Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 515

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?

New Britain

Where will your project be performed or exhibited?

New Britain

Will this activity occur after November 1, 2025?

Yes

Are you a recent grantee?

Yes

Enter your Report Code

154258-Roberts2022

Organization Name

Women Composers Festival of Hartford

Organization's IRS Tax ID #

471095892

Principal Contact Name

Colette Hall

Title

President

Email

ColetteDHall@gmail.com

Phone

(845) 235-5980

Address

55 McMullen Avenue
Wethersfield, Connecticut 06109
United States
Map It

Website

https://www.womencomposersfestivalhartford.com/

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 515

Amount requested this application

$10,000.00

What is the organization's mission/vision statement?

The mission of the Women Composers Festival of Hartford is to promote the music of contemporary and historical women composers through the lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion, empowering women and gender-expansive artists from underrepresented groups, including LGBTQ+ individuals, people of color, Indigenous peoples, and people with different abilities.

Provide a brief history of your organization and its activities.

The Women Composers Festival of Hartford (WCFH) was founded in 2001 by Heather Seaton, a student of the Hartt School of Music, and became a 501(c)3 organization in 2014 to better advocate for the ongoing recognition of work by women composers. All women composers, both contemporary and historic, including individuals who identify as non-binary, are celebrated with an annual two-day festival, held each year during Women's History Month.

Operating entirely with a volunteer Board and without paid staff other than three part-time consultants, WCFH is the only independent organization in the U.S. whose sole purpose is to advance the work of women-identifying and non-binary composers. Thus, all funds raised are utilized entirely and exclusively to support the many artists for whom we advocate. We are unique in this regard – and we are proud to say that the WCFH is the longest continually running women composers' festival in the United States.

In addition to our annual festival, our Teaching Artist program (second year) provides community outreach, no-cost instruction, demonstrations, concerts, and mentorship to non-profit collaborators and local area students, many of whom are low income. From the positive feedback we received about this project, we are now working with existing/new partners to schedule teaching artist programming during the week prior to our 2026 festival.

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

There were 59 surveys completed by audience members at our 2025 festival. The following are the self identified demographics of survey respondents: 37% White cisgender women; 17% White cisgender men; 8% White non-binary persons; 8% Black cisgender women; 2% Black cisgender men; 2% Black non-binary persons; 8% Latina cisgender women; 3% Latino cisgender men; 2% Latinx gender fluid persons; 8% Asian cisgender women; 2% Asian cisgender men; 3% Asian non-binary persons.

Describe your organization's governance.

Our Board of Directors meet monthly throughout the fiscal year, with attendance between 85 to 100%. The Board discusses all aspects of competitions/festival preparations, and develops/approves our annual budgets. The Treasurer prepares financial reports for the board's monthly review, approves all payment requests and prepares our reconciliations and tax forms. Since our last application, our treasurer Stephen Silberman departed, and our new treasurer Josh Thomas was appointed.

Ethnicity/Race + %

White 66%

Ethnicity/Race + %

Black 11%

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 515

Ethnicity/Race + %

Other 22%

Ethnicity/Race + %

LGBTQ+ 11%

Ethnicity/Race + %

Female 66%

Ethnicity/Race + %

Male 11%

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

One hundred percent of our Board of Directors make personal financial contributions to the Women Composers Festival of Hartford.

Project Name

2026 Women Composers Festival of Hartford

Is this project related to the Visual Arts?

No

Project Description

The Women Composers Festival of Hartford (WCFH) will present its 25th annual Festival on March 27 & 28, 2026 at Central Connecticut State University's (CCSU) Founders Hall in New Britain, CT. This will be our fourth year at CCSU; the festival is open to the public and is live streamed.
We provide support and mentorship to presenters and performers throughout the two-day event, especially during the Composition Workshop (a composition masterclass). Other festival events include the Scholarly Symposium, Music Marathon, and Feature Concert, which is the highlight of the festival.
Our Teaching Artist program (second year) provides community outreach, no-cost instruction, demonstrations, concerts, and mentorship to non-profit collaborators and local area students, many of whom are low income. From the positive feedback we received about this project, we are now working with existing/new partners to schedule teaching artist programming during the week prior to our 2026 festival.

Total estimated project budget

$45,300.00

Project start/opening

01/01/2026

Project end/closing

06/30/2026

Project venue

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 515

Founders Hall, Central Connecticut State University (CCSU)

Project town

Greater New Britain, Metro Hartford

Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

Registration fees for presenters: $75 - general/professional; $50 - adjunct faculty/senior/student; $25 – virtual; $0 – financial need.
Audience tickets: $30 (2-days), $10 live streaming. Free for students, CCSU students/faculty, children. Comp tickets are given to funders and the media.
Anticipated total attendance: 150.
Open to the public, the 2-day festival has 4 events: Scholarly Symposium, Music Marathon, Composition Workshop, Feature Concert.

How do you intend to promote/market this project?

