



MEDIA ALERT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA ALERT

November 16, 2022

Contact: Juan Garcia
DCA Public Information Director
juan.garcia@lacity.org

**Mayor Eric Garcetti
and
Department of Cultural Affairs
Launch Task Force
to Explore Options for a
COVID-19 Pandemic Reflections Initiative**

Los Angeles - The **Office of Mayor Eric Garcetti**, the **City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA)**, and **See Change Institute**, the consultant team selected to conduct the research and evaluation phases of the **COVID-19 Pandemic Reflections Initiative (CPR LA)** have developed a plan for the community engagement, facilitation, and evaluation of listening sessions to determine if the City should create a permanent COVID-19 memorial and to gather community feedback on the form(s) a memorial could take as well as collect potential site recommendations.

“The COVID pandemic has impacted all of us in a profound way, including through the loss of family members, friends, colleagues, and neighbors. This memorial will provide us with a physical space where we can honor and remember our loved ones,” **said Mayor Eric Garcetti**. “The memorial will also stand as a testament to our collective strength and resilience for generations to come.”

CPR LA was first introduced earlier this year with a request for proposals (RFP) for a consultant team to research, design, plan, facilitate, execute, and monitor the project. Through a panel selection process, See Change Institute was selected to facilitate a series of listening strategies, including a citywide survey and community listening sessions, and to use insights gained from the public to develop the project.

“Our team is excited to work with the City of Los Angeles, the Department of Cultural Affairs, and the Mayor’s Office to explore what the COVID-19 pandemic has meant to Angelenos and discuss options for a COVID-19 Memorial through this initiative,” **said Dr. Beth Karlin, Founder and CEO of the See Change Institute**. “This is an important step forward towards engaging our city in a collective process of memorializing the loss and lessons we experienced as a result of the pandemic.”

CPR LA is an outgrowth of the **Civic Memory Project** led by Christopher Hawthorne, the former City of Los Angeles Chief Design Officer. The Civic Memory working group, made up of historians, architects, scholars, and staff from city departments, began working in November, 2019 and concluded its work in February, 2021. Its final report, ***Past Due***, offers strategies to help a city-led approach to the production of monuments, memorials, and commemorations that feel authentic, equitable, and productive to Angelenos.

“In recognition of the many lives lost as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, this initiative will give the residents of Los Angeles the opportunity to honor the people we loved and to reflect, remember, and instill hope as we move forward in our recovery and healing,” said **Daniel Tarica, Interim General Manager of the Department of Cultural Affairs**.

In November 2022, Mayor Garcetti launched *Strength and Love, The City of Angels’ COVID-19 Memorial* to commemorate and remember those lost to COVID and those who have held the City together throughout the pandemic. During the 3-day memorial, Angelenos had opportunities to join nightly actions. Buildings across L.A. were also lit blue each night, and the Griffith Observatory hosted a white flag installation to memorialize the nearly 27,000 lives lost to COVID-19 at that time.

The CPR LA RFP stressed that before the city can begin to envision creating a permanent representation of the effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Angelenos, it is important for communities to heal, beginning with the need for personal reflection and contemplation. Thus, the focused attention during the first phase of CPR LA will address three key themes: **Honor, Remember, and Mobilize**. Honor the loss of ordinary citizens and city workers; remember and ameliorate the grief and disruptions to lives and livelihoods; and mobilize solidarity amongst Angelenos to come together to rebuild communities.

While most memorials mark a specific event or person, a permanent COVID-19 memorial will be the first that specifically recognizes the pandemic as an event that every Angeleno experienced simultaneously and collectively, albeit differently, and how memorializing this moment will shape civic identity in the future. Because the pandemic illuminated and exacerbated systemic inequalities, the ability to use this initiative to help communities process this type of inquiry and trauma in real time is important.

The RFP further stated that memorials can take many forms - outdoor plazas, water features, museums, landscaped pathways, figurative or abstract sculptures, gardens, and lighting installations. Memorials can also be temporary or permanent, in a single or multiple sites, and designed by an artist or architect. They may also take the form of a multimedia project (e.g., video, quilt) or an annual event or activity.

Through CPR LA, the city is supporting a new paradigm for engendering a civic dialogue, one that changes its role to be more of a facilitator in the conversation about this important public memorial. The direction a permanent COVID-19 memorial could take will come out of the community input.

See Change Institute’s consultant team partnered with experienced and leading experts to assist with: hosting sessions with communities who are in the process of, or are going through, trauma; research experience and stakeholder engagement with people in a post disaster context; survey design and implementation; and knowledge of community arts in the public sphere, as well as experience working with public agencies including cities, states, or federal agencies.

For more information on the CPR LA community outreach sessions, please visit: <https://culturela.org/pandemic-reflections/>

ABOUT THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS (DCA)

As a leading, progressive arts and cultural agency, DCA empowers Los Angeles's vibrant communities by supporting and providing access to quality visual, literary, musical, performing, and educational arts programming; managing vital cultural centers; preserving historic sites; creating public art; and funding services provided by arts organizations and individual artists.

Formed in 1925, DCA promotes arts and culture as a way to ignite a powerful dialogue, engage LA's residents and visitors, and ensure LA's varied cultures are recognized, acknowledged, and experienced. DCA's mission is to strengthen the quality of life in Los Angeles by stimulating and supporting arts and cultural activities, ensuring public access to the arts for residents and visitors alike.

DCA advances the social and economic impact of arts and culture through grant-making; public art; community arts; performing arts; and strategic marketing, development, design, and digital research. DCA creates and supports arts programming, maximizing relationships with other city agencies, artists, and arts and cultural nonprofit organizations to provide excellent service in neighborhoods throughout Los Angeles.

For more information, please visit culturela.org or follow us on Facebook at: [facebook.com/culturela](https://www.facebook.com/culturela), Instagram [@culture_la](https://www.instagram.com/culture_la), and Twitter [@culture_la](https://twitter.com/culture_la).

###