

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS KATHRYN BARGER AND
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OCTOBER 8, 2024

**PROCLAIM OCTOBER 2024 AS LOS ANGELES COUNTY FAITH LEADER
APPRECIATION MONTH**

National Clergy Appreciation Month was established in 1992 and is observed in October to celebrate and recognize the contributions of clergy of faith-based organizations (FBOs) and houses of worship (HOWs) who have given their time, support and resources to selflessly serve vulnerable populations. In October 2023, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors made an inaugural declaration of October as Faith Leader Appreciation Month in Los Angeles County. The proclamation encouraged all County Departments to establish ways to recognize partnerships with Faith Leaders and celebrate their contributions. While the month of October is also celebrated around the country as National Clergy Appreciation Month, the Faith Leader Appreciation Month Proclamation gives LA County Departments the opportunity to join a global celebration that recognizes the value in integrating the invaluable influence of the faith community when servicing families in need.

Faith Leader Appreciation Month in Los Angeles County encourages numerous County Departments to recognize and express gratitude to FBOs and HOWs that strive for stronger and meaningful partnerships between the County and the faith community. The dedicated efforts of Faith Leaders have leveraged their unique experiences, insights, and guidance in supporting families that has made significant impacts on the many families we serve.

Over the years, the County has partnered with faith groups to share vital information and resources to support public health, homelessness, foster youth, and more. Traditionally, this outreach has been established and organized by individual departments and agencies, such as the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), the Department of Health Services (DHS), the Department of Public Health (DPH), and the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) that have built relationships with faith-based organizations (FBOs) and houses of worship to create advisory boards, develop community programs, and conduct staff outreach.

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As one of many departments that work with faith-based organizations, the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) continues to strengthen collaborative partnerships with FBOs and HOWs from different religious affiliations to meet the complex and diverse needs of children, youth and families residing in LA County. FBOs and HOWs often have the ability to connect with faith-based networks that offer concrete and non-tangible supports for families such as food, formula, diapers, clothing, beds, mentoring, and advocacy, expenses to cover utilities and rent, as well as “safe” spaces for family bonding activities, which are pivotal to achieving family reunification.

FBOs and HOWs are often working the closest with vulnerable families and Communities: thus equipping them with the ability to refer children, transition age youth (TAY), caregivers or families to an array of community-based services that can help stabilize the family system before more invasive interventions are necessary.

The Faith Leader Appreciation Month in Los Angeles County Proclamation celebrates FBOs and HOWs collaborative work alongside the County, community-based organizations, philanthropy, and external stakeholders. Families that are connected and feel supported have greater chances at becoming healthy families, which undoubtedly is in the best interest of children. Together we bring impact. Together we provide solutions, and Faith Leaders have answered the call.

As the County continues its mission to build stronger relationships with faith leaders, FBOs and HOWs, proclaiming October as Faith Leader Appreciation Month provides County departments the opportunity to celebrate, honor and affirm the faith communities’ commitment and dedication to children, youth and families from different cultural backgrounds they often tirelessly serve. It is our hope that during Faith Leader Appreciation Month, faith leaders, FBOs, and HOWs are appreciated countywide for their outstanding service and acknowledged for their role as vital County partners.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

- 1) Proclaim the month of October as Faith Leader Appreciation Month in Los Angeles County;
- 2) Encourage all County Departments to establish ways to recognize partnerships with Faith Leaders and celebrate their contributions to improve the health and well-being of vulnerable youth, adults and families in need of support; and
- 3) Encourage relevant County Departments to strengthen existing faith-based initiatives, as well as streamline and enhance communication with the faith community for better engagement.

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