

# 2026 Chicano Heritage Month

By the authority of the Orange County Board of Supervisors, the following resolution is hereby issued:

**WHEREAS**, Chicano Heritage Month is celebrated in August to recognize the significant contributions of Mexican Americans to the history of the United States, and the terms "Chicano" and "Chicana," sometimes used interchangeably with "Mexican American," during the 1960s and 1970s to express political empowerment, ethnic solidarity, and pride in their Indigenous heritage; and

**WHEREAS**, the Chicano Movement, or "El Movimiento", was a social and political movement in the United States inspired by prior acts of resistance among people of Mexican descent, that worked to embrace a Chicano/Chicana identity and worldview that combated structural racism, encouraged cultural revitalization, and achieved community empowerment through advocacy work of individuals like Vickie Castro, Ruben Salazar, Corky Gonzales, Gonzalo Mendez, William Guzman, Lorenzo Ramirez, Dolores Huerta, and others; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1946, the Supreme Court issued a landmark ruling in the Mendez et al. v. Westminster School District of Orange County that declared school segregation of Mexican Americans illegal; some elementary schools throughout the County have commenced renaming their campuses in recognition of other named plaintiff families, such as the Virginia & William Guzman Elementary School and Frank & Irene Palomino Elementary School; and

**WHEREAS**, Orange County residents Ruben Salazar and Emigdio Vasquez made enduring contributions to civil rights, journalism, and the arts, with Ruben Salazar becoming the first Mexican-American columnist for the *Los Angeles Times* and the first journalist to bring the experiences of the Chicano community to mainstream media, and Emigdio Vasquez, known as the "Godfather of Hispanic artists," creating more than 30 public murals throughout central Orange County, including a notable work at the former OCTA Bus Terminal in Santa Ana, California; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2021, the City of Santa Ana became the first major city in the United States to declare August as "Chicano Heritage Month," helping to establish a tradition of Chicano Heritage celebrations throughout Orange County that bring communities together to honor the rich history and lasting contributions of Mexican Americans through cultural performances, art, education, and other community activities; and

**WHEREAS**, the Historic Orange County Courthouse has served as a cultural venue for preserving and showcasing Chicano art and history through exhibitions such as *The Chicano Collection/La Colección Chicana*, featuring images depicting urban life and the Chicano experience from 1969 to 2001, and *The Other Side of Memory*, a photography exhibition by Luis C. Garza documenting the Chicano civil rights movement; and

**WHEREAS**, Santa Ana College's Nealley Library houses the 80-foot MEChA mural, *The History and Evolution of the Chicano in America* (1974), painted by Chicano students under the direction of Sergio O'Cadiz, reflecting the artistic and cultural contributions of the Chicano Movement in Orange County; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the 2019 American Community Survey, people from Mexico comprised 11.3 percent of the foreign-born population in the United States, Chicanos/Chicanas have been a long-standing part of the culture of the United States, with an undeniable influence in education, public safety, infrastructure, economic development, culinary arts and governance; and

**WHEREAS**, immigration reform and the empowerment of immigrant communities through access to legal resources, advocacy, the protection of rights, and a pathway to citizenship are essential to ensuring that all

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individuals, regardless status, can thrive, contribute to their communities, and live free from discrimination or undue hardship; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS** proclaim the Month of August as Chicano Heritage Month and encourage residents to join in acknowledging and celebrating cultural diversity in our community.