



CITY OF NEW YORK
**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD
FOUR**

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JESSICA CHAIT
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

June 18, 2024

Hon. Eric Adams
Mayor
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Subject: Restore Funding to the New York Public Library

Dear Mayor Adams,

On the recommendation of its Arts, Culture, Education and Schools (ACES) committee, Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) urges you to restore all funding to New York City's public libraries. At its full board meeting on June 5, 2024, MCB4 voted, with a vote of 39 voted in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining, 1 Present Not Eligible, to recommend reversing the \$53.8M proposed budget cuts. These severe proposed cuts will have detrimental effects to our communities including local residents and thousands of asylum-seeking families temporarily residing in hotels in our district especially as one of the libraries in MCB4 is closed for renovations.

For more than a century, the New York Public Library (NYPL) system has been an essential resource for communities across New York City, including our district. The need for free services provided by the NYPL is important in helping residents with translation services, English language learning, teen services, story-time for children, technology use and instruction. The proposed cuts will result in reduced days, hours, and staff shortages, at a time when library resources and programming are needed the most.

MCB4 has two libraries within its district: Columbus Library located at 742 9th Avenue in Midtown and Muhlenberg Library located at 209 W. 23rd Street in Chelsea. The Muhlenberg branch has been closed for over two years and its reopening remains unclear. The Columbus branch had 64,593 visits by patrons from July '23 to March '24. The Columbus branch offers a diverse array of programming that currently includes:

- Digital literacy courses, Microsoft Office instruction, and coding at their TechConnect lab;
- After School homework help and tutoring to children ages 6- 12;

- Early Literacy programs for toddlers and their caregivers: family story time, coloring for children and toddlers;
- Teen Chess Club;
- And programming for adults such as weekly movie nights and a weekly writing club.

In addition to its excellent programming, the libraries are a safe haven for many children and teens who otherwise have nowhere to go during the summer months. Across our city we are seeing an increased need for free programming and resources for our youth many of whom depend on the NYPL. We urge you to restore all library funding so that the Columbus branch may remain open and fully operational six days per week and that the reopening of the Muhlenberg branch will not be unnecessarily delayed.

MCB4 is fully aware of the great challenges faced by our city and is doing its part to address these needs. We have welcomed thousands of migrant families into our community and need the city to fully fund our libraries to support our growing population. Ensuring that all our residents have access to free knowledge and welcoming spaces is vital to the strength of New York City.

Sincerely,



Jessica Chait
Chair
Community Board 4



Josephine Ishmon
Co-Chair
ACES Committee



Matt Green
Co-Chair
ACES Committee

CC: Hon. Erik Bottcher, Council Member
 Hon. Gale A. Brewer, Council Member
 Hon. Carlina Rivera, City Council, Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations (Chair)
 Robin Forst, Mayor's Community Affairs Unit