

Hudson Sankofa Black Arts and Cultural Festival 2022

Continuation of Answers and Additional Information

1. Project Description

The Hudson Riverfront Part Permit has been submitted for Friday, Saturday and Sunday, August 12, 13 and 14, 2022. The Family Day focus day is Saturday, August 13th. Sunday has a family, theater and Gospel focus with the flexibility to be the rain date for the Saturday event. Holding the Friday open allows us to expand the event and partner with other entities that will enhance the experience of the Sankofa festival. The week prior to the land festival, August 3-13th, The Bindlestiff Stilt Walking Workshop and the Kaisokah Jumbies will hold weeklong workshops for parade stilt walkers and jump start parade onlookers heading down to the river. All permits, including event, vendor and banners, have been submitted and approved by the City of Hudson. The Food Permit is in progress.

The Hudson Sankofa Festival is meant to appeal to everyone. The nature of this cultural celebration will highlight contributions in the arts and other areas by Black and Brown people. These contributions are impacted by all people. Celebrating and sharing one's culture appeals to many people, especially those who believe in diversity, equity and inclusion. We intentionally end the Saturday family themed day with a band or performance group that appeals to the adult population. The evening hour attracts locals and out of town guests. In addition, the virtual Hudson Sankofa cultural 2021 event had reached over 7,000 people. Entertainment and forums will appeal to many ages and offer new opportunities for all voices and create another platform for the youth voice. We are counting on our social media to connect with local and visitors for over the 6 months cultural event and beyond.

Friday- available if needed to spread out/expand and to partner with other entities that may need a venue with possibilities.

Saturday-Family Day begins with the Parade to the Riverfront Park and kicks off with Mayor Johnson city officials and the Sankofa Awardees being honored for their community service. A collaboration of teens from The Catskill and Hudson Club House and Bindlestiff Summer Cirkus will meet weekly to organize all youth activities. The West African Drum and Dance company will hold two dance workshops, encouraging community engagement on event day. Fitness Fun, The Rainbow Singers, the Apolonia free river excursions, meet the horses, School Supply Give-Away, concession and the Hudson Black Entrepreneur Market Collaboration, highlighting local and regional businesses will round out the day. The Hudson African American Quadricentennial Exhibition will be displayed.

Sunday-Gospel Sunset Service, Flexible for Saturday's rain date if needed. Environmental themes with Arm of Sea Theater, Black cabaret, a return of vendors, and The Sunset Service are among the festivities of the closing day. We anticipate 3,000 or more in good weather.

The Sankofa Virtual Experience is an online, ongoing expression of cultural appreciation. Social media provides a platform for performance by non-local artists and opportunities for discussion of topics relevant to current times. Virtual Sankofa starts in the fall and culminates with the community Kwanzaa Celebration in collaboration with Hudson Hall. We anticipate live performance on the Hudson Hall stage will an online presence. A free community dinner will follow the in-person event. However, if not in person, we will continue to offer seven days of online programming with community involvement. Operation Unite will utilize a media profile with Columbia Greene Media and The Columbia Paper, which will include newspaper ads, social media ads, and radio station PSAs written by our workforce

development youth. Our general media outreach includes regional newspapers and online sites. Signage will include two street banners at Third Street coming into the city of Hudson, Fairview Ave, gates signs, posters, and handouts. See attached Budget for details of all expenses, P.R., parade, entertainment, etc.

