CITY OF LA CROSSE COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT GRANT APPLICATION

Please note that previous funding amounts are not a guarantee for continued support and any funding amount may be based on a number of factors including, but not limited to, performance, available City funds, and collaborating efforts by your organization with similar organizations.

Contact Information

Organization
Sacred Voice

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Name of contact person
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Proposal Summary

Project Name
La Crosse Indigenous Peoples' Day Celebration

Total amount of City funds your agency is requesting
$30,000.00

Will any new jobs be created as a result of the project?
○ Yes ◉ No

If so, how many?

What benefit has your organization provided to the La Crosse community, and specifically to the City, in 2024?
Awareness and action are two main components of Indigenous Peoples' Day, particularly through the education of the event as well as other events that complement the day, like the MMIW (Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Children) and the Indigenous Film Series. All of these events are facilitated to increase awareness of ALL of our city's residents, especially the ones who lived here before La Crosse was established as a municipality. Indigenous Peoples' Day (IDP) hosted education for local middle schools (both schools from La Crosse attended) as well as for general community members. From evaluations, students indicated what they learned, made, watched, and tried to provide better awareness of Ho-Chunk culture as well as how it impacts all of our lives today. Through activities students stated that Indigenous people are "similar to us," which provided a new lens of connection and empathy. Students reported learning about policies that harmed Indigenous people and what could be done to preserve Indigenous culture. Students stated that having all voices heard through voting and civic engagement is important for all people.

What does your organization have planned for the remainder of 2024 (that is of benefit to La Crosse, and specifically the City)?
NA

What does your organization plan to accomplish with the help of City funding in 2025?
In 2025, our efforts are collaborative and coordinated. Working with the City of La Crosse Parks and Recreation Department, the Ho-Chunk Nation Youth Services, FSPA, The Nature Place, Black Leaders Acquiring Collective Knowledge, Western Technical College, UW-La Crosse, UW Madison Division of Extension in La Crosse County, La Crosse Public Library, the School District of La Crosse, plans include a youth centered track as well as a community track to ensure that awareness of Ho-Chunk culture, history, tradition, and life is learned as well as celebrated. We also plan to incorporate the grand opening of the Indigenous Garden in La Crosse's International Friendship Gardens.

Organization Details

Legal status of organization
Private, Non-Profit

Federal Tax Identification Number
33-3284413

What was your organization's total operating budget for the past year?
$27,350.00

Has your organization received City funds in the past?
(•) Yes ( ) No

If yes, how much has your organization received and how many years has your organization participated in the program?
$5000 (2022), $5000 (2023) and $5000 (2024)

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Organization Structure

Attach the following documents (check off as you upload each file below)

- [ ] Concise organization chart showing your agency's major administrative structure
- [ ] Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws
- [ ] List of Board of Directors
- [ ] Current agency budget
- [x] Current project activity budget if currently funded
- [ ] Other financial forms: Form 990, Income Statement, Balance Sheet, et al.

File Upload

20250319 Indigenous Peoples' Day - 2025 Budget & Funding.pdf 62.5KB

What is your agency's primary funding source(s)?
This is a collaborative effort including City of La Crosse Parks and Recreation Department, the Ho-Chunk Nation Youth Services, FSPA, The Nature Place, Black Leaders Acquiring Collective Knowledge, Western Technical College, UW-La Crosse, UW Madison Division of Extension in La Crosse County, La Crosse Public Library, the School District of La Crosse. All of these agencies provide in kind donations through administrative work, planning, expertise, materials, and staff time. Funding has included multiple grants and contributions each year, including from the Mayor's Fund which is funding that is now changed into this grant format. City support for this project is instrumental in ensuring that all residents of the City of La Crosse know they belong.

What percent of your anticipated total project budget does this City request represent?
50%

What other source(s) of funds could your organization pursue? Does your organization receive similar funding from other municipalities?
Other sources of funding include the Ho-Chunk Nation, La Crosse Community Foundation, FSPA, Western Technical College. This is a La Crosse based project. Other municipalities would like to host this event and we have stayed in La Crosse.

Proposal Details

Provide an overview of the program (this pertains only to the activity for which you are seeking funds).
October 13, 2025 is Indigenous Peoples' Day, while federal employees will have the day off and banks will likely be closed, the City, the Ho-Chunk Nation, and other community partners will host Indigenous Peoples' Day at the Nature Place and Myrick Park in La Crosse so people may learn more about Ho-Chunk Culture, celebrate Ho-Chunk tradition, food, and art, enjoy Ho-Chunk and Indigenous entertainment, and watch a traditional lacrosse and double ball tournament, for which La Crosse was named. We will incorporate the opening day events for the Indigenous Garden at La Crosse's International Friendship Gardens as well as host an evening track designed for adults (new this year). While these seem like "just an event," great intention has been provided to ensure that authentic learning takes place, that Ho-Chunk and Indigenous people receive not just recognition but compensation for their talent, skill, and knowledge, and that everyone has the opportunity to make a small change to be kinder.

