

**BETANYC  
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COMMON CAUSE NEW YORK  
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
NEW YORK PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP  
REINVENT ALBANY  
WOMEN'S CITY CLUB OF NEW YORK**

June 2, 2015

The Honorable Bill de Blasio  
Mayor, City of New York  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Mr. Dean Fuleihan  
Director, Office of Management and Budget  
City of New York  
255 Greenwich Street  
New York, NY 10012

**VIA EMAIL AND MAIL**

**Re: Funding for Commission on Public Information and Communication (COPIC)**

Dear Mayor de Blasio and Director Fuleihan,

We write as government watchdog groups and members of the NYC Transparency Working Group to request that the final city budget include funding sufficient for the Commission on Public Information and Communication (COPIC) to hire staff and conduct its charter mandated duties.

COPIC was created by the 1989 City Charter revision. Section 1061(c) of the City Charter regarding COPIC, states: "The commission shall appoint an executive director, a general counsel and such other officers, employees, and consultants as are necessary to fulfill its duties, within appropriations available therefor."

We believe that this indicates the COPIC should receive its own budget, beyond that provided to the Public Advocate for its current staff. We understand that the Public Advocate has requested \$100,000 for such staffing, though note that the charter-mandated listing of staff indicates that a higher number of \$250,000 would be more appropriate.

The Commission on Public Information and Communication was most recently reconvened by Public Advocate Letitia James in December 2014, with appointees from your administration, and other representation from the Public Advocate, City Council and Borough Presidents. It held its second meeting on May 19, 2015, voting on a plan to carry out its mandate, specifically focusing on compliance with Local Law 103 of 2013 regarding the webcasting of city government entities.

Given the promise of COPIC to increase public accessibility of city government meetings, data and information, we request the modest budget of \$250,000 for staffing of COPIC to ensure it is able to fulfill

the duties outlined in the City Charter. We believe this will also serve to assist other city government entities in fulfilling their mandates by expanding their reach and accessibility to the public.

Sincerely,

Noel Hidalgo, Executive Director  
BetaNYC

Rachael Fauss, Director of Public Policy  
Citizens Union

Andrew Rasiej, Founder  
CivicHall.org

Lauren George, Associate Director  
Common Cause New York

Cathy Gray, Vice President  
League of Women Voters of the City of New York

Gene Russianoff, Staff Attorney  
NYPIRG

John Kaehny, Executive Director  
Reinvent Albany

Jacqueline Ebanks, Executive Director  
Women's City Club of New York

Cc. Public Advocate Letitia James  
Councilmember Julissa Ferreras, Chair, Committee on Finance  
Councilmember Ben Kallos, Chair, Committee on Governmental Operations  
Umair Khan, Interim Executive Director, COPIC  
Jon Paul Lupo, Director of City Legislative Affairs, Office of the Mayor  
Jeff Merritt, Director of Innovation, Mayor's Office of Technology and Innovation