

LA County 2024 Arts Internship Program

August 2025



Final Report

LA County
**ARTS &
CULTURE**

“If it hadn’t been for this internship I think I honestly would have been lost...Luckily I got personal guidance and wisdom from my organization’s founder. Her advice and the opportunities she gave me made me more confident in my choice to pursue a career as an artist.”

—An intern at an arts education organization

Background and Program Overview

“I gained a lot of knowledge in what working for a nonprofit organization is like and the huge role that each person plays in an organization like this.”

—An intern at a dance organization

The Los Angeles County Department of Arts & Culture (Arts & Culture) 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 civic 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 a variety of complimentary artistic disciplines and creative fields. Interns learn about the role of the arts in communities, expand their networks, and develop skills that can be applied in their future careers.

AIP 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-hour internship that takes place from June to March. In

2024 ARTS INTERNSHIP FINAL STATISTICS

98% of students in the program would recommend it to a friend

On a scale of 1 - 5, with 1 being “poor” and 5 being “excellent”:

81% of interns rated their relationship with their supervisor as a 5

An additional 12% ratted their relationship with their supervisor as a 4

92% of interns felt adequately supported during the internship

On a scale of 1 - 5, with 1 being “poor” and 5 being “excellent”:

92% of interns rated their overall experience a 4 or higher

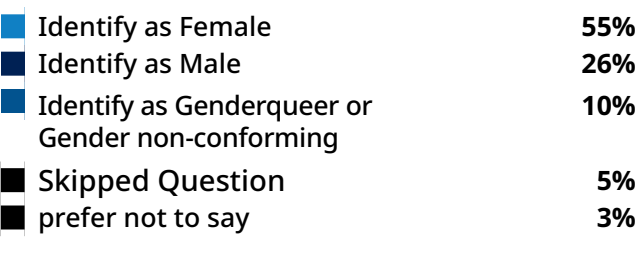
94% of interns felt that the program structure worked well for them

INTERN DEMOGRAPHICS

BY RACE/ETHNICITY:



BY GENDER IDENTITY:



***Other response:** This count includes respondents who stated they are not more than one race/ethnicity and selected more than one race/ethnicity category or “I prefer not to say” in the question “Which of the following race or ethnicity categories do you best identify with?”

2020, social service and social justice organizations with dedicated arts programming that are grantees of the Community Impact Arts Grant (CIAG) program also became eligible to apply, further expanding the available opportunities for interns. AIP facilitates educational, peer learning, 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. These are hallmarks of the AIP program that demonstrate both longevity and responsiveness to the evolving needs and aspirations of the arts field.

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. In its most recent 2024 year program, AIP invested over \$1.6 million dollars to support 228 paid student intern positions. Today, many intern alumni remain in the field and have gone on to supervise other interns, lead successful careers in arts and culture, and become leaders of nonprofit arts organizations. While the program’s structure remained relatively unchanged over

INTERN SPOTLIGHT:
Aviva Miller



| | | | |
|---|--|------------------------------------|---|
| INTERNSHIP TITLE: Production Intern | INTERNSHIP HOST ORGANIZATION: A Noise Within | HIRED BY: A Noise Within | HIRED AS: House Manager, Student Matinees |
|---|--|------------------------------------|---|

“The LA County Arts Internship Program helped me gain confidence and a sense of direction for my career in the arts. I was able to be part of conversations I never would have been able to at this point in my career, and I felt so integrated into the organization I interned for.”

the years, Los Angeles County’s Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative (CEII) highlighted the need to more intentionally support students of diverse backgrounds to be able to take advantage of internship opportunities. The CEII community college expansion not only increased the total number of student positions in the program overall, it also spurred more deliberate outreach, relationship building between AIP and community colleges, and positions for community college students. In addition, a deeper equity lens has been championed across all of Arts & Culture’s programs by the Arts Commission and Department leadership, staff, and key partners.

In 2020, AIP responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by shifting various program components to better reflect the changing needs of both organizations and students in the County. These changes included shifting the program timeline from a ten-week summer program to a nine-month program, providing more needed flexibility in schedules by reducing the minimum number of hours an intern can work from 40 to 15 hours per week, as well as allowing remote work flexibility and providing virtual educational components. Due to overwhelmingly positive feedback year after year, these changes have been sustained to

better accommodate a wider diversity of college students with varying needs, resulting in greater accessibility and inclusion.

