

Enriching Lives



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Los Angeles County museums and gardens and Ford Amphitheatre Family Series offer free admission to low income families

Through a joint effort of two Los Angeles County agencies - the Arts Commission and the Department of Public Social Services - low-income families receiving CalWORKs/Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) and/or Food Stamp benefits can visit 18 regional museums and gardens for free. In addition, these families enjoy free admission to the Big!World!Fun! family series at the Ford Amphitheatre this summer.

“The CalWORKs free access project is a pioneering effort to bring cultural services to a chronically underserved population,” said **Laura Zucker**, Executive Director of the Arts Commission. “The project is also a prime opportunity for cultural institutions to introduce themselves to an audience they are not reaching.”

The week of May 30 the Department of Public Social Services is sending announcements of the free cultural offerings in nine languages to the 167,000 families who are CalWORKs/RCA and Food Stamp participants. Free admission is conditional upon presentation of the family's Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card.

“Our department's goal is to provide families with an experience that would otherwise be beyond their reach,” said **Bryce Yokomizo**, Director of the Department of Public Social Services.”

MORE

Participating museums and gardens are:

Arboretum of Los Angeles County
Autry National Center (including Southwest Museum and Museum of the American West)
California African American Museum
Descanso Gardens
Hollywood Entertainment Museum
Japanese American National Museum
Long Beach Museum of Art
Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA)
Museum of Latin American Art (MOLAA)
Natural History Museum
Pacific Asia Museum
Santa Monica Museum of Art
Skirball Cultural Center
South Coast Botanic Garden
UCLA Fowler Museum
USC Fisher Gallery
Virginia Robinson Gardens

The Arts Commission and DPSS launched a pilot program in summer 2004. CalWORKs/RCA and Food Stamp participants were offered free access to nine Big!World!Fun! family events at the Ford Amphitheatre and constituted 29 percent of attendees at those performances. In August 2004, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors charged the Arts Commission and DPSS to expand the program to County museums, gardens, and other venues.

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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. The Arts Commission provides leadership and staffing to support the regional blueprint for arts education, *Arts for All*; administers a grants program that funds more than 250 nonprofit arts organizations annually; 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 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 2005-2006 President of the Arts Commission is Hope Warschaw.

The **Department of Public Social Services** administers programs that provide services to individuals and families in need. These programs are designed to both alleviate hardship and promote family health, personal responsibility, and economic independence.