

Instructions

QUINNIPIAC RIVER FUND GRANT AWARD - FINAL REPORT QUESTIONS

This form is to be completed by all nonprofit organizations that received a grant through the Quinnipiac River Fund.

Grant Details

Grant Details

Organization Name

Canal Dock Boathouse, Inc.

Grant Description

to support boating and environmental programming that bring New Haven area residents in contact with New Haven Harbor and Quinnipiac River, highlighting the waterfront's importance to the community.

Total Grant Amount

13,000.00

Report Questions

1. List the specific objectives/outcomes of the project and tell how they were met during the grant period. Also, provide an update on any special conditions of the grant (if applicable).

1. Develop community events and youth programming (in person and virtual) that is compliant with city and state rules regarding social distancing and COVID safety.

In 2021, Canal Dock was able to safely resume programs and activities outdoors at the boathouse. In addition to activities such as community boating days, summer camp and membership outings we began new programs such as the Crew Haven youth development program, Yoga on the Platform and Dry Land Rowing and Fitness.

Many of the activities that we launched in 2021 are targeted to engage individuals who have not engaged in activities on the water or who are hesitant to participate in activities on New Haven's waterways. I-95 effectively disconnects much of the City's neighborhoods from the waterfront. Activities such as Yoga classes and Dry Land Fitness draw people to the waterfront and gives them exposure to on-the-water activities in a less daunting way. Many people who joined us for fitness classes attended Community Boating Days and were able to paddle in a kayak or enjoy Dragon Boating for the first time. The intimidation factor was greatly diminished for these individuals because they were accustomed to the surroundings. Many people who joined as members only to participate in fitness classes eventually became rowing and paddling members, allowing them to experience New Haven's rivers and harbor for the first time.

Crew Haven is a program that we launched in 2021 and is designed to engage New Haven's youth by giving them the opportunity to engage in a sport that is centered around New Haven Harbor and Quinnipiac River. Some of the youth enrolled are focused on the competitive aspects of the sport, while others are more interested in recreational rowing and fitness components. All youth enrolled receive tutoring, mentoring and leadership development while attending programming.

The Canal Dock Boathouse is a facility owned and operated by the City of New Haven. Therefore, we are

subject to follow all City protocols as they relate to Covid monitoring, testing and disinfecting. While indoors, we are required to wear masks. Up until April of 2022, all unvaccinated members and participants were required to test for Covid weekly and report results to Canal Dock staff.

2. Increase Canal Dock membership by 15% over 2020.

As is the case for many other nonprofit organizations, 2020 was a difficult year for Canal Dock. We were forced to halt programming because of the pandemic and the subsequent closure of all City owned and operated facilities. A consequence of the closure of the facility was that our membership decreased to 34 active members by the end of the year. In 2021, we were able to rebuild our membership to 72 active members. Our membership is an important component of our financial and business model. In addition to providing us with an supplemental income source, our members make up the core of our volunteer base which helps us to run community-based activities like Community Boating Days.

3. Serve 40 young people in Canal Dock's youth and high school programs.

Canal Dock enrolled 32 young people in summer rowing camps (on the water), an additional 8 youth in a modified dry-land fitness camp, and 17 youth in our Crew Haven year-round youth development program. The total number of unduplicated youth that we served during our 2021 program year was 52 (5 youth from summer camp enrolled in Crew Haven).

4. Hold at least five community-oriented events (in person or virtual) designed to highlight the New Haven Harbor and Quinnipiac River basin.

Canal Dock held monthly Community Boating Day events from May through September 2021 where we engaged 146 unduplicated individuals from all neighborhoods and different towns within New Haven County. People from all walks of life attended and were able to explore New Haven's waterways and in kayaks, rowing shells and our Dragon Boat.

In addition to the five Community Boating Days, Canal Dock held a Crew Haven Kick Back, where high school aged students from New Haven Public Schools were able to learn about the sport of rowing and hear motivational speaker and author Arshay Cooper talk about how rowing and spending time on the water changed the trajectory of his life.

All of Canal Dock's community events are held at no cost to participants.

5. Develop summer youth programming.

In 2021 we enrolled 32 youth in week-long, on-the-water programming where they learned the fundamentals of rowing, paddling and were able to experience and explore New Haven's waterways. In addition to our traditional program, we engaged 8 youth who were not comfortable being on the water in fitness activities on our platform. In total, we engaged 40 youth. Because of the grant funding we received during the year, 80% of youth were able to participate at no cost.

