

Enriching Lives



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Embargoed until July 12, 2011, 12:00 p.m. PDT

Los Angeles County Arts Commission Civic Art Program Receives Our Town Grant From the National Endowment for the Arts

***Project Willowbrook: Cultivating a Healthy Community through Arts and Culture
is among 51 grants nationwide selected to support creative placemaking***

LOS ANGELES, CA—Today, the Los Angeles County Arts Commission announced that it will receive an Our Town grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), one of only 51 grants awarded nationwide. The Arts Commission will receive a \$100,000 grant to support artistic and cultural development in the unincorporated neighborhood of Willowbrook.

Our Town is the NEA's new leadership initiative focused on creative placemaking projects. In creative placemaking, partners from both public and private sectors come together to strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, city, or region around arts and cultural activities.

The Los Angeles County Arts Commission's project will capitalize on the County's over \$600 million investment in health and infrastructure improvements in Willowbrook. This project includes the execution of a comprehensive planning effort for the new Martin Luther King Jr. Medical Campus and a plan designed to improve the linkages between the community and the Rosa Parks Metro Station. The MLK Campus will also be the site of the County's largest civic art commission to date with a budget of \$1 million.

Primary project partner, community arts organization LA Commons, will assist Arts Commission staff in the identification of artists, cultural assets and resources that are unique to Willowbrook and its adjacent communities. In collaboration with key stakeholders, the two organizations will use this information to develop a strategic and sustainable plan that will integrate art and culture into overall community development.

National Endowment for the Arts Chairman Landesman said, "Communities across our country are using smart design and leveraging the arts to enhance quality of life and promote their

distinctive identities. In this time of great economic upheaval, Our Town provides communities an opportunity to reignite their economies.”

"The arts are an integral component of healthy communities, serving to shape and reinforce a collective aesthetic and identity," said L.A. County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, whose Second District includes Willowbrook. "Through the Our Town initiative, the Arts Commission will help us achieve our shared vision for a healthier, more creative and more vibrant Willowbrook."

The City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) received a \$250,000 Our Town grant for the design of the Watts Historic Train Station Visitor Center and Artist Pathways, which will provide point of entry to Watts and connect the 103rd Street Blue-Line train station to the Watts Towers, just north of the Arts Commission's Willowbrook project. The County Arts Commission and DCA will align their efforts to capitalize on the significant cultural investment being made in the area.

Under the **Civic Art Program**, one percent of construction costs of all Los Angeles County capital projects over \$500,000 is set aside for the incorporation of civic art. Since 2004 the Los Angeles County Arts Commission Civic Art Program has implemented over 40 civic art projects for a variety of County facilities and documented 90 in the County's collection. Projects range in size and are managed by a skilled staff dedicated to facilitating innovative projects while providing access to high-quality artistic experiences for the residents of Los Angeles County. For more information about the Civic Art Program: <http://www.lacountyarts.org/civicart.htm>

The **Los Angeles County Arts Commission**, Laura Zucker, Executive Director, provides leadership in cultural services of all disciplines for the largest county in the United States, encompassing 88 municipalities. In addition to overseeing the County's Civic Art Program for capital projects, the Arts Commission provides leadership and staffing to support the regional collaborative for arts education, *Arts for All*; administers a \$4.1 million grants program that funds more than 300 nonprofit arts organizations annually; programs the John Anson Ford Theatres; funds the largest arts internship program in the country in conjunction with the Getty Foundation; and supports the Los Angeles County Cultural Calendar on ExperienceLA.com. The Commission also produces free community programs, including the L.A. Holiday Celebration and a year-round music program that funds more than 70 free concerts each year in public sites. The 2011-12 President of the Arts Commission is Ollie Blanning. For more information please consult the Arts Commission online press kit: <http://lacountyarts.org/page/pubnewspress>

The National Endowment for the Arts was established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government. To date, the NEA has awarded more than \$4 billion to support artistic excellence, creativity, and innovation for the benefit of individuals and communities. The NEA extends its work through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector.

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7/12/11