

RAD



FROM OUR DEPARTMENT HEAD, JENNY ROGERS

2025, A Year of Impact

The Recreation & Arts Department (RAD) enriches lives by providing a dynamic array of recreation, arts, and community event services—created with and for the community—that inspire play, connection, and shared experience in Santa Monica’s public spaces. Delivering essential city services, in support of physical and mental health, social connection, cultural expression, and community resilience, while contributing to the city’s small-town character and high quality of life.

The importance of safe, welcoming places to gather was not theoretical in 2025. In the aftermath of the January 7 Palisades Fire, which devastated much of Pacific Palisades, the city of Santa Monica mobilized quickly in a true One SaMo response. RAD played a pivotal role by opening community facilities as places of refuge and support for evacuees who arrived with little more than the clothes they were wearing. As recovery continued, RAD staff helped displaced families reestablish routines and reconnect to essential community services, including arts, cultural, and recreation programs that provided stability, healing, and connection during a prolonged period of disruption.

RAD’s recovery efforts extended beyond direct services to individuals and families to include support for artists, cultural workers, and community-based organizations impacted by the fire. Through the Cultural Affairs Division, the Art of Recovery grant program provided critical funding to nonprofit arts and service organizations supporting wildfire survivors. Rental relief was also provided to artists at the Airport Art Studios, many of whom lost homes, studios, artwork, and livelihoods. Across divisions, RAD adapted programs and hosted targeted community events designed to meet the unique needs of wildfire survivors of all ages.

At the same time, RAD continued advancing the City’s broader priorities and long-term vision. In July, the department led a citywide celebration marking the reopening of the Miles Memorial Playhouse with a community Play Day at Reed Park as part of the State of the City. This event celebrated the completion of two years of facility improvements and reinvestment, returning a beloved cultural asset to active community use and demonstrating the power of arts, recreation, and

Known for its exquisite natural beauty and near perfect climate, Santa Monica is *the* place for play.

public space to bring people together.

RAD’s work in 2025 also aligned with the City Council–adopted Realignment Plan, supporting public safety, economic recovery, organizational capacity, and long-term fiscal stability. Recreation and Arts services are foundational to this work. Santa Monica is truly a small city in an urban environment. Given its unique placement, Arts and Culture are at the core of this place in a community where creativity is part of the local fabric and cultural participation strengthens civic life. In this ideal recreational environment, Santa Monica’s recreation programs—on land and in water,

indoors and outdoors—serve residents of all ages and abilities and reflect the city’s identity as a place where recreation is a way of life all year.

Known for its exquisite natural beauty and near perfect climate, Santa Monica is *the* place for play. The adoption of the 2025 Parks and Recreation Vision Plan further reinforced this role, establishing a long-term framework for recreation and arts facilities and programs and guiding future investment, including planning for the Beach and Pier Vision Plan. Together, these efforts position RAD as a key contributor to a resilient, inclusive, and forward-looking Santa Monica.

As a city department, we build community. Our RAD services provide a helping hand for the most vulnerable, a gathering place for social connection and enrich the small-town character and high quality of life in Santa Monica. Recreation and Arts are the why for why people decide to live, visit and vacation in Santa Monica. Come join the fun in the best place on earth for play — Santa Monica is RAD and our cultural renaissance has only just begun!



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Recreation

In 2025, the Community Recreation Division continued to deliver high quality programs, facilities, and services that support play, connection, health and quality of life across Santa Monica. From busy pools, gyms, and fields, to vibrant camps, classes, and community events, participation remained strong throughout the year and across all age groups.



COMMUNITY RECREATION DIVISION

Overview

Community Recreation programs and facilities continued to serve as important gathering places for residents of all ages in 2025. Through aquatics, sports, camps, classes, fitness, special events, and shared use facilities, the division provided a wide range of opportunities that promoted recreation, wellness, learning, and community connection throughout the year.

This level of engagement is reinforced by the Council adopted Santa Monica Parks and Recreation Vision Plan. Survey results show that **96% of respondents visit parks, arts, or recreation facilities in a typical year, and 49% participate in a City program annually, both well above national averages.** These findings reflect how central recreation facilities and programs are to daily life in Santa Monica.

Seasonal camps, youth and adult classes, aquatics, and fitness programs continued to see high demand, particularly during school breaks. Collaborating with schools through Joint Use Agreements enabled access to school sites and remains essential in meeting year-round recreation needs, while ongoing facility maintenance and targeted improvements helped ensure safe, welcoming, and well used spaces. Community events such as the Spooky Splash, Polar Bear Plunge and the Toys for Tots Softball Tournament added energy and connection across City facilities.

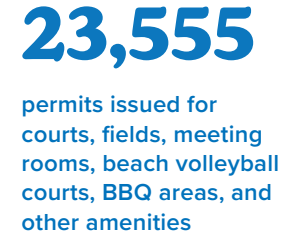
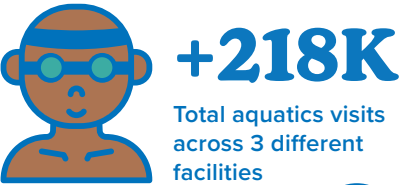
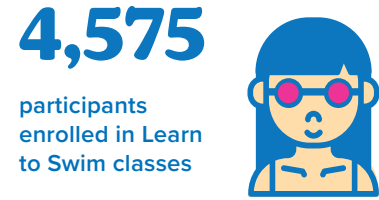
The division also focused on access and inclusion. Westside Special Olympics programming expanded and hosted multiple tournaments, and staff worked closely with schools

and community partners to coordinate shared use of fields, gyms, and pools amid increasing demand and to help displaced schools and youth organizations from the Palisades Fire. In response to community feedback, hours at the Memorial Park Fitness Room, SAMOHI Pool and Pickleball Open Play were expanded, and staff continued to refine operations to better serve residents.