“I am extremely grateful to have been able to learn more about various careers found in theatre. I graduated from college in May, and this internship helped stabilize what could easily feel like a tumultuous time.”

—an intern at a theatre organization

The success and relevance of the program is reflected in continued demand for the program, high positive feedback from participants, as well as the Board of Supervisors’ championing of its growth over time. Despite reductions during the Great Recession, AIP expanded in the last few years and initial pandemic budget cuts were restored by the Board. In 2024 the County invested over \$1.6 million dollars to support 228 paid internships in the program. In 2024, 228 positions were initially awarded to 164 organizations and of those, 227 positions at 163 organizations were successfully launched. An estimated 5,640 applications were received for these positions.

INTERN SPOTLIGHT:
Kimberly Rice



**INTERNSHIP
TITLE:**
River Sessions
Intern

**INTERNSHIP HOST
ORGANIZATION:**
LA River Public
Art Project

HIRED BY:
LA River Public
Art Project

HIRED AS:
Outreach and
Volunteer
Manager

“Public art is public expression, which is needed now more than ever. Overcoming censorship and oppression requires open minds, full hearts, and ready hands. Art is a community effort.”

Program Outreach

Each year, AIP staff conduct Info Sessions at various colleges and universities, with the goal of increasing awareness among prospective student applicants, with specific emphasis on the community colleges. These Info Sessions were comprised of an overview of the program as well as Q&A with AIP staff. These presentations allowed Arts & Culture to demonstrate the Countywide scope of the program, encourage students from community colleges to apply, as well as provide insight and advice for the application process.

With increased program visibility thanks, in part, to our presence on college campuses, AIP staff are now often invited to present or table at additional community events where appropriate. For the 2024 cycle, staff participated in additional events such as the Center Theatre Group: Getting Started Symposium hosted at East Los Angeles College, the Cal

Arts Job Fair, and the Otis College Internship and Recruitment Day, among others. These events allowed AIP staff to reach nearly 300 additional students.

Since the implementation of the community college expansion to the program, the numbers of participating community college students has skyrocketed. In 2017, seven students from community colleges participated in the program, comprising just over 5% of the total pool of interns. In 2024, 45 community college students participated in the program, an increase to over 19% of the total pool of interns. This high growth, combined with increasing interest from schools and community partners in learning more about the program, is a true embodiment of the goals set forth by the Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative, the Board of Supervisors, and Department of Arts & Culture.

| SCHOOL INFO SESSION | APPROXIMATE # OF STUDENTS ATTENDED |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Loyola Marymount University | ~32 |
| East Los Angeles College | ~70 |
| West Los Angeles College* | ~5 |
| Compton College x2 | ~6 |
| Santa Monica College | ~15 |
| Long Beach City College | ~50 |
| Cal State Long Beach | ~12 |
| Cal State Northridge* | ~12 |
| College of the Canyons* | ~11 |
| Pierce College | ~20 |
| Pasadena City College | ~70 |
| Antelope Valley College | ~4 |
| TOTAL | ~307 |

**info session conducted virtually*

Impact of the Fires

In early January 2025, Los Angeles experienced widespread devastation due to a series of severe wildfires, including the Eaton and Palisades fires, resulting in displacement of thousands of Angelenos and heartbreaking loss of life. Understanding that grantee organizations, supervisors and interns may have been affected, the AIP team connected with all organizations who had interns working at the time to better understand the impact. Some grantee organizations reported supervisors who had lost homes, interns who could not commute to work due to hazardous road conditions and toxic air quality, closed offices

and more. The timing of the fires overlapped with the final two months of the internship program, a critical time when many interns and organizations are working to complete the 400 hours before the program end of March 1.

To support grantees and interns, the Department offered a 30 day extension to the AIP contract, allowing interns to work through March 31 if affected by the fires. In the end, 12 organizations hosting 13 interns requested the extension so that their interns could have more time to complete their hours.

Program Highlights

Supervisor Orientation

We once again held a two-part virtual Supervisor Orientation, in partnership with The Getty Foundation. Each program held its own orientation on “Day One” to better maximize covering all aspects of the program requirements and brought both Getty and County AIP program supervisors together for “Day Two”.

