

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 activities on the New Haven Harbor and on the Quinnipiac and Mill rivers including after-school boating programs for New Haven high school students, dragon boat competitions for adults and community boating events for adults.

Total Grant Amount

15,000.00

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).

Canal Dock's overarching goal is to provide access to New Haven's waterfront to residents who would not typically have access to rowing and paddling activities. Canal Dock is also dedicated to partnering with New Haven's educational institutions to educate the community about New Haven Harbor, the Quinnipiac River and Mill River through equitable and accessible programming and activities.

In January of 2020, Canal Dock had established goals and objectives that we felt would promote organizational growth and increase community outreach. The Covid-19 pandemic forced us to rethink many of these goals and forced us to take a different approach to achieving these objectives. It also forced us to request an extension to achieve those goals. We have made progress on the following objectives which were outlined in our 2020 Quinnipiac River Fund proposal:

- Hire a program director oversee boating and coaching programs.

In February of 2020, Canal Dock hired and onboarded our first ever Head Coach and Director of Boating Operations. Unfortunately, after his second week at Canal Dock, the current global health crisis forced us to shut our doors. After a very hopeful two months, The Canal Dock Boathouse, Inc Board of Directors determined that we needed to return the operation of the boathouse back to The City of New Haven and renegotiate our lease agreement with the city. During this time were unable to conduct any community boating or youth programming and were forced to lay off our Head Coach along with other staff.

Since this time, we have executed a new agreement with The City of New Haven, allowing Canal Dock staff and programs to inhabit space at The Canal Dock Boathouse on Long Wharf. We have also partnered with another nonprofit organization, Crew Haven, which will act as the funding arm of our youth rowing programs. Because of this we have been able to hire a new Head Coach and a Program Manager to oversee our youth programs. We began our search to fill these positions in April of 2021. After an

exhaustive national search, we have hired both a new Program Manager and Head Coach who will oversee youth programming and boating operations. They will both start their employment in August of 2021.

- Increase the number of students and schools involved Metro Rowing and other high school programs.

Canal Dock began to offer student programming at Metropolitan Business Academy (MBA) prior to the opening to The Canal Dock Boathouse. In the last year, we have made plans to expand the "Metro Boating" program to several other schools. The Crew Haven program will offer opportunities to participate in competitive and recreational boating, mentoring, and educational programs and will promote the continuation of education after high school graduation. Canal Dock has had listening sessions and has worked with youth and staff from MBA, The Sound School, Wilber Cross, ESUMS, and HSC.

- Increase participation in community-oriented programs and events, such as Dragon Boat Competition and Community Days.

We have held two Community Boating Days in 2021 and have engaged over 90 unduplicated individuals in rowing, dragon boating, and kayaking. Many of the people who attended had never been in a kayak, or a rowing shell. Fifteen of the 25 people that had attended the Community Boating Day event in May came back to attend the second event in June. Some of those in attendance registered their children for summer camp. All in attendance expressed great joy in having been able to participate in a safe, outdoor activity after having been inactive for over a year.

- Develop a robust summer-long youth programming.

Though we were unable to offer summer rowing clinics to New Haven youth during the summer of 2020, we are making up for the lack of programming at Canal Dock during the summer of 2021. As of June 30, 2021, we have completed two week-long camp sessions, and have reserved 66% of slots for youth attending New Haven. We plan to conduct four more weeks of summer rowing clinics this summer and hope that of the 66% of youth enrolled from NHPS will enroll in our Fall Crew Haven program.

- Launch environmental education programs in conjunction with UNH.

On March 6, 2020 the License Agreement between Canal Dock Boathouse, Inc and The University of New Haven was approved by the City of New Haven's Board of Alders. Unfortunately, the subsequent financial crisis that affected many institutions of higher learning deeply affected UNH and their ability to sign this agreement, derailing much of the progress that had been made in developing environmental education programs at Canal Dock.

Despite the fact that our primary collaborator in executing this aspect of programming was no longer able to partner with us, Canal Dock continued to pursue funding and partnerships to incorporate educational programs at Canal Dock. We have hosted science classes from Metropolitan Business Academy safely on the platform at Canal Dock. In March of 2021, Canal Dock partnered with NHBOE, The Sound School, High School in the Community, and MBA along with Gather New Haven to apply for an NOAA grant that allows youth to explore and learn about the marine ecology in and around New Haven's waterfront. Unfortunately, we learned in late June that we were not recipients of this funding; however, we now have a program model to refine along with notes from the NOAA grant readers detailing how the program plan could be improved.