2. Purpose of Project

The Sankofa Hudson Black Arts and Cultural Festival represents opportunities for Black and Brown members of a changing community, a community that needs to be inclusive of people of color front and center amid a destination city. The elevation of this traditional event to the same level of participation and media attention as many others, speaks to the many threads that make the diverse Hudson blanket. We want all people to recognize the Sankofa symbol and immediately connecting it to the rich history, contributions, and presence of African Americans in the City of Hudson. Already the longest festival in Columbia County, the Sankofa branding allows local and tourists to associate the festival with family fun and entertainment at the river, as well as mark this event to return to Hudson year after year. This virtual forum will have links to partnering businesses, especially Black businesses, artist of color, and galleries with exhibitions or sales relative to the Sankofa event for the next four months through the December cultural Kwanzaa Celebration. The online festival reached over 7000 people last year. We will expand to involve Hudson voices young and old, converse about concerns of Hudson citizens and highlight the gems. Increasing Hudson's online presence and foot traffic along our main street, impacts the economic footprint of Hudson, the hub and draw to Columbia County. We are counting on the wholesomeness of the parade, the beauty of the waterfront, the warmth of the people and the virtual Sankofa Festival to be the imprint of Hudson's diverse community. The festival has the potential to appreciate Black businesses, cultural appreciation, visual and performing arts..

3. Why should the City Fund this event?

The name "Sankofa" connects heritage and culture. The Hudson Sankofa Black Arts and Cultural Festival is the oldest community festival in Columbia County. Known as the Hudson Black Fest', the event was started between 1960s by African American families living on lower Columbia Street. Funding this event acknowledges presence and appreciation for people of color with family histories and new residents to the city. The Our goals for 2022 are 1) bring people together in a spacious natural environment promoting safety and good hygiene practices, 2) reflect the history, diversity, and beauty of the City of Hudson, 3) enhancing appreciation of the river with increased water activities 4) attract local residents, out of towners and increase the foot traffic from Warren Street down to the Riverfront Park, 5) resume the parade down Warrant St. to the Riverfront Park, attracting locals and tourists to the event while acknowledging the Hudson's Black Community and 6) acknowledge contributions of residents and artists of color through the Sankofa Virtual Festival from September to December 2022 with an outreach of over 5,000 people. Our Sankofa Youth photographers will document the event weekend and create a post slide show recognizing all participants.

The presence of the Hudson Sankofa Festival means that people of color are present and appreciated. We have a commitment to our children, families, and neighbors to acknowledge contributions on every level including the arts, education and any relevant concern that may be expressed through the arts and forums. I believe that the arts help shape our brain cells and allow us to absorb the teachings of the world. We have an obligation to generations of Hudson and Columbia County to be inclusive of everyone, even if people cannot physically attend. We recognize that many organizations are not 501 3c organizations yet share our community aspirations. However, they need our support and ability to collaborate with them to provide necessities leading to community engagement.

4. Who Benefits?

Everyone who attends will benefit from the event. This cultural celebration is meant to be shared with everyone. It is the sharing of cultures and differences that breed respect and acceptance. We recognize that the Black and Brown Community must be honored and celebrated with equal access to all that Hudson has to offer. Partner organizations and artists will help us to be inclusive to all of Hudson, day visitors and overnighters who welcome a walk to the waterfront. Last year's parade observers exhibited expressions of joy and community pride. Many people in the outside restaurant areas stopped eating in surprise of the small-town charming parade. Economically, local and regional artists and businesses provided services necessary for the event to occur. The Apolonia Schooner with Sam Merritt, and Hudson Hall for onsite technical support at the waterfront and virtual uploading of content. We are asking donations from the business community. Most of the artist participation will be on a reduced rate as part of their contributions. Visual Artist-Media Specialists Elena Holmes, Visual Artists S.Trianna, Ifetayo Cobbins, Lucy Welch, Gospel Singer Marline and the Rainbow Singers and the African American Family Photography Exhibition, Photographers David McIntyre, JD Urban and Shanikwa Tomlinson, Performance Artists Live & Virtual:, Arm of the Sea Theater, Zorkie Nelson West African Drummers and Dancers, Bindelstiff Family Cirkus and the Kaisokah Jumbies, Ujima Community Collective-John & Olympia Ward, Jordan Taylor Hill and representatives of a Black equestrian stable, Ohanna Farms. Virtual Sankofa panel leaders will include leaders of Black lead organizations and law enforcement leaders of color

5. Specific Breakdown of how and when funding will be used.

See attached Budget Information Sheet.

