501(c) (3) not-for-profit organization working with over 30 City agencies and offices, 300 institutional funders, and 100 community-based partners.

The Mayor's Fund and its partners advance initiatives that improve the lives of New Yorkers from all walks of life and across all five boroughs. In particular, the Mayor's Fund has made strategic investments to promote mental health services for all New Yorkers, increase workforce development opportunities for young New Yorkers, and meet the needs of New York City's diverse immigrant community.

In building partnerships, the Mayor's Fund seeks to seed promising, evidence-based models; evaluate the efficacy of new programs and policies; bring innovative solutions to scale, and respond to the emerging needs of the city.

First Lady Chirlane McCray chairs the Mayor's Fund and governed by a Board of Directors appointed by the Mayor. Also, the Mayor's Fund has an Advisory Board comprised of prominent civic and business leaders appointed by the Mayor to advise and assist the Board of Directors.

### **NeON Arts**

NeON Arts is a program of the NYC Department of Probation in partnership with Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute. Public support is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts and the City of New York through the Department of Cultural Affairs, the New York City Council, and notably Council Members Vanessa Gibson, Alicka Ampry-Samuel, Robert Holden, and Debi Rose, the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity, and the NYC Young Men's Initiative. Past funding for NeON Arts has been provided by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, The Pinkerton Foundation, and The Staten Island Foundation through grants to the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City.