Our festival is promoted on a variety of platforms, including eBlasts to a curated list of 600+, our website (http://womencomposersfestivalhartford.com), YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/@wcfh), Facebook page (HartfordWCF), and Instagram channel (hartfordwcf). Additionally, local and industry-wide media (e.g. Hartford Courant and local radio promotions) are provided with details about WCFH activities, and local music students are encouraged to attend.

How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?

Funding will support compensation for our Teaching Artists so we can offer free workshops and classes for local students in Metro Hartford and Greater New Britain through partnerships with schools and other nonprofits.
Funds will also help defray costs of compensation for the 2026 Composer- and Ensemble-in-Residence, professionally curated audio/video recordings for all presenters, and tech assistance for live streaming.

How will Roberts support be recognized?

We will acknowledge Roberts Foundation for the Arts support by placing the Roberts logo and recognition messaging in our 2026 festival program, on festival signage, on our website, in eBlasts, and on social media platforms. Support from Roberts Foundation is announced at all Festival and Teaching Artist events and included in print and radio media. We will also provide recognition to the Roberts Foundation during our Teaching Artist programming.

What is your organization's definition of artistic excellence?

The Women Composers Festival of Hartford's (WCFH) high standard of artistic excellence brings diverse innovative performers to Hartford and surrounding areas. Selected artists are professionally and artistically focused, and exemplify creativity, collaboration, and community. We intentionally seek out high caliber women/woman-identifying/non-binary artists, from award-winning composers Melika M. Fitzhugh (WCFH Artistic Chair, 2021 Composer-in-Residence, 2021 Bang on a Can Fellowship) to Kari Cruver Medina (2026 Composer-in-Residence, Emmy-nominated composer for film and television) whose works are well-crafted, show originality, and emotionally resonate with the audience.

We support skilled artists whose voices might never be heard otherwise, and we provide talented emerging composers with introductions to the public, including those who have been selected to have their work performed and critiqued during our festival's Composition Workshop.

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

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 515

Now, and throughout history, women are overlooked and underrepresented in classical music composition. The predominance of male classical composers diminishes opportunities for women, leading to the inequality they endure throughout their musical careers. It is essential to create a platform that encourages their efforts and elevates their standing in the music world. By introducing their work to new audiences, creating an appreciation of their work, we challenge the status quo of gender discrimination within the classical music milieu.
Women and girls must see "people who look like them" to understand that they too have a place in the world of classical composition; we encourage all to never censor their dreams because of gender or other social biases.

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

Our annual festival and Teaching Artist program enhance the lives of all women who listen, participate, and learn through our programming; our intent is to continuously create learning opportunities and experiences for students, teachers, families, and the broader community, particularly marginalized communities.
Our programming encourages broader acceptance of women and non-binary composers' music, and increases awareness of women composers, both overlooked historical figures and current composers in today's music industry. Recognition and appreciation of women classical composers and musicians is long overdue; we hope our programming helps facilitate that appreciation and thereby encourages women and girls to believe in themselves and their musical skills and abilities.
We believe the spirit of our local communities will benefit and be changed by our musical programs.

How will this project be evaluated?

After every WCFH festival, attendees (in person and via live stream) are encouraged to complete a survey that gauges how our work impacts the community by region, age, and racial, ethnic, and gender identities. We compare survey results with previous years' results to help assess increases/decreases in audience size and participation levels, and whether we made an impact on communities, especially those that are most vulnerable and in need. Our volunteer Board of Directors measures our programmatic outcomes based on reviews of audience surveys, presenter submissions, and comparisons to previous post-festival surveys.
We also evaluate attendance numbers and audience location information to assess the effectiveness of our advertising and promotional campaigns.

Cover letter

- WCFH-Cover-Letter.pdf

Board list

- WCFH-Board-of-Directors.pdf

IRS 501(c)3 determination letter

- WCFH-IRS-Determination-Letter.pdf

Financial statement

- WCFH-IRS-Form-990N.pdf

Last year operational budget

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 515

- WCFH-FY25-Operational-Budget.pdf

Current year operational budget

- WCFH-FY26-Operational-Budget.pdf

Balance sheet

- WCFH-September-2025-Balance-Sheet.pdf

Project budget

- WCFH-FY26-Project-Budget.pdf

Does your organization produce an annual report?

No

Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?

No

Grant Report

- Women-Composers-Festival-of-Hartford-Grantee-Reporting-Form-.pdf

Other materials?

- WCFH-2025-Festival-Poster.pdf
- WCFH-2025-Festival-Program.pdf
- WCFH-FY26-Program-Summary.pdf

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

Notes

Zapier
added November 1, 2025 at 12:35 am

Entry sent to Zapier. Request ID: 019a3cd7-384b-4990-6be4-c081c1c45fe7.

Admin Notification (ID: 5e0a490a5c999)
added November 1, 2025 at 12:35 am

WordPress was unable to send the notification email.

Submission Confirmation (ID: 5e0f7526b33d3)

added November 1, 2025 at 12:35 am

WordPress was unable to send the notification email.