

**Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 33**

**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**

Riverfront Recapture Inc

**Organization's IRS Tax ID #**

061045653

**Principal Contact Name**

Deborah Baker

**Title**

Director of Development

**Email**

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(860) 713-3131

**Address**

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United States

[Map It](#)

**Website**

<http://riverfront.org>

**Amount requested this application**

\$7,500.00

**What is the organization's mission/vision statement?**

## **Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 33**

Riverfront Recapture's (Riverfront) mission is straightforward: Connect people with the Connecticut River. We envision a beautiful riverfront park system that is highly utilized and widely recognized as a unique regional asset. Riverfront serves as a guardian of the river and its parks and provides cultural, recreational, and educational programming to engage our community. Last year more than 836,000 Greater Hartford residents, employees, and visitors entered our park system.

### **Provide a brief history of your organization and its activities.**

Riverfront Recapture was formed as a private-public effort in 1981 to reconnect Hartford and East Hartford to the Connecticut River in ways that would make the region a better place to live, work, and play. Our four-park system encompasses 148 acres of public riverfront land connected by roughly 3.5 miles of paved walkway with an additional 4.5 miles of wooded trails. Our oversight expands to 304 acres and a future fifth park on 80 acres of riverfront land in northeast Hartford and southeast Windsor, with significant Riverwalk extension plans underway; 20 acres is state-owned property.

Unlike many other waterfront development organizations, Riverfront is committed to bringing our community together in our parks through cultural events and activities and recreational programs. Riverfront has introduced free, regular weekday programming, like health & fitness activities, concerts, cultural festivals, and the Hartbeat Music Festival. Our Rowing and Adventure programs are fee-based.

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

Our parks welcomed more than 836,000 visitors in 2019. Event survey responses indicate more than 20% of public event attendees were from Hartford or East Hartford (64% were from MetroHartford). Nearly 60% identified as female and 40% as male. Respondents were 57% Caucasian; 13% Hispanic/Latino; 13% African American; 14% Asian; and 3% Multiracial, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, or American Indian/Alaskan Native. 51% of respondents were 35-64, 41% 18-34, with another 6% older and 1% under 18.

### **Describe your organization's governance.**

Riverfront's Board of Directors meets four times annually: January, April, July, and October. In 2019, 100% of elected Board members made personal financial contributions to Riverfront and our meeting attendance average of elected Board members is 64.5%.

Our Board Vice Chair moved out of the region for job purposes in late summer 2019. The bylaws do not require a Vice Chair to be in place and allow up to three Vice Chairs to serve, allowing flexible succession planning. Our Board Chair has indicated interest in stepping down in the next two years, and three Vice Chairs were elected in late April 2020. It is hoped that one of them will rise to the Chair position.

Two staff members (one full- and one part-time) handle our organization's financial and accounting duties to provide greater control over cash receipts and disbursements and the preparation of financial statements. Employees receive a manual that outlines procedures for all financial transactions. Finance staff prepares monthly financial statements, and the Board receives quarterly statements at meetings.

This executive committee meets eight times a year: February, March, May, June, August, September, November, and December. This committee consists of the chairman, vice chair, president, treasurer, CEO of Hartford or his/her designee, the CEO of East Hartford or his/her designee, the CEO of the Metropolitan District, the executive director of the Capitol Region Council of Governments, and the chairs of all standing committees. The Executive Committee reviews the annual budget for preliminary approval in December, and sends it to the full Board for final approval in January. The President and CEO meets with the Executive Committee to present the organization's priorities for the upcoming year and to discuss his/her evaluation. In a closed session, the Board Chair leads an assessment of the past year's performance.

Riverfront's audit committee maintains communication between the auditors and the Board. Riverfront's auditors provide an engagement letter before the audit and present the draft audited financial statements to the committee for review and discussion. The final audited financial statements are presented by a partner of the audit firm to the Board at its April meeting.

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

Our elected Board is 58.3% male and 41.7% female. The Board is 13.9% minority. 86.1% are Caucasian, 8.3% African American, 2.8% Latinx, and 2.8% Asian.

Minority Board members are at a premium in the community; we will continue to seek additional minority Board members in the immediate future and long-term including Board member candidates identified by their businesses as corporate representatives.

The average age of our elected Board has deliberately declined over the past six years.

### **Project Name**

Hartbeat Music Festival

### **Project Description**

The Hartbeat Music Festival is a free, all-day festival celebrating the local music scene; it is a partnership between Riverfront Recapture and the Professors of Sweet Sweet Music (POSSM). Our shared interest in utilizing Riverfront's unique waterfront performance venue to elevate the voices of many local artists has been well received by artists and the community.

The festival will take place Saturday, September 12, 2020 from 11 am to 9 pm at Mortensen Riverfront Plaza in downtown Hartford. From 11 am to 2 pm the festival will be family-oriented, with an emphasis on kid-friendly musicians, with activities such as poem-writing, art creation, drumming lessons, and musician chat.

Musicians will perform throughout the day on three stages – the upper plaza, main stage, and on a stage in a grassy area north of the Plaza. More than 100 CT artists applied to perform; confirmed artists range in genre from World music to Americana, country rock to jazz fusion, R&B to hip hop.

### **Project start/opening**

09/12/2020

### **Project end/closing**

09/12/2020

### **Project venue**

Mortensen Riverfront Plaza

### **Project town**

Hartford

### **Admission fees, attendance, and activity details**

This is a free public event. An estimated 6,500 or more people will attend the festival based on prior attendance and early interest expressed through social media.

