

Bookstock

Project Overview

Bookstock, the Green Mountain Festival of Words, is an annual literary festival which in 2022 will take place on June 24 – 26, free of charge and open to all. It expects to host a mini-Bookstock later in the year. It aspires to be the premier cultural experience in Vermont.

Grant Request

\$20,000

Total Project Budget

59,750

Applicant Information

Name of Applicant / Organization / Business

Bookstock Inc

Mailing Address

53 Wayside Rd. Woodstock VT 05091

Name of Project Coordinator

Peter Rousmaniere

Contact's Email Address

EDC Application Q & A

Telephone

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Organization's Website URL

<https://bookstockvt.org/>

EIN

87-2977173

Applicant / Organizational Description

Brief Description

Please begin your review of our application by watching a short video on Vimeo, which is pitched to encourage all in Woodstock and Vermont to support Bookstock:

<https://vimeo.com/681972575>

This video reflects our economic strategy: (1) secure the brand of Bookstock as the premier cultural

experience in the state of Vermont, and (2) ensure that many businesses and non-profits in Town benefit by greater visibility and broader patron/customer connections.

There is a public facing script (the video is the same) for use in promotion to the public, including placing on the internet, on the websites of inns, Chamber of Commerce, etc:

: <https://vimeo.com/682012531> currently

Mission: Bookstock supports the cultural richness and diversity of Vermont and New England. Our region is home to many talented writers representing diverse genres, from national Poet Laureates and Pulitzer Prize winners to emerging young writers and those who have found their compelling voice at midlife. Bookstock encourages appreciation for good writing and other artistic endeavors by introducing residents and visitors of all ages to writers, musicians and artists in an intimate setting. We are committed to keep all events free and open to the public.

UP-FRONT STATEMENT: The necessity of paid staff: It became clear in the late 2010s that the festival was over-taxing the volunteer base of the Woodstock area. Also, in retrospect, it is clear that professional-level talent is needed to perform some key functions, of which some are smooth management of author recruitment and looking-after, design of non-author events, logistics, and better attention to our many collaborating organizations. The team will enable us to control the burden on the Town while enhancing the Festival's attractions, and greatly scale up our regional and national visibility. We are trying to achieve the ideal: to have an inclusive, intimate and 100% free cultural event of national visibility, in an extraordinary rural environment, at the barest possible cost.

Who we are: Bookstock Literary Festival is an inclusive and intimate annual Woodstock-based literary festival, attracting about 1,000 persons and hosting upwards of 50 authors and other events, all free and open to the public. It will take place on June 24 – 26, 2022. The festival is a collaboration of upwards of two dozen non-profit, public and business organizations, ranging from a team of Woodstock high school students to Artistree and Pentangle. The festival was founded in 2009 as a collaboration among non-profits in the Woodstock area. Its annual festival grew under entirely voluntary and informal leadership through 2019, then was substantially suspend for two years due to the pandemic. In 2021 it completely reorganized as a formal organization with paid staff (incorporated as non-profit, 501c3 status pending). Bookstock is one of two prominent literary festivals in Vermont and New Hampshire (with Brattleboro) and the only festival which vigorously promotes Vermont authors.

If you are applying on behalf of an organization, what is your total organizational budget?

\$59,750

Project Information

Detailed Project Description

UPFRONT: the matter of scale. In some ways the Festival became too large (too many author sessions, too much car traffic) and also too small (no serious online presence, little to offer children). The board is aware of these concerns and addressing them for 2022.

ALSO: the EDC has posed some questions for us to address. Some of the questions do not fit easily into this application framework, and we may not fully answer them in the proposal. however, we have answered them in our working papers and can share them.

Through our weekend, Bookstock enriches the way people view Woodstock as a town. The town is already known for its charm and beauty, its Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historic Site, and its excellent

shopping and dining. To those elements of its reputation or character Bookstock contributes dramatically to a sense of – and a reputation for -- community vitality, fun, high-quality, multifaceted events centered principally around the humanities and arts, and engaging people of a broad range of ages and backgrounds.

How Bookstock will work on June 24 – 25, 2022, with several dozen author sessions in several venues, mainly Friday and Saturday, and a very active Green, mainly on Friday afternoon and all day Saturday.