Indigenous Peoples' Day helps to correct a whitewashed American history that glorified Europeans, like Columbus, who committed violence against Indigenous communities. The idea was first proposed by Indigenous people at a United Nations conference in 1977 to address current oppression and discrimination against Native Americans. South Dakota became the first state to replace Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples' Day in 1989. Now, ten states observe the holiday via proclamation including: Arizona, California, Iowa, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, North Carolina, Virginia, Wisconsin, plus Washington, D.C. Indigenous Peoples' Day was formally commemorated by the White House in 2021.

Indigenous Peoples' Day honors the past, present, and futures of Native people throughout the United States. The holiday recognizes the legacy and impact of colonialism on Native communities and celebrates the cultures, contributions, and resilience of contemporary Indigenous people. It aims to teach the whole history of our pasts and understand that Indigenous communities have lived in the Americas for thousands of years.

Instead of planning for, we plan with. The La Crosse Parks and Recreation Department is working directly with the Ho-Chunk Nation to plan events that celebrate Ho-Chunk culture. To start teaching whole history to the entire community and celebrate the people who lived on the land that colonists stole, we bring awareness, recognition, and ideally, policy and cultural change.

Specifically state how the requested funds will be used.
City funds will pay for the entertainment for the student track (day) as well as the new adult track (evening).

State the specific local needs and problems that your proposal intends to address.

The City of La Crosse reports that it is committed to authentically collaborating with systemically harmed groups to uplift and celebrate their voices, traditions, culture, and people. This event raises awareness about the cultural practices and contributions of indigenous peoples as well as educates people about past wrongs and current realities so that our community can move forward together.

Native Americans have higher rates of murder, suicide, sexual assault, human trafficking, and addiction (Indian Health Service, US Department of Health and Human Services, 2023). Nearly 100% of all Indigenous families have been affected by boarding schools which, from 1819 to 1969 and beyond, mandated that children were taken from their families to forcibly attend school to assimilate to dominant culture. These children were not allowed to speak their own language, were not allowed to have friends, were forced to become Christian, and many were abused, raped, or killed. That intergenerational trauma is still evident today (Bureau of Indian Affairs, Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative Investigative Report, May 2022). Most of the history that we learn in school is about the conqueror, the explorer, and the aggressor. This includes Christopher Columbus.

The first recorded celebration of Columbus Day in the United States took place on October 12, 1792. It was organized by the Society of St. Tammany, also known as the Columbian Order and commemorated the 300th anniversary of Columbus' landing (Library of Congress). Columbus Day as many know the second Monday in October was created by President Harrison in 1892 in response to the anti-Italian motivated lynching of 11 Italian Americans in New Orleans in 1891 (White House Proclamation, October, 7, 2022). Columbus Day became a federal holiday in 1937 due to efforts of Roman Catholic Italian Americans. While many European Americans have celebrated Columbus and his landing near the United States, what has never been taught, until recently, is the suffering of the people who lived here first.

La Crosse was a removal site of the Ho-Chunk people from their land multiple times throughout the 1800s and 1900s. Spence park is the location where people were violently taken and transported to reservations. On Indigenous Peoples' Day, the City will unveil the Ho-Chunk gardens just north of Spence Park. The event will be held at Myrick Park, Nathan Myrick was the first white settler in La Crosse and was instrumental in the removal of the Ho-Chunk people. Acknowledging our holistic history and creating authentic relationships with our neighbors is one way that we can be a great city.

Identify the project target population your proposed program or activity will serve. Include unique characteristics such as: ethnicity/race, age, disability, income level.

While the entire community is invited to the event, one focus will be 8th grade students. In 2023, the first year that some of the area 8th graders participated in Indigenous Peoples' Day, two students went back to school and were reported as being excited that they got to learn about "people like us." In 2024, the student attendance grew to over 600. Representation is important and participating in culture and history is so much more effective that being told something or reading it in a book.

The event is free, so people of any socio-economic level can participate. The event ensures that it is accessible so that people of all abilities can participate in activities.

Describe methods used to measure success in achieving objectives and specifically meeting needs of the target population.

Each year, our evaluation is more robust. In 2024, La Crosse School District and UW Madison Division of Extension collaborated to evaluate student learning outcomes as well as behavioral change. From evaluations, students indicated what they learned, made, watched, and tried providing better awareness of Ho-Chunk culture as well as how it impacts all of our lives today. Through activities students stated that Indigenous people are "similar to us," which provided a new lens of connection and empathy. Students reported learning about policies that harmed Indigenous people and what could be done to preserve Indigenous culture. Students stated that having all voices heard through voting and civic engagement is important for all people.

If more than one agency within the La Crosse area deals with similar problems or clients that you have identified, describe how your agency coordinates tasks and responsibility with these other agencies and how duplication of services will be avoided.

This is a collaborative effort including City of La Crosse Parks and Recreation Department, the Ho-Chunk Nation Youth Services, FSPA, The Nature Place, Black Leaders Acquiring Collective Knowledge, Western Technical College, UW-La Crosse, UW Madison Division of Extension in La Crosse County, La Crosse Public Library, the School District of La Crosse. Each person and each agency has specific roles, responsibilities, talents, and gifts that they provide. Monthly meetings are held to ensure the vision, values, and outcomes are the guiding focus of all the individual work that happens with the agencies between meetings.