We anticipate 22-25 musical performances, as well as kid's hands-on arts and music activities. Artists are so eager to participate in this festival that they forego charging their full performance rates in order to support this ongoing celebration of Hartford music.

### **How do you intend to promote/market this project?**

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Hartbeat Music Festival is listed as an event on our website and Facebook, as well as POSSM's Facebook page. A series of e-blasts to Riverfront's email list, as well as Facebook posts and tweets will promote the event. The event will be shared with a range of media outlets and signage will be placed in Riverfront parks.

### **How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?**

Support from the Roberts Foundation will be recognized on Riverfront Recapture's website and social media pages; in Riverfront Recapture's 2020 Annual Report; on the Hartbeat Music Festival webpage and related print materials, including the event banner; and in announcements at the Hartbeat Music Festival.

### **What is your organization's definition of artistic excellence?**

Riverfront Recapture defines artistic excellence by the breadth of arts and cultural programming we are able to offer, as well as the diversity of those served by such programming.

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

The Hartbeat Music festival aligns with our definition by inviting a myriad of musical acts from the MetroHartford area to perform at the festival. The 2019 lineup brought artists from several different genres and performance styles, including (but not limited to): indie and alternative rock, soul, bluegrass, reggae, and, hip-hop, as well as a youth drumline. In addition, interactive dance, drum, guitar and singing lesson were available, as family-friendly elements. This year's lineup also delivers an array of artists who bring original compositions from a range of musical genres including jazz fusion, soul, Americana, and world music. The addition of poetry feeds into the arts, as does creation of visual art in the kid's area.

The Hartbeat Music Festival advances Riverfront's mission to connect people with the Connecticut River by inviting them to enjoy a full day of free, high-quality local music at Mortensen Riverfront Plaza, our waterfront park in downtown Hartford.

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

Our large and diverse audience for past music festivals has been well-representative of the MetroHartford region. People of all ages attended, 36% of them with families. 99% of survey respondents were satisfied with their overall experience at the event, and at least 68% spent more than two hours, enjoying multiple performances. This free festival clearly benefits those who enjoy music, especially those who may not be able to afford performance tickets at other venues. Attendees also feel a sense of community at the event, with a diverse crowd in regard to ages, gender, and ethnicity that is not always found elsewhere. Additionally, the event supports the local economy, from the on-site vendors to local restaurants and attractions; our survey respondents indicated that 65% ate at a local restaurant; 37% visited another local attraction; and 22% used public transportation to get to and/or from the event.

### **How will this project be evaluated?**

The main goals of the Hartbeat Music Festival are to expose talented local musicians to a broad audience; attract a large and diverse crowd; provide attendees with high-quality entertainment; foster a sense of community among attendees; and encourage economic activity in Hartford and East Hartford. Riverfront will measure the success of this year's Hartbeat Music Festival by: working with local safety officials to estimate event attendance; collecting feedback from festival attendees through post-event surveys and informal conversations at the event; and using an event evaluation template designed for Riverfront by ESPN to measure the quantitative and qualitative impact of this event and assess its ability to help us meet our mission while remaining economically prudent. Feedback is utilized for assessment and planning so that we are able to make modifications to improve future events.

## **Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 33**

### **Cover letter**

- [2020.Riverfront-Recapture-Cover-Letter.pdf](#)

### **Board list**

- [2020-2021-RRR-Board-List.pdf](#)

### **IRS 501(c)3 determination letter**

- [2007-Riverfront-Recapture-501c3-Letter.pdf](#)

### **Financial statement**

- [2019-Riverfront-Recapture-Audited-Financial-Statements.pdf](#)

### **Last year operational budget**

- [2019-Budget-vs-Actual-Final.pdf](#)

### **Current year operational budget**

- [2020-Budget-vs-Actual-MARCH.pdf](#)

### **Balance sheet**

- [2020-BALANCE-SHEET-MARCH.pdf](#)

### **Project budget**

- [2020-Hartbeat-Music-Festival-Budget-Funders.pdf](#)

### **Does your organization produce an annual report?**

Yes

### **Annual report**

- [2019-Riverfront-Recapture-Annual-Report.pdf](#)

### **Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?**

Yes

### **Strategic plan**

- [Riverfront-Recapture-Strategic-Plan-2017-2020.pdf](#)

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### Other materials?

- [2020-Hartbeat-Music-Festival-Performers.partial-listing.pdf](#)
- [Riverfront-Recapture-2019-Roberts-Foundation-Grant-Report-Budget.pdf](#)
- [Riverfront-Recapture-2019-Roberts-Foundation-Grant-Report-Narrative.pdf](#)

We received a two-year \$100,000/year grant from Bank of America 2018-2019 and a three-year \$100,000/year General Operating Support grant from Hartford Foundation for Public Giving 2019-2021. That support bolsters park maintenance, cut by more than \$128,000 in response to the MDC funding loss of \$650,000 in 2020.

Additional budget reductions were made deliberately, so we can provide our parks system, events, and programs to the public to the best of our ability.

A variety of short-term and long-term funding solutions is in motion in relation to the MDC funding reduction, including hiring a marketing firm to assist Riverfront in communications, particularly with state leaders. Conversations with state leaders have gone well, and we anticipate a long-term solution will be confirmed by end of year.

Additional unanticipated financial challenges have arisen, due to closures caused by the coronavirus pandemic, affecting our Rowing and Adventure programs and their revenue.

### 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