A significant area of focus in 2025 was the division's role in supporting recovery efforts related to the Palisades Fire. Community Recreation worked extensively with displaced schools, youth sports organizations, and community partners to relocate recreation programming, school athletics, and physical education activities into Santa Monica facilities. This required a high level of coordination, flexibility, and responsiveness from staff, as well as close collaboration across departments and with external partners. These efforts not only ensured continuity of programming for impacted communities, but also demonstrated the strength, adaptability, and regional importance of Santa Monica's recreation system.



COMMUNITY RECREATION 2025 BY THE NUMBERS



These numbers reflect a highly active recreation system with strong participation across all age groups, significant demand for programs and facilities, and a growing need to continue expanding and evolving our programs.



Aquatics

Our Aquatics team provides year-round public access, instruction, competitive programming, and safety education across three pool sites: Santa Monica Swim Center, Annenberg Community Beach House Pool, and Santa Monica High School Pool. Serving residents of all ages, Aquatics supports early swim instruction, youth development, competitive athletics, senior fitness, and lifelong wellness.

Aquatics remains one of the City’s most consistently utilized recreation services and serves as both a public health asset and a critical public safety resource.

“The Aquatics team at all levels is dedicated to safety, health, teaching, and developing swimmers. The current leadership, coaches, and lifeguards have taken it to a whole new level.”



- SANTA MONICA RESIDENT

2025 HIGHLIGHTS



218,272

Total Visits across three pool facilities, reflecting sustained community demand.



1st Place

captured by Sharks Swim Team at the 2025 Southern California Municipal Athletic Foundation Championships, competing against 15 teams and 400+ athletes.

1,060

Youth athletes (across six sessions) attended the Team Santa Monica Swim Meet and the Western State Conference Championships in partnership with Santa Monica College, welcoming top collegiate athletes



2,000

residents attended Summer Splash Nights and the 3rd Annual Spooky Splash



WATER SAFETY MONTH

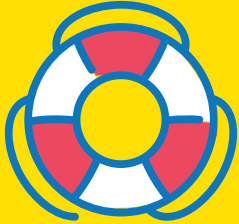
Following the Mayor’s proclamation in May, Aquatics led a citywide campaign focused on youth engagement, safety education, public library partnerships, interdepartmental collaboration, and free community CPR training.

YOUTH-TO-PROFESSIONAL PATHWAY

Beyond programming, Aquatics maintains rigorous safety standards, continuous staff training, and emergency preparedness coordination. The division builds future-ready professionals, strengthens public safety capacity, and provides a trusted civic space that supports health, connection, and community resilience.

Aquatics sustains one of the City’s strongest internal talent pipelines resulting in **115 TRAINED AQUATIC SAFETY PERSONNEL** in 2025.

Our Model



LEARN-TO-SWIM



SWIM TEAM



JUNIOR LIFEGUARD



LIFEGUARD & SWIM INSTRUCTOR CERTIFICATION



CITY EMPLOYMENT



AQUATIC/BEACH RECREATION SITE LEADERSHIP



CONTINUED ADVANCEMENT WITHIN THE CITY AND BEYOND.

Beach Recreation

Beach Recreation activates Santa Monica’s iconic shoreline as a year-round destination for recreation, fitness, competition, and community connection. From Ocean Park to the Annenberg Community Beach House, programming supports residents, schools, athletes, and visitors across all ages and skill levels through beach camps, surf camps, sand sports leagues, open play access, and contracted fitness and wellness classes on the sand and in the water.

Through tournaments, seasonal camps, instructional programs, and long-standing partnerships, Beach Recreation reinforces Santa Monica’s identity as a premier coastal recreation destination. The division also oversees popular community events including the Cardboard Yacht Regatta and the Polar Bear Swim, which draw hundreds of participants and spectators annually.

BEACH RECREATION & COMMUNITY REACH continues to balance preservation, access, and activation, ensuring the shoreline remains an inclusive, well-managed, and vibrant gathering space that reflects Santa Monica’s coastal identity. Programming served residents and visitors alike, providing accessible outdoor recreation in one of the City’s most visible and valued public spaces.

2025 HIGHLIGHTS



BEACH & SURF PROGRAMMING
Youth beach and surf camps provided structured coastal recreation.

REGIONAL TOURNAMENTS
Hosted competitive events drawing participants from across Southern California and beyond.



COURT & SAND SPORTS
Ongoing beach volleyball leagues, tournaments, camps, and classes

SCHOOL & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS Continued collaboration with schools, athletic groups, and instructors to expand coastal recreation access.



Community Programs

The Community Camps, Classes & Westside Special Olympics (WSO) program area delivers inclusive recreation, enrichment, and adaptive sports opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities. Through camps, contract classes, and competitive programming, the program area supports youth development, lifelong learning, and equitable access to recreation.

50 YEARS OF WESTSIDE SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Founded in 1976 in partnership with Olympic champion Rafer Johnson, Westside Special Olympics (WSO) has been operated continuously by the City of Santa Monica for 50 years.

