

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 93

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

702766-Roberts2020

Organization Name

Out Film CT, Inc.

Organization's IRS Tax ID #

222990670

Principal Contact Name

Jennifer Kaplan

Title

Director of Marketing

Email

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Phone

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Address

32 Watch Hill Circle
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[Map It](#)

Website

<http://www.outfilmct.org>

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 93**Amount requested this application**

\$5,000.00

What is the organization's mission/vision statement?

The mission of OutFilm CT is to entertain, educate and promote community through the exhibition of LGBTQ+ films.

Our vision is to provide an essential forum for original, creative voices, and viewpoints, which are often not available in the mainstream media, particularly in the greater Hartford area. Our hope is that our films and discussions will foster diversity, understanding and acceptance, which can inspire positive change for the LGBTQ+ community.

Describe the diversity of your board.

As an LGBTQ organization, Out Film CT is deeply committed to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the community. We strive to select a film lineup that includes all parts of the community, so that all facets of the community can see their lives represented on screen.

The board of directors consists of 5 members: 2 female and 3 male. The racial/ethnic diversity is 1 Hispanic/Latinx and 4 White.

Our screening committee comprises African American, Latino and White members.

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

Currently, 80% of board members make personal financial contributions to the organization. All board members give to the organization through significant commitment of volunteer time.

Detail any changes since your last application.

Since the COVID Pandemic and the lockdown occurred in March 2020, we have had to make changes to our traditional in-person 9-day film festival. We moved the traditionally held June festival to October 2020 (thinking we could have more in-person screenings - not realizing the severity of the Pandemic). We provided 3 screenings at the Manchester Parkade Cinemas Drive-In. The remainder of the film programs was virtual. We had to create a completely new structure for uploading the films digitally, learning the ins and outs of a new virtual film festival platform, creating descriptions and ticket pricing and providing 72 hour availability for each film online. Additionally, we created and shared a mix of 15 pre-recorded and live Question & Answer sessions that complemented the films we were screening. Those sessions were then uploaded to the film page for each ticket purchaser to be able to watch at his/her/their leisure. This is the largest number and farthest-spanning assortment of Q & A's we have ever had, including filmmakers and special guests from as far away as Germany, UK, Russia, New Zealand, Australia, and Brazil.

Organizationally we also have added a new co-director Jaime Ortega, who joins our stalwart director Shane Engstrom, who has been with the festival for 21 years, serving as director for 13 and secretary for 7 years. Marina Yurieva, a previous screening committee member, stepped into the Vice President role.

Project Name

CT LGBTQ Film Festival

Project Description

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The Connecticut LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer) Film Festival is a distinctive cultural event that brings films, producers, directors and actors to the community to inspire dialogue, increase awareness of important issues and celebrate the lives of our LGBTQ community. Out Film CT provides an essential forum for original, creative voices, opinions and viewpoints, which are often overlooked in the mainstream media.

The film festival will be celebrating its **34th year in 2021!** Over 60 LGBTQ features, documentaries and short films will be screened during the 10-day festival, from June 4-13, 2021. The Film Festival is the largest LGBTQ arts and cultural event in the state.

We attract close to 2,000 audience members from all over Connecticut as well as Western Massachusetts and New York.

Due to the festival's growing prominence, we have already received over 325 submissions for this year's festival and they continue to come in!

Project start/opening

06/04/2021

Project end/closing

06/13/2021

Project venue

Cinestudio, Manchester Parkade drive in and online

Project town

Hartford and Manchester and beyond!

Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

\$20 - Opening and Closing night which include receptions

\$10 - General admission, \$8 Student/Senior admission

\$10 - Virtual admission, \$15 Virtual household admission

\$35 - 5-Show pass (in-person or virtual)

\$100 - Festi-Pass (good for all shows)

Ticket revenue accounts for only 15-20% of our income. The remainder is corporate/foundation support, friends of the festival, advertising income and silent auction.

How do you intend to promote/market this project?

Please see the attached 2021 Marketing Plan.

How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?

Funding from the Roberts Foundation will go directly towards funding expenses related to the virtual film festival platform, allowing members of the community who are not comfortable attending screenings in public to participate in the festival. Additionally, we will use some of that funding to provide film awards for excellence in craft and filmmaking for those films that win the audience and jury awards.

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How will Roberts support be recognized?

We are requesting that the Roberts Foundation serve as a Diamond sponsor at the \$5,000 level. We have attached a sponsorship benefits sheet to this grant so you can review all the options.

What is your organization's definition of artistic excellence?

For Out Film CT, artistic excellence is the ability of a filmmaker to transport and immerse audience members in a world that they may not be familiar with. The best films have the ability to combine visually captivating cinematography, realistic acting, and intriguing storytelling that illuminate and celebrate the LGBTQ experience.

For a documentary, many of these same elements apply in addition to offering perspectives and insights into a subject matter that the viewers were not aware.

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

Out Film CT's mission is to entertain, educate and promote community through LGBTQ+ film. The CT LGBTQ Film Festival has brought that mission to life for the past 33 years. In a world where the LGBTQ community faces persecution from bullies and even political figures, it is important to open the dialogue about issues affecting the LGBTQ community. Film has the ability to bring people of very different backgrounds together in a shared, safe space, and it allows audience members to see on the big screen the stories of individuals who may share in their experience, letting them know they are not alone. Q&A sessions allow audience members to engage and gain knowledge about the art of filmmaking that they would never be able to experience. The festival provides Audience and Jury Awards awards for films that tell stories that are particularly important to shine a light upon. In these ways, we succeed in advancing our mission while rewarding artistic excellence.

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

Even in this era of myriad communication methods, people who are in minority populations can feel isolated. With the COVID Pandemic, people are feeling more isolated than ever, as they've had limitations on physical distancing for almost a year now. The festival brings a diverse group of people together to share in celebration of the many facets of the LGBTQ community. You don't feel alone when you see your stories on screen and when sitting in a theatre with people who are like you. This acknowledgement can be very affirming for those who are not involved in LGBTQ groups and even those who are.

How will this project be evaluated?

Our audience members vote on Audience Awards for all films screened, so we know very quickly how successful we were at bringing stories that impact and energize the community through their votes.

After the festival is completed in June, we also send out a survey to our email list, obtaining information about how well the festival is meeting their needs. We have found these surveys to be most enlightening and can help shape future festivals.

Cover letter

- [robertsfoundation.pdf](#)

Current year operational budget

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- [Current-Year-Operational-Budget-Out-Film-CT.pdf](#)

Balance sheet

- [Balance-Sheet-Out-Film-CT-as-of-1.31.2021.pdf](#)

Project budget

- [Project-Budget-Out-Film-CT- V2.pdf](#)

Does your organization produce an annual report?

No

Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?

No

Grant Report

- [Out-Film-CT-Inc.-Grantee-Reporting-Form-20211.pdf](#)

Other materials?

- [Detailed-Event-Description.2021.pdf](#)
- [SponsorSheet_OutFilmCT_2021_Revised.pdf](#)

We were so pleased to receive a \$3,000 grant from the Roberts Foundation in 2020. We were thrilled to be able to partner with you in helping Out Film CT provide one of our most diverse and outstanding array of films and programs and hope to continue to build our relationship. We are very careful stewards of our finances, spending wisely and not above our means, while raising the revenue needed in a variety of ways.

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