

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 439**Are you a 501(c)3 organization in good standing with the IRS?**

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 April 1, 2025?

Yes

Are you a recent grantee?

Yes

Enter your Report Code

Roberts2022

Organization Name

Riverfront Recapture Inc

Organization's IRS Tax ID #

061045653

Principal Contact Name

Deborah Baker

Title

Director of Development

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(860) 713-3131

Address

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Hartford, Connecticut 06106
United States
[Map It](#)

Website<https://riverfront.org>

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 439**Amount requested this application**

\$10,000.00

What is the organization's mission/vision statement?

Our mission: Connect people with the Connecticut River.

We keep our regional park system clean, attractive, and open; develop new parks, park extensions, and points of access; connect to municipalities on both sides of the river; and actively work to maintain the river's health.

Local residents and employees engage in cultural, recreational, and educational activities, developing and supporting community; green space and Riverwalks provide opportunities to enjoy nature, relax and decompress.

Provide a brief history of your organization and its activities.

Riverfront Recapture formed in 1981 as a private-public effort to reconnect Hartford and East Hartford to the river, making the region a better place to live, work, and play. We constructed three and renovated one waterfront parks, all within the dike flood control system. Master planning for our fifth riverfront park is underway. Connected by a series of paved and unpaved walkways, a 2.5-mile segment is in the works, with new connections to Windsor Meadows State Park and nearby Keney Park, resulting in 6.76-miles of riverwalks along 5.87-miles of the Connecticut River shoreline and expanding our property oversight from 148 to 304 acres. Construction funding is in place with plans and permits submitted for two of the three sections.

Our regional park system enhances quality of life in the MetroHartford region by providing opportunities for people to enjoy the great outdoors along the river as well as to the arts. Public sculptures are on display in our parks year-round, with an online narrated tour of the 16-Lincoln Financial Sculpture Walk sculptures. Each summer, we hold numerous free public concerts, performances, and cultural festivals, thanks to many supporters. Fee-based recreational opportunities include our Riverfront Community Rowing program and dragon boating. As a community feature and alluring destination, we have helped make the Hartford region attractive to many current and prospective residents and employees. Over the past 24 years, we have welcomed 18.7 million people into our regional park system, averaging 813,00 people each year.

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

In 2024, 935,766 park visitors enhanced the vitality of the region in our parks and through our events. Our combined surveys report:

- 18%-35-44; 22%-25-34; 15%-45-54; 18%-55-64; 4%-18-24; 15%-65+; 8%-blank
- 58%-female; 34%-male; 1% non-binary; 8%-blank
- 51%-Caucasian; 11%-Asian; 12%-Black; 8%-Latin/Hispanic; 1%-multiracial, 2%-Native American Indian/Alaska Native; 1% Pacific Islander/Hawaiian; 16%-blank
- 17%-Hartford; 69%-Hartford County; 13% out-of-state/country; 16%-other CT towns

Describe your organization's governance.

Riverfront's Board of Directors meets quarterly, In 2024, 100% made personal financial contributions to Riverfront; meeting attendance of elected Board members-64%.

The Executive Committee: the chair, vice-chairs, secretary, treasurer, committee chairs, up to five at-large, and ex officio members meets eight times. Minor leadership changes: two new committee chairs filled vacated roles.

Please describe the diversity of your board by gender and ethnicity/race. Use percentages.

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 439

Our elected Board is 53% male and 47% female. The Board is 68% Caucasian and 32% minority: 16% African American; 8% Latino; 8% Asian/Asian American.

We have continued to make strides in representation and are very close to US Census data for Hartford County. When replacing Board members serving as corporate representatives, we ask them to consider diversity, skills, and personal interest. Age diversity is also important and we work to achieve balance.

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

100%

Project Name

Hartbeat Music Festival

Is this project related to the Visual Arts?

No

Project Description

A free, all-day festival, the Hartbeat Music Festival (HBMF)) celebrates local, original music. Riverfront Recapture and the Professors of Sweet Sweet Music (POSSM) continue to grow our shared interest in utilizing Riverfront's unique waterfront performance venue to elevate the voices and instruments of many local artists.

With more than 100 bands applying to participate, we appreciate working with the HBMF committee to review applications and select a broad mix of musical genres and band sizes to ensure a variety of representation that will appeal to audiences. Artists have typically reduced their full performance rates in order to support this ongoing celebration of Hartford music, and to perform in this festival and venue. Three stages allow for rotation of bands so that there is constantly at least one, if not two, ongoing performances. This keeps the audiences moving between spaces, hearing different music styles that they might not have expected, discovering new enjoyment.

