

**Increasing Engagement and Participation of Antelope Valley Artists and Organizations**

The Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture (Department) has a variety of funding opportunities for artists and arts organizations throughout the year. Each fall, the Department opens applications for its three grant programs through its Grants Division: the Organizational Grant Program (OGP) for arts-focused nonprofits; the Community Impact Arts Grant (CIAG) for community nonprofits who offer arts programming; and the Arts Internship Program (AIP), which provides funding for local nonprofits to hire paid college student interns. Additionally, the Department’s Civic Art Division regularly promotes Calls for Artists to apply for the chance to create artworks across the County.

While all of these chances to get connected with arts funding and work opportunities are available to artists and nonprofits countywide, data shows few applications for any of them are from the Antelope Valley. In the 2023-24 grants cycle, just one nonprofit applied for OGP out of a total of 240 applicants and two applied for CIAG out of 87 applicants. To help nonprofits recover from the effects of the pandemic, the Department of Arts and Culture also awarded more than \$26 million in American Rescue Plan funds to 668 grantees in the nonprofit arts and culture sector. Of those 668 grantees, just six came from the Antelope Valley. Engagement in County civic art opportunities by artists in the Antelope Valley has been minimal as well. In three out of the last four Calls for Artists, no artists from the Antelope Valley submitted applications among the pool of 321 applicants. For just one Call for Artists, four Antelope Valley artists applied out of 108 total.

In addition to opportunities for professional artists and organizations, the Department also offers internships for college students. Each year, the Department hosts an informational session for students at Antelope Valley College with varied levels of attendance. This year, in preparation for the summer 2024 season, the Department hosted a session with students in March. Despite this in-person engagement, only three interns came from the Antelope Valley. In total, 224 positions were available at 155 organizations, including various virtual opportunities for students to work remotely.

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It's clear that nonprofits and artists in the Antelope Valley are not taking advantage of the resources available to them by the County, either because they do not know the opportunities are available or because they face perceived or actual barriers to apply. To aid in the application process, the Department offers various resources for prospective applicants. Virtual workshops and office hours are available for all three grant opportunities currently open this fall, allowing nonprofits to tune in from anywhere in the County. Pre-recorded workshops are available on the department's website for those who cannot attend in real-time. Grantseekers are welcome to email the grants division with questions at any time during the process. There are also two civic art opportunities currently open for artists. There is a Call for Artists for five homelessness-related art projects, one in each Supervisorial District. Additionally, a Request for Proposals for an Artist-in-Residence for the Vision Zero Los Angeles County initiative is currently taking applications. For future opportunities, artists can sign up for emails on the department's website to get informed about open calls when they are released.

To ensure Antelope Valley residents and organizations are informed about the arts opportunities available to them, it's important to do targeted outreach to equip them with all the information they need. The County must do its due diligence to get the word out in our North County communities to bring awareness for any individuals or organizations who would be interested to apply. We have an opportunity and responsibility to build on the efforts already underway to uphold the Department's commitment to arts programming and artwork that are reflective and inclusive of every part of the County, including artists and organizations from the Antelope Valley.

**I, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors direct the Department of Arts and Culture to:

1. Urge Antelope Valley artists and organizations to learn more about and apply for opportunities they provide;
2. Collaborate with Countywide Communications and relevant County departments to actively promote current and future arts opportunities in the Antelope Valley through targeted social media campaigns, news outlets, and direct contact with local community leaders, trusted ambassadors, organizations, and educational institutions;
3. Create and send out a survey to Antelope Valley residents and organizations to garner feedback about their awareness of available arts opportunities and the barriers they face to apply; and
4. Continue to collect and monitor data related to applicants from the Antelope Valley to identify gaps and work with the Chief Executive Office's Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion (ARDI) Initiative to evaluate potential solutions.

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