

**Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 174**

**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**

190417-Roberts2020

**Organization Name**

First Night Hartford

**Organization's IRS Tax ID #**

222970922

**Principal Contact Name**

Jeffrey Devereux

**Title**

Executive Director

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[Map It](#)

**Website**

<https://firstnighthartford.org/>

## **Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 174**

### **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 innovative, diverse and quality programming 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.**

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. Decades later, there are more than 100 First Nights celebrated in cities and towns across the United States. Hartford joined in 30 years ago.

The day is a multicultural, artistically unique, alcohol-free New Years experience with countless professional musicians, artists, performance groups and exhibits that inspire thousands of people of all ages to attend each year. It's also an affordable way for everyone to ring in the New Year.

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

According to the most recent ACS, the racial composition of Hartford was:

- Black or African American: 37.70%
- White: 31.25%
- Other race: 21.48%
- Two or more races: 6.40%
- Asian: 2.68%
- Native American: 0.43%
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 0.06%

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

First Night Hartford is composed of a nine member Board of Directors. 100% of our board members make donations to First Night Hartford, and around 70-90% attend all meetings.

### **Describe the diversity of your board.**

First Night Hartford Board of Directors demographics:

- % Board who identify as female: 55
- % Board who identify as male: 44
- % Board who identify as African American/Black/Caribbean American: 44
- % Board who identify as Caucasian/White: 44
- % Board who identify as Multiracial: 11

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

100% of the First Night Hartford Board of Directors makes financial contributions to our organization.

## Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 174

### Project Name

Collaborative Production

### Is this project related to the Visual Arts?

No

### Project Description

There is this perfect moment as the fireworks countdown approaches where there is a cross-section of our community held captive in anticipation of a moment of wonder. This past year we beta tested performance during the aerial display to great success. The joy in that moment encouraged us to think a bit bigger. As a culmination to the upcoming First Night activities, we will be introducing an elevated level of artistic integrity and production value to a decades old tradition. In our next iteration we will partner with Director/Producer taneisha duggan (TheaterWorks, The Juilliard School, Playwrights Realm), Music Director/Composer chad browne-springer (Phat A\$tronaut, The Juilliard School, Funnybone Records, and Eugene Morton (SXSW, S.E.E.D.S.) to create a 15-minute live performance that combines music, movement, light and story to journey through how we are connected to each other by virtue of our country (Hartford Bonanza) and a look back at the year that past (First Night).

### Total estimated project budget

\$129,800.00

### Project start/opening

07/05/2022

### Project end/closing

12/31/2022

### Project venue

Bushnell Park

### Project town

Hartford

### Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

Hartford Bonanza is a free event open to the public. We estimate that Hartford Bonanza's audience will see 5,000 people.

First Night Hartford button prices are the following: \$12 for adults, \$3 for youth ages 3-15, and free admission for ages 2 and under. We are estimating that First Night Hartford will see 3000-5000 ticketed attendees on December 31, 2022. 500 of the tickets will be complimentary tickets donated to local schools.

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

First Night Hartford is a long-standing non-profit arts and culture organization that benefits from three decades of promotion and community relationships. Over the past three years, 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. Our marketing strategy will still include traditional methods of print media and posting flyers at businesses in Hartford.

## **Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 174**

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

Funding from the Roberts Foundation will go directly towards paying artist and performances fees for the project.

### **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?**

Artistic excellence means working in a multidisciplinary fashion—taking the best ideas across culture and creating an unforgettable experience. It looks like collaboration and innovation in service of that shared experience. It also looks like thoughtful production values and high-quality storytelling devices. We want to bring the same level of production seen inside ticketed spaces, to the public for free, giving all people opportunity and access to the best creative experiences our minds can come up with. Artistic excellence also means creating a team to execute the idea that is reflective of the makeup of our city. We are committed to representation in artistic personnel, as well as rigorous inclusion across the project—because we understand that excellence must be measured through a diverse lens. And finally, we view excellence as contributing to a better life for all who touch the project, through robust compensation of their efforts, or through the value of their experience.

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

This event aligns with our definition of excellence through the artists we have selected. taneisha has over a decade's worth of experience in producing high quality theatrical experiences, and creating work. Eugene and chad are an unexpected duo of sound and story who provide authenticity to our interdisciplinary experience. Finally, the use of fireworks and aerial light displays to support exciting storytelling, brings an innovation and high tech element that makes this a truly unique event.

### **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.pdf](#)

### **Board list**

- [FNH Board 2022-2-2.pdf](#)

## **Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 174**

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

- [First-Night-Hartford-501c3-Designation-letter-1-2.pdf](#)

### **Financial statement**

- [Form990Package-4-1-2.pdf](#)

### **Last year operational budget**

- [FNH-Last-Year-Operational-Budget-Sheet1-1.pdf](#)

### **Current year operational budget**

- [FNH-Current-Year-Operational-Budget-Sheet1-1.pdf](#)

### **Balance sheet**

- [Balance-Sheet-as-of-2\\_3\\_22-Sheet1-1.pdf](#)

### **Project budget**

- [FNH-Project-Budget.xlsx-Sheet1.pdf](#)

### **Does your organization produce an annual report?**

No

### **Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?**

No

Our organization is currently working on producing an annual report for the current fiscal year 2021-2022, and will be publishing this report soon.

First Night Hartford is currently undergoing strategic planning, and will have a new strategic plan by the end of 2022.

### **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