

CULTURAL COALITION

serving southeastern & northeastern CT

P.O. Box 95, New London, CT 06320 | (860) 448-5135 | info@CultureSECT.org | www.CultureSECT.org

City of Norwich - % for Arts & Culture – American Rescue Plan (ARP)

Recommendation: To have meaningful and transformative impact, dedicate \$500k or 5% of municipal ARP funds to arts & culture to address the negative impacts of covid-19, speed the recovery of an industry severely hard-hit, and contribute to the City's vibrancy and economy.

The City of Norwich has a long history of stops and starts with regards to investing in and supporting its local arts and cultural sector - a vital economic, community development and tourism driver. From a former city staff position, to individual grants and sponsorships, and various Mayoral and City programs, local arts and cultural representatives need a sustainable and consistent resource to leverage the creative community and advance the City's economic development goals.

The arts & cultural industry, including history and heritage, is part of the hospitality and tourism sector, which is among the most negatively impacted by the pandemic. Eligible as a use for ARP funds, the arts & cultural community is a key component of the City's recovery and will help to accelerate it.

ARP Funds represent an opportunity to **REVITALIZE** and **REIMAGINE** the Rose City of Norwich by: **EXPANDING** activities from evening and weekends to daytime and weekday year-round and beyond the downtown core; **INCLUDING** neighborhoods, youth, elders, partners, service organizations, chamber, schools, religious groups, and all of Norwich's arts organizations; **EMBRACING** Norwich's history and heritage in the existing arts & cultural initiatives.

Funds would be committed to support and implement the Strategic Plan goals developed in 2015 for the Norwich Creates Arts Collaborative, which were led by the Mayor's Office (Hinckley), NCDC (Jason Vincent), and the Cultural Coalition (Wendy Bury) with support from 50+ community leaders. Never funded or administered as recommended, the mission, vision and goals remain unchanged and continue to be supported by the creative community today.

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS (2015)

- 1. DEVELOP ARTS & CULTURE BASED BEAUTIFICATION PROJECTS** – Norwich has a history of arts programs and places with great arts, culture, history and heritage. However, there are places in the city that look vacant and neglected. Arts and culture should be utilized to beautify and enhance the city.
- 2. MANAGE PERCEPTION OF NORWICH** – Norwich has several perception problems, which include lack of parking, that the city is dirty, unsafe, etc. There is a need to address the issues that are commonly referenced.
- 3. COORDINATE AND PROMOTE ARTS, CULTURE, HISTORY AND HERITAGE EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES** – There is a lot to do in Norwich but it is not always well communicated or collaboratively coordinated. There is a need for a purposeful commitment to marketing of arts, cultural, history and heritage events and activities.

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Our mission is to improve the economy, vitality and quality of life in eastern Connecticut by supporting the arts, cultural and creative community.

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\$500K TO BE COMMITTED TO THE FOLLOWING:

\$100K FOR 2 YEAR PT-FT COORDINATOR – funding to support a part time to full time Norwich arts & cultural coordinator position within and overseen by the Cultural Coalition. Goal to have position become sustainable, long-term and permanent either in Cultural Coalition, City or other entity.

\$400K TO IMPLEMENT STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS – funding to support and implement the Norwich Creates Strategic Plan goals developed collaboratively in 2015.

\$300K FOR GRANTS AND REGRANTING - to support economic recovery, strategic plan goals, and include a variety of grant opportunities to the local arts & cultural businesses and artists.

A combination of *competitive*:

- small, relief and support grants for artists and arts & cultural businesses (for profit and nonprofit)
- larger, transformative grants that support goals
- grants for BIPOC owned/led businesses, organizations and artists
- opportunities that require matching grants, collaboration, etc., including expanding and enhancing Sustainable CT projects in Norwich (Sustainable CT Community Match Fund)
- grants that require applicant be READI (Relevant, Accessible, Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive)

\$100K FOR ARTS & CULTURAL PROJECTS/PROGRAMS/EVENTS – to support existing and new collaborative, community arts & cultural events; coordination and activation of spaces and places for arts & culture to thrive; and address impact of pandemic; help speed recovery of arts & cultural community; and invest in efforts to increase local tourism, hospitality and the economy.

Focused on:

- identifying, cultivating and activating spaces and places for arts & cultural activities
- pop ups (vacancies, storefronts, public spaces) for arts & culture
- spaces for temporary and/or permanent public art – streetscape, beautification, community
- engage with and support youth, community, and schools through enrichment programming
- marketing & promotion
- arts & cultural-based focus (music, performance, visual arts, events, activities)
- expand and enhance existing community events, ex. First Fridays, Global Cities, etc.
- collaborative opportunities for all arts & cultural orgs/bus and artists to engage, support and participate in organizing and executing

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COORDINATOR POSITION PROPOSAL

\$75k for Arts & Cultural Coordinator position to:

- serve as a dedicated arts & cultural coordinator for City of Norwich
- have arts & cultural administration, economic & community development, and relevant background
- understand artistic/arts & culture best practices, national and state trends, and data/research
- cultivate opportunities for collaboration, innovation and recovery
- address impact of pandemic on arts, culture and tourism
- focus on downtown, surrounding neighborhoods and the greater Norwich community
- engage with diverse BIPOC communities of City, including youth, students, families, elderly
- integrate with and support City and NCDC strategic plans and goals as possible
- track funds according to ARP reporting requirements and provide reports to City as required

\$25k for Cultural Coalition to:

- hire, contract with, partner with, and oversee coordinator
- ensure READI (Relevant, Equitable, Accessible, Diverse and Inclusive) lens in all activities, which is an adopted policy of Cultural Coalition and CT Office of the Arts
- provide support, access to resources, and expertise to help implement and achieve goals
- provide office space and help partner with NCDC in Foundry 66 (office of Cultural Coalition)
- utilize 501c3 nonprofit status to be able to apply for local, state and federal grants
- ensure ARP accounting and reporting requirements to City are met

Meeting for Norwich's creative community RE: ARP funds for arts & culture

Meeting Info: Held on June 23 from 4:30 to 6pm via zoom

17 registered to attend, 13 attended

Recorded and shared publicly after

Meeting Facilitated by Wendy Bury and Deb Mathiasen of the Cultural Coalition

Goal to develop recommendations for at least 1% of Norwich's ARP funds to arts & culture

Attendees at 6/23 meeting:

Becca Atkins

Carrie Dyer

Faye Trafford

John Salamone

LaShawn Cunningham

Dayne Rugh

Regan Miner

Cam Farlow

Emma Palzere-Rae

Faye Ringel

Kris Nickerson

Michael Van Vlaenderen

Shiela Hayes

Draft reviewed by attendees and open for additional comment and input prior to submission to City.