Volunteers and paid staff: We have an amazing group of volunteers. Some give a few hours during the festival itself, others work many hours year-round. Change the World Kids are expected to volunteer as they have in the past. Additionally, there are the immeasurable volunteer hours put in throughout the year by the board, our communications coordinator Maris Serafini, and our invaluable venue liaisons.

On January 1, 2022, Joni Cole came aboard as our paid part time Program Director; on February 1, 2022, RJ Crowley as our Event Manager. Their thumbnail profiles are as follows (more information is available)

Joni B. Cole is the author of six books. For over a decade she has run the Writer's Center of White River Junction, Vermont, helping hundreds of aspiring authors through her in-person and online classes. She hosts the popular podcast, Author, Can I Ask You? RJ Crowley is a graduate of The American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York City. He has managed the dining facilities at both the Woodstock Inn and Twin Farms. He has written and directed plays throughout the Upper Valley. He is directing a play in Spring of 2022 at ArtisTree in Pomfret, Vermont: "The Play That Goes Wrong." He is the House Manager for Northern Stage in White River Junction and We The People Theatre at the Briggs Opera House.

Author presentations: venues to be used are being defined now. They may include The History Center, Artistree, NWPL Mezzanine, MBRNHP Forest Center, Woodstock Town Hall meeting room, and the North Chapel, and others. This year, our goal is to further elevate Bookstock's national reputation as a premier literary festival (and destination event for book lovers and tourists in general). To achieve this goal, we are amplifying our program in a number of directions. Rather than peg the program on the strength of a single headliner during the 3-day festival, our goal is to include at least four nationally-prominent authors, representing a diversity of genres. Two Pulitzer Prize winners are already confirmed, one of whom, Ayad Akhtar, Artistree stepped forward to recruit and arrange a reception.

Cross-cultural voices: Bookstock is doubling its efforts to include prominent presenters with books that offer a diversity of perspectives of cultural significance. Beyond-the-books appeal: the program is being designed to foster meaningful dialogues about topical subject matter, such as war reporting. Panel discussions: We have confirmed mystery writer Archer Mayor, author of 31 novels, in conversation with Sarah Stewart Taylor, whose third book in her acclaimed Maggie D'Arcy series will be newly released in June. Also, we have designed a Vermont Poet Laureate Celebration with Chard deNiord, Sydney Lea, and Mary Ruefle. Vermont authors: even as it looks to grow in national prominence, Bookstock will continue to showcase the talents within the state and region. Our ambition for the 2022 program is to not mess with past success...but simply build on it.

Artistree Unbound show: this show opens on Friday of the Festival and serves as an opening reception.

On the Green: several live musical performances, a "Hire a Poet" tent, and other activities not listed here are being planned. The Used Book Sale on the Green splits its profits between Bookstock and the NWPL. Mac McClelland of the NWPL inspects and prices books throughout the year. The Library's Vintage Book Sale occurs in the library simultaneously during the festival. The Book Sale runs 9-6pm on Friday and Saturday, 9-2pm on Sunday. The Book sale is deeply grateful to the Masonic Hall for providing sorting

space. Exhibitor tents: We expect to have about 25 exhibitors. Virtual Reality tent: This will be the third year

of hosting Virtual Reality demos at Bookstock. The tent is staffed by Andrew Smith, Woodstock High School teacher of Computer Science, and students in his Introductory Computer Programming courses and some Independent Study students.

Lodging for authors: The number of authors and poets varies from year to year that are placed in lodging facilities. In 2019 arrangements were made for rooms for 10 poets and authors. These places would normally cost an average of at least \$200 per night but are given complimentary by the lodging owner to the author/poet. The innkeeper may publicize their poet/author on social media who will be staying at their inn. I've found that guests love having breakfast with a well-known author/poet. (This function has been performed in the past by Charlotte Hollingsworth).

Yankee Bookshop: The Yankee Bookshop holds responsibility for providing book sales for all of the visiting authors who have traditionally published books, and for those who want us to take care of sales for their self-published titles. In 2019, over \$13,000 was initially invested in gathering inventory to make sure all of our authors were appropriately represented, and over 200 hours of our time was volunteered over the course of the year to organize and prepare for these mobile bookstores. Yankee Bookshop was a co-founder of Bookstock in 2009.

