

**Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 120**

**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**

968042-Roberts2020

**Organization Name**

Riverfront Recapture Inc

**Organization's IRS Tax ID #**

061045653

**Principal Contact Name**

Deborah Baker

**Title**

Director of Development

**Email**

[dbaker@riverfront.org](mailto:dbaker@riverfront.org)

**Phone**

(860) 713-3131

**Address**

50 Columbus Boulevard, 1st Floor  
Hartford, Connecticut 06106  
United States  
[Map It](#)

**Website**

<http://riverfront.org>

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### **Amount requested this application**

\$7,500.00

### **What is the organization's mission/vision statement?**

Riverfront Recapture's (Riverfront) mission is straightforward: Connect people with the Connecticut River. We envision a beautiful riverfront park system that is highly utilized and widely recognized as a unique regional asset. Riverfront serves as a guardian of the river and its parks and provides cultural, recreational, and educational programming to engage our community. Last year more than 744,000 Greater Hartford residents, employees, and visitors entered our park system.

### **Provide a brief history of your organization and its activities.**

Riverfront Recapture was formed as a private-public effort in 1981 to reconnect Hartford and East Hartford to the Connecticut River in ways that would make the region a better place to live, work, and play. Our four-park system encompasses 148 acres of public riverfront land connected by roughly 3.5 miles of paved walkway with an additional 4.5 miles of wooded trails. Our oversight expands to 304 acres and a future fifth park on 80 acres of riverfront land in northeast Hartford and southeast Windsor, with significant Riverwalk extension plans underway; 20 acres is state-owned property.

Unlike many other waterfront development organizations, Riverfront is committed to bringing our community together in our parks through cultural events and activities and recreational programs. Riverfront has introduced free, regular weekday programming, like health & fitness activities, concerts, cultural festivals, and the Hartbeat Music Festival. Our Rowing and Adventure programs are fee-based.

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

Our parks welcomed more than 744,000 visitors in 2020 despite no live public events; people simply enjoying and using our spacious parks. We tracked 12,407 Facebook (FB) and 3,009 YouTube (YT) unique viewers of our virtual Hartbeat Music Festival. Those viewers represent:

73% MetroHartford (27% from Hartford)

13% other CT

13.5% MA, NY, NY, PA

.5% out of country. This deeper reach is impressive and puts Hartford on the map in regard to engaging people with music.

Working within available data, we know the audience was:

Female – 42% YT, 32% FB; Male – 58% YT, 68% FB

Ages

25-34 - 35.6% YT, 27.5% FB; 35-44 – 34.5% YT, 37% FB; 45-54 – 11% YT, 20% FB; 55-64 – 19% YT, 16% FB. No views reported ages 24 and under or 65+.

Neither FB nor YT was able to provide information on racial affinity.

### **Describe your organization's governance.**

Riverfront's Board of Directors meets in January, April, July, and October. In 2020, 100% of elected Board members made personal financial contributions to Riverfront and our meeting attendance average of elected Board members is 71.4%.

The executive committee meets in February, March, May, June, August, September, November, and December. This committee consists of the chairman, vice chair(s), secretary, treasurer, the chairs of all standing committees, up to five at-large

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and ex-officios.

**Describe the diversity of your board.**

Our elected Board is 55.6% male and 44.4% female. The Board is 22.2% minority. 77.8% are Caucasian, 13.9% African American, 2.8% Latinx, and 5.6% Asian.

Minority Board members are at a premium in the community; we will continue to seek additional minority Board members in the immediate future and long-term including Board member candidates identified by their businesses as corporate representatives.

The average age of our elected Board has deliberately declined over the past seven years.

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

100%

**Project Name**

Hartbeat Music Festival

**Project Description**

The Hartbeat Music Festival is a free, all-day festival celebrating the local music scene; it is a partnership between Riverfront Recapture and the Professors of Sweet Sweet Music (POSSM). Our shared interest in utilizing Riverfront's unique waterfront performance venue to elevate the voices of many local artists has been well received by artists and the community.

The festival will take place Saturday, September 18, 2021 from 10 am to 10 pm at Mortensen Riverfront Plaza in downtown Hartford. The festival will feature family-oriented activities, with an emphasis on kid-friendly musicians, with activities such as poem-writing, art creation, drumming lessons, and musician chat from 10-2.

Musicians will perform throughout the day on three stages – the upper plaza, main stage, and on a stage in a grassy area north of the Plaza. Artists continue to apply to perform; confirmed artists range in genre from World music to Americana, country rock to jazz fusion, R&B to hip hop.

**Total estimated project budget**

\$29,160.00

**Project start/opening**

09/18/2021

**Project end/closing**

09/18/2021

**Project venue**

Mortensen Riverfront Plaza

**Project town**

Hartford

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### **Admission fees, attendance, and activity details**

This is a free public event. An estimated 6,500 or more people will attend the festival based on prior attendance and early interest expressed through social media.

We anticipate 22-25 musical performances, as well as hands-on arts and music activities aimed toward children. Artists are so eager to participate in this festival that they forego charging their full performance rates in order to support this ongoing celebration of Hartford music.

### **How do you intend to promote/market this project?**

Hartbeat Music Festival is listed as an event on our website and Facebook, as well as POSSM's Facebook page. A series of e-blasts to Riverfront's email list, as well as Facebook posts and tweets will promote the event. The event will be shared with a range of media outlets and signage will be placed in Riverfront parks.

