

LA County Arts Internship Program



Los Angeles
County
Arts &
Culture

2020 Program Highlights



With the support of the LA County Department of Arts and Culture, 163 college students had paid internships at 108 performing, presenting, film, media, literary, municipal arts, social service and social justice organizations in 2020.

"I accomplished things in this internship that were new to me that I didn't think I could do at the beginning but look where we are now! This internship also provided stability and structure during an otherwise confusing and uncertain time period, so it really does mean a lot!"

— curriculum intern at an arts education organization

"This is an incredible program and contributes greatly to our work! In addition to all his other great work – our intern really modeled for us ways to use the zoom chat in youth arts workshops to build positive, engaged, affirming communities of youth and artists."

— supervisor at a community art organization

What participants had to say:

"I really enjoyed the flexibility of this year's schedule. It allowed for a more diverse range of projects my intern would not have gotten the opportunity to participate in otherwise."

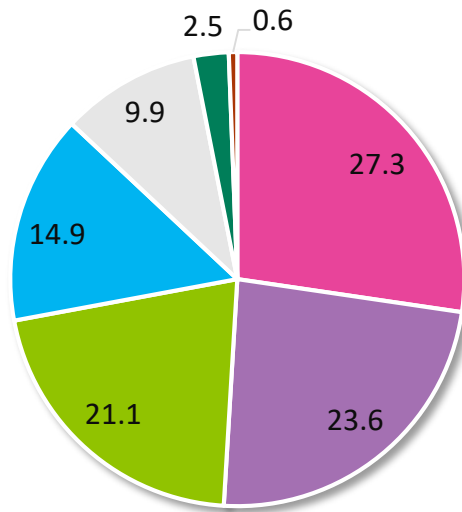
— supervisor at a music organization

"The best part of my internship was my connection with the supervisor. I was able to bring up my concerns and not feel shame about it."

— education intern at a theater organization

BY THE NUMBERS

2020 Interns by Race/Ethnicity



■ Hispanic or Latino

■ Asian or Pacific Islander

■ Black or African American

■ Other

■ White

■ Mixed Ethnicity

■ Decline to State

By Gender Identity:

70.4% Identify as Female

27% Identify as Male

2.5% Identify as Other

Program Impact + Success:

- **96%** of interns reported achieving their learning objectives in their internship.
- On a scale from 1 to 5, **97%** of interns rated the quality of their relationship with their supervisor a 4 or higher.
- **97%** of interns reported that the remote internship format & part time hours worked well for them.
- **100%** of interns said they would recommend this program to a friend.

Colleges with highest representation:

- UCLA
- USC
- Cal State Long Beach
- Loyola Marymount
- Cal State Northridge
- Occidental College
- Pasadena City College
- Santa Monica College

Of the total pool:

