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**SUPERVISOR RIDLEY-THOMAS CALLS FOR FUNDING
OF COUNTY'S ARTS INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

He cites the many positive reports from participating student interns in the summer program, as well as representatives of hosting organizations

LOS ANGELES – On a motion by Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, the Board of Supervisors today voted to pursue using alternative funding to continue the County's Arts Internship Program.

Due to the current economic climate, the County's Chief Executive Office has recommended against using county funds to operate the program next summer.

In a report to the Board of Supervisors at the June 22 meeting, the CEO proposed that the County instead pursue federal stimulus money available through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Emergency Contingency Fund.

On Tuesday, the Board ordered the CEO to report back in 45 days on whether the funding will be sufficient.

"What this essentially seeks to accomplish, through the due diligence of the CEO's office, is to raise the level of support and continuity for this internship program," Supervisor Ridley-Thomas told his colleagues today during county budget deliberations.

As a possible backstop, Supervisor Ridley-Thomas suggested using cable television franchise funds to continue the program.

The summer 2009 Arts Internship Program, administered by the Los Angeles County Arts Commission, recently concluded with positive reports from the participating student interns, as well as representatives of hosting organizations.

“The interns gained priceless skills in an organized, nurturing and practical environment, which cannot be duplicated in a classroom,” Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said. “The organizations also benefited with the addition of a high-energy, motivated member of their staff, who brought fresh and creative ideas to the table.”

In recent months, the Board and the CEO have been examining all possible forms of funding -- not just for the Arts Internship Program -- but for other needed programs administered by various County departments.

Currently, the CEO has allocated \$369,000 for the County’s annual Christmas Eve Holiday Celebration, a six-hour seasonal music and dance show featuring more than 45 groups from all parts of the County.

Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said a possible solution could be to allocate that money to fund the Arts Internship Program and transfer the same amount from Cable TV Franchise Funds to the Arts Commission for the County’s Holiday Celebration.

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