### **How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?**

We will use Roberts funding to support artist performance fees, sound and lighting, and to assist with some overhead costs including staffing to organize and execute the event, marketing, insurance costs, maintenance-including portalets, trash removal, etc.

### **How will Roberts support be recognized?**

Support from the Roberts Foundation will be recognized on Riverfront Recapture's website and social media pages; in Riverfront Recapture's 2021 Annual Report; on the Hartbeat Music Festival webpage and related print materials, including the event banner; and in announcements at the festival.

### **What is your organization's definition of artistic excellence?**

Riverfront Recapture defines artistic excellence by the breadth of arts and cultural programming we are able to offer, as well as the diversity of those served by such programming.

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

The Hartbeat Music festival aligns with our definition by inviting a myriad of musical acts from the MetroHartford area to perform at the festival. Past lineups brought artists from several different genres and performance styles, including (but not limited to): indie and alternative rock, soul, bluegrass, reggae, and, hip-hop, as well as a youth drumline. In addition, interactive dance, drum, guitar and singing lesson were available, as family-friendly elements. This year's lineup also delivers an array of artists who bring original compositions from a range of musical genres including jazz, pop, blues, folk, soul, R&B, country, and hip hop. The addition of poetry feeds into the arts, as does creation of visual art in the kid's area.

The Hartbeat Music Festival advances Riverfront's mission to connect people with the Connecticut River by inviting them to enjoy a full day of free, high-quality local music at Mortensen Riverfront Plaza, our waterfront park in downtown Hartford.

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

Our large and diverse audience for past music festivals has been well-representative of the MetroHartford region. In 2019, our most recent live event, people of all ages attended, 36% of them with families. 99% of survey respondents were satisfied with their overall experience at the event, and at least 68% spent more than two hours, enjoying multiple performances. This free festival clearly benefits those who enjoy music, especially those who may not be able to afford performance tickets at other

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venues. Attendees also feel a sense of community at the event, with a diverse crowd in regard to ages, gender, and ethnicity that is not always found elsewhere.

Additionally, the event supports the local economy, from the on-site vendors to local restaurants and attractions; our 2019 survey respondents indicated that 65% ate at a local restaurant; 37% visited another local attraction; and 22% used public transportation to get to and/or from the event.

### **How will this project be evaluated?**

The main goals of the Hartbeat Music Festival are to expose talented local musicians to a broad audience; attract a large and diverse crowd; provide attendees with high-quality entertainment; foster a sense of community among attendees; and encourage economic activity in Hartford and East Hartford. Riverfront will measure the success of this year's Hartbeat Music Festival by: working with local safety officials to estimate event attendance; collecting feedback from festival attendees through post-event surveys and informal conversations at the event; and using an event evaluation template designed for Riverfront by ESPN to measure the quantitative and qualitative impact of this event and assess its ability to help us meet our mission while remaining economically prudent. Feedback is utilized for assessment and planning so that we are able to make modifications to improve future events.

### **Cover letter**

- [2021-Riverfront-Recapture-Cover-Letter.pdf](#)

### **Board list**

- [2021-2022-Riverfront-Recapture-Board.pdf](#)

### **IRS 501(c)3 determination letter**

- [2007-Riverfront-Recapture-501c3-Letter.pdf](#)

### **Financial statement**

- [2020-Riverfront-Recapture-and-Subsidiary-Audited-Financial-Statements.pdf](#)

### **Last year operational budget**

- [2021-Riverfront-Recapture-Organizational-Operating-Budget.pdf](#)

### **Current year operational budget**

- [2021-Riverfront-Recapture-BUDGET-VS-ACTUAL-MARCH.pdf](#)

### **Balance sheet**

- [2021-Riverfront-Recapture-BALANCE-SHEET-MARCH.pdf](#)

### **Project budget**

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- [2021-Riverfront-Recapture-Hartbeat-Music-Festival-Budget-Funders.pdf](#)

### Does your organization produce an annual report?

Yes

### Annual report

- [2020-Riverfront-Recapture-AnnualReport\\_Web.pdf](#)

### Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?

Yes

### Strategic plan

- [2017-2020-Riverfront-Recapture-Strategic-Plan.pdf](#)

### Grant Report

- [Riverfront-Recapture-Inc-Grantee-Reporting-Form.pdf](#)

### Other materials?

- [2021-Riverfront-Recapture-Hartbeat-Music-Festival-Bands-with-Bios.pdf](#)

Riverfront Recapture entered 2020 with cash reserves from 2019 as well as a considerable loss of funding from MDC. This drastic change in funding meant tightening all aspects of the organization.

The high level of use of our parks increased expenses on one end, while a milder winter and flooding season helped keep those expenses in check. We adjusted to the COVID-19 guidelines, eliminating one program's operation for the year, modifying another, and eliminating all public and private events. This resulted in decreased expenses as well as reduced revenue. In response to the pandemic, like so many nonprofits, we applied for and received a PPP loan, which converted to grant status.

Despite many challenges, we successfully managed expenses and generate support, ultimately closing 2020 with a surplus. Surplus funding is typically designated to a reserve fund for use in future years in which we may experience extreme flooding or other needs beyond the approved budget.

### 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