WSO currently offers seven sports across three seasons and is part of Special Olympics Southern California, serving athletes throughout the West Los Angeles region. Powered by dedicated volunteers, WSO hosts two annual regional tournaments and has supported athletes advancing to represent Team USA at the Special Olympics World Games.

For five decades, Santa Monica has remained a regional leader in inclusive recreation, enriching the lives of athletes, families, and volunteers.



2025 HIGHLIGHTS

1,000+
CAMPS & CLASSES
DELIVERED

Expanded offerings across arts, STEM, fitness, and youth enrichment, including new trend-responsive programs such as K-Pop Demon Hunters Camp.

NEIGHBORHOOD STEM EXPANSION

Partnered with Fairview Branch Library to bring STEM camps directly into community spaces.

STRONG SEASONAL CAMP OPERATIONS

Delivered high-quality summer and school-break camps supporting working families and sustained youth engagement.

MODERNIZED FACILITY ACCESS

Streamlined the community room rental process to improve customer experience and operational efficiency.

Sports & Athletics

The Sports & Athletics program area activates Santa Monica’s parks, fields, gyms, courts, and beach spaces through year-round leagues, open play, fitness access, and comprehensive facility permitting — ensuring safe, equitable, and vibrant use of City assets.

EVERGREEN PROGRAMMING & SERVICES

- **Seasonal adult sports leagues** including softball, soccer, volleyball, basketball, and pickleball totaling over 10,000 participants annually
- **Ongoing open play**, reservation systems, and court access across multiple sites for tennis and pickleball
- **Daily operations** of Memorial Park Gym and Fitness Center
- **Year-round oversight** of Cove Skatepark, one of California’s premier skate facilities, offering camps, classes, weekly bike sessions, girls-focused and adult sessions, along with general membership hours that serve riders of all skill levels
- **Permitting for sports fields**, courts, beach athletics, gym use, picnic areas, and commercial fitness instruction



2025 HIGHLIGHTS

- Expanded pickleball open play and the launch of a new league
- Added adult volleyball at SAMOHI and a Friday night co-ed softball league
- Increased Memorial Park Fitness Room hours
- Coordinated with Public Works on the installation of new scoreboards at Los Amigos and Historic Belmar Park with generous financial support from the Santa Monica Kiwanis Club
- Hosted inclusive programming including Aceing Autism and weekly girls-focused skate sessions that provide dedicated time for skill-building, mentorship, and community connection in a supportive environment
- Celebrated the 20th Anniversary of the Cove Skatepark and the 110th Annual Dudley Cup Tennis Tournament
- Supported Toys for Tots tournaments and provided athletics/PE space for displaced Palisades schools

These highlights represent a snapshot of a much broader year of programming, partnerships, and community activation across Santa Monica’s recreation system.



Facilities

City Parks & Recreation Facilities

- Airport Park
- Clover Park
- Douglas Park
- Gandara Park
- Historic Belmar Park
- Los Amigos Park
- Marine Park
- Memorial Park
- Ocean View Park
- Reed Park

Specialized Recreation Facilities

- Reed Park Tennis Center
- Cove Skatepark
- Santa Monica Swim Center

Beach Facilities

- Beach Parks, Courts & Fields
- Annenberg Community Beach House Pool

School Sites (Joint Use Partnerships)

- Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD):
 - John Adams Middle School
 - Lincoln Middle School
 - Santa Monica High School
- SMMUSD Elementary Schools (Grant, Will Rogers, McKinley, Franklin, Edison, Roosevelt)
- Windward School



Community Recreation Division Pillars

Community Recreation provides a wide range of services and opportunities to the community through its four program areas:

- AQUATICS
- BEACH RECREATION
- COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING
- SPORTS & ATHLETICS



Cultural Affairs

During 2025, Santa Monica's Cultural Affairs Division experienced a transformative period. As our community emerged from a time of profound change, artists, cultural organizations, and residents came together to rebuild, reconnect, and reimagine what creative life in our city can be.

CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Overview

This report reflects a year defined by renewal—most notably the reopening of the historic Miles Memorial Playhouse, the continued evolution of the Camera Obscura residency, expanded cultural programming at the Beach House, renewed energy and oversight at the Airport Arts Center, and a growing calendar of citywide events in parks and public spaces.

With three new staff members supporting facilities, grants, and programming, we expanded our capacity to launch new initiatives, strengthen collaborations, and invest directly in Santa Monica’s creative workforce through grants, residencies, and microgrants.

We also had the privilege of helping shape Santa Monica’s 150th Anniversary—supporting community-led projects that uplifted the voices, histories, and stories of our city. And through the Art of Recovery initiative, we continued to fund artists in ways that advance healing, resilience, and public connection.

The arts remain a powerful force in shaping civic identity, strengthening neighborhoods, and bringing people together. This year, we witnessed that power everywhere—from public art at City Yards to vibrant events in our parks to the work of dozens of organizations supported through our grants.

Cultural Affairs embodies how the arts are an essential civic service—woven into the identity, wellbeing, and daily life of Santa Monica. Our mission is to ensure residents, visitors, artists, and arts organizations have access to opportu-

nities for creativity, connection, and cultural expression across the city.

Throughout 2025 Cultural Affairs advanced this mission while supporting the City’s newly adopted Realignment Plan and its strategic priorities. Our work contributes to:

- **Achieving Safe Neighborhoods & Clean Streets** through activation of parks, community spaces, and neighborhood gathering places.
- **Activating Economic Opportunity & Growth** through the rental and operation of cultural facilities and by supporting artists and arts organizations whose work drives economic activity.
- **Building Organizational Capacity & Health** through new streamlined grant processes, improved operational systems, and community partnerships that allow work to scale.

