

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 44**Is your organization a 501(c)3 nonprofit?**

Yes

According to your 501(c)3 letter, in what town is your official office located?

Hartford

Where will your project be performed or exhibited?

Hartford

Will this activity occur after February 1, 2023?

Yes

Are you a recent grantee?

Yes

Organization Name

Charter Oak Cultural Center

Organization's IRS Tax ID #

061026597

Principal Contact Name

Erica Willis

Title

Grants Coordinator

Emailerica.willis@charteroakcenter.org**Phone**

(860) 310-2580

Address

21 Charter Oak Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106
United States
[Map It](#)

Website<http://www.charteroakcenter.org>**Amount requested this application**

\$8,000.00

What is the organization's mission/vision statement?

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Mission Statement: Charter Oak Cultural Center, a beautiful historic landmark and vibrant non-profit multi-cultural arts center, doing the work of social justice through the arts.

Provide a brief history of your organization and its activities.

Charter Oak Cultural Center was established in 1979 to save the historic building we occupy, the first synagogue build in Connecticut, and provide space to showcase visual and performing arts.

We are a multi-cultural arts center, doing the work of social justice through the arts in the following ways: Our Youth Arts Institute offers tuition-free and audition-free classes in the arts to over 1,000 underserved Hartford youth, ages six through eighteen. Our Beat of the Street programming provides three opportunities for education, employment and self-expression to the homeless community through *Beat of the Street* newspaper, the BOTS Center for Creative Learning, and Eats of the Street. The professional multicultural performances and exhibits we present teach people about other cultures through the magic and power of the arts, explore the burning political and social issues of our day and are accessible to everyone because our policy is to turn no one away due to lack of funds.

Describe the demographics of your audience/people served by your activities.

Charter Oak Cultural Center's programming is, first and foremost, designed for those who otherwise would not have exposure to the arts, including primarily low-income, multi-lingual and multi-racial Hartford residents. Our key constituencies include the Hispanic and Latino/a, Black/African-American, West Indian, Asian and Jewish communities in Hartford and the surrounding towns.

Describe your organization's governance.

Our board meets monthly with an average attendance of 85% and our board reviews financial reports on a monthly basis. Our Managing Director closely monitors our income and expenses, reports to the Executive Director, and prepares monthly reports for our board. Our Treasurer and Finance Committee meet monthly to discuss where the organization stands against our budget, and the Managing Director consults with our Executive Director and Treasurer frequently between those meetings. The board evaluates our Executive Director annually.

What percentage of your board makes personal financial contributions to your organization?

Our board is comprised of 75% female-identifying members, 13% African American, 25% Hispanic, and 13% Asian/Caucasian members.

Project Name

Bilingual Theater Series

Project Description

This second installment in our *Bilingual Theater Series* will bring two children's shows to Hartford during Hispanic Heritage Month, both produced by the nationally recognized New York-based theatre company, Teatro SEA. "La Cucarachita Martina" is a rock-n-roll musical based on a popular Cuban and Puerto Rican folktale that teaches lessons in self-worth, happiness, and true friendship, all through the lens of Hispanic culture. "My Superhero, Roberto Clemente" is a musical that follows a group of friends as they discover the story of Roberto Clemente. This heartfelt show teaches lessons of perseverance and standing up for yourself, and the importance of family and maintaining a cultural identity against all odds.

Project start/opening

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09/15/2020

Project end/closing

10/15/2020

Project venue

Charter Oak Cultural Center

Project town

Hartford

Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

Admission will be offered free for anyone who cannot afford the price of a ticket. As is our practice, we plan to keep ticket prices low, charging five dollars for students and seniors and ten dollars for adults. We expect a full house, approximately 120 audience members for each performance, and we estimate a total of \$1,650 in ticket sales with about 5-10% of our audience receiving free admission. There will be one performance of each show during Hispanic Heritage Month, with exact dates TBD.

How do you intend to promote/market this project?

We will market the shows with posters placed at key locations in Hartford, including the public libraries and other organizations serving children and families. We will send information via email to all of our Youth Arts students, Hartford Public Schools, and the Charter Oak community. Our marketing will promote in both English and Spanish, and our marketing company will get the message out in a very powerful way, bringing us tremendous visibility for these plays.

How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?

Funding from the Roberts Foundation will be used to pay the \$4,000 performance fees for each of the two shows.

It will be our pleasure to acknowledge and celebrate the Roberts Foundation's generosity on all posters, fliers and programs, along with acknowledging in our social media posts, making it clear that this programming would not be possible without this funding.

What is your organization's definition of artistic excellence?

For us, artistic excellence is about content and aesthetics. We ask: Does this performance or exhibit add to an important conversation? Does it make us laugh? Does it make us think? Does it touch us? Does it teach us? Is it beautiful to behold? These questions are the lens that the Charter Oak Cultural Center uses in deciding what to present.

How does this project align with that definition, and how does it advance your mission?

When we apply these questions to "La Cucarachita Martina" and "My Superhero, Roberto Clemente," the answer is a resounding yes to all of them. These are rich, thought-provoking, beautifully engaging performances that, we believe, will bring joy and insight to young and old alike. Presenting these shows will advance our mission by bringing these high quality, artistically excellent shows to the Hartford community, and providing access to theater, and especially theater that reflects their own experiences and culture, to the Hispanic population.

How will your audience and the community benefit from this project?

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These performances are for everyone, for Spanish-speaking people and bilingual families, for people who want to learn more about Hispanic culture, for people who are interested in the arts and those who are interested in the subject matter, immigration and death, that these pieces, respectively, explore. They are for families and children. There are very few opportunities to see professional theatre that is bilingual, anywhere in New England. These plays honor Hispanic culture and Spanish language and, we believe, will be a source of pride for the Hispanic community. This will enable Hispanic Hartford families the opportunity to see their own lives, experiences, culture, and traditions represented onstage, and will provide a point of entrée into Hispanic culture for those who are not Hispanic, creating better understanding among people. These plays will bring people together to consider the important topics of immigration and death. They will be a gift, in many ways, for us all.

How will this project be evaluated?

We will evaluate the success of these shows in two ways. First, the series will be evaluated through audience response, including surveys as well as a community forum to discuss what people thought of these performances and what else they would like to see as part of our *Bilingual Theater Series*, as we move forward with it. The second evaluation method will be the success of our marketing and outreach, measured by number of attendees.

Cover letter

- [Charter-Oak-Cultural-Center_Cover-Letter.pdf](#)

Board list

- [Charter-Oak-Cultural-Center_Board-Member-List.pdf](#)

IRS 501(c)3 determination letter

- [Charter-Oak-Cultural-Center_IRS-Determination-Letter.pdf](#)

Financial statement

- [Charter-Oak-Cultural-Center_2018-Audit.pdf](#)

Last year operational budget

- [Charter-Oak-Cultural-Center_Previous-Year-Operational-Budget.pdf](#)

Current year operational budget

- [Charter-Oak-Cultural-Center_Current-Year-Operational-Budget.pdf](#)

Balance sheet

- [Charter-Oak-Cultural-Center_Balance-Sheet.pdf](#)

Project budget

- [Charter-Oak-Cultural-Center_Project-Budget.pdf](#)

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Does your organization produce an annual report?

No

Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?

Yes

Strategic plan

- [Charter-Oak-Cultural-Center_Strategic-Plan.pdf](#)

Have you contacted the Executive Director by email or phone to discuss this proposal?

Yes

Is your cover letter signed by your senior executive? on your letterhead? with your official office address?

Yes