

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 117

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

114045-Roberts2020

Organization Name

Night Fall, Inc.

Organization's IRS Tax ID #

463282277

Principal Contact Name

Anne Cubberly

Title

Executive/Artistic Director

Email

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Phone

(860) 490-6645

Address

45 Church Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06103
United States
[Map It](#)

Website

<http://www.nightfallhartford.org>

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Amount requested this application

\$10,000.00

What is the organization's mission/vision statement?

Mission: Night Fall brings the people of Greater Hartford together every fall to showcase Hartford's artists, parks and creative spirit through a free and magical performance.

Provide a brief history of your organization and its activities.

In 2012, Night Fall burst on to the Hartford scene, attracting an audience of nearly 1K people to witness the artistic visions of Anne Cubberly, Steve Mitchell, and LB Muñoz come to life. Since then, Night Fall has grown in both production value and attendance, hosting successful events in Pope Park (2013/2018: 4K), Colt Park (2014/2019: 3.5K), Keney Park (2015: 5K), Elizabeth Park (2016: 5K), and Bushnell Park (2017: 5K). In 2020, nearly 2K households watched the Night Fall movie online in addition to those who watched the broadcast on public access television.

Along with the annual production, Night Fall has an ongoing presence in the Hartford community through participation in local and regional events. These appearances provide performance opportunities for puppeteers and touchpoints to talk about the production with people who can attend, volunteer, or audition for the production. In addition, public workshops in costume construction, giant puppet manipulation, banners and site décor, and lantern making offer community participation for Hartford residents.

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

Night Fall is a free event, which breaks down economic barriers and brings a large and diverse group of community members together for a shared artistic experience. Night Fall is artistically accessible to people of all ages and non-English speakers providing a cultural experience for a broad audience. Night Fall connects local artists with each other as well as the surrounding community cultivating a strong creative class, which is common in cities with positive economic development. Finally, Night Fall hires a diverse group of local artists (69 in 2020), pays them fairly, and supports local businesses.

Describe your organization's governance.

Night Fall is a 501(c)3 with a Board of Directors and paid production staff. The board meets once every quarter, plus an annual meeting. Our active and committed board has a record of 90% attendance at regular meetings. While it is not a board requirement, 56% of voting board members make personal financial contributions to the organization. Since our last application, Mellissa Craig has stepped fully into the role of Board President and Jeanika Browne-Springer was named Board Vice President.

Describe the diversity of your board.

Night Fall values diversity and practices inclusion. The diversity of our board reflects our commitment to equity and inclusion in the arts and the make-up of our community. 90% of our board members identify as female and 70% identify as Black or Latinx.

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

While it is not a board requirement, 56% of voting board members make personal financial contributions to the organization.

Project Name

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Night Fall

Project Description

Night Fall is a signature event held every October in a different Hartford park. This year's production will be created through a collaboration of local artists, dancers, choreographers, musicians, actors, and theater craftspeople. The work will be generated by these artists, embracing their unique forms of expression. These artists come from diverse backgrounds in every way—culture, education, artistic discipline, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and more. This collaboration nurtures leadership and skill sharing naturally occurs—creating professional development between artists. The work they create richly represents our communities.

This year's event is scheduled for October 9, 2021 in Keney Park. The pre-show event starts at 2 PM and the show begins at sunset. Each year, the show culminates with the arrival of "Solstice," a giant illuminated puppet, surrounded by performers and audience volunteers carrying lanterns built by neighborhood residents.

Total estimated project budget

\$177,241.00

Project start/opening

01/05/2021

Project end/closing

10/10/2021

Project venue

Keney Park

Project town

Hartford

Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

Night Fall is free to the public. In 2015, Night Fall welcomed an audience of 5K to Keney Park. In order to maintain proper social distancing, we expect that an in-person audience would be approximately 2.5-3K people. If the show is recorded and live-streamed without a live audience, we estimate that more than 2K households will enjoy the performance.

How do you intend to promote/market this project?

Digital engagement includes the new website, email communications, and social media. Night Fall will be posted on events calendars including GHAC, Hartford.com, and more. Traditional media outreach includes press releases and pitches to *Connecticut Magazine*, *Hartford Courant*, and more. Bilingual posters and postcards will be distributed to more than 100 Hartford locations. Yard signs will be posted. Night Fall also promotes the show by supporting community events with puppet appearances.

