



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council

Through: Genesis D. Gavino, Chief of Staff 

From: Angela Means, Director, Austin Arts, Culture, Music and Entertainment 

Date: September 30, 2026

Subject: **National Arts & Humanities Month and October 2 Kickoff Celebration**

The purpose of this memorandum is to share information about Austin's celebration of National Arts & Humanities Month this October and highlight opportunities throughout the month to recognize and experience the people, places, and stories that contribute to Austin's creative and cultural identity. The month-long celebration will begin with the October 2 kickoff at Austin City Hall and the opening reception for The People's Gallery 2026.

National Arts & Humanities Month is an annual nationwide celebration of culture, creativity, and the humanities. This year's national theme, "Stories Unite Us," recognizes the power of art and culture to bring people together, share experiences, and build connections across communities. In Austin, it provides an opportunity to celebrate the many stories, traditions, and forms of creative expression that make our city distinctive.

Throughout October, Austin Arts, Culture, Music and Entertainment (ACME) and the City's cultural facilities will join local artists, cultural organizations, and community partners to celebrate the artists, musicians, performers, historians, culture bearers, and creatives who shape life in Austin. Through exhibitions, performances, cultural celebrations, public programs, and community events, Austinites will have opportunities to experience and participate in Austin's creative community throughout the month.

Arts and culture are part of how Austin tells its story. They give us places to gather, ways to share our experiences, and opportunities to connect across generations and communities. Creative experiences offer joy, reflection, learning, and a sense of belonging that support individual and community well-being.

Austin's creative community also contributes to the vitality of our local economy. Artists and creative businesses earn their livelihoods through this work, while performances, exhibitions, festivals, and cultural destinations draw local Austinites and visitors to neighborhoods across the

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community, generating activity for nearby venues, restaurants, and other local businesses. Sustaining Austin's creative community helps sustain the people and places that make our city distinctive.

Arts & Humanities Month Kickoff: The People's Gallery 2026

Austin's month-long celebration will officially begin on October 2 with the National Arts & Humanities Month kickoff and opening reception for The People's Gallery 2026:

When: Friday, October 2, 2026, from 6–9 p.m.

Where: Austin City Hall, 301 W. 2nd Street

For nearly two decades, The People's Gallery has made City Hall a place to experience the creativity of our community. This year's exhibition will feature work by 105 local artists, selected from nearly 250 submissions representing the Greater Austin area. In the spirit of this year's "Stories Unite Us" theme, the exhibition offers an opportunity to experience Austin through the perspectives and creative expressions of the artists who call our community home.

The reception will include live music, light refreshments, opportunities to meet participating artists, and the start of voting for the People's Choice Award.

A Month of Arts, Culture and Community

The October 2 celebration is only the beginning. Throughout the month, Austinites will have opportunities to experience exhibitions, performances, music, cultural celebrations, community programs, and other activities at ACME facilities and throughout the community. A full calendar of activities will be available through the [ACME Events Calendar](#).

Please join us in encouraging the community to participate throughout the month by attending an event, visiting a cultural facility, experiencing local art or music, or discovering a program or cultural space for the first time.

National Arts & Humanities Month gives us an opportunity not only to celebrate what makes Austin creative, but also to recognize the people who create, preserve, perform, teach, and share the stories of our community. In the spirit of "Stories Unite Us," we look forward to celebrating Austin's creativity with the community throughout October.

Should you have any questions or concerns questions, please contact Morgan Messick, Assistant Director of ACME, at morgan.messick@austintexas.gov or 512-974-7873.

cc: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
Erika Brady, City Clerk
Jason Hadavi, City Auditor
Mary Jane Grubb, Municipal Court Clerk
Judge Sherry Statman, Municipal Court
CMO Executive Team
Department Directors