- 22% recent graduates
- 33% rising seniors
- 34% rising juniors

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS



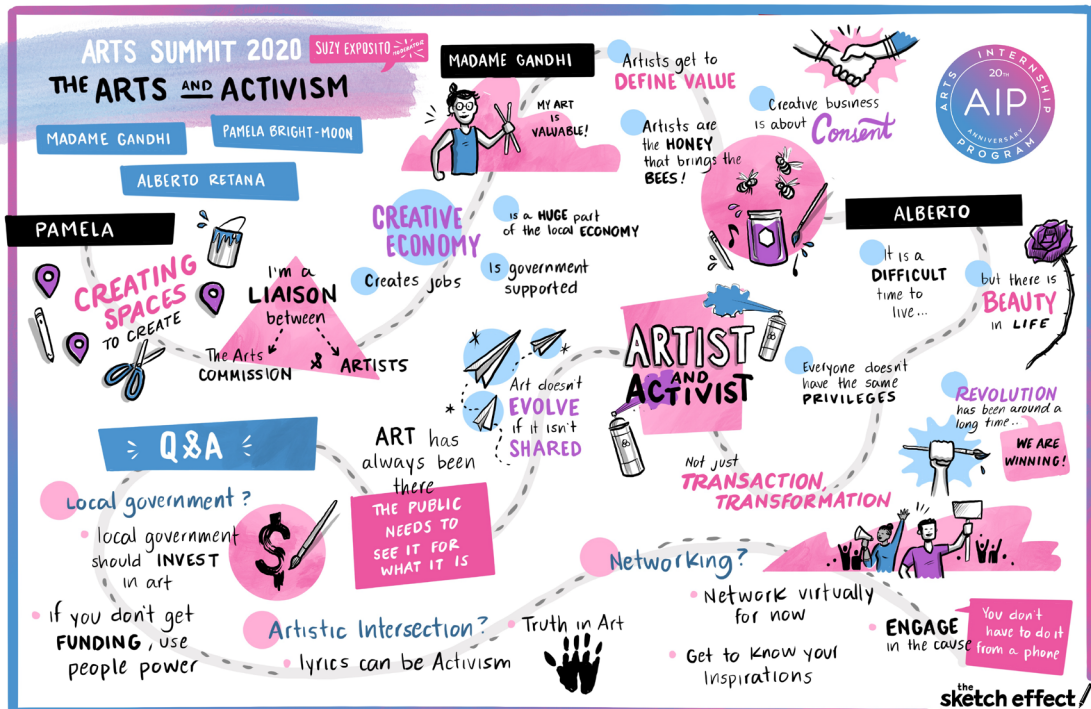
Flyer for 2020 Arts Summit



The Arts and Activism Panelists



Arts and Government Event



2020 Arts Internship Final Report

May 2021



Background and Program Overview

The Los Angeles County Arts Internship Program (AIP) supports and strengthens the cultural sector of LA County by expanding access to high quality paid opportunities for college students of all backgrounds to gain experience, understanding, and transferable skills relevant to careers in the arts, the creative economy, and engagement in public life. Established in 2000 as a companion to the Getty Foundation's Marrow Undergraduate Internship Program, which funds 10 week, full-time internships in visual arts organizations and museums for college students, AIP allows students to develop a deeper understanding of the work involved in nonprofit arts administration across disciplines learn about the role of the arts in communities, and develop skills that can be put to use in their future careers.

The AIP program provides grants to nonprofit performing, presenting, film, media, literary, and municipal arts organizations to hire students to engage in specific projects over the course of a 400 hours internship. In 2020, social service and social justice organizations who are grantees of our Community Impact Arts Grant (CIAG) program were also eligible to apply, further expanding the available opportunities for interns. The program also facilitates educational and networking opportunities for the interns to get a broader view of the arts ecosystem outside of the context of the day-to-day work within their organizations, and provides a supervisor orientation for host organizations to integrate a lens of diversity, equity, inclusion, and support for diverse students as a hallmark of the program.

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors' investment in AIP began with a commitment to fund approximately 120 positions, on par with the Getty's program. The program quickly became a mainstay with a ripple effect across the region, with many interns remaining in the field and going on to supervise other interns and some also becoming leaders of nonprofit art organizations. While the program's structure had remained relatively unchanged over the years, its focus has shifted to reflect the changing needs of both organizations and students in the County. Most notably, Los Angeles County's [Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative](#) (CEII) highlighted the need to more intentionally support students of all backgrounds to be able to take advantage of internship opportunities. As a result of CEII, AIP staff have strengthened relationships with local community colleges and encouraged grantee organizations to consider

community college students in their hiring. As a result, the number of participating community college students has skyrocketed from 7 in 2017 to 48 in 2019 and 24 in 2020.

In 2020, the Department celebrated the 20th Anniversary of the Arts Internship Program, while simultaneously adjusting the program to ensure viability and flexibility in the face of challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Department, the arts sector, and students in the County.

The success of the program is reflected in the Board of Supervisors’ championing of its growth and steadfast support. Despite reductions in the program’s scale during the Great Recession, AIP has steadily expanded in the last few years. 228 positions were initially awarded in 2020 – the highest number in the program’s history and an important milestone for the 20th anniversary of the program.