Streaming: Because of COVID risks, we have been planning for the possibility that some or all of author events will be "streamed," meaning (1) entirely online, (2) streamed out of venues into the internet, and/or (3) streamed into a venue by an author who could not travel due to COVID. At this time, we are aware that the NPWL has experimented with out-streaming, and that the WCTV was involved. We are considering piloting live streaming some events regardless of COVID risk. At the time of this submission, we are engaged in discussions with several local organizations about streaming technology. We are also discussing with other cultural organizations their experience with streaming. Bookstock can help the town and local organizations learn how to plan and effect hybrid events.

Project Timeline

Marketing: From January on we promote on social media and through marketing organizations our authors, events on the Green, and our local partners. We distribute copies of our program to several dozen sites in the Upper Valley weeks before the weekend. With media outlets we place press releases and our own written articles. "A Taste of Bookstock": we will publish and distribute well in advance to inns a pamphlet-sized teaser which includes a poem, quote from a non-fiction book, and key how-to information about the festival.

Six months prior to weekend: set budget, begin to recruit authors and plan non-author events. Coordinate with local partners. Fundraise.

Three months prior to weekend: Complete most of author recruitment, most major grants received, ramp up promotion, recruit volunteers, complete plans for non-author events.

One month prior to weekend: aggressive media print marketing, final revisions to the weekend plans.

The June Festival will begin on June 24, Friday morning, and run until June 26, Sunday afternoon. There may be some events scheduled prior to Friday. The budget includes staff and volunteer time to initially plan a mini-Bookstock to take place on a fallow tourist period, in close collaboration with local businesses and non-profits.

Project Champion

Bookstock Inc is a non-profit Vermont corporation as of August 2021. Engagement of many organizations to collaborate is absolutely essential for the festival's success. The following organizations will provide staffing, space, lodging, publicity, and/or financial support (this is an incomplete list): Sustainable Woodstock, the Ottaquechee Health Foundation, Artistree, Pentangle, Town of Woodstock, the History Center, North

Chapel, Norman Williams Public Library, Marsh Billings Rockefeller National Historical Park, Yankee Book Shop, The Woodstock Chamber of Commerce, The Vermont Standard, Casella Waste Management, local inns to be identified, and WCTV.

Bookstock is a large undertaking which frankly risks over-taxing local organizations and the volunteer base. It also needs to draw upon talent outside the Town. One of our board members (Peter Gilbert) lives in Montpelier. Nan McCann lives in Claremont NH. Dave Whitney lives in Woodstock and Peter Rousmaniere divides time between Woodstock and Colorado. We are close to bringing on more Woodstock-based board members,

Project Budget Narrative

UP FRONT: The Festival is shifting from a shoe-string budget of the past to a budget more consistent with sustainability. It will take a couple of years to complete the shift.

As of 2/25/22, total expenses are forecast at \$58,600. The major expense categories include website, internet broadcasting, and social media \$9,000; author honoraria \$13,000; Program Director, \$8,500; and Event Manager, \$8,500; Green-related expenses, \$9,500. Liability insurance has been purchased. We are ready to go over the forecasted expenses and income in detail. Because all events are free and open to the public, Bookstock relies on contributions, especially non-profit and government grants.

This year of 2022 is a year of recovering from a two-year suspension, comprehensive reorganization, and opening up during continued COVID risk. Our executive-level planning and execution resources are four times that of 2019. Our programming activity is easily double or triple that of 2019. Our social media promotional program simply did not exist in the past. Our dollar investment in information technology has quintupled. In the 2009 – 2019 period, Bookstock ran on a shoestring, with tight financial self-discipline, which has carried through to this year.

As we noted at the beginning, it became clear in the late 2010s that the festival was over-taxing the volunteer base of the Woodstock area, and in ways over-taxing the Town. Professional-level talent is needed to perform some key functions, of which some are smooth management of author recruitment and looking-after, the non-author events, logistics and better attention to our many collaborating organizations.

