

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 97

Is your organization a 501(c)3 nonprofit?

Yes

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

Wethersfield

Where will your project be performed or exhibited?

Wethersfield

Will this activity occur after February 1, 2023?

Yes

Are you a recent grantee?

No

Organization Name

Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum

Organization's IRS Tax ID #

060699245

Principal Contact Name

Anne Guernsey

Title

Director of Development

Email

aguernsey@webb-deane-stevens.org

Phone

(718) 614-2466

Address

211 Main Street
Wethersfield, Connecticut 06109
United States
[Map It](#)

Website

<https://webb-deane-stevens.org/>

Amount requested this application

\$6,000.00

What is the organization's mission/vision statement?

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The Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum (WDS Museum) has been owned and operated by The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America in The State of Connecticut (NSCDA-CT) since 1919. Our mission is to promote the understanding of colonial life and its enduring influence in the lower Connecticut River Valley through the preservation and interpretation of the museum's buildings, collections, and grounds.

Provide a brief history of your organization and its activities.

Located at the center of Old Wethersfield, Connecticut's largest Historic District, the WDS Museum is comprised of three professionally preserved, historically significant, 18th-century houses (including two National Historic Landmarks), each in its original location:

- Joseph Webb House, c. 1752, acquired by the NSCDA-CT from Wallace Nutting in 1919, where, in May of 1781, General George Washington and French General Rochambeau met to plan joint military operations that ultimately ended with the Yorktown Campaign. It is a National Historic Landmark.
- Silas Deane House, c. 1770, acquired by the NSCDA-CT in 1959, was built for America's Revolutionary War diplomat to France. It is a National Historic Landmark.
- Isaac Stevens House, c. 1788, acquired by the NSCDC-CT in 1958, was the home of a craftsman and entrepreneur reflecting the emerging middle class in the early 19th century. It is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

The campus also includes a newly-constructed, state-of-the art 9,200 sq. ft. Education and Visitor Center, a restored 19th-century barn, a Colonial Revival garden, and 8-acres of fields and woods, one of Old Wethersfield's last and largest open spaces. The museum strives to fulfill its mission through educational programs, research, exhibitions, and public tours, all geared to diverse audiences.

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

Visitors to the museum reflect the demographics of the town of Wethersfield's 26,267 residents: 86% White, 5% Black, 4% Asian, 4% two or more races, and 1% Other. The WDS Museum's primary audience consists of school students as well as heritage and history enthusiasts of all ages throughout the region and beyond.

Describe your organization's governance.

The museum is governed by a 27-member board of managers - who meet every month and are elected by the general NSCDA-CT membership who meet twice a year. The board regularly exceeds their bylaw mandated quorum guidelines and frequently exhibits 100% attendance at ZOOM meetings during the pandemic. A board-appointed museum committee includes viewpoints and voices from the broader Wethersfield community and beyond. A total of 100% of the governing board contribute to the organization.

Describe the diversity of your board.

While the NSCDA-CT is a hereditary organization comprised of females who can trace their ancestry to the founding of our country, they actively work to include diverse viewpoints in the work of the museum. Furthermore, we are committed to expanding our programs to reflect the community in which we reside.

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

A total of 100% of the governing board contribute to the organization.

Project Name

Community Courtyard Summer Concert Series Budget

Project Description

The WDS Museum would like to kick off our first annual music series in celebration of the opening of the Education and Visitor Center in our redesigned courtyard. During severe weather, the event will be moved inside. The welcoming entrance is already a popular spot; residents, including many families with young children, frequent the area, as well as tourists from near and far who come to experience the largest historic district in Connecticut. Our grounds are a constant source of enjoyment and delight – even before now. The museum sees performances this summer as an opportunity to engage in diverse ways with audiences. WDS Museum will showcase a variety of artists and genres - from African drummers to Latin jazz; from acoustic players to single singers; from emerging instrumentalists to seasoned musicians. Each of the historic houses will have a stationed guide on hand to answer questions and to talk about the role music played in the lives of the people who lived in the houses.

Total estimated project budget

\$6,500.00

Project start/opening

07/09/2021

Project end/closing

08/27/2021

Project venue

Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum Courtyard

Project town

Wethersfield

Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

The concerts will be free to the public every Friday evening in July and August (excluding July 2) from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm. We expect 50 to 100 people per evening or 400 to 800 people for the entire summer.

How do you intend to promote/market this project?

Targeted promotion will widen awareness of our music performances: social media - Facebook and Instagram; "What's New at WDS Museum" posts on the website; a press release; posting of information on Wethersfield town pages and other calendars across the state. Excellent audience collaboration opportunities include the Wethersfield Historical Society, situated across the street, and local restaurants.

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How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?

Of the total project budget of \$6,500, the vast majority of the grant will go directly to the performers themselves (65%), followed by staff (25%) and marketing (10%).

How will Roberts support be recognized?

We will acknowledge your support on our WDS Museum website, in publicity and social media, and in the NSCDA-CT newsletter.

What is your organization's definition of artistic excellence?

The museum's definition of artistic excellence is mastery of skills related to the arts and the ability to connect with the community.

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

We strive for excellence in what we do at the museum in terms of adult and children's programs, with meaningful interactions between museum teachers and the public. The WDS Museum would extend the same measure to artists who share our vision for excellence and who perform outside in our courtyard. This weekly music series will enable us to connect with the community in novel ways, engaging them with our organization and mission and broadening our reach. Our hope is that this type of event will encourage people to return to the museum and share with their friends and family. Courtyard performances will be posted on the museum's YouTube channel pending approval of the artist(s).

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

Over the last few months, the WDS Museum has made a concerted effort to expand our partnerships with the community we serve. In times of crisis with an uncertain and unknown end, we need the arts to bring us closer together. Art and music allow us to communicate from afar, generating appreciation and hope. The benefits of the arts go beyond academics to better health and well-being. The arts teach empathy and the ability to respond to the unexpected and these are precisely the skills needed in this uncertain time. Arts is a way to convey positivity. WDS Museum promotes optimism in its programming and our audience feedback continues to be overwhelmingly personal and positive. The series is a creative way to connect with our audience. Participants will be given an opportunity to experience the arts against the backdrop of our historic houses. The enriching cultural encounter joins live performance art with applied art in a unique and memorable way.

How will this project be evaluated?

The WDS Museum Community Courtyard Summer Concert Series will be evaluated in several ways. Staff will count attendance every event and measure attendance over time. The museum will also post a survey on Facebook to garner quantitative and qualitative feedback from the community.

Cover letter

- [Roberts-Coverletter.pdf](#)

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Board list

- [Board-Members-May-2020-May-2021.pdf](#)

IRS 501(c)3 determination letter

- [IRS-Determination-page-12.pdf](#)

Financial statement

- [Audit-2019.pdf](#)

Last year operational budget

- [WDS-Museum-FY21-Budget-versus-FY20-Budget.pdf](#)

Current year operational budget

- [WDS-Museum-FY21-Budget-versus-FY20-Budget1.pdf](#)

Balance sheet

- [WD-Balance-Sheet-01.27.21.pdf](#)

Project budget

- [Budget.pdf](#)

Does your organization produce an annual report?

No

Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?

Yes

Strategic plan

- [StrategicPlan.pdf](#)

WDS Museum reaches out to your target population. We have a loyal following among residents of central Connecticut. In 2019, we served almost 18,000 visitors, including over 2,000 students, chaperones, and teachers. About 11% of our students served attended Priority School Districts, specifically East Hartford, Hartford, and New Britain Public Schools.

While we did not discuss the project with the executive director, we did email a prospectus on January 22, 2021.

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

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Yes

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

Yes