This report reflects the breadth and depth of Cultural Affairs’ work: grants and funding programs, public art, artist residencies, community events, cultural facilities, signature initiatives, and deep cross-city collaborations. At the heart of it all are the people we serve.

Uplifting Black Legacy, Chicken Soup Performance
Marjani Forté-Saunders,
February 27, 2025

Photo by
Asha Mone of
HRDWRKER



GRANTS



\$538K
distributed
in arts grants

supporting nonprofit organizations, individual artists, youth access, and transportation to cultural destinations.

27

Organizational Support Program (OSP) grantees were funded and 20 Community Access & Participation (CAP) projects.

\$48K

awarded to 4 individual artist fellowships and project grants

EVENTS + PROGRAMS



1,200+

attendees at the reopening of Miles Memorial Playhouse after five years closed, while hosting 12 public rentals.

15+

bands brought to parks and public spaces for Make Music Day



FACILITIES

Camera Obscura Art Lab supported:

12

artists-in-residence

+ 14

workshops

+ 365

workshop participants

the Airport Arts Center and 3026 Studios supported:

34

studio artists



PUBLIC ART



12 schools and nonprofits supported through the Arts Transportation Grant

33

Art of Recovery projects supported, including 11 fire-recovery activations in parks, streets, and community spaces.



80+ events on the new community calendar funded

through Santa Monica’s 150th Anniversary microgrant program

New artist residency program that commissioned a new permanent commission Manos Unidas, a piece created with Public Works staff with artist Tanya Aguiñiga at City Yards

31

temporary exhibitions, Art Bank rotations, and ongoing maintenance of key artworks across the city

“Given the current instability in arts funding nationally, support from the City of Santa Monica is more important than ever.”

JOSEPHINE MOERSCHEL
Executive Director of Elemental Music,
an OSP and CAP grant recipient

the Annenberg Community Beach House produced:
17 cultural programs (1,005 attendees) and 18 community programs (4,151 attendees)

Pillars of Work

Cultural Affairs works through six interconnected program areas to deliver broad public benefit through culture.

THE SIX CORE AREAS INCLUDE:

- Cultural Facilities
- Programs & Events
- Grants & Artist Support
- Residencies
- Public Art
- Citywide Initiatives

Across all of this work, the division strives to provide accessible, inclusive, and creative experiences that reflect the diversity and vibrancy of the Santa Monica community.



Barbara Carrasco,
Self Portrait in
a time of Crisis
2024



Cultural Facilities

ANNENBERG COMMUNITY BEACH HOUSE

The Annenberg Community Beach House is both a beloved public destination and a sought-after rental venue, offering inclusive community access alongside unique spaces for gatherings and events.

Public Place

As a signature community destination, the Beach House blends historic legacy with contemporary, family-friendly amenities. The space offers the public spectacular ocean views, a splash pad, playground, beach courts and fields, open seating, free Wi-Fi, community and cultural events, and Back on the Beach Café. Cultural Affairs produced 17 cultural programs (1,005 attendees) and supported 18 community events (approximately 4,151 attendees). The Marion Davies Gold Coast-era guest house offers year-round tours as well as swimming in the historic pool during the summer.

Rental Venue

The Beach House also serves as an exceptional rental and filming location, generating local economic activity while supporting community engagement. It accommodates gatherings from intimate meetings of ten to celebrations of up to 280 guests and is available for private events,

meetings, and film and photo shoots in a truly one-of-a-kind coastal setting.

2025 Event Bookings

- 153 booked private events
- 11,226 attendees

Event Booking Highlights

- Kia K4 “Morning Haze” Color Unveiling/ Media Launch Ride and Drive – Members of Asian media outlets got the first look at the new “Morning Haze” color of the Kia K4 and got the opportunity to drive the K4 along the California coast from the Beach House.
- Disney+ Home Alone Themed Holiday Party – Influencer event that transformed the Guest House into the McCallister house with interactive Home Alone content
- Germany’s Next Topmodel Filming and Photo Shoot – Contestants took part in video and photo shoots in the historic Beach House pool in season 20 of Germany’s Next Topmodel
- TEDx Great Pacific Garbage Patch – Speakers presented in front of an intimate live audience at the Beach House, and their talks were livestreamed to a global audience, with attendees tuning in from every continent on Earth (except Antarctica).

“Our cultural facilities are more than buildings, they are places where artists create, communities gather, and Santa Monica's cultural identity continues to evolve.”

SOFIA KLATZKER, CULTURAL AFFAIRS MANAGER

CAMERA OBSCURA ART LAB

The Camera Obscura Art Lab (COAL) in Palisades Park was Santa Monica's community arts practice studio, hosting three artists-in-residence cohorts each year for 14-week terms. Part of a larger network of artist opportunities administered by Cultural Affairs, the COAL residency program has supported more than 200 artists across disciplines including visual arts, textiles, light-based work, ceramics, large-scale installation, and community muralism.

During this reporting period, COAL supported 12 resident artists who offered 14 public workshops, reaching 365 participants. Recent program adjustments increased artist stipends, expanded outreach, and strengthened ties to the broader creative community, including a prioritized focus on artists impacted by the Eaton and Palisades fires.

MILES MEMORIAL PLAYHOUSE

The Miles Memorial Playhouse is a historic landmark located in Christine Emerson Reed Park. Completed in 1929 and designed by architect John Byers in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, the building retains original architectural features including its stage, chandeliers, sconces, proscenium arch, hand-hewn beams, and landmark fireplace. For more than 95 years, the Playhouse has

served as a civic cultural gathering space for performance, community events, and youth engagement.