Day One of Supervisor Orientation for AIP supervisors focused on the mechanics of the program; reviewing supervisor responsibilities, intern approval, required surveys and other technical pieces. With increased staff capacity, AIP staff debuted to grantees the first ever Supervisor Handbook; a tool designed to better support supervisors in grant compliance and

by extension, ensure their interns complete the program as intended. The handbook provides guidance for supervisors in areas like program timeline, intern recruitment, grant reporting, and tips for a successful internship, as well as a “what should I do if” section highlighting common issues and areas of confusion with their solutions.

Day Two of Supervisor Orientation engaged two outside consultants to provide concentrated professional development. Arts & Culture and The Getty presented topics as areas of need identified in feedback from supervisors in both programs. New supervisors were required to attend at least one session but could choose to attend both:

Session 1: Mentorship and Intergenerational Communication
with Sharifa Johka

Session 2: Gender Diversity for Intern Supervisors
with Badly Licked Bear

The themes of these sessions were culled directly from supervisor feedback about topics they would find most valuable, as well as shifting intern demographics. Through updates to demographic questions, we know interns self-identifying as gender diverse represent nearly 10% of the total intern pool, so equipping our supervisors with the knowledge and skills to support those interns continues to be paramount. All supervisors were extremely engaged in each session and took advantage of being able to network with colleagues in The Getty's program.

Educational Components – Intern Peer Groups

To produce the peer group program, AIP staff engaged 10 arts and culture professionals as peer group leaders who were tasked with planning and executing the events with the interns. Staff worked closely with Peer Group Leaders and ensured a blend of in-person and virtual events to accommodate the widest access for student attendees. Peer Group Leaders were a mix of new and returning individuals. Below is a list of the 2024 Peer Group Leaders as well as the events they hosted. Events marked with an asterisk were held in-person:

Building Your Creative Community*
Larry Laboe, *Executive Director*
New Filmmakers Los Angeles

Teaching Artistry Explored*
Tahnee Freda, *Executive Director*
LAMuseArt

Get Paid for Your Creative Talent
Sayon Syprasoeuth, *Program Manager*
United Cambodian Community

Melding Artistry and Arts Management*
Amy Eriksen, *Executive Director*
Angels Gate Cultural Center

"Blended Worlds" Exhibit Tour and Poetry Workshop*
Jennifer Fukutomi-Jones, *Arts and Culture Administrator*
City of Glendale

Offstage & On: Creative Minds Behind Fights, Studnts, Intimacy, and Choreography
Elisa Bocanegra, *Founder and Executive Director*
Hero Theatre

How Día de los Muertos is Celebrated Through Dance in LA
Christie Rios, *Artistic Director*
Floricanto Dance Theatre

Understanding Funding in the Nonprofit Sector
Raelle Dorfan, *Executive Director*
The Dance Resource Center

Behind the Pages: The Journey of a Book
Piper Gourley, *Administrative and Events Coordinator*
Red Hen Press

Creative Recovery: How the Arts Can Advance Hope and Resilience After the Fires
Karen Mack, *Executive Director*
LA Commons



Teaching Artistry Explored



Building Your Creative Community



Blended Worlds Exhibit Tour



Interns attend the 2024 Arts Internship Summit. Photo by Yoko Morimoto



Photo by Yoko Morimoto



Photo by Yoko Morimoto

Art Summit

2025 marked the return of our annual Art Summit event for the first time since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Longtime partner Community Arts Resources (CARS) was selected as our event producer following an RFP process. CARS' long history with Art Summit and AIP made them a tremendous asset in our planning as we worked to update the event, maintaining core components while also testing new strategies to increase intern engagement.

We identified three goals for this year's Art Summit event:

1. Provide interns with a space to network, build connections and share their internship experience with one another while in the program
2. Increase interns' awareness of the arts ecosystem of the region
3. Introduce interns to the larger work of Arts & Culture, so they may better understand the role of the Department in supporting the sector

The event was held on Saturday, September 21, 2024 and was centered in the community of Leimert Park. Interns began the day at the historic Regency West Theatre where they were welcomed by Kristin Sakoda, Director of the LA County Department of Arts & Culture, Leticia Buckley, President of the LA County Arts Commission and Second District LA County Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell. Welcome remarks highlighted the work of Arts & Culture as a local arts agency, and the importance of arts and culture in the broader

Los Angeles region. Local facilitators Marks 'n Sparks then lead interns in a warm-up icebreaker to encourage engagement.