6. Other Funding being sought or anticipated by this project (include source, amount and use)

Additional Information

Collaborating organizations, community groups and businesses.

Tiffany Garriga's Black Market Enterprise will be featured on Saturday. This collaboration sets precedent for community organizations working together to share resources and bring more to the community we serve. We are collaborating with Bindelstiff Family Cirkus for their coordination of a weeklong residency with the Kaisokah Jumbies. They will work with our Stilt Walking workshop, training youth to walk in our parade and perform on Saturday. Operation Unite NY's commitment is \$1500 of the week residency. The Hudson Promise AmeriCorps will provide volunteers to assist with Set Up and Decorations. We are in conversation with PS 21 will offer a week of dance workshops in Hudson and possible performance at the Sankofa Festival. The Friendship Equestrian Farm will house the Ohanna Farm horses. The Tomorrow Tomorrow Rescue Farm will provide goats for a petting zoo. The Nack Center/Sloop Club will offer fishing, educational information. The Apolonia will have excursions during the day. Operation Unite NY has involved youth and staff in conversation with Prof. Kaja Kuhl, and members of the Hudson Valley Collaborative which is looking at short term and long-term solutions addressing the issues of the eminent encroachment of the river at the waterfront, linked to climate change. In addition, we plan to work with Kaja Kuhl to test the water around the park in order to provide a realistic ecological view of

what we have and what we need to move forward for preservation and maintaining a healthy community. We are hoping that the committee will have an information table at the event. In addition, we are partnering with the Hudson Sloop Club to have the mobile Nack Center engaging with participants, offering an education opportunity at Sankofa. Opportunities are available for all groups to share their information.

Economic Footprint

Utilizing local artists is a staple component of this traditional event. At least sixteen of the artists mentioned and several group members are within the Capital Region that Hudson falls under. Our Youth In Action Workforce Development Program will be working with other summer youth workers who will have an intricate role in the making of the Riverfront event and will also be part of the virtual creative presentations as well- about 14 youth workers. Public relation activities contribute to jobs at newspapers, Pro Printers, Staples, and others. Whether purchasing food from vendors or from local vendors, money will be spent on meals, therefore supporting the restaurant businesses.

Project Goals

Goal #1: Engage the community at large in a necessary ongoing tradition celebrating the African American Cultural.

-This will be measured by participation on site and online attendance.

Goal #2: Introduce the virtual medium to the festival, aligning with current events in all over the world and future events to come.

-This will be measured by online participation and the breakdown attendance according to forums.

Goal #3: Maintain social distancing and safe health practices as dictated by NYS Health Department.

-This will be measured by the willingness of participants to follow all guidelines presented in public and the use of supplies available.

-The addition of Virtual Program will contribute to social distancing.

Goal #4: Actively engage local artists and businesses in events that promote the individuals, organizations, and business that are an integral part of Hudson and Columbia County tourism.

-This will be measured by the participation of artists, volunteers, organizations, and business sponsorship.

Gratitude

Operation Unite NY prides itself in assisting community members and other organizations in achieving their mission of serving the community. We will continue to collaborate, reaching out to some and responding to those reaching out to us, when the community benefits. We are hosting the Black Entrepreneur Market and providing the legal permits for the Juneteenth Celebration. Our commitment to our youth is deeply lodged in participation in community activities, events, and partnerships. Our youth learn by seeing, hands on experiences, and feeling a part of the community family. They need to be

engaged and acknowledged by others. These types of community events combine many elements of learning and achievement for all ages. As they move forward with their lives, we give them a badge of honor as contributors to their community. We give their families the acknowledgement that we all belong together. Operation Unite NY is grateful for all the support received by the City of Hudson sub-committees and members of the Common Council.