Following a five-year closure beginning in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Miles reopened in July 2025 with a reimagined, community-centered State of the City celebration that welcomed more than 1,200 attendees.

Bringing the Miles back online required significant restoration and operational preparation, followed by a six-month pilot that tested systems, programming and rentals and welcomed community partners including Community Corp, artEquity, Art of Recovery grantees, and local theater and performance organizations.

The Playhouse is now fully available to rent for nonprofit performing arts presentations, individual artist productions, meetings, special events, film shoots, and photo shoots. During 2025, the Miles has hosted 12 rentals, with community feedback consistently praising its accessibility, affordability, historic character, and staff support.

AIRPORT ARTS CENTER, 3026 STUDIOS

The Santa Monica Airport has a rich history as the former home of the Douglas Aircraft Company and the birthplace of the DC-3 and has been home to notable artists dating back to the 1950s. The Airport now houses the largest concentration of artists in Santa Monica, comprising 60 art studios and creative spaces across four airplane hangars and additional buildings forming the Airport Arts Center.

These studios are a cultural asset to the city, ensuring artists can continue to have a presence in the city and create an arts campus that draws local and regional visitors.

The 3026 Studios hangar contains 34 artist studios and serves as an active creative hub with year-round programming that includes artist-led workshops, curated exhibitions, professional development offerings, and public open studio events.

A central focus this period has been elevating the work of Airport studio artists through expanded visibility initiatives—including a rotating exterior banner exhibition, the first exhibition featuring only Airport-based artists, and a series of artist-led workshops for the community.

A recent RFP and the selection of a new cultural programming manager for the 3026 Studios has provided increased support for the artists, expanded public engagement, and continues to evolve the space as a thriving center for artistic practice and community connection.

BERGAMOT STATION ARTS CENTER

Bergamot Station Arts Center is a beloved arts and cultural hub of commercial galleries, and visual and performing arts organizations, offering free exhibitions, ticketed performances, and community-driven public programs.

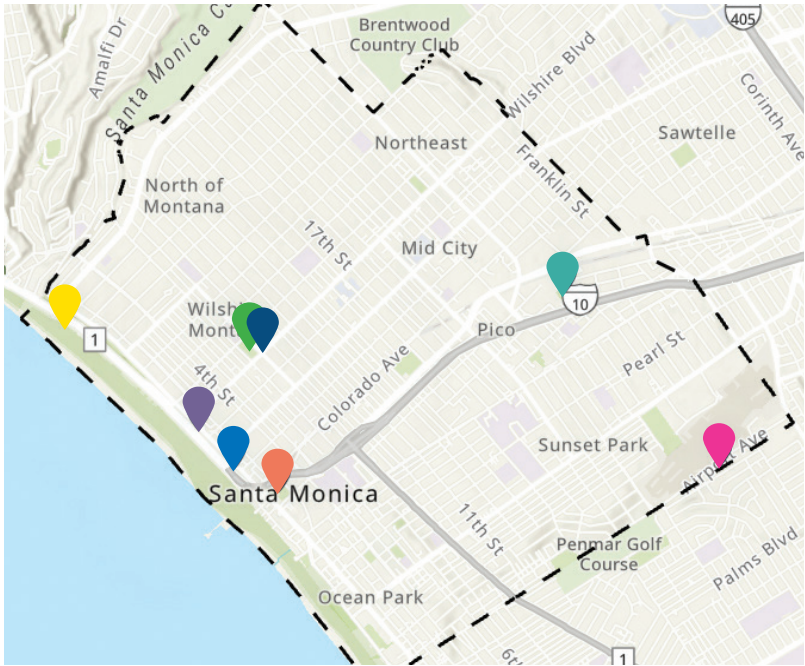
For nearly three decades, Bergamot Station Arts Center has served as a Santa Monica arts and cultural hub—home to galleries, performances, installations, and year-round community programming, as well as artist and curatorial residencies.

Cultural Affairs partners with the City's Economic Development Department, which manages the site, and with the Bergamot Ad Hoc Subcommittee of the Arts Commission, which reviews tenant applications to ensure alignment with the center's mission and continued vibrancy.



Programs & Events

Our citywide programs activate parks, public spaces and facilities—creating moments of connection across neighborhoods and bringing art into daily life.



KEY PROGRAMS AND HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- Reed Park**
Hosted Gather & Grow, a neighborhood-based series of performances, workshops, recreation activities, and cultural activations.
- Gandara Park**
Featured Americana in the Park, a music series and community programming focused on local engagement and connection.
- Tongva Park**
Served as the home of Endless Summer, a series of family-friendly seasonal activations and public programming throughout the year.

- Palisades Park**
Hosted Vamos Al Parque, a culturally focused neighborhood event series featuring community gatherings and performances.
- Miles Memorial Playhouse**
Hosted the annual State of the City, a major civic kickoff gathering featuring City highlights from the past year alongside arts programming, drawing more than 1,200 attendees.
- Santa Monica Airport**
Served as the site for Frieze Los Angeles, a partner-produced art fair and public art activations supported through Art of Recovery.

- Camera Obscura Art Lab**
Supported 12 resident artists who offered 14 public workshops, reaching 365 participants.
- Annenberg Community Beach House**
Delivered ongoing site-specific cultural programs and workshops that connect artists, residents, and visitors.

