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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 May 1, 2026 ?

Yes

Are you a recent grantee?

Yes

Enter your Report Code

GRF-T3-2025

Organization Name

Connecticut Museum of Culture and History

Organization's IRS Tax ID #

066026012

Principal Contact Name

Michaela Seales

Title

Grants Manager

Email

mseales@connecticutmuseum.org

Phone

(860) 969-6089

Address

1 Elizabeth Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06105
United States
Map It

Website

https://connecticutmuseum.org

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Amount requested this application

$10,000.00

What is the organization's mission/vision statement?

Our mission: The Connecticut Museum of Culture and History brings the state's culture and history into focus, sparking curiosity, deepening understanding, and strengthening connections that bring communities together across generations.

Our vision: The Connecticut Museum of Culture and History is valued as an essential statewide resource where communities see their stories presented, understood, and preserved.

Provide a brief history of your organization and its activities.

Founded in 1825, the Connecticut Historical Society was founded in Hartford, Connecticut, by 31 men who wanted to preserve the stories and artifacts of the American Revolution for future generations. Today, the Connecticut Museum of Culture and History is a non-profit museum, research center, and educational hub, and its collection contains 4.7 million objects, artifacts, and manuscripts that share many historic moments, movements, and peoples of the state, and its purpose has transformed from an exclusive archive to an active educational institution and connector of people and resources. The Museum adopted the state's folk and traditional arts program in 2015, linking the organization's longstanding dedication to Connecticut's history with contemporary cultural communities. Today, the Museum's Department of Cultural Sustainability advances the work of outreach to people and ethical collaboration on creative programming that strengthens local cultures throughout the region.

The Museum's exhibition galleries, library, and the Waterman Research Center at the Hartford campus are open to the public six days a week, and Museum staff do extensive in-person outreach across the state, which includes collaboration with other museums and educational and community organizations. Public programs include permanent, temporary, and traveling exhibitions, workshops and seminars, outreach presentations, collections tours, educational opportunities, family activities, arts experiences, and a rich roster of school programs. Museum activities in 2025 reached 64,314 people, in person and virtually.

By engaging with cultural heritage in both historical and contemporary contexts, the Museum serves as a bridge between generations and communities, ensuring that the Museum can truly be valued as an essential statewide resource where people see their stories presented, understood, and preserved.

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

64% of the Museum's engagement serves Greater Hartford. Demographics vary between different Museum activities. Walk-in visitation to the Museum in 2025 was: 71% White, 11% Hispanic, 8% Black, 10% Asian, 2% Native American, 2% Middle Eastern, and 84% CT residents. In contrast, onsite school visitation was 53% White, 20% Hispanic, 13% Black, 10% Asian, and 4% multiracial. Cultural Sustainability's partnership events reflect the community; ex: 46% Hispanic attendance at Día de Muertos.

Describe your organization's governance.

The Connecticut Museum is governed by a Board of Trustees that currently comprises 24 members. Board meetings occur on a quarterly basis and are well attended, with about 90%-100% of the committee present at all meetings.

Substantial upcoming changes to our leadership will occur at the end of April 2026, when our Executive Director and CEO Robert Kret will retire, and our Deputy Director Ilene Frank will become our new Executive Director and CEO.

Ethnicity/Race + %

Female 45%

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Ethnicity/Race + %

Male 55%

Ethnicity/Race + %

White 74%

Ethnicity/Race + %

Black/African American 13%

Ethnicity/Race + %

Hispanic/Latino 9%

Ethnicity/Race + %

Asian 4%

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

100%

Project Name

2026-2027 Cultural Partnership Events

Is this project related to the Visual Arts?

No

Project Description

The Connecticut Museum's major community partnership events have artistic excellence at their core, provide educational context, and prioritize community perspectives.

Día de Muertos, scheduled for October 26, 2026, will feature the youth Mariachi Laureles del Monte and Ballet Folklórico Alma de Mexico, and professional mariachi Son de mi Tierra. The Spanish Community of Wallingford co-designs this event with us, combining performances, an ofrenda installation, and arts workshops led by community members including Hartford arts organization, Helena's Casita.

Lunar New Year, scheduled for February 27, 2027, will feature many performers, including Springfield Lion Dance, Lao Traditions of CT, and the New Haven Chinese Cultural Cooperative, and cultural arts workshops led by experienced teachers like Alibaba Awrang and Guocun Yang. Co-organized with the Asian Pacific American Coalition of CT and CT State Manchester, this event invites attendees to build community together.

Total estimated project budget

$56,085.00

Project start/opening

08/01/2026

Project end/closing

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03/31/2027

Project venue

Día de Muertos: Connecticut Museum; Lunar New Year: CT State Community College Manchester

Project town

Hartford, Manchester

Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

The Día de Muertos and Lunar New Year Celebrations are both offered free of charge. The one-day events transform two distinct venues into immersive cultural experiences featuring exceptional performers, displays, and traditional arts activities from Connecticut's cultural communities (please see attachment for details). Based on previous years' attendance, the Museum estimates that 1600 people will attend both events, with 600 attending Dia de Muertos, and 1,000 attending Lunar New Year.

