

NYCMER's Statement on the Presidential Election

The New York City Museum Educators Roundtable supports workers at museums and cultural institutions across the tri-state area. Over the last eight months, NYCMER members and our industry colleagues have been severely impacted by layoffs, furloughs, pay cuts, hour reductions, institutions closing, and more. While museums and cultural institutions struggle to survive, both [locally](#) and [nationally](#), this divisive election cycle added to the uncertainty of our future as museum educators and community liaisons. **We move forward by holding each other up.**

At the 2020 NYCMER Conference, Keynote Speaker **Chloë Bass** encouraged us to mobilize our institutions as second responders, saying, "While the second responder is not necessarily required to be the person who cleans up after the first responders, I want to hold onto the sense that what follows is as urgent and essential as what happens." As educators, we are essential at handling the cultural needs of a communal identity, fostering a safe space to relax and heal, and providing crucial, trustworthy information in a time of uncertainty. She later said, "I also believe that it's in this period of stressful pause that we actually have the ability to question what we may have been unnecessarily and quietly accepting for a very long time." **We move forward by pushing back against what we used to accept.**

While we are optimistic about federal support with the election of Joe Biden as President, there is still work to be done. The Democratic National Committee platform "supports public funding for the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and for art and music education in public schools," and Democrats in office do have a broad track record of following through on this, but with a looming deficit and so many issues on the table, we need to make sure our voices are heard. **We move forward by advocating for ourselves.**

CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION ON WHAT NYCMER AND YOU CAN DO!

What is NYCMER doing?

NYCMER provides a forum for museum educators, pushing for change and standardizing best practices in the field. These are several actions we are taking:

- In May, NYCMER wrote a [Testimonial Letter](#) to the New York City Council in support of funding for arts and informal education programs. We will continue to seek out local and national ways to advocate for our field.
- NYCMER's Advocacy Committee is working to address the subject of mutual aid. If you have any experience with a mutual aid organization we ask you to complete [this](#) short survey.
- The Advocacy Committee is also developing a dynamic [mutual aid resource list](#), and NYCMER will continue to expand and disseminate relevant [resources](#) and information to share with the cultural field at large.
- We are partnering with the NYC AiE Roundtable to collaborate on timely programming and distribution of resources. We believe there is strength in numbers and we will look to partner with other organizations of a similar mission.



- In an effort to strengthen our community and encourage the exchange of information and perspectives, we are continuing our monthly programs, book club, and peer groups online. We are making a concerted effort to keep a large portion of our programming free to all during this challenging and isolating time.

What can I do?

With Election Day past, it is up to all of us to hold our elected officials accountable:

- On the federal level, contact your congressperson and senators and share why federal support for museum workers, museums and our audiences is essential. Share your stories as constituents. For resources on how to do this, check out:
 - [American Alliance of Museums \(AAM\)](#)
 - [Association of Science and Technology Centers \(ASTC\)](#)
 - [North American Association for Environmental Education \(NAAEE\)](#)
 - [National Art Education Association \(NAEA\)](#)
- On the state level, reach out to your state legislators to advocate for recovery efforts to include cultural workers and institutions and to limit cuts to education. Cultural institutions and tourism are a driving force of many state economies, so we have a real voice. In New York:
 - [Submit a written statement](#) to Senator José M. Serrano, Chair of the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks & Recreation, **by November 18**.
 - Check out [resources](#) from the Museum Association of New York.
- On the NYC level, connect with your city councilmember, the mayor and the school chancellor to share your stories about the need to support informal education and educators. Follow the NYC Arts in Education Roundtable's **#ArtsAreEssential** campaign to advocate for arts and informal education:
 - [NYC AiE Roundtable resources](#)
- Share the list of mutual aid campaigns listed above, and contribute if you are able to.
- And as we advocate for support for our cultural institutions, we must continue to hold them accountable to their commitments to [social justice, diversity, equity and inclusion](#).

Through all of this, we thank those who worked to keep our democracy running during this turbulent time, particularly those in our own NYCMER community who became poll workers and watchers. In the face of job losses and reductions, museum educators channeled their efforts to civic service, and we appreciate this.

As we move forward, we are committed to advocating for our field and our broader communities. We invite your input, and you are welcome to email us at president@nycmer.org.

We are with you,

The New York City Museum Educators Roundtable Board of Trustees