

Enriching Lives



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LOS ANGELES COUNTY ARTS COMMISSION GRANTS BUDGET DOUBLED

The Arts Commission is now the largest public funder of the arts in L.A. County

LOS ANGELES, CA., June 26, 2006 — Today the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved \$4,518,000 for the Arts Commission's Organizational Grant Program (OGP) in fiscal year 2006-07. The amount is double the 2005-06 appropriation of \$2,259,000 and far exceeds the previous record grants budget of \$2,352,000 in 2001-02. The action, which came at the Supervisors' budget hearings for the coming fiscal year, runs counter to the current trend of funding for the arts from governmental agencies. The appropriation makes the Arts Commission the largest public funder of the arts in L.A. County with an annual grants budget for the region greater than that of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs or the National Endowment for the Arts.

The larger appropriation enables the Arts Commission to increase the dollar amount of its grant awards and institute multiple year funding. County arts grants are among the few available locally which support core operations — such as staff salaries, facility rental, strategic planning and technology upgrades. With a substantial increase in grant size, the more than 250 arts organizations the County funds annually will be able to offer:

- More free festivals and events for underserved families—currently more than half of grantee organizations' admittances are free of charge

- More artist-instructors in public school classrooms — approximately 35% of grant funds are now directed toward projects/organizations primarily benefiting children
- More employment and better compensation for artists and arts administrators

"The arts contribute to the quality of life and play an important role in our communities," said Los Angeles County Mayor Michael D. Antonovich. "The arts improve the educational process at all levels and allow young people to develop their minds and their imaginations."

Third District Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky noted "These arts grants are an investment in intellectual creativity. They fund employment opportunities and afford access to cultural experiences for all County residents regardless of their economic circumstances. The arts foster understanding, insight and empathy - a field of endeavor that doesn't just produce financial wealth, but increases our value as individual human beings and as a community."

Second District Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke said "I am pleased that the Board of Supervisors has approved an appropriation in the amount of \$4,518,000 for the Arts Commission's Organizational Grant Program (OGP). The arts are such a vital part of providing Los Angeles County with a rich cultural environment. The Arts Commission is becoming the largest public funder of the arts in L.A. County, and I hope that arts organizations in the Second District will take full advantage of the opportunities the commission offers."

"Our entire community will benefit from this increase, but I am particularly pleased with the impact it will have on young people," said Fourth District Supervisor Don Knabe. "From my youth, the arts have been a personal passion of mine. Children with opportunities in the arts have a lifelong benefit."

First District Supervisor Gloria Molina observed, "During tough budget years, arts programs are oftentimes the first to endure cuts. Given that we are in the midst of much rosier fiscal circumstances it is entirely appropriate that we augment our arts program budget. I am immensely pleased that the Board of Supervisors has taken this step."

Marjorie S. Lyte, President of the Arts Commission, hailed the increase as "a historic moment in the Commission's history. The funding of non-profit arts organizations serving County residents

is our core program. The number of organizations and services continues to grow. The increased appropriation enables us to meet the challenge of supporting them.”

The first round of grant awards resulting from the increased budget will be announced in mid-July. Concurrent with the increased grants appropriation, the Arts Commission is phasing in a two-year grant cycle for all OGP grantees. (Small budget organizations have been on a two-year funding cycle for a few years.) With grants that cover two years rather than one, arts groups can plan ahead with greater certainty and focus time and resources on services.

The doubling of the grants budget is the latest expression of Los Angeles County’s long-standing role as a leader in the arts field. The County Board of Supervisors created the Arts Commission in 1947; it is the second oldest municipal arts agency in the state. Several of the region’s leading cultural institutions — including The Music Center, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Hollywood Bowl, the John Anson Ford Amphitheatre and the Natural History Museum — are owned and supported by Los Angeles County. In 2001 the Board of Supervisors was recognized nationally with the County Arts Leadership Award from Americans for the Arts. In 2002, Board of Supervisors adopted *Arts for All*, launching an initiative to return quality, sequential arts education to all 80 public school districts in the County, and in 2004 the Supervisors adopted the County’s first Civic Art Policy.

The Los Angeles County Arts Commission, Laura Zucker, Executive Director, provides leadership in cultural services of all disciplines for the largest county in the United States, encompassing 88 municipalities. In addition to its grants program, the Arts Commission provides leadership and staffing to support the regional blueprint for arts education, *Arts for All*; oversees the County’s Civic Art Program for capital projects, funds the largest arts internship program in the country in conjunction with the Getty Foundation, programs the John Anson Ford Theatres and supports the Los Angeles County Cultural Calendar on ExperienceLA.com. The Arts Commission also produces free community programs, including the L.A. Holiday Celebration broadcast nationally, and a year-round music program that funds more than 60 free concerts each year in public sites. The 2006-07 President of the Arts Commission is Marjorie Lyte.