EDC: How will funds be used to grow Event? How do you plan to use this grant to become self-sustaining in future years? How do you plan to make your event self-sustaining in year 2 and beyond?

ANS: During the informal years of Bookstock (2009 – 2019) the budget was so tight that we did not have to do much fundraising beyond 2 – 3 institutions and a half dozen individual donors. For 2022 we expect funding from 4 – 6 institutions and about ten donors. In 2023 we aspire to enjoy 6 – 8 institutional grants and several dozen donors.

We ask the EDC to consider 2022 as the first of two years of rebuilding and expansion. Our goals: make Bookstock recognized nationwide as the premier cultural experience in Vermont; and, a large number of local businesses and non-profits say they benefit from Bookstock. Understandably, the EDC may not be in a position to make two-year commitments, but we expect that it will take two years to build up our private sector financial support to the level which will significantly reduce and possibly eliminate the need for EDC funds. We will do this by greatly growing individual contributions, expanding our foundation grants, and creating corporate sponsorships.

We ask for \$20,000 through June, 2022. These funds will be expended on paid staff (\$17,000) and information technology investments including a new website (\$3,000). All of these funds are expected to be used before July, 2022.

Project Budget - Itemized

Income Category	Total	Applicant	EDC	Other	In-Kind
Grants and contributions	\$48,750	\$48,750	\$20,000	\$28,720	
Book sale	\$8,000			\$8,000	
Exhibitor tent	\$2000			\$2000	
Program ads	\$1000			\$1000	

Expense Category	Total	Applicant	EDC	Other	In-Kind
author honoraria, lodging, travel	\$13,000	\$13,000			\$3,000
information technology	\$9,000	\$6,500	\$2,500		
Program Director & Green Mgr	\$17,500		\$17,500		
other	\$19,100	\$19,000			\$10,000

What will success look like?

Specific steps in our strategy:

ONE. Secure the brand of Bookstock as the premier cultural experience in the state of Vermont. A. recruiting more nationally known authors, made possible by hiring Joni Cole as our Program Director (described elsewhere) and collaboration with local partners (such as Pentangle). B A very lively Green which will gain widespread recognition as one of most fun events of the year in the statw, engineered in 2022 by our Event Manager, RJ Crowley. C. Live/recorded author presentations on the internet in collaboration with WCTV. D. An unfolding internet series throughout the year of short recorded content, some drawn from the weekend, some developed in collaboration with Chamber of Commerce and local partners.

TWO. Ensure that many businesses and non-profits in Town benefit by greater visibility and broader patron/customer connections. Participant surveys. On-going consultation with Chamber of Commerce and local business surveys. Evaluation by EDC.

Visitor traffic:

there two kinds of visitor traffic prompted by Bookstock: event traffic, and visitors on non-event times dues to expanded image of the Town.

We expect, after two year's absence, to restore the previous volume of participants to about 1,000. (We have plans to rapidly adjust the festival to any COVID surge near the date of the festival.) Also we will reach many more nationally through live and/or recorded events on the internet (see section on "streaming"). Example: Ocean Young 2019 presentation posted on Youtube, 950 views. We will significantly increase our internet author event visibility in 2022. We are planning for a "mini" Bookstock to held in a low tourist period (such as November and Mud Season) in close collaboration with local lodging.

It is important to include the non-event visitor traffic to Bookstock, based on promotion of Bookstock as the premier cultural experience in Vermont, which builds on and extends the town's sterling visibility.

Community support for this project

We have discussed throughout this application our collaboration with many organizations in the Woodstock area, and refer you to these sections.

Community support for this project

Given as we have been largely dormant two years (excepting seven online events done in collaboration with the NWPL) we have had to restart our fund raising. For 2022 we aim to increase grant funding sources from three to about six In 2023 we aim to receive grants from about 8 sources Our individual giving has

Since its inception in 2020 we aim to receive grants from about 8 sources. Our historical grant has historically about \$3,500. We aim to significantly increase that in 2023. We are looking to increase our onsite income (primarily Green-based activity.) We expect to return to the EDC for funding in 2023, with the goal of completely eliminating or radically lowering EDC support in 2024. Note that the festival has been extremely frugal in the past and continues to be so.

EDC Application Q & A



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