How do you intend to promote/market this project?

Event promotion will include:
Media release shared with 20 local and regional new organizations
Connecticut Museum website and social media listings: 100K monthly views
Biweekly email announcements: 9,500 recipients
Membership mailings (Revisit magazine; quarterly program calendar): 1,500 households
CT Public radio spots: 168,200 weekly listeners
Radio calendar submissions to WWUH, WRTC, and WHUS
Online calendar lists, such as ctvisit.com, Hartford.com, GHAC Events, and NextDoor.com

How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?

Funding from the Roberts Foundation will be used to provide stipends to the traditional artists participating in the events from a broad range of cultural communities. Additional funds may be utilized for related materials including: event supplies, event promotion, event signage and programs, and event-related administrative expenses.

How will Roberts support be recognized?

The Roberts Foundation will be recognized as a lead supporter on all media press releases, marketing materials, and event signage. The Museum will include the Foundation's logo on all promotional materials, if it is desired. Official verbal announcements during the course of the event will also thank funders by name. In addition, the Roberts Foundation will be recognized in our digital communications, magazines, and annual report.

What is your organization's definition of artistic excellence?

To determine artistic excellence, the Connecticut Museum is not an arbiter but a listener, working with different cultural communities in Connecticut to respond to what they value and recommend. The Museum approaches art as a cultural production, worthy of study on its own merit as well as part of the cultural and historical contexts where it is created. Decentering definitions of artistic excellence that are biased toward Western European ideas about art, in 2015 the Connecticut Museum adopted the state folk and traditional arts initiative.

Defined through a folkloristic lens, artistic excellence combines the creation of a pleasing, recognizable form together with the cultural ideas associated with that form. Artistic excellence is determined by how an artist's skill is perceived by and linked to

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their cultural community. Without that contextualization, many forms of art, the skill it takes to create them, and their deep underlying meanings can be opaque to the outside observer.

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

These events and performances explicitly align with our mission of cultivating understanding of history and culture in context, with specific reliance on our institutional value of inclusivity, sharing authority and knowledge as equal partners. Our large events that feature performing arts are only one facet of work institution-wide—including exhibitions, educational outreach, and collection activities—to collaborate with cultural communities and learn from their expertise, include their perspectives, and become a trusted community partner.

Building meaningful partnerships with diverse cultural groups helps us become an institution that is relevant to people, and investing our energy in doing work together with communities to pursue activities that sustain cultural vitality makes us an active partner to preserve not only the tangible artifacts of Connecticut's past, but helps to sustain the state's intangible, living cultural heritage that its people will carry into the future.

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

The main goals of these events are twofold: to foster cultural continuity, and to promote intercultural understanding through arts experiences that include, represent, and engage all populations regardless of background. The Día de Muertos Community Celebration and the Lunar New Year Celebration facilitate cross-cultural understanding and encourage networking between diverse audience and community members through their shared participation in the event, as well as provide a location where community members feel like they connect culturally and intergenerationally to their heritage.

Collaboration with different cultural communities ensures that these events serve community goals, whether that is providing the opportunity for youth to deepen their own appreciation of their cultural heritage and become more confident performers, or for community organizations to engage one-on-one with visitors to share new information and hear the experiences they have common with one another.

How will this project be evaluated?

Successful events will demonstrate substantial new and diverse audience participation, stimulate community dialogue, present important cultural traditions accurately and respectfully, enhance audiences' understanding, and generate new ideas for future inclusive programming. The Museum will measure these outcomes through 2 methods: Quantitative methods: 1) Attendance numbers based on entry headcount; 2) Examining demographic information obtained through voluntary survey completion to gauge audience diversity; 3) User analytics for social media and email announcements to assess outreach.

Qualitative methods: 1) Observation of audience interactions to assess degree of audience engagement; 2) Targeted question-based surveys with attendees to gauge learning; 3) Post-event feedback session with community partners to gauge their satisfaction; 4) Follow up meeting with partners to evaluate the event and develop new ideas for programming and collaboration.

Cover letter

- Signed-Cover-Letter-for-Roberts-Foundation.pdf

Board list

- 2026-Board-List.pdf

IRS 501(c)3 determination letter

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- IRS-determination-letter-CHS.pdf

Financial statement

- CHS-2024-Form-990-Public-Disclosure-Copy.pdf

Last year operational budget

- Income-Stmt-12-2025-Unaudited.pdf

Current year operational budget

- FY26-Approved-Budget-and-Income-Statement.pdf

Balance sheet

- SFP-March-2026.pdf

Project budget

- Roberts-Foundation-Project-Budget-FY26-27.pdf

Does your organization produce an annual report?

Yes

Annual report

- CMCH_AnnualReport_2024_FNL_Alt2_single.pdf

Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?

Yes

Strategic plan

- Strategic-Plan-2025-One-Pager.pdf

Grant Report

- Connecticut-Museum-of-Culture-and-History-Grantee-Reporting-Form.pdf

Other materials?

- Artist-information-2026-2027.pdf

Have you contacted the Executive Director by email or phone to discuss this proposal?

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Yes

Is your cover letter signed by your senior executive? on your letterhead? with your official office address?

Yes