How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?

Support from the Roberts Foundation would be used to pay artists. The artistic collaboration process model is a reflection of Night Fall's commitment to equity and developing the artistic leaders of the future. It requires more artists to be involved earlier

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in the process which results in an increased budget for artist fees.

How will Roberts support be recognized?

The Foundation will be recognized on production marketing materials including the Night Fall website, poster, postcard, curtain speech, playbill, and the livestream credits.

What is your organization's definition of artistic excellence?

Night Fall's definition of artistic excellence is to create accessible artistic experiences with a diverse group of artists.

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

Night Fall is dream-like experience with little spoken word. The dream is created through large, moving visuals and giant puppetry, as well as dance, pantomime, and music. Using these art forms to tell a story makes the work accessible to people of all ages and languages.

Night Fall gathers the best local artists to bring the dream to life. By assembling these talented individuals, each with their own commitment to Hartford and their own art form, Night Fall presents an annual performance of the highest quality in a collaborative and creative environment.

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

The City of Hartford is financially beleaguered, suffers from social stratification caused by commuter culture, and lacks professional opportunities for local artists. Night Fall is a free event, which breaks down economic barriers and brings a large and diverse group of community members together for a shared artistic experience. Night Fall is artistically accessible to people of all ages and non-English speakers providing a cultural experience for a broad audience. Night Fall connects local artists with each other as well as the surrounding community cultivating a strong creative class, which is common in cities with positive economic development. Finally, Night Fall hires a diverse group of local artists, pays them fairly, and supports local businesses.

How will this project be evaluated?

Art becomes more visible in the community and celebrates Hartford's rich cultural heritage. Creating new relationships between arts and non-arts organizations. Increasing community participation. Evidence: # of participants at events. # of non-arts organizations engaged in arts programming.

Improve underappreciated public space to maintain the vitality of the city. Evidence: Community cleanup of space. # of attendees. Anecdotal evidence of site appreciation.

Provide opportunities for creative output and increasing interactions between artists and community members. Evidence: # of opportunities and people served.

Enhanced community pride. Evidence: Anecdotal evidence from attendees regarding project impact.

Expanded markets for artists work and leadership opportunities. Increased availability of resources and encouraging resource and skill sharing. Evidence: # of artists employed by the project. Percentage of budget as artist payroll. Future collaborations.

Cover letter

- [Night-Fall-2021-Roberts-Foundation-Cover-Letter.pdf](#)

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Board list

- [Night-Fall-Board-of-Directors-2021.pdf](#)

IRS 501(c)3 determination letter

- [Night-Fall-501c3-Designation-Letter.pdf](#)

Financial statement

- [Night-Fall-2020-990-EZ-signed-05012021.pdf](#)

Last year operational budget

- [Night-Fall-2020-Operating-Budget-with-Actuals-1.pdf](#)

Current year operational budget

- [Night-Fall-2021-Budget-with-YTD.pdf](#)

Balance sheet

- [Night-Fall-Inc-Balance-Sheet-05012021.pdf](#)

Project budget

- [Night-Fall-2021-Project-Budget-with-YTD.pdf](#)

Does your organization produce an annual report?

No

Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?

No

Grant Report

- [Night-Fall-Inc.-Grantee-Reporting-Form-.pdf](#)

Other materials?

- [Night-Fall-2021-Collaboration-Team.pdf](#)

Night Fall raised just over \$90K in contributed income in 2020, which included \$13K of COVID-19 relief funding. If Night Fall was not a recipient of a grant from the Roberts Foundation, the organization would need to seek out alternative institutional

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funding or solicit additional gifts from individuals. Support from the Roberts Foundation remains essential as we navigate a challenging fundraising landscape.

As noted in our 2019 report, Night Fall leaders gathered in early 2020 to evaluate the goals outlined in the 2019-2021 Strategic Plan, distilling the original 8 objectives to 4: Deepen the connection with the host neighborhood to the artistic product; Expand our education and professional development opportunities for Hartford artists; Double annual income from \$90-\$180K; Hire staff and establish committees responsible for the planning and implementation of programs, fundraising, marketing and communications, and board development. An updated strategic plan is in process.

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