Program Outreach

Building on relationships forged in 2019, Arts and Culture staff again hosted “Info Sessions” at several community colleges with the goal of increasing awareness of AIP among their students. These info sessions were comprised of a short overview of the program and Q&A with a local host organization and where possible, an intern alumnus. These presentations allowed Arts and Culture staff to demonstrate the countywide scope of the program alongside alumni, while introducing community college students to a local arts nonprofit in their area. In 2019, four info sessions were hosted on community college campuses. In 2020, we were invited to 6 community college campuses, adding sessions at Long Beach City College and Antelope Valley College for the first time.

School	BOS	# of students attended
Santa Monica College	3	~ 100
LA Mission College	3	~ 30
Long Beach City College	4	~ 80
East Los Angeles College	1	~ 30
West Los Angeles College	2	~ 30
Antelope Valley College	5	~ 100

* A session with Pasadena City College was cancelled at the end of March due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Arts and Culture staff were also invited to present about the program via an invitation from the LA County Department of Mental Health. Staff presented the program to about 50 DMH service providers who work directly with college-aged youth in March of 2020.

Program Structure: Recalibration & COVID-19

In March of 2020, the Department of Arts and Culture was preparing to launch all 228 positions online to begin the official recruitment period for interns. LA County’s Safer at Home Health Officer Order went into effect on March 16, 2020 to control the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) in the region, and as a result of the order and the rapidly shifting Public Health mandates regarding business and office closures, Arts and Culture paused the 2020 Arts

Internship program to give staff the opportunity to recalibrate and issue guidance to grantees on how to move forward once the Safer at Home order was lifted or amended.

Recognizing the difficulties in the months ahead, staff identified program changes to give organizations and interns the most flexibility possible. Updated program guidance was issued on March 26, 2020 (and reviewed via online webinar for all grantees on April 9, 2020) with changes focused in four key areas:

1. *Expanded Timeline and Flexible Hours*: Given the disruption the COVID-19 pandemic caused for grantees and students, the end date of internships was extended from August 31, 2020 to March 1, 2021. To provide students with flexibility they would need to balance other work and class schedules during the school year, interns were permitted to work a minimum of 15 hours per week over a longer period of time (rather than requiring full-time for 10 weeks).
2. *Remote/Virtual Work*: To ensure intern safety and grantee compliance with local and state health orders, updated guidance permitted interns to work remotely for the first time in the 20-year history of the program.
3. *Virtual Educational/Peer Events*: Restrictions on large in-person gatherings necessitated moving all educational components of the program, the annual Art Summit event and Peer Group events, to a virtual format.
4. *Project Changes without Penalty*: Due to the pandemic, many of the originally intended intern projects had been cancelled or substantially altered. Updated guidance allowed organizations to rewrite their internship job descriptions, if necessary, and allowed for an organization to forfeit their award and to apply in subsequent years without penalty.

On June 1, 2020, once many grantee organizations pivoted operations in response to LA County's Health Officer Order, Arts and Culture relaunched the program with the updated guidance. Internship positions launched online on a rolling basis beginning July 1, 2020 through the end of the year. Staff provided technical assistance in weekly office hours to answer grantee questions, discuss forfeiture and offer support. In total, 163 of the originally planned 228 positions launched during the 2020 program year.

Program Highlights

Reflect In / Reflect Out

For the 2020 program cycle, staff felt it was important to dedicate time and resources to growing the skill set of supervisors in the program. As the internship pool continues to diversify with students of all backgrounds, new skills are necessary to deepen the role of supervisors as mentors. While the program has always emphasized mentorship, program resources were rarely directed towards professional development for supervisors to aid them in this effort. This approach also allowed the program to utilize the supervisor orientation as a touch point for greater awareness and application of diversity, equity, and inclusion for host organizations in support of students.

