

February 19, 2021

Dear Esteemed Members of the CT Appropriations Committee,

My name is Aaron Thompson and I am Director of Finance and Administration with the New Haven International Festival of Arts & Ideas. I am writing today to urge you to support funding in the Governor's Proposed FY 2022-2023 Budget for Conservation and Development agencies.

The Festival has been a longtime partner with the State of Connecticut, and we are grateful for your ongoing support. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on arts and culture organizations in all parts of Connecticut. Now more than ever, it is important to maintain and build connections to each other. It is through these connections that we can work to ensure that the rich cultural heritage of our region lives on for generations to come.

On average, \$15M is invested in our State when the Festival welcomes more than 100,000 attendees to New Haven each year. The economic impact that arts and culture institutions have on the statewide economy is a critical piece of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and key to rebuilding the region's tourism sector. Arts and culture institutions provide job opportunities, bring dollars into the local economy and provide a pathway for community engagement and assistance to those significantly affected by the pandemic.

I urge you to support funding for arts and culture institutions in the State of Connecticut now and in the future. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Aaron Thompson
Director of Finance and Administration