

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR KATHRYN BARGER

MAY 13, 2025

**Proclaim June 3, 2025, as Employee Wellness Through the Arts Day**

Research has shown that engaging in arts and cultural activities contributes to social cohesion, intercultural understanding, civic engagement, and positive health outcomes. It also promotes connection to place and creates a sense of belonging, as well as providing opportunities for joy and learning. The link between creative and artistic expression and wellness has been well established. By participating in art and exploring creative expression, we can relieve anxiety, stress, and anger and even improve our immune systems' function. The Journal of Positive Psychology states that "spending time on creative goals during the day is associated with higher activated positive affect," underscoring that engaging in creative and artistic expression generates joy and can even improve our outlook on life. The World Health Organization (WHO) acknowledges that "art can help us to emotionally navigate the journey of battling an illness or injury, to process difficult emotions in times of emergency and challenging events," adding that "enjoyment of the arts helps to promote holistic wellness and can be a motivating factor in recovery."

Our employees, Countywide, have been tested time and again over the past few years with crisis after crisis, most recently with the January 2025 wildfire emergency. This unprecedented event resulted in tremendous loss and suffering, impacting employees, their families, and friends. Whether or not they were affected directly, our employees have assisted and supported others devastated by this disaster through their role as public servants and first responders. As the immediate crisis has ended, our employees are now leading or supporting recovery and rebuilding efforts, helping our communities heal.

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**MOTION**

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HAHN	_____
BARGER	_____

We are now called to offer support and resources to our employees to aid their own recovery and strengthen their resiliency. As part of its ongoing mission to support the well-being of our County workforce, the Department of Human Resources (DHR) is honored to partner once again with the Department of Arts and Culture (Arts and Culture) in its mission to advance arts, culture, and creativity throughout Los Angeles County (County). The newest iteration of that collaboration is to offer a special platform to promote the healing power of the arts, this year encouraging creative expression through poetry and creative writing.

In a special collaboration, DHR and Arts are partnering with the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County (NHM) to present the 2025 Los Angeles County Employee Wellness, Arts, and Culture Festival. The festival was inspired and created by christy roberts berkowitz (who presents her name in lowercase, honoring the late writer bell hooks), an artist-in-residence assigned to DHR as part of Arts and Culture's Creative Strategist program. Arts and Culture's innovative Creative Strategist–Artist in Residence Program places artists in County departments to work alongside staff to develop, promote, and implement artist-driven solutions to complex social challenges. The Creative Strategist Program emerged as a recommendation from the L.A. County Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative. It supports the implementation of the [Countywide Cultural Policy](#) and its three main goals: to invest in cultural infrastructure and access to arts and culture; advance arts and culture in every sector of civic life; and promote cultural equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging.

Artist christy roberts berkowitz began her Creative Strategist residency with DHR in July 2023; her focus has been to develop new approaches to employee well-being that use the arts to embrace creative expression and contribute to a more cohesive, productive, engaged, and resilient workforce.

The 2025 Employee Wellness, Arts, and Culture Festival will feature free admission to NHM, which will be open exclusively for County employees. The event's program will include:

- Art and wellness activities, including sound baths and creative expression opportunities;
- Live music by Mariachi Lindas Mexicanas and DJed entertainment; and
- Self-guided tours of NHM's exhibitions, halls, and nature gardens.

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All participants will also receive a copy of an anthology of selected poetry and creative writing submitted by County employees.

This healing opportunity would not be possible without the valued partnership and creative collaboration between DHR, Arts and Culture, and NHM. NHM is the largest natural and historical museum in the Western United States. We are fortunate to have NHM among the many cultural treasures Los Angeles County offers.

Our support to encourage and enable the participation of our employees – both as artists and as participants across the County – is pivotal to illustrate the County’s commitment to employee well-being. It also supports interdepartmental collaboration and demonstrates an innovative understanding of arts as a strategy for employee engagement and wellness.

**I, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Proclaim June 3, 2025 as Employee Wellness Through the Arts Day;
2. Direct County departments to encourage employees to attend the L.A. County Employee Wellness, Arts, and Culture Festival at NHM on June 3, 2025 from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m; and
3. Direct County departments to share information about the L.A. County Employee Wellness, Arts, and Culture Festival and other opportunities to engage in the arts with their employees in partnership with the Department of Human Resources, Arts and Culture, and the Natural History Museum.

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