



93 Main Street
Suite 201
Waterville, Maine 04901
watervillecreates.org

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CONTACT: Nathan Towne, Marketing Manager, Waterville Creates!

media@watervillecreates.org

(207) 232-6005

The Harold Alfond Foundation Continues to Champion Maine's Creative Economy by Awarding More Than \$2 Million in Grant Funding to Waterville Creates!

Waterville, Maine — Waterville Creates!, one of Maine's leading arts and cultural organizations and a key driver in making the city a vibrant destination in central Maine, has again been awarded grant money by the Harold Alfond Foundation (HAF) to continue its work toward building a strong future for the arts in greater Waterville. Waterville Creates! is scheduled to receive grant funding in the amount of \$2.1 million over two years to advance the organization's mission and to provide significant funding to its partner institutions, including the Maine Film Center and the Waterville Opera House.

"We are energized and proud that the Harold Alfond Foundation has committed their continued support of the important work that we are doing," says Waterville Creates! board Chair Larry Sterrs, adding, "we see this funding as a vote of confidence in our staff, our board, and our wonderful community partners, all of whom are working together to ensure a vibrant future for Waterville and the region."

The generous grant from HAF will allow Waterville Creates! to focus on a number of key priorities in 2017 and 2018, including increasing both programmatic and operational collaboration between local arts organizations, expanding the marketing of Waterville's arts and cultural assets to place more emphasis on Waterville as an arts and cultural destination, and catalyzing improvements in the quality, visibility, and accessibility of programming at Common Street Arts, an arts exhibition and education space owned and operated by Waterville Creates! located in The Center building at 93 Main Street in downtown Waterville.

"In addition to facilitating more collaborative programming in the new year, we plan to work with our partners to explore shared service and staffing models and other potential efficiencies that can be achieved through increased collaboration," says Shannon Haines, president and CEO of Waterville Creates! "By funding staffing and operational expenses as well as specific initiatives designed to enhance collaboration amongst Waterville's arts and cultural institutions



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and other community partners, this grant will allow us to build a more sustainable organization as we continue to strengthen Waterville's creative economy." Waterville Creates! is currently offering contracted marketing services for both the Maine Film Center and the Waterville Opera House and is investigating a shared box office system, bookkeeping services, and other financial services.

This generous grant also includes continued funding for Waterville Creates! **Partner Incentive Grant** program, which was established in 2014 as a way to incentivize increased collaboration and enhanced arts and culture programs amongst arts and cultural organizations and other community partners. Past Partner Incentive Grant funding recipients include the Waterville Opera House for the Waterville Rocks! summer concert series, Waterville Main Street for Harvest on the Square, and the Maine Film Center for VJ Suave at the 2016 Maine International Film Festival.

"The Harold Alfond Foundation has been impressed with the thoughtful collaboration that Waterville Creates! has fostered among the city's arts organizations and all that has been achieved to more widely promote Waterville as a vibrant hub of arts and cultural activities," said Greg Powell, chairman of the Foundation's board. "We are confident that this grant will enable the organization and its partners to take their efforts to the next level."

Grant funds have also been designated for the purchase of digital projection equipment at the Waterville Opera House to improve the quality of their live broadcast programs, such as the National Theater Live, The Bolshoi Ballet in Cinemas, and the Met Live in HD, and to facilitate the annual Maine International Film Festival and other Maine Film Center programs throughout the year.

The **Harold Alfond Foundation** furthers the legacy of Harold Alfond by investing in education, healthcare, youth development, and other philanthropic charitable causes that hold the promise of making enduring transformative contributions to the community and State of Maine.



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About Waterville Creates!

Waterville Creates! is a non-profit on a mission to promote, support, and grow greater Waterville's arts and cultural scene. Collaborating with regional arts and culture institutions and their supporters, together we are strengthening our community as a vibrant creative center, increasing access to creative opportunities. For more information, visit

<http://www.watervillecreates.org/>

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