6. Explore environmental education programs in conjunction with New Haven Public Schools.

Canal Dock worked with New Haven Public Schools to apply for grant funding through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) to engage 9th and 10th graders attending The Sound School, Metropolitan Business Academy, and High School in the Community. Unfortunately, we were not the recipients of this funding; however, we have continued our work with New Haven Public Schools and hope to revisit the program model with NHPS and other potential partners!

2. Please share your successes, challenges and any lessons learned through the implementation of your project. Were there any unintended consequences or lessons learned that may affect how you operate your program moving forward?

2021 was a year of tremendous growth for Canal Dock. After a tumultuous 2020, we were able to regroup, collaborate and develop an effective strategy which reaffirmed our mission and helped us to become financially stable. In 2021, we came to the conclusion that our true mission as an organization is to provide equitable access to New Haven's waterways to all residents. We are no longer responsible for the day-to-day management of event rentals at the boathouse. We are now able to dedicate all of our energy and resources to helping the most disconnected residents begin to form a relationship with our most underappreciated and underutilized resources: New Haven's waterways.

This was also a year where we launched new programs that engaged people who did not have a solid understanding of the beauty or the importance of our waterways. Many people who had no interest in rowing or paddling came to us to participate in different activities and ended up learning how to paddle in a kayak or our dragon boat. Many people reluctantly came to a Community Boating Day with a friend and ended up returning for multiple events. Many youth who had never been able to participate in a sport were able to fall in love with the water because they had the opportunity to participate at no cost.

There is no doubt that 2021 was an extremely productive year for Canal Dock Boathouse, Inc, but there are so many more opportunities for growth. We are working to develop a swim-to-row program so that more youth and adults can experience the harbor and rivers in boats and kayaks. We plan to continue our partnership with NHPS to pursue an environmental science program that engages youth and families. A sailing program would work well on the harbor during the windy afternoons. Finally, we would love to start an adaptive rowing program so that all people can enjoy the beauty of our waterways.

3. What are the opportunities and needs of your organization as it continues to move forward with its work to positively impact the Quinnipiac River?

As mentioned above, there are many opportunities to expand program offerings and engage a wider, more diverse group of people. Developing new programs and expanding the scope and services of existing programs is a priority for Canal Dock. Additionally, providing services that help people to prepare to get on the water, such as swim-to-row and swim-to-paddle courses and dry-land fitness opportunities is a priority for us. Expanding our own definition of "equitable access" to the waterfront by incorporating adaptive programs that serve individuals with disabilities is also potentially on the horizon in the next several years. We feel that the opportunity for Canal Dock to become a hub where all people can learn about and have access to New Haven's waterfront is there.

It is up to the staff, board of directors and executive leadership at Canal Dock to aggressively pursue all opportunities presented to achieve these goals and all parties are passionate about the work being done at Canal Dock. We need to expand our network of partners and utilize all available resources to ensure that all residents can access and be educated about the New Haven Harbor and Quinnipiac River. Partners like The Quinnipiac River Fund act as credible messengers of our mission and our ability to effectively engage individuals by providing equitable access to the waterfront. We need to continue to collaborate with other, like-minded partners to further our mission.

Attachments

Financial information (required): Please provide a detailed accounting of how the specific grant dollars were spent based on the budget submitted in the grant application.

Detailed Accounting

QRF Financial Information.xlsx

Pictures (optional): Please attach one to three pictures in JPEG format, in the highest resolution possible, of activities that have occurred throughout the grant period as a result of grant funding. By providing pictures, your organization is consenting to unlimited use of the pictures by The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven and/or the Valley Community Foundation in publications in print and online (including www.thequinnipiacriver.com). Please include a description of each photo and, when known, the photographer to be credited.

Picture 1

IMG-1478 (1) (2).jpg

Description and Photo Credit

Crew Haven youth engaging in team building activities after rowing practice.

Picture 2

June Community Day (2).jpg

Description and Photo Credit

A New Haven Resident kayaking for the first time. This particular participant attended 3 other Community Boating Days and has inquired about membership.

Picture 3

20210807_091439 (4).jpg

Description and Photo Credit

All people pictured are New Haven residents. This was the first time paddling in a Dragon Boat for all of them.