Many of these programs are produced in collaboration with other City divisions and community partners, including Mobility, the Santa Monica Public Library, Community Recreation, Public Works, Parks & Public Landscaping, neighborhood associations, and nonprofit organizations. Impact metrics for these programs are reflected throughout this report in attendance figures, artist participation, and event counts.

Grants & Artist Support

FUNDING SANTA MONICA'S CULTURAL ECOSYSTEM

Cultural Affairs administers a suite of grants that strengthen arts organizations, expand access for residents, support artists, and connect community members with regional cultural opportunities

Across programs, Cultural Affairs invested \$538,723 during this period, supporting nonprofit organizations, individual artists, youth programming, and equitable access to arts experiences.

STREAMLINED GRANT PROCESSES

- Cultural Affairs implemented significant improvements to make grants more accessible and efficient including:
- Combined the OSP/CAP application and contract into a single process so organizations submit one application and sign one agreement each year.
 - Moved all programs into SurveyMonkey Apply, centralizing applications, reviews, and reporting.
 - Simplified application questions, aligning with regional funders such as LA County Arts while maintaining Santa Monica-specific priorities.
 - These changes reduced administrative burden and improved accessibility for applicants, reviewers, and staff.

GRANTMAKING: ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT PROGRAM & COMMUNITY ACCESS & PARTICIPATION

Organizational Support Program (OSP)
The Organizational Support Program provides multiyear general operating support for Santa Monica-based nonprofit arts and culture organizations.

- 27 OSP organizations were funded
- \$409,926 was awarded
- Disciplines included dance, theater, visual arts, community and heritage organizations, literary arts

Three new OSP grantees were welcomed: Crow Comedy, Human Family Educational & Cultural Institute (Humanitas), and the Santa Monica Pier Corporation.

COMMUNITY ACCESS & PARTICIPATION

The Community Access & Participation (CAP) program provides project-based support for arts programming that increases access for residents and visitors.

- 20 CAP projects were funded
- \$73,799 was awarded

INDIVIDUAL ARTIST FELLOWSHIPS & PROJECT SUPPORT

The city of Santa Monica is one of the few municipalities that provides funding directly to artists. Cultural Affairs supports individual artists through fellowships and project grants that recognize artistic excellence and encourage new work.

- 4 artists were funded
- \$48,000 was awarded

Grantmaking: Arts Transportation

ARTS TRANSPORTATION GRANT (ATG)

The Arts Transportation Grant supports transportation to arts and culture sites for Santa Monica-based schools and nonprofits, expanding access to regional cultural resources.

- 12 grantees received support
- \$6,999 was reimbursed for transportation costs

“For some students, this was their first time visiting the Getty Center, and they were so excited to ride the tram up the hill...Students received parking passes so they could return with their families, extending the impact well beyond a single visit.”

Art of Recovery

OVERVIEW

Art of Recovery (AoR) is Santa Monica's flagship creative recovery initiative, supporting artists, cultural producers, and community-based organizations in activating public space and fostering shared cultural experiences. In 2025, AoR continued to serve as a flexible and responsive tool for community vitality, economic activation, and healing—particularly in the context of fire recovery. Comprised of two complementary components—the AoR Microgrant Program, which supports small-scale, community-based projects, and AoR Producing Partners, which funds larger, more complex creative productions—the program animated parks, streets, and civic spaces; provided paid opportunities for artists and creative workers; engaged local businesses and partners; and created accessible cultural experiences for residents and visitors across a wide range of formats, including performances, festivals, exhibitions, installations, neighborhood activations, and media-based work.

In 2025, Art of Recovery funded 33 projects, allocating \$144,750 in support. Of these, 11 projects directly addressed fire recovery and community healing, offering opportunities for connection, reflection, and collective care for those impacted by the Palisades Fire. Through these efforts, AoR played a key role in helping artists, cultural workers, and community organizations respond meaningfully to evolving community needs.

MICROGRANT PROGRAM

The AoR Microgrant Program provides grants of up to \$5,000 to support projects that activate public space, engage residents, and build community connection. In 2025, microgrants supported a broad range of small-scale, high-impact projects, with priority given to first-time applicants and initiatives that centered Santa Monica residents and enliven public space.

PRODUCING PARTNERS

AoR Producing Partners is an RFP-based program that partners with and supports larger-scale creative production led by arts and cultural organizations, collectives, and individual producers. In 2025, 13 Producing Partner projects were supported, including family-focused programming, music festivals, cultural celebrations, citywide arts events, and neighborhood-based initiatives. Partners included local business districts, arts organizations, and community collaborators, with additional partners selected for future cycles.

AoR-supported projects and events are featured throughout this report, including high-profile public activations as well as smaller, community-centered gatherings, illustrating the program's breadth and its role in strengthening Santa Monica's cultural life in 2025.



Public Art

Santa Monica's civic public art program commissions new works and stewards the City's Public Art Collection, featuring works by local, national, and international artists and encompassing permanent artworks, a robust archive of temporary works, and the Art Bank, a rotating collection displayed in public facilities. The City's Percent for Art program contributes to the built and cultural environment with artworks made possible by both private development and public works projects. Ongoing programs include Acknowledge + Reframe Together, a series of civic reimagining projects that center

historically excluded communities. The collection is enhanced with work from artists in residence, artist fellows, and artists enlisted to contribute to other City projects and grant programs. This work is administered by Santa Monica Cultural Affairs in consultation with the City's Arts Commission and Public Art Committee and with reference to public art policies and guidelines.

