

City of Dallas News Release

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City of Dallas

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City of Dallas Office of Cultural Affairs History

The Office of Cultural Affairs originated in the City Arts Program, which was established in 1976 as a division of the Dallas Park and Recreation Department. The purpose of the City Arts Program was to coordinate details of existing cultural programs and increase opportunities for cultural activities in Dallas.

In 1989, the City Council adopted the ordinance creating the Office of Cultural Affairs, a department within the City Manager's office, with a Director to oversee operations. Many of the functions of the City Arts Program were transferred to the new Office of Cultural Affairs, which no longer reported to the Park and Recreation Department. Also in 1989, the City Council established, by ordinance, the Cultural Affairs Commission, an advisory board of citizens to be appointed by the Mayor and City Council.

Today, the Office of Cultural Affairs (OCA) operates a budget of over \$15 million; oversees 18 cultural facilities, five cultural centers, and 300 works of public art; facilitates cultural services contracts for over 200 arts and cultural organizations; operates television cable systems and a classical radio station; and employs over 70 people dedicated to advancing the arts in Dallas and ensuring that all citizens and visitors have access to a broad array of arts and cultural opportunities.

Office of Cultural Affairs Timeline:

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| 1897 | First work of public art dedicated in the City of Dallas |
| 1921 | WRR radio station is licensed (now WRR Classical 101.1 FM) |
| 1976 | City Arts Program established as a division in the Dallas Park and Recreation Department |
| 1977 | The Funding Programs/Cultural Services Contracts department is established |
| 1981 | The Bath House Cultural Center opens to the public |
| 1982 | The first public art program in Dallas is established as the Art in Public |

Places Program

- 1986 The South Dallas Cultural Center opens to the public
- 1988 The Percent for Art Program is adopted by ordinance by City Council, providing 0.75% to 1.5% of certain capital projects to be used for public art
- 1989 City Council established by ordinance the Office of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Commission; oversight of City arts programs moved to OCA
- 1989 The Meyerson Symphony Center is dedicated
- 1997 The Ice House Cultural Center opens to the public
- 2003 The Latino Cultural Center opens to the public
- 2007 The City of Dallas OCA embarks on a groundbreaking arts education partnership with DISD and Big Thought
- 2009 Office of Cultural Affairs celebrates 20 years of excellence in Dallas arts and culture with special event, "20 Days, 20 Deals," offering special discounts to cultural events