In 2020, the Arts Internship Program launched *Reflect In / Reflect Out*, a professional development series specifically for supervisors in the 2020 Arts Internship Program. For the

program, Department of Arts and Culture staff contracted with consultants to offer workshops in three content areas:

- **Recruitment and Onboarding Through a Lens of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion** presented by Evonne Gallardo
- **A Trauma Informed Approach** presented by Valinda Meneses and Angela Rubalcava
- **The New Management Paradigm** presented by Belinda Madrid Teitel*

**12 participants in this session received small group coaching for 6 months after the workshop.*

While the workshops had initially been conceived of as in person sessions taking place before the launch of internships, due to the COVID-19 pandemic staff worked with the consultants to retool the workshops into a virtual format over a longer time frame. In the six sessions that were offered, 67 supervisors from 51 organizations attended one or more sessions.

Feedback from the sessions was overwhelmingly positive, with 100% of attendees reporting that they would recommend these events to their colleagues. 81% of attendees reported they shared something with a friend or colleague, and 65% of attendees reported sharing something they learned with a supervisor or board member.

Community Impact Arts Grant (CIAG) Grantees

In the fall of 2019, the Arts Commission approved guideline changes to allow grantees of the Community Impact Arts Grant to apply for the Arts Internship Program for the first time. The addition of social service and social justice nonprofits with arts programming to the internship pool provided interns with an opportunity to see how arts and culture programming can be used to bolster vital community services. The intersectional nature of the work of these organizations also invites students with different skillsets and passions to further investigate the ways in which the arts can be utilized to advance these efforts; a skill set that is extremely valuable to emerging professionals.

Educational Components – Arts Summit

Educational components resumed with adjustments for remote operations. For the annual Art Summit, a key educational component of the program that offers students opportunities to network and attend panels with arts leaders and performances, staff successfully shifted the event to a virtual format on October 7. The Department included as many of the original components of Art Summit as possible: showcasing local artists, highlighting the work of our Department and grantees, and providing opportunities for interns to engage with one another. In the main panel discussion, interns were able to hear from the following speakers in a conversation moderated by Suzy Exposito, a music writer with the Los Angeles Times:

- Alberto Retana – Executive Director, Community Coalition
- Madame Gandhi, Artist
- Pamela Bright-Moon, Arts Commissioner with the Second District

Suzy also participated in a discussion with the keynote speaker: rapper, musician and community leader, D Smoke. Finally, we enlisted the services of Julia Bogany of the Gabrieleño Tongva to provide a land acknowledgment in honor of those whose ancestral lands we occupy. Poet and Author Yosimar Reyes delivered a spoken word piece during the program, and singer and songwriter San Cha performed live to close out the event.

In advance of the event, registered interns were sent an AIP branded “welcome kit” to their residences which included items from Los Angeles based talent and businesses.

Educational Components – Peer Groups

Peer group sessions, which provide students with opportunities for small group reflection and mentorship, were shifted to virtual format. All sixteen peer group leaders (arts and culture professionals from across the region) held their small group sessions from August 2020 through February 2021, providing interns an average of two to three monthly virtual engagement opportunities.

Below is a list of the 2020 Peer Group Leaders as well as the events they hosted:

