



# 2024-2025 West Virginia Folklife Apprenticeship Program GUIDELINES

Deadline:  
Aug. 26, 2024  
[wvfolklife.org](http://wvfolklife.org)

## Important Dates

Application Opens: July 1, 2024

Application Closes: August 26, 2024, at 11:59 p.m.

Review Panel Meets: September 2024

Notification of Award: October 2024

Apprenticeship Time Period: October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025

## About the West Virginia Folklife Program

The West Virginia Folklife Program administers the West Virginia Folklife Apprenticeship Program. West Virginia Folklife is a project of the West Virginia Humanities Council and is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the Department of Arts, Culture and History. West Virginia Folklife is dedicated to the documentation, preservation, presentation, and support of West Virginia's vibrant cultural heritage and living traditions. Learn more at [www.wvfolklife.org](http://www.wvfolklife.org)

## What is Folklife and Traditional Arts?

Folklife and traditional arts, often defined as "the art of everyday life," refer to art and cultural expressions that are based in and reflective of traditional knowledge and connection to cultural communities. Folklife and traditional arts are generally passed down from one generation to another through community-based activities, observation, practice, and apprenticeships.

## What is the West Virginia Folklife Apprenticeship Program?

Since 2017, the program has celebrated traditional artists and helped them pass on cultural knowledge, stories, and techniques to their apprentices. This time-tested model allows dedicated apprentices to study with recognized experts in their traditional art forms and better understand their communities and history. Our program encourages these lasting meaningful relationships, preserves knowledge through one-to-one teaching and documentation, and benefits the community by carrying on important practices and stories.

Hosted biennially, the apprenticeship program supports one year of teaching artists and apprentices working in pairs on a self-designed work plan. Participants have expressed appreciation for the trust and flexibility built into the process, allowing them to follow through on their own set goals at their own paces.

Folklife apprenticeships can be in music, dance, craft, fiber arts, occupational arts, foodways, storytelling, and much more. The traditions may be based in generations of practice in West Virginia or in traditional practices from more recent immigrant communities in the Mountain State. Importantly, the tradition must be rooted in community identity because apprenticeships facilitate not only the transmission of specialized techniques, but also the histories and cultural knowledge associated with the practice. Please note, the program does not provide job training qualification.



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## Funding

This program is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the West Virginia Humanities Council (WVHC). Use of logos and acknowledgement must be given to the NEA and the West Virginia Folklife Program/WVHC in all promotional materials of events and work related to the apprenticeship program.

Teaching artists receive \$3,000 paid in two installments: \$2,000 at the beginning, and \$1,000 at the end of the formal program year. Apprentices are supported with \$800, also to be paid in two installments: \$500 at the beginning and \$300 at the end.

Apprenticeship pairs may request additional funding, up to \$400. We recommend these funds be used to support expenses associated with your public presentation component or documentation of your apprenticeship experience (see below). To receive the additional \$400, you will outline your expenses in **Part D: Budget**. Your work plan will be evaluated based on its feasibility, which includes projected expenses. Stipends and additional funds may be used to pay for expenses related to your work plan including for example, tools, supplies, and travel costs.

Please note the West Virginia Humanities Council will issue an IRS Form 1099 to each recipient and funding is subject to federal taxation.

## Participation Expectations

### 1. Documentation

The state folklorist will visit each pair during the program year, conduct recorded interviews, and take photographs to document the art form, the cultural knowledge, and the stories shared among the teaching artist, the apprentice, and their community. *Apprenticeship pairs are highly encouraged to document their own experiences together.* We will host a virtual workshop for program participants on documentation. Additional funds (up to \$400) can be budgeted in your application for recording devices or other supplies such as logbooks, etc.

### 2. Virtual Meetings

Following a virtual orientation meeting, the cohort of participants attend virtual meetings throughout the program year. Feedback has informed us that these meetings promote social engagement among the cohort of apprenticeship pairs, as participants get to learn about traditions practiced across the state. These show-and-tell sessions allow the pairs to share their latest successes, works-in-progress, and challenges.

### 3. Presentations & Showcases

Pairs are required to participate in at least one public component to present about their work, such as a performance for their local communities at a public library or school, or other ideas as appropriate. Additionally, the West Virginia Folklife Program will host

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public showcases at the end of the program year; these events will be recorded for our archival collection and published on our websites and social media.

## 4. Final Report

Pairs are required to submit a final report detailing their activities, work, and skills gained. All final report materials will be deposited in the West Virginia Folklife Collection, and information may be used for the program funder reports.

## West Virginia Folklife Apprenticeship Eligibility

The cultural expression or art form must be a part of the current lives of residents of West Virginia residents. The teaching artist and apprentice must apply together and should be familiar with each other's work and skill level. It is preferred, though not required, that the teaching artist and apprentice belong to the same cultural community, meaning that they share common cultural experiences and traditional creative expressions, such as being members of the same family, immigrant community, social scene, or religious group, to name a few examples. Applications from marginalized groups or traditions having few remaining practitioners are especially encouraged.

### A teaching artist must:

- Demonstrate excellence or mastery within their traditional art form.
- Be established and recognized (formally or informally) by their community for their skills, knowledge, and cultural practice.

*Tip: One way to demonstrate this recognition is by submitting letters of support with your application.*

- Be a resident of West Virginia for at least one year prior to the application deadline.  
*In some instances, such as in the case of cultural communities that exist across state lines, an apprenticeship with someone living outside the state may be considered, but a compelling reason must be established in the application. If your apprenticeship requires such circumstances, please contact State Folklorist Jennie Williams prior to applying.*

### An apprentice must:

- Demonstrate engagement and basic competency in the art form or cultural expression (or a closely related form) prior to the apprenticeship.
- Demonstrate a commitment to learning and practicing nuances of the tradition.
- Demonstrate a commitment to sustaining the art form or cultural expression in West Virginia beyond the apprenticeship period.
- Be at least 18 years of age; minors can participate with written permission from a parent or guardian—under **Part G: Required Signatures**.



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*There is a significant public component to the program, which includes participation in public presentations, archived interviews, published online features, press releases, and more. Please consider if these activities are appropriate for an apprentice under the age of 18 before applying.*

## The program does not fund the following activities:

- Staged productions, reenactments, or representations of historical folk arts
- Reproductions of historic objects no longer in use.
- Ongoing classes where the artist instructs in a classroom-like environment.
- Production of crafts and other forms that are not part of the living heritage of West Virginia communities.

*Previously funded apprenticeship pairs are allowed to apply again, but reviewers may take that prior participation into account when making recommendations, especially in the case of a competitive applicant pool. Please describe your previous apprenticeship in your application and compelling reasons for your continued support.*

## How to Apply

The application is available at <https://wvfolklife.org/category/apprenticeships/> where you can also read about previously awarded apprenticeship pairs and their projects.

Teaching artists must submit their applications together with their proposed apprentices. They should discuss and establish the skills to be taught and a work plan. Questions on the application may help guide this discussion. Please answer all questions as thoroughly as possible, using additional pages as needed. Applications should be typed or written in legible print. **Incomplete applications may result in rejection of the application.**

*Tip: The most promising applications come from a traditional artist and an apprentice who already know each other and have begun working together or who worked together in the past.*

## Required Application Materials:

- Part A: Questionnaire for Teaching Artist
- Part B: Questionnaire for Apprentice
- Part C: Work