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City of San Diego Announces 60 Artists Creating Projects to Increase Awareness of Urgent Issues

FAR SOUTH/BORDER NORTH GRANT PROGRAM BRINGS JOBS AND PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS TO SAN DIEGO AND IMPERIAL COUNTIES

SAN DIEGO – This month, residents in San Diego and Imperial Counties will begin seeing 60 artists and cultural practitioners in their neighborhoods, creating projects that aim to engage them and bring awareness to urgent issues shaping our region.

Today, the City of San Diego announced these artists and cultural practitioners are starting to implement their public awareness campaigns as part of the [Far South/Border North: Artists and Cultural Practitioners in Community](#) grant program. The program, which was announced in August 2022, creates jobs for these regional artists and will focus on issues including public health, civic engagement, climate mitigation and social justice. The campaigns will target communities ranked in the lowest quartile of the [California Healthy Places Index](#), which looks at social conditions that drive health, like education, job opportunities, clean air and water.

"Far South Border North aligns beautifully with the goals of the City of San Diego's strategic plan, said Jonathon Glus, Director of the City's Arts and Culture. "Many of our region's most civically-engaged artists and culture bearers are now partnering with agencies working to address some of the City's highest priorities – homelessness, environmental justice and community health – all anchored in our equity framework. Ultimately, this effort is empowering artists to lead change at the community-based level."

For the past six months, the artists and cultural practitioners participated in peer learning and group activities to foster cross-industry connections and community-building while also focusing on developing campaign designs.

Between Nov. 2023 and May 2024, the artists and cultural practitioners will carry out their projects using diverse artistic and creative forms, ranging from performing arts, visual arts and literature to music, film and media.

"We're thrilled to be moving into the next phase of Far South/Border North with the launch of artist and cultural practitioner-led campaigns," said Christine E. Jones, Chief of Civic Art Strategies for the City's Arts and Culture. "These campaigns will help bring people together, shift perspectives, challenge assumptions and catalyze intersectional work by artists that fuel positivity and contribute to health equity and new ways of working that build capacity and connect to larger movements for systems change in the region."

Campaigns include a mobile healing arts studio that will visit Santa Ysabel and Julian to promote mental health and social interaction. Another project in City Heights combines storytelling with community practice to create a unique performance experience.

In north San Diego County, public interventions seek to raise awareness and support individuals experiencing homelessness. A podcast series in Imperial Valley features interviews with local activists, community organizers and individuals affected by social justice issues.

Another project in Imperial County includes a documentary that highlights the ecological concerns surrounding the Salton Sea, impacting nearby communities. Additionally, a joint campaign in San Ysidro will focus on recording and highlighting elders' stories through multimedia.

"Our communities need the freedom of self-expression that artists and cultural practitioners represent to truly thrive," said Megan Thomas, President and CEO at Catalyst of San Diego & Imperial Counties. "This initiative not only empowers artists with resources and learning, but it provides a blueprint for how an ecosystem of philanthropy, public organizations, nonprofits, and individual people can strengthen communities."

The Far South/Border North initiative is funded by a \$4.75 million California Creative Corps grant provided by the [California Arts Council](#) (CAC), a state agency, and \$1.4 million from [The Conrad Prebys Foundation](#).

The City of San Diego is spearheading the program while implementation partners for Far South/Border North include [Catalyst of San Diego & Imperial Counties](#), [San Diego Regional Arts and Culture Coalition](#) and the [San Diego Foundation](#). The team also consists of five nonprofit social sector organizations functioning as social impact hubs. These organizations—[Alliance San Diego](#), [A Reason to Survive](#) (ARTS), [Casa Familiar](#), [Imperial County Food Bank](#), and [RISE San Diego](#)—offer crucial support to artists and cultural practitioners throughout their creative process.

The City of San Diego advances and drives an equitable and inclusive creative economy and cultural ecosystem by investing in the work of artists and creatives and the institutions and systems that amplify creative work and experiences. To learn more, visit sandiego.gov/arts-culture.

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