Tanya Aguiñiga,
Manos Unidas
photo by Gina Clyne



Debra Scacco, *Water Map*

PUBLIC WORKS ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE For the Percent for Art funded program at the newly modernized City Yards, Cultural Affairs partnered with Public Works to commission a permanent artwork and host a civic-embedded artist residency, both centered on deep engagement with essential workers and the daily operations of the site.

The permanent commission was executed by Tanya Aguiñiga and resulted in the *Manos Unidas* tile mural installed in City Yards, on Operations Building A in early 2025, as well as several other smaller sculpture projects throughout the site.

Artist Debra Scacco was selected to execute a multiyear artist residency embedded with the Resource, Recovery & Recycling (RRR) and Water divisions of Public Works. During the course of her residency, she explored the lives of essential workers onsite through portraiture, a poster campaign presented on city trash and recycling trucks, and a park festival; toured infrastructure sites; held discussions about water stewardship with public agency and community experts; created a poster print for the Water division; and developed a culminating exhibit featuring artwork and documentation of the residency.

COLLECTIONS AND EXHIBITIONS

Santa Monica's Art Bank, established in 1984 and funded through the City's Percent for Art Program, brings art into public spaces and includes more than 200 works including sculpture, painting, photography, and works on paper by notable artists.

Art Bank installations and acquisitions brought artworks into City offices, the Miles Memorial Playhouse, and other public facilities, keeping the collection in active circulation. Temporary exhibitions included *Refractions: Contemporary Indigenous Art* at the Annenberg Community Beach House and *Laboratory for the Future*, the culminating exhibition of Debra Scacco's residency with Public Works at the Airport Arts Center, along with additional Art of Recovery-related displays across the city.

The division coordinated maintenance and emergency conservation for several key artworks, ensuring that existing public art remains safe, visible, and cared for.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Cultural Affairs staff supported mural policy language revisions and began laying groundwork for future civic memory, monuments, and markers policy development.



Administration Division

OVERVIEW

The Administration Division supports the department’s overall mission by ensuring the systems, resources, and operations are in place to effectively deliver programs and services. The division oversees a department budget of \$25,388,051, ensuring resources are aligned with community and department priorities, and maintains the bookkeeping for the Santa Monica Arts Foundation. Staff also coordinate procurement and contract preparation, conduct policy review, support operations at the Annenberg Community Beach House, and provide broad administrative oversight. These efforts help ensure transparency, efficiency, and the responsible use of public funds.



COMMUNITY EVENTS

In 2025, the Community Events team continued to support a wide range of public, private, and cultural events that animate Santa Monica’s streets, parks, beaches, and iconic venues. From neighborhood celebrations and athletic gatherings to festivals, demonstrations, and brand activations, these events play an important role in strengthening community connection, cultural expression, and local economic vitality. Throughout the year, the team partnered closely with residents, organizations, and City departments to guide events from concept through completion, balancing creativity, access, and public safety while helping bring ideas to life.

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During the year, the Community Events team permitted and supported 163 events, reflecting both sustained demand and Santa Monica’s role as a regional destination for gatherings of all sizes. In addition to day-to-day event support, a key focus for the team has been improving and streamlining the permitting and licensing process so it is user-friendly, transparent, and easy to navigate for both applicants and staff. This work includes the development of a new Community Event Planning Guide, designed to clearly outline requirements, fees, and available locations.

Special Initiatives

SANTA MONICA’S 150TH ANNIVERSARY

2025 marked Santa Monica’s 150th anniversary and the community was invited to celebrate shared history, honor untold stories, and imagine the city’s future, supporting public events aligned with the celebration’s themes of:

- Celebrating community history and diversity
- Honoring achievement
- Addressing historical inequities
- Fostering connection

Program Results

- 33 projects funded
- \$58,000 awarded
- Projects included staged readings, historic storytelling, veterans’ art, writing workshops, digital game creation, performances, exhibits, and community celebrations
- Over 80 events were included in a new community-wide online calendar enabling the community to explore all the events happening during the anniversary. Cultural Affairs will continue to grow and open the calendar to the broader community to ensure citywide cultural events are easy to find and access.

MAKE MUSIC DAY – SANTA MONICA

Make Music Day is a global celebration of music observed in 800 cities across 110 countries on June 21, the summer solstice, inspired by France’s Fête de la Musique. The city of Santa Monica has participated in Make Music Day since its inception in 2012 and provides support to neighborhood associations through its Art of Recovery program to present outdoor concerts.

In 2025, three neighborhood associations were funded supporting free outdoor concerts in neighborhoods across the city building community and bringing live music into parks and streets.

Impact:

- 3 neighborhood concerts
- Over 15 participating bands
- \$3,500 in project support



Looking Ahead

RAD will continue advancing a robust vision for community recreation, arts, culture and civic creativity grounded in access, equity, and community connection.

COMMUNITY RECREATION:

- Continued planning for the future Memorial Park Expansion Project, which represents a significant opportunity to enhance recreational amenities, expand programming capacity, and better serve the evolving needs of the community.
- Expanding Beach Recreation programming to further activate the coastline with inclusive, accessible, and diverse recreational opportunities for residents and visitors of all ages.
- Grow aquatics programming beyond the Santa Monica Swim Center by increasing utilization of the Annenberg Community Beach House Pool and the SAMOHI Pool, improving access and program variety across multiple sites.
- Increasing access across all recreational facilities by balancing drop in use with organized permit use, ensuring equitable availability while maximizing community benefit.
- Continuing to expand camps, classes, and community-based programming, with a focus on new and innovative offerings that respond to evolving community interests and trends.
- Evaluating developing, and enhancing services for special populations, including youth, teens, seniors, and individuals with disabilities, to ensure inclusive and equitable recreation opportunities.
- Strengthening partnerships with schools, community organizations, and program providers to broaden reach, enhance programming, and maximize use of shared spaces.
- Enhancing community events and programming that activate parks and public spaces, fostering connection, vibrancy, and a strong sense of place across Santa Monica.

