

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 274

Is your organization a 501(c)3 nonprofit?

Yes

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

Windsor

Where will your project be performed or exhibited?

Windsor

Will this activity occur after August 1, 2023?

Yes

Are you a recent grantee?

Yes

Enter your Report Code

682109-Roberts2022

Organization Name

Windsor Art Center

Organization's IRS Tax ID #

261422815

Principal Contact Name

Sarah McKay

Title

Executive Director

Email

Smckay@windsorArtcenter.org

Phone

(860) 602-8319

Address

40 Mechanic St
Windsor, Connecticut 06095
United States
[Map It](#)

Website

<https://windsorartcenter.org>

Amount requested this application

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 274

\$10,000.00

What is the organization's mission/vision statement?

The Windsor Art Center celebrates creativity and inspires an appreciation for diverse artistic cultures by showcasing the visual and performing arts

The Windsor Art Center aims to reflect and enhance the aesthetic and cultural life of its visitors. The majority of the programs are free or donation-based. Since its inception, it has produced over 70 varied exhibitions as well as educational and cultural programming such as performances and educational programs for youth and adults.

Provide a brief history of your organization and its activities.

Windsor Art Center, a non-profit 501(c)3, is a place for the visual and performing arts located in Windsor, Connecticut. Founded in 2007, the Center is housed in a former freight house adjacent to the Amtrak line in downtown Windsor. Windsor Art Center offers educational programs and cultural events, visual art exhibitions, and performances showcasing artists from throughout New England and beyond year round.

In 2013, Windsor Art Center acquired the use of the neighboring Windsor Train Station building expanding its ability to serve as a resource and support for teaching of the arts. The Art Center renovated the train station to accommodate six artist studios, a classroom and community meeting space.

Actively involved in the community, the Windsor Art Center received the Windsor Human Relations Commission's Bridge-Builder Award in 2009 in recognition of its efforts to use art as a bridge for cross-cultural exchange and communication.

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

With nearly 30,000 residents, Windsor Art Center's vision is to make the arts accessible to all of its visitors from the Greater Hartford area and residents of the Windsor community.

The Windsor Art Center hosts programming directed by and for historically underrepresented communities. Recent programs include: LGBTQIA+ Exhibit – An Inter-generational Panel Discussion; Weusi- The Beauty of Blackness; Juneteenth Spoken Word Celebration; Women's Artist Collective; and FREEDOM exhibition.

Describe your organization's governance.

The Board of Directors meets monthly with a quorum. WAC has hired an Executive Director, Sarah McKay, to implement the strategic vision. McKay has a decade of non-profit cultural experience, most recently as Executive Director for Orange County NY Arts Council. Windsor artist, Trae Brooks, is the new curatorial Chair and Board Member who has a long list of solo exhibitions including Real Art Ways. The new leadership on our team is committed to DEI and fostering excellence in the arts.

Describe the diversity of your board.

63% of our board are members of the BIPOC community and include representation of visual and performance artists, Windsor Continuing Education Program, local libraries, and Art Professor from Trinity college.

Percentage	Race/Ethnicity
25%	African American/ Black
25%	Hispanic/Latino
12.50%	Asian / Pacific Islander
37%	Caucasian

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 274

100%

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

63% of our board members make personal financial contributions, while all members donate time and professional services. Some donate 5-10 hours per week for curatorial work, volunteer coordination, financial oversight, and marketing. We intentionally created an inclusive board that doesn't require a set giving amount, allowing for diversity in financial backgrounds. All board members help fundraise to support our mission, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and community.

Project Name

CT River & Roots Festival

Is this project related to the Visual Arts?

No

Project Description

CT River and Roots Festival presents internationally recognized musicians that speak to the roots of our shared cultures leaning into the deep history of the Connecticut River. This first annual CT River and Roots Festival will showcase the internationally recognized and award-winning musician Jake Blount who seamlessly merges centuries-old traditional songs with the trappings and techniques of modern Black genres. This "[genrequeer](#)" approach to the traditions has earned his music a place in the very same archives from which he extracts his repertoire. Blount fashions an "[Afrofuturist folklore](#)" that disintegrates the boundaries between acoustic and electric, artist and medium, and progeny.

Headliner, Jake Blount is an award-winning interpreter of Black folk music ranked among the best of 2020 by outlets including [Bandcamp](#) and [The New Yorker](#), [NPR](#), [The Guardian](#), [Rolling Stone](#) and more.

The event will showcase a minimum of three performers including regional musicians.

Total estimated project budget

\$22,750.00

Project start/opening

09/09/2023

Project end/closing

09/09/2023

Project venue

Windsor Town Green under a Big Top Tent with a rain plan at 25 Central St Venue (300 ppl capacity)

Project town

Windsor

Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 274

Drawing in an expected audience of 300ppl, the location requirements include all-accessibility access, a minimum capacity of three-hundred people with sufficient parking accommodations.

Paid: 150, Comp: 50, Artist Pass: 50, Sponsor Tickets: 30

Admission - General	\$20
Admission - Discounts for students, seniors, veterans	\$15

Comp Tickets available for continuing education students earning their GED and artists who qualify/ find cost a barrier to participation.