Total estimated project budget

\$73,158.00

Project start/opening

06/14/2025

Project end/closing

06/14/2025

Project venue

Mortensen Riverfront Plaza

Project town

Hartford

Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

There are no admission fees; all performances (21 planned) are open to the public. We anticipate 5,000 attendees in this kick-off to the Riverfront event season. The one-day event features blues, indie rock, soul, bluegrass, folk, pop, Latin, country,

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 439

Afrobeats, and more. Performances are on the upper plaza and main stages with acoustic/small groups on the adjacent CT Science Center Plaza. If funding permits, we would add a mid-day and evening headliner, with a corresponding attendance boost.

How do you intend to promote/market this project?

A multi-event press release will be shared. The event will be included on Riverfront's website and Facebook, and POSSM's Facebook page with Facebook ads closer to the June event date. All events will be shared to our email list via an e-blast series and shared with a range of media outlets. Signage placed in Riverfront's parks, prior to and during the event, and distributed event rack cards, will also promote the event. We hope to work with CT Public Radio on some promotional ads or interviews.

How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?

Roberts funding will be used primarily to support artist performance fees, sound and lighting; a small portion may assist with some overhead costs related to organizing and executing the event such as event and marketing staff.

How will Roberts support be recognized?

The Roberts Foundation will be recognized on Riverfront Recapture's website and social media pages; in Riverfront Recapture's 2026 Annual Report; on the HBMF webpage and related printed materials, including the event banner and other event signage; and in announcements at the Heartbeat Music 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. We strive to include original music, dance, and art as possible, as another measure of excellence.

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

The Heartbeat Music Festival supports our mission to connect people with the Connecticut River, as it draws them to our waterfront park in downtown Hartford to enjoy a full day of free, high-quality local music at the river's edge. While the event's focus is on music, other artists and artisans are encouraged to participate with interactive elements or booth space to show and sell their wares.

Multiple music styles helps to attract and welcome all people residing in greater Hartford to our Riverfront park system. Past lineups brought artists from several different genres and performance styles such as bluegrass, reggae, soul, indie and alternative rock, hip-hop and family-friendly elements of interactive dance and music to further engage those attending. This year's lineup delivers an array of artists bringing original composition and lyrics, several with new albums and music for 2025 release. We hope this inspires young musicians in the audience to further explore their talents.

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

The festival is a place and event that engenders a community feel, drawing and encouraging people of all ages, genders, ethnicities, and socioeconomic backgrounds to come together in celebration of music and sound. A number of our attendees may not be able to afford performance tickets at other venues. Offering a diversity of music types, with slightly overlapping performances, encourages people to explore music they may not have otherwise listened to, broadening their scope.

Attendees 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 2024

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 439

survey respondents indicated that 7% ate a local restaurant, 15% visited another local attraction, 5% purchased retail items, and 6% used public transportation to get to and/or from the event.

How will this project be evaluated?

Riverfront will measure the success of this year's events by: working internally and with local safety officials to estimate event attendance; collecting feedback from festival attendees through at- and post-event surveys and informal conversations during the event. Feedback is utilized for assessment and planning so that we are able to make modifications to improve the experience for attendees, as well as vendors and performers. We receive additional feedback through ongoing meetings with the HBMF committee.

Cover letter

- [2025-Riverfront-Recapture-Cover-Letter.pdf](#)

Board list

- [2024-2025-Riverfront-Recapture-Board.pdf](#)

IRS 501(c)3 determination letter

- [Riverfront-Recapture-IRS-Letter-of-Tax-Exempt-Status.pdf](#)

Financial statement

- [2023-and-2022-Riverfront-Recapture-Audited-Financial-Statements.pdf](#)

Last year operational budget

- [2024-Riverfront-Recapture-Operating-Budget-Actuals.pdf](#)

Current year operational budget

- [2025-Riverfront-Recapture-Operating-Budget.pdf](#)

Balance sheet

- [2024-Riverfront-Recapture-Balance-Sheet-DEC.pdf](#)

Project budget

- [2025-Riverfront-Recapture-Hartbeat-Music-Festival-Budget.pdf](#)

Does your organization produce an annual report?

Yes

Annual report

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 439

- [RRI AnnualReport 2023 Web.pdf](#)

Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?

Yes

Strategic plan

- [Riverfront-Recapture-Strategic-Plan.2022-2025.pdf](#)

Grant Report

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

Other materials?

- [2025-Riverfront-Recapture-Hartbeat-Music-Festival-Performer-Info.pdf](#)

We closed 2024 with a small operating surplus, with those funds placed in our reserves, and invested until needed. Beyond our annual operating costs, numerous capital projects are at various levels: some with approved permits moving toward construction in 2025 – Riverfront Land and Great River Park, others under review by regulatory agencies, and a few awaiting final funding. Many of these projects require upfront expenditures and are then reimbursed by local, state, or federal agencies. Our Finance Director and Finance Committee have this well in hand for covering these anticipated costs prior to reimbursement.

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