After the welcome and icebreaker activity, interns were able to participate in two of the following breakout sessions of their choosing:

- A walking tour of Leimert Park provided by grantee LA Commons, which guided interns around many of the important cultural landmarks that have contributed to the area's prominence
- A hands-on interactive drum circle with Mama Nené at the historic World Stage Performance Gallery

10 COLLEGES WITH HIGHEST PARTICIPATION
from high to low:

University of California, Los Angeles
University of Southern California
Cal State University Northridge
Occidental College
Loyola Marymount University
Cal State University Los Angeles
Long Beach City College
Cal Poly Pomona
Santa Monica College
Cal State University Long Beach

- A conversation with Leimert Park's very own multidisciplinary artist Ben Caldwell, in partnership with TEC Leimert - an organization focused on bridging the growing digital divide facing communities of color whose resource fair happened concurrently with our event
- A 1 on 1 photography session provided by Las Fotos Project where students received headshots to use in their professional settings

Interns were treated to lunch from local Jamaican restaurant Ackee Bamboo, highlighting food as part of local culture, during which our colleagues from the LA County Registrar-Recorder and County Clerk provided voter registration opportunities. Marks 'n Sparks kept the energy high by introducing some table games to get interns networking with one another over lunch.

To end the day, all interns gathered at ORA Urban Café to hear directly from arts and culture leaders whose work and organizations are shaping the future of Leimert Park, while also working to preserve its historic legacy. The panel discussion, moderated by Arts & Culture Director Kristin Sakoda, included:

- Karen Mack, CEO of LA Commons
- Natasha Moise, Director of Partnerships and Grants with Destination Crenshaw
- Tony Jolly, owner of ORA Café and member of the Black Owned and Operated Collective Land Trust

After a brief overview of the work of their organizations, the panelists engaged in a conversation that included discussions of how to resist gentrification, empower diverse communities, and the critical importance of community voice. Panelists also generously shared their own career trajectories as well as their hopes and dreams for the future of Leimert Park. Interns were encouraged to hang out at Café Ora after the conclusion of the event, where they were treated to a closing set by local talent, DJ Ade.

Intern energy during the event was high. One intern remarked, "The Art Summit in Leimert Park was a cool celebration of creativity and community. The energy of the space and the engagement between artists and attendees made it a truly enriching experience. I especially appreciated the opportunity to see local artists showcase their work in such a welcoming environment."



Word Cloud of Intern Positions

Looking Ahead

The Upcoming 2026 Cycle

Interns participating in the 2025 program began work on June 1, 2025, so the cycle is well underway. As a result of county budget impacts, the Arts Internship Program budget will be reduced for the 2026 program, resulting in an overall reduction in available internships and changes to the program guidelines. As always, the program will continue to provide exciting and meaningful opportunities in arts and culture throughout Los Angeles County, and AIP staff are

prepared to be supportive of both grantee and student needs in the coming cycle. The application for the 2026 program cycle will open in September 2025.

“This summer was an incredibly busy one for our organization. Thus, having such skilled interns was vital to our success.”

—a supervisor from a theatre organization



Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell and Kristin Sakoda are joined by interns attending the 2024 Art Summit event at The World Stage.

2024 Arts Internship Program: Schools Attended by Interns

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| AMDA College of Performing Arts | Loyola Marymount University | University of California, Santa Cruz |
| Arizona State University | Macalester College | University of Chicago |
| Art Center College of Design | Mount St. Mary's College | University of Colorado, Boulder |
| Berklee College of Music | New York University | University of Mississippi |
| Boston Conservatory at Berklee | Northwestern University | University of Nevada, Las Vegas |
| Cal Poly Pomona | Oberlin College | University of Southern California |
| Cal State University Bakersfield | Occidental College | Wesleyan University |
| Cal State University Channel Islands | Otis College of Art and Design | |
| Cal State University Dominguez Hills | Pasadena City College | |
| Cal State University Fullerton | Pierce College | |
| Cal State University Long Beach | Pitzer College | |
| Cal State University Los Angeles | Pomona College | |
| Cal State University Northridge | Purchase College | |
| California Institute of the Arts | Santa Monica College | |
| Chapman University | Scripps College | |
| College of the Canyons | Soka University of America | |
| East LA College | Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-ARC) | |
| El Camino College | Southern Oregon University | |
| Emerson College | Spelman College | |
| LA City College | University of California, Los Angeles | |
| LA Mission College | University of California, Riverside | |
| LA Trade Tech College | University of California, San Diego | |
| Long Beach City College | University of California, Berkeley | |
| Los Angeles Film School | University of California, Irvine | |