In spite of the hardships that Canal Dock faced during this most difficult year, we have managed to regroup, rethink our strategy to achieve our goals and have a renewed focus on our mission to open New Haven's waterfront to all members of our community. The funding that we received in 2020 from QRF helped us to refocus our efforts on community access and education. Without the support of partner organizations like the QRF, we would not be offering programs to the community, nor would we be thinking of expanding programming options and community activities in 2022.

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?

Despite the many setbacks that happened during the pandemic, Canal Dock has had a very successful start to our 2021 season. We have increased attendance at Community Boating Day events, held two separate camp sessions, doubled the number of scholarship slots available to New Haven Public School students for camp, added yoga to our dry land exercise schedule, increased dry land rowing classes, increased community engagement, added to the number of partner schools and significantly diversified our outreach and program enrollment.

Though we have experienced significant setbacks in the last year, the pandemic and subsequent shutdown have allowed us to reexamine our funding model and have allowed us to refocus on our mission of opening New Haven's waterfront to the community. We worked with Sarah Shrewsbury from Vineyard Consultants to create a new development strategy, which has helped us to cultivate new funding sources and has helped us to create a long-term development strategy. We have also refocused on the mission of Canal Dock, eliminating the focus on event rentals and concentrating our focus on increasing our outreach and impact within the New Haven community. The past year has forced us to regroup, restructure and refocus on the mission, allowing us to develop strategies to increase outreach and engagement.

We've also increased the number of partner organizations that we work with. We have continued our relationship with schools and organizations such as Metropolitan Business Academy and LEAP and have established new connections with schools such as The Sound School, HSC and ESUMS. We intend to partner with other nonprofits like Discovering Amistad and Gather New Haven in the future, increasing the impact of all organizations and further spreading information and access to the harbor and Quinnipiac River to the New Haven community.

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?

Canal Dock is currently working with The City of New Haven to renegotiate our lease agreement which will expand our access to the building. We hope to conduct year-round youth and community exercise and education programs that help foster a deeper connection between community members and New Haven's waterfront. To conduct more robust programs that engage the community on a longitudinal basis, we will need increased space and access to the boathouse.

Though this last year was incredibly difficult in many ways, the renegotiated lease agreement between Canal Dock and The City of New Haven has afforded us the opportunity to refocus on the mission of Canal Dock. As a nonprofit, we were established to provide access, education and opportunity to New Haven residents who reside in neighborhoods that have been disconnected from the city's waterways. Prior to the shutdown, much of our focus was dedicated to generating revenue through event rentals to primarily to support building operations and secondly to further fund the mission. Since handing the responsibility of building operations to the city and utilizing the space as a tenant of the boathouse, we have been able to focus all of our attention on connecting people to New Haven's waterfront.

The pandemic halted all event rentals at The Canal Dock Boathouse, significantly disrupting our revenue model. Though we have a renewed sense of purpose and have increased our focus on connecting New Haven residents to the harbor and rivers and providing education about the waterways, we have also had to rethink how we fund activities, programs and general organizational operations.

Our funding disruptions have also affected our ability to market programs and activities. The lack of in person community meetings during the past year has also greatly affected our ability to communicate activities and programs that are taking place at Canal Dock. We are currently looking to diversify our funding model to include an increased focus on unrestricted funding streams and grants that support operations to support this need.

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

March 2020 - June 2021 Expense Report.xlsx

Pictures (optional): Please attach 1 to 3 pictures of activities that have occurred throughout the grant period (with a description for each) as a result of grant funding. All pictures should be submitted in JPEG format and may be uploaded to www.thequinnipiacrivier.com and used in Foundation publications.

Picture 1

Camp June 2021.jpeg

Description

Two youth from Canal Dock's June 21-25 session carry a Zephyr rowing shell to the dock.

Picture 2

June Community Day.jpeg

Description

Community Boating Days are a great way to introduce members of the New Haven community to the harbor and rivers as well as giving them introductory boating instruction!

Picture 3

Dry Land Rowing May 2021.jpg

Description

Our dry land rowing classes are one way that young people from our youth program introduce their families to rowing and paddling. It helps beginner rowers/paddlers to build confidence before getting on the water.