CULTURAL AFFAIRS:

- Continued improvements to grants, artist support, and facility operations.
- Increased visibility of artists, cultural workers, and public art across Santa Monica.
- The opening of the City's first ever gallery in Bergamot Station
- Increasing rentals at Miles Playhouse and Bergamot
- Planning for the 2028 Cultural Olympiad
- Launching Digital Billboard arts program
- Cultural Affairs remains committed to ensuring the arts play a central role in shaping a resilient, inclusive, and creative future for all who live, work, or visit Santa Monica.
- Continued refining of systems, tools, and coordination efforts to ensure Santa Monica remains a welcoming, well-managed place for memorable and meaningful events.

ADMINISTRATION:

- Strengthening financial and operational systems to support long-term sustainability, transparency, and alignment with City priorities.
- Improving internal processes and cross-division coordination to better support programs, facilities, and community-facing work.
- Enhancing procurement, contracting, and policy workflows to increase efficiency, clarity, and responsiveness.
- Advancing administrative practices that support equity, accountability, and responsible stewardship of public resources.
- Building administrative capacity to support evolving departmental initiatives, partnerships, and community needs.

Commissions and Boards

Arts Commission & Arts Foundation

Together, the Arts Commission and Arts Foundation help ensure a culturally vibrant, equitable arts ecosystem in Santa Monica.

The Santa Monica Arts Commission is composed of nine members appointed by the City Council. The Commission provides policy guidance, oversight, and support for public art, funding programs, and citywide cultural planning. Subcommittees include Public Art and the Bergamot Ad Hoc.

The Santa Monica Arts Foundation is a private nonprofit organization created to promote the arts by raising funds from the general public, which are used to support City-sponsored art programs such as public art, festivals, outreach programs, and art exhibits. The Foundation frequently acts as a 501(c)(3) fiscal receiver for City departments, other Santa Monica-based arts organizations, and individual artists raising funds for public art projects.

Recreation and Parks Commission

The Recreation and Parks Commission is a seven-member body appointed by the City Council to advise the Council and staff on matters related to public recreation, parks, and open space. The Commission reviews and makes recommendations on recreation programming, park planning, and related budgets, and helps promote community recreation in coordination with public and private partners. Advisory committees to the Commission include the Field Sports Advisory Committee (FSAC) and the Santa Monica Aquatics Advisory Committee (SMAAC), which provide stakeholder input and recommendations on field sports, aquatics programs, facilities, and related operational issues.

Our Team

Jenny Rogers
Recreation and Arts Department Director

COMMUNITY RECREATION

Micah Akerson <i>Community Recreation Manager</i>	Eric Johnson <i>Principal Community Services Supervisor</i>	D'Ante Lock <i>Community Services Program Supervisor</i>
Joelle Simmons <i>Aquatics Program Manager</i>	Anthony Pezzetti <i>Beach Recreation Supervisor</i>	Jazzmyne Urquiza <i>Community Services Program Supervisor</i>
Danny Price <i>Principal Community Services Supervisor</i>	Heinz Davila <i>Aquatic Site Supervisor</i>	Noe Mendoza <i>Staff Assistant III</i>
	Shadi Eghbali <i>Aquatic Site Supervisor</i>	

CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Sofia Klatzer <i>Cultural Affairs Manager</i>	Lindsey Schoenholtz <i>Cultural Affairs Supervisor, Grants</i>	Naomi Okuyama <i>Cultural Affairs Supervisor, Public Arts</i>
Patricia Garza <i>Cultural Affairs Supervisor, Facilities & Cultural Programming</i>	Natalie Marrero <i>Cultural Affairs Supervisor, Cultural Programming</i>	Jade Rodriguez <i>Staff Assistant III</i>

Annenberg Community Beach House

Nan Friedman <i>Venue Manager</i>	Heath Hamilton <i>Cultural Affairs Venue Supervisor</i>	Francis Palacio <i>Guest Services Coordinator</i>
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ADMINISTRATION

Colby Bakke <i>Executive Administrative Assistant</i>	Jonathan Carr <i>Senior Administrative Analyst</i>	Joanna Rubio <i>Staff Assistant III</i>
Angela VonSlomski <i>Administrative Services Officer</i>	Melissa Zak <i>Senior Administrative Analyst</i>	

Community Events

Allison Ostrovsky <i>Recreation and Arts Administrator</i>	Rochelle Fabb <i>Event Coordinator, Community Events & Film Permitting</i>	Sara Reznick <i>Administrative Staff Assistant, Community Events Permitting</i>
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CITY COUNCIL

Caroline Torosis
Mayor

Jesse Zwick
Mayor Pro Tem

Lana Negrete
Councilmember

Dan Hall
Councilmember

Ellis Raskin
Councilmember

Barry Snell
Councilmember

Natalya Zernitskaya
Councilmember

CITY MANAGER OFFICE

Oliver Chi
City Manager

Susan Cline
Assistant City Manager

Peter James
Deputy City Manager



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