

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 148

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 August 1, 2023?

Yes

Are you a recent grantee?

Yes

Enter your Report Code

522268-Roberts2020

Organization Name

First Night Hartford Inc

Organization's IRS Tax ID #

222970922

Principal Contact Name

Jeffrey Devereux

Title

Executive Director

Email

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Phone

(501) 545-1534

Address

1429 Park Street, Suite 114
Hartford, Connecticut 06119
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[Map It](#)

Website

<https://firstnighthartford.org/>

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Amount requested this application

\$25,000.00

What is the organization's mission/vision statement?

First Night Hartford's mission is to broaden and deepen the public's appreciation of the visual and performing arts through an innovative, diverse and quality New Year's Eve program which offers the community a shared cultural experience that is inexpensive and accessible to all.

Provide a brief history of your organization and its activities.

First Night Hartford is a multicultural, artistically unique, New Year's Eve experience with countless professional musicians, artists, performance groups and exhibits. Our current mission is to broaden and deepen the public's appreciation of the visual and performing arts through an innovative, diverse and quality New Year's Eve program which offers the community a shared cultural experience that is inexpensive and accessible to all. The history of First Night began in Boston in 1976 with a small local group of artists who were inspired to create a new kind of New Year's revelry emphasizing community spirit. In 2000, more than two hundred cities hosted First Night celebrations. Since then, many cities have discontinued First Night celebrations due to a myriad of reasons, including the increased difficulty of finding funding. Hartford joined in 1988, and is now in its 33rd year of operation.

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

First Night Hartford welcomes a diverse audience. Our target audience includes the Greater Hartford area. Our event aims to attract all types of people across gender lines, age demographics, racial designations, and levels of physical ability, and more.

Describe your organization's governance.

The event is managed by First Night Hartford's Board of Directors and Event Organizer. Event planning is a year-long process. We set goals and objectives, create a 12 month planning timeline of tasks, raise funds throughout the year, develop on-going marketing, hire artists and performers, sign up volunteers, and balance the demands of scope, cost, quality, resources, and any challenges to produce the event. The Board of Directors meets monthly to manage duties oversee the Event Coordinator.

Describe the diversity of your board.

The First Night Hartford equity statement serves as the public declaration of our commitment but it also the lens through which our decisions are made. We are committed towards maintaining our current practices of diversity, equity, and inclusion across all of our events and internally with our staff and board of directors. The First Night Hartford Board of Directors is 60% people of color and 40% white, 60% female and 40% male.

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

100%.

Project Name

Main Acts for Hartford Bonanza 2022 & First Night Hartford 2023

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Project Description

Hartford Bonanza 2022 is the city's new Independence Day will take place on the 4th of July weekend of 2022. Hartford Bonanza came about after Riverfront Recapture chose to move on from their annual Riverfest celebration before the COVID-19 pandemic. We began hosting Independence Day programming in 2020, and re-launched the celebration as Hartford Bonanza this past summer. Hartford Bonanza aims to increase civic engagement and social cohesion through a day of family-friendly activities that include sports programming, local speakers, entertainment, and of course fireworks.

First Night Hartford 2023 will take place on December 31, 2022 and will include our traditional in-person activities, including our two fireworks shows. Our programming will include a myriad of professional musicians, artists, performance groups, and exhibits alongside interactive art installations.

We are requesting support from the Edward C. and Ann T. Roberts Foundation for our two main acts.

Total estimated project budget

\$230,000.00

Project start/opening

01/01/2021

Project end/closing

01/01/2023

Project venue

Multiple locations in Hartford.

Project town

Hartford.

Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

Hartford Bonanza is a free event open to the public. Hartford Bonanza spans three days and includes sports programming, local speakers, entertainment, and a marquee fireworks show.

First Night Hartford button prices are \$12 for adults, \$3 for youth ages 3-15, and free admission for ages 2 and under. We are estimating that First Night Hartford 2023 will see 3000 ticketed attendees. First Night Hartford is a day full of performances, exhibits, activities, and two fireworks shows.

How do you intend to promote/market this project?

First Night Hartford is a long-standing community event that benefits from three decades of promotion and community relationships. First Night Hartford has focused on increasing our digital marketing efforts which has included placing a bigger emphasis on social media marketing and email newsletter marketing – alongside traditional methods of print marketing. We also produce a program in partnership with Hartford News that is distributed throughout town in the week leading up to First Night.

How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?

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First Night Hartford will utilize Roberts funding to go towards a total of two major headlining acts, one for Hartford Bonanza, and one for First Night Hartford. Our selection criteria prioritizes innovative artists and bands that are from Hartford and have a history of quality work. If awarded, our funding will go directly towards artists fees.

How will Roberts support be recognized?

The Edward C. and Ann T. Roberts Foundation will be listed as a major First Night Hartford Partner and named the sponsor of entertainment. The foundation will be recognized through exclusive logo placement on a billboard, on our physical and digital program, on our website, our email newsletter of over 10,000 subscribers, posts on our social media channels, and acknowledgment in all print marketing materials including posters and event banners.

What is your organization's definition of artistic excellence?

First Night Hartford defines artistic excellence as work that is innovative, diverse, and high in quality. We believe that exceptional work pushes boundaries and creates dialogue. We also believe that Hartford has many exceptional and innovative artists that are often not recognized by institutions or given opportunities to perform. First Night Hartford prides itself in hiring high quality and diverse artists and performers from Hartford.

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

Hartford Bonanza 2022 and First Night Hartford 2023 are community events that directly support artistic excellence in Hartford. First Night Hartford has historically supported quality and innovative performances, installations, and experiences. Artistic excellence is one of the main priorities in our programming, and receiving financial support for two headlining acts would allow us to advance our mission through expanding our programming options, and would ultimately allow us to continue creating family-friendly, multicultural, and artistically unique experiences in Hartford.

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

First Night Hartford's mission is to offer the community a shared cultural experience that is inexpensive and accessible to all. Our Greater Hartford community benefits by having access to high quality and awe-inspiring community experiences that increase social cohesion and support local artists.

How will this project be evaluated?

First Night Hartford's main metrics of success include both qualitative and quantitative data from our post-event survey, in-person feedback, volunteer feedback, and audience numbers.

Cover letter

- [First-Night-Hartford-Cover-Letter-1.pdf](#)

Board list

- [First-Night-Board-of-Directors-July-2020.pdf](#)

IRS 501(c)3 determination letter

- [First-Night-Hartford-501c3-Designation-letter.pdf](#)

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Financial statement

- [2.28.19-income-statement-1.pdf](#)

Last year operational budget

- [First-Night-2020-Budget-vs-actuals-Sheet1-1.pdf](#)

Current year operational budget

- [First-Night-2021-Budget-vs-Actual-Sheet1.pdf](#)

Balance sheet

- [Balance-Sheet-as-of-7_27_2020-Sheet1.pdf](#)

Project budget

- [First-Night-2021-Finale-Budget-Sheet1.pdf](#)

Does your organization produce an annual report?

No

Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?

No

Grant Report

- [First-Night-Hartford-Grantee-Reporting1.pdf](#)

First Night Hartford is currently conducting strategic planning and will have a strategic plan at the end of 2021.

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