



Preliminary Budget Hearing for NYC Committee on Libraries

The NYC City Council's Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Relations is holding a hearing on March 18, 2026 to discuss the preliminary budget. **THIS IS A KEY MOMENT DURING NYC's BUDGET CREATION.** NYC Public Library Action Network (NYC PLAN) is calling for 0.5% of the city budget to be committed to libraries – a request which Mayor Mamdani committed to throughout his campaign! Unfortunately, the preliminary budget falls short of that promise. Help us show the City Council that New Yorkers want increased library funding!

The Council meeting is **Wed 3/18** starting at 9:30am. Representatives from NYC's libraries will present first, and the Department of Cultural affairs will present around 12pm. **Public testimony is scheduled to start around 1:30pm.** You can testify in person in Council Chambers in City Hall or via Zoom.

Sign up Instructions:

To sign up, go to council.nyc.gov/testify/ and follow the instructions.

Choose an option from the drop down menu to indicate how you will be testifying. Under "Select a hearing," choose Wed, Mar 18 @ 9:30 AM – Committee of Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Relations from the drop down.

In the "Subject of testimony" field, write a quick description of what your testimony is about: e.g., library budget, 0.5% for libraries. If you are organizing with NYC PLAN, select Other for the "Organization" field and specify "NYC Public Library Action Network."

Testimony Recommendations:

You will likely only have 3 minutes. This goes by very quickly! The Council may cut you off if you go over by more than a few seconds, so practice reading your testimony out loud ahead of time.

If you have a schedule conflict, written testimony can also be submitted up to 72 hours after the end of the hearing, so you don't have to upload a file at the same time as you sign up. You may want to sign up to testify now even before you write your testimony.

For questions about accessibility or to request additional accommodations, email EEEOfficer@council.nyc.gov or call (212) 788-6936 at least 3 business days before the hearing.

Include the name and date of the hearing, as well as your name, phone number, and email address.

Information to Help You Craft Your Testimony

NYC PLAN's ask:

We ask that public library funding be increased from 0.39% to at least 0.5% of the total city budget in this upcoming fiscal year. This would translate to \$143.5 million (\$143,569,000) in public library funding for the FY '27 cycle, or a 23% increase in total library funding in this upcoming fiscal year.

In addition, we ask that the 0.5% of the total city budget be the benchmark for all future library budgets.

And if there are any follow up questions about how much that would be, or how much it currently is, here's some background info that may be useful:

- The financial year (FY) 2027 **Preliminary Budget** estimate total for public libraries is \$491,436,000 (\$491.4 million). The total municipal budget for FY '27 is \$127,000,969,000 (\$127 billion). So the current FY '27 est. funding for libraries is a measly 0.39% of the total budget.
- The demand from NYC PLAN is that the city council and Mayor Mamdani increase that number from 0.39% to at least 0.5% (half of 1%) of the total city budget. For FY '27, that would be \$635,005,000 (\$635 million).
- Another way to think about this is that we're demanding an **increase of \$143,569,000 (\$143.5 million) in public library funding in the FY '27 cycle, or a 23% increase in total library funding in this upcoming fiscal year.**

And if there's a follow up asking why we settled on that number, you could say:

"We think it's a realistic but significant number. We believe this would allow libraries, which are relied on now more than ever, to be more fully staffed, and to accommodate patron needs."

One other piece of financial info that is important for us to understand, is that **the three library systems together are operating under a structural financial deficit, mainly because of growth in overall expenses due to inflation since 2021. The current operational deficit is \$44.6 million.**

The NYC PLAN demand for \$143 million more in library funding for FY '27 means ***there would only be \$98.4 million available for a true increase*** in service or staffing levels from their current state if \$44.6 million is just getting the libraries caught up with inflation for current operations.