- Music, Visual Art and Social Change presented by **Alma Villegas**, Director of Development and Communications at artworxLA
- Arts and Civic Engagement presented by **Sayon Syprasoeuth**, Program Manager at United Cambodian Community
- Navigating Employment Opportunities in the Creative Industries presented by **Larry Laboe**, Executive Director of New Filmmakers Los Angeles
- What is Teaching Artistry? Presented by **Diana Rivera***, Professional Development Coach with Creative Empowerment Coaching
- Starting off in Theatre & Film in Los Angeles presented by **Brian Elerding**, Executive Director of Lineage Performing Arts Center
- Job Application Advice and Tips presented by **Mandy Matthews***, Manager of Community Engagement at American Youth Symphony
- Arts Education Bootcamp presented by **Manuel Prieto***, Executive Director of LAMusArt
- The Evolution of Arts & Social Justice in Chicano Folk Dance presented by **Christie Rios**, Director of Programs at Floricanto Dance Theatre
- Building Your Career as an Artist presented by **Charlie Jensen**, Program Director of UCLA Extension Writer’s Program
- Pursuing Your Career as an Artist presented by **Felicia Vann**, Executive Director of Precision Dance Company
- Conquering Adversity & Challenges in Theatre presented by **Gia Inferred-Jordahl**, Producing Artistic Director at The Torrance Theatre Company
- Jump On In: Navigating the Job Market for Women & BIPOC Folk presented by **Kristin Lorey**, Community and Culture Director with Young Storytellers
- Living in Art and Community presented by **Allison Wyper**, Founder of Rhizomatic Arts
- A Virtual Networking Event with Mark Slavkin of The Wallis presented by **Debra Pasquerette**, Manager of Community Engagement at The Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts
- How Can I Affect Change Within the Education System? Presented by **Jennifer Fukutomi Jones**, Arts and Culture Administrator with the City of Glendale
- Creative Paths Toward Social Change presented by artist **Sandra de la Loza**
- Emotional Intelligence Essentials and Interpersonal Effectiveness presented by **Nina Crowe**, Managing Director of Glendale Arts

*Indicates a program alumnus

The Department of Arts and Culture also hosted its own Peer Group event in January 2021 entitled “The Role of Government in Supporting the Arts” where interns participated in a panel discussion with Arts Commissioners Madeline DiNonno and Helen Hernandez as well as municipal arts leaders Jennifer Fukutomi Jones from the City of Glendale and Griselda Suarez from the Long Beach Arts Council. The panel was moderated by the Director of the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture, Kristin Sakoda. The Department recorded as many of these Peer Group events as possible and made them available to all interns via [YouTube](#) so that they could be viewed when convenient.

77% of interns considered their Peer Group meetings beneficial, and 89% found there to be a sufficient amount of Peer Group offerings.

Looking Ahead

Field Challenges

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic resulted in unique challenges this year. While AIP grant funds cover the expense of an intern salary, it also requires that a hosting organization spend staff resources to mentor and support a college intern, which posed challenges to arts organizations as they struggled with shuttering their venues, devastating losses to revenue and in many cases pivoted entire operations to virtual settings, which required investments in technical capacity. For several organizations, hosting an intern, even with the increased flexibility provided, was not feasible in 2020. In their forfeiture letters, many organizations noted that they were not able to provide a high-quality experience to an intern given staff capacity or the virtual setting. Other organizations noted that the programming and work they had planned for the intern had been cancelled or needed to be restructured in a way that would not make it feasible to complete the project while supervising an intern. All organizations who forfeited their grant award expressed gratitude for being able to apply in the future. While this highlights challenges in the field, allowing organizations to forfeit their award in this unprecedented year was an important aspect of the program changes made and signs point to organizations becoming ready to rejoin AIP in the next program cycles.

Resiliency for the 2021 Cycle

The 2020 program changes were well received by grantees and throughout the process they shared their gratitude for the clear instructions and flexibility. Pausing the program for nearly 2 months allowed organizations to acclimate to telecommuting and remote operations, exercise virtual supervising skills, and recalibrate programming. In their final surveys, an overwhelming number of supervisors noted that the program changes made hosting an intern possible in a year fraught with challenges.

Because of the wide appreciation for the changes made to the program coupled with the uncertainty of the trajectory of the COVID-19 pandemic, staff made the decision to keep in place much of the flexibility for the 2021 program cycle. Additionally, educational components like Arts Summit and Peer Groups will continue to take place in a virtual format. Staff will continue to monitor the program through consistent contact with supervisors and interns and will recommend additional changes to future program cycles as needed.

A webpage celebrating the 20th anniversary of the program was created with links to additional materials from this year's program, including a commemorative video highlighting the contributions of interns over the past twenty years. It can be accessed [here](#).