How do you intend to promote/market this project?

Marketing channels include social media, email newsletters, and distributing print materials. Additionally, we will reach out to local media outlets and community calendars to publicize. Collaborating with our partners, First Town Downtown, we will engage with the local business community to encourage sponsorship and collaboration. With collective efforts, we aim to generate excitement and awareness for the festival, and encourage attendance from music enthusiasts and community members alike.

How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?

The majority of the Roberts Funding will be used to cover performing musician fees. We also request assistance with stage manager fees, marketing, and sound A/V technician fees.

How will Roberts support be recognized?

The Robert's Foundation will be recognized as a key sponsor of the CT River and Roots Festival. Logo will be prominently displayed on all marketing materials, including flyers, posters, social media posts, and website. On-site announcements will acknowledge the foundation's contribution to the event. The program guide will include a dedicated section recognizing the foundation. Festival organizers will ensure that the foundation's contribution is recognized and celebrated throughout the event.

What is your organization's definition of artistic excellence?

Artistic excellence in the performing arts means creating an environment where everyone has the opportunity to experience and participate in the arts. This requires a commitment to programming that reflects the diversity of our community and promotes inclusivity. We believe in providing a platform for artists from diverse backgrounds that also considers the broader impact of the work, including its ability to inspire and provoke thought, challenge assumptions and norms, and contribute to cultural and social dialogue.

We strive to provide access to the arts by removing barriers, such as physical, financial, or cultural, that may prevent individuals from participating. We believe that the pursuit of excellence requires a commitment to creativity, experimentation, and continual growth. Ultimately, our goal is to create a space where artistic excellence is not defined by exclusivity, but by the richness of experiences shared by all members of our community.

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

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 274

This event will fit our definition of artistic excellence by presenting musical offerings of quality, creativity, and originality that present diverse performers and interpretations.

The CT River and Roots Festival reflects these values by providing a platform for diverse artists and removing barriers to participation including ensuring that the venue is accessible to people of all abilities and that ticket prices are not cost prohibitive using tiered pricing. This event creates a space where all members of the community can share rich experiences and take pride in their cultural community.

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

Raising the bar for musical presentations in our area, this cornerstone initiative will be key to generating awareness, excitement, and integrating the arts with the community as well as provide economic stimulation to surrounding areas of Windsor and the Greater Hartford Area.

Like other industries, the impact of COVID-19 has been devastating to CT's arts and cultural sector. The sector has lost millions of dollars in revenue from ticket sales, program income and events. ["CT Arts Alliance data derived from local surveys conducted by Designated Regional Service Organizations shows \\$24 million in lost revenue between March and April due to closing."](#) The state's arts and cultural organizations are very diverse, made up of museums, performing arts centers, theaters, galleries, community festivals, and more. The Town of Windsor is part of this broader community, and is honored to have the opportunity to partner with the Roberts Foundation in letting the community know, "*We are here*".

How will this project be evaluated?

Evaluation is based on various measures, including attendance and ticket sales, audience feedback, media coverage, and engagement on social media. Additionally, the project's impact on the community and the extent to which it achieves its goals of promoting inclusivity and diversity can be assessed through post event surveys. Success would include increased awareness and appreciation of Black folk music, increased engagement with the cultural history of the Connecticut River, and increased opportunities for local musicians to perform alongside internationally recognized artists. Qualitative feedback from participating musicians is also a measure of success.

Cover letter

- [Cover-letter.pdf](#)

Board list

- [WAC-Board-list-May-2023.pdf](#)

IRS 501(c)3 determination letter

- [WAC-IRS-Determination-Letter.pdf](#)

Financial statement

- [WAC-990-2021-1.pdf](#)

Last year operational budget

- [WAC-Budget-2020-2021-HP.pdf](#)

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 274

Current year operational budget

- [Budget-2023-2024-Sheet1.pdf](#)

Balance sheet

- [Balance-Sheets-pending.pdf](#)

Project budget

- [CT-River-Roots-Fest-Budget-2023-2024-Roberts-Foundation-Sheet1.pdf](#)

Does your organization produce an annual report?

No

Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?

Yes

Strategic plan

- [WAC-Strategic-Plan-Updated-2017-1.pdf](#)

Grant Report

- [Windsor-Art-Center-Grantee-Reporting-Form.pdf](#)

Other materials?

- [Jake-Blount-bio.pdf](#)

WAC's financial year is July thru June. Our organizational budget for the upcoming financial year (July 2023-June 2024) is in process and the anticipated budget has been attached.

There is a notable difference in our past year's budget and current year. We look towards a new phase in our financial maturity as an organization in securing sustainable diversified income with new professional paid staff. We have been volunteer run for nearly a decade, and are in the process of revising our financial management, annual reports, and budget processes. Our community has been resilient through the challenges of covid19 and the demand for a vibrant arts and cultural center has never been clearer.

(Please note: our new Executive Director attempted to contact the Roberts Foundation, but was unsuccessful and would be grateful for the opportunity to discuss this project in more detail.)

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

No

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

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 274

Yes