



Bridgeport  
Downtown Special  
Services District

DSSD

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**May 24, 2022**

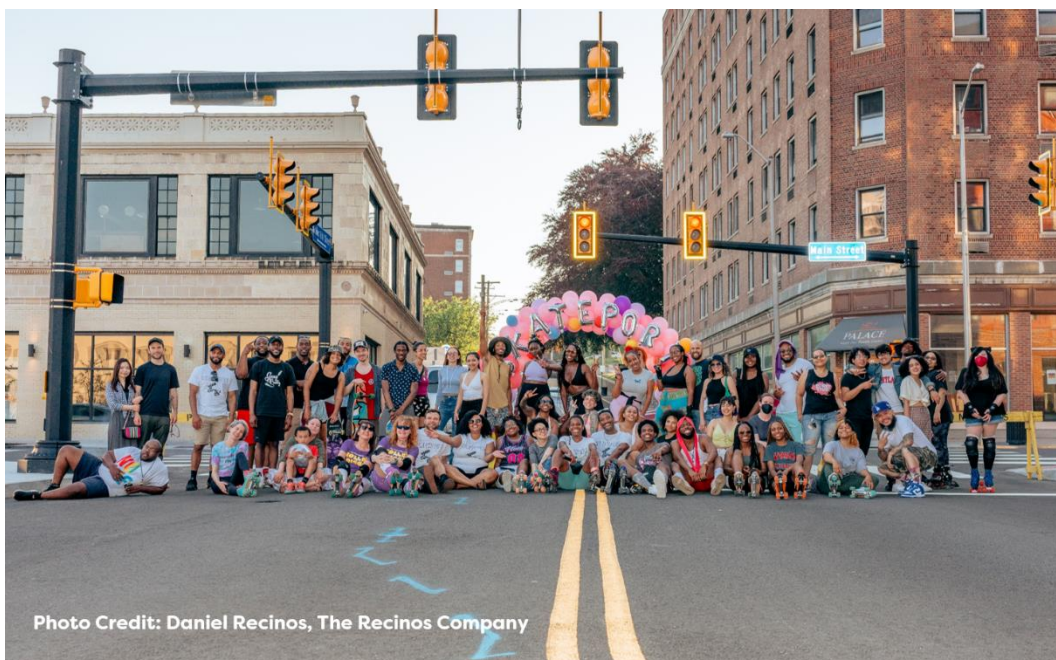
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## **BRIDGEPORT DSSD ANNOUNCES CT CULTURAL FUND OPERATING SUPPORT GRANT WITH LAUNCH OF SKATEPORT**

**BRIDGEPORT, CT** – May 24, 2022 – Connecticut Humanities, the statewide, nonprofit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), awarded the Bridgeport Downtown Special Services District (DSSD) a **\$22,300 CT Cultural Fund Operating Support Grant (CTCFOSG)**. The Bridgeport DSSD is using the funding to expand its Colorful Bridgeport creative placemaking programming, initiated in 2019 to build the reputation of the Downtown as a friendly, eclectic business and residential community flourishing at the intersection of commerce, community, and culture(s). The Bridgeport DSSD has engaged strategic partners in this programming, who can increase and diversify our audiences for the neighborhood, like Skateport.

Skateport draws residents from all over Connecticut, and in particular residents from Bridgeport, to hosted roller skating events held in the Downtown. The events invite attendees to view the city as a vibrant place to enjoy roller skating and the musicality of the sport, combined with other offerings from local vendors. With the ease of access from Metro North and the bus station, people both within and beyond the city come to Downtown Bridgeport to enjoy Skateport events and explore what Bridgeport has to offer. The Skateport team hosted its first event of the season on Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup>. Two additional dates planned for 2022: Saturday, July 23<sup>rd</sup> and Saturday, October 1<sup>st</sup>.



Skateport's founder, Takina Pollock Shafer, said "Skateport creates an intergenerational, multicultural space for roller skaters to connect and rebuild a community that was lost. There are currently no roller skating rinks in Fairfield County, but there are many avid roller skaters craving places to pursue the artistic sport and expand their talent. This funding is feeding a growing appetite for roller skating and making creative use of public space in a way that Bridgeport has never seen before. Bridgeport could be the site of a roller revival in Connecticut, accompanied by the new energy and interest surrounding the art of roller skating around the world."

The Bridgeport DSSD understands the impact that well executed events have on the perception a person has of place. The Colorful Bridgeport creative placemaking efforts introduce audience members to the whole neighborhood, even if they initially attend for a specific purpose. [The annual Jane's Walk](#) - neighborhood walking tours focused on local history and community building - was the fortunate recipient of a CT Humanities Fund Quick Grant. That funding exponentially increased the reach and impact of that event by allowing the Bridgeport DSSD to create a video walking tour, which gains more viewers and introduces more people to Bridgeport's history each day.

"We know that by partnering with initiatives like Skateport and the collection of stakeholders for our Jane's Walk each year, we will draw in individuals who have never been to Bridgeport and allow current Bridgeport residents to see their city in a new way. The CT Cultural Fund Operating Support Grant is transforming our ability to grow interest in Downtown Bridgeport by activating our city's streets in a way that reduces car traffic and reclaims streets for people-centered activity, encouraging people to explore the area, and helping them re-imagine the places they live. This commercial and residential community radiates with diversity, and this funding allows us to offer events that add to the neighborhood's identity, making our place one of value," said Lauren Coakley Vincent, President and CEO of the Bridgeport DSSD.

The Bridgeport DSSD was one of 624 organizations in Connecticut that was awarded CT Cultural Fund support totaling \$16M from CT Humanities. The CTCFOSG are part of \$30.7M of support allocated to arts, humanities, and cultural nonprofits through CTH over the next two years by the CT General Assembly and approved by Governor Ned Lamont. The CTCFOSG will assist organizations as they recover from the pandemic and maintain and grow their ability to serve their community and the public.

*This grant was administered by CT Humanities (CTH), with funding provided by the Connecticut State Department of Economic and Community Development/Connecticut Office of the Arts (COA) from the Connecticut State Legislature.*

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### **About Bridgeport Downtown Special Services District**

The Bridgeport Downtown Special Services District (DSSD) serves the vibrant and diverse businesses within the 30 blocks in of our heart-shaped neighborhood. Our role at the Bridgeport DSSD is to support the needs of growing businesses in the district, from keeping the Downtown clean and friendly, connecting them to city resources to offering free marketing and advertising, and everything in between. Throughout the year we deliver sanitation services, our friendly team of Ambassadors keep the district clean and safe, we promote the

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district through the dynamic Colorful Bridgeport campaign, and produce community events including the Downtown Farmers Market. **Contact Lauren Coakley Vincent at [lauren.dssd@infobridgeport.com](mailto:lauren.dssd@infobridgeport.com) or (203) 908-3622 and learn more at [www.colorfulbridgeport.com](http://www.colorfulbridgeport.com).**

## SKATEPORT

### About Skateport

Skateport's mission is to bring roller skating back, Bridgeport style. Skateport is a project designed to spread and support the culture of roller skating in Connecticut by creating spaces to skate. Seasoned skaters, new skaters, and aspiring skaters are invited to join! **Contact Takina Pollock Shafer at [takinapshafer@gmail.com](mailto:takinapshafer@gmail.com) and learn more at [www.skateportct.com](http://www.skateportct.com).**

## cthumanities

### About Connecticut Humanities

CT Humanities (CTH) is an independent, nonprofit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. CTH connects people to the humanities through grants, partnerships, and collaborative programs. CTH projects, administration, and program development are supported by state and federal matching funds, community foundations, and gifts from private sources. **Learn more by visiting [cthumanities.org](http://cthumanities.org).**



Department of Economic and  
Community Development

Office Of The Arts

### About Connecticut Office of the Arts

The Connecticut Office of the Arts (COA) is the state agency charged with fostering the health of Connecticut's creative economy. Part of the state's Department of Economic and Community Development, the COA is funded by the State of Connecticut as well as the National Endowment for the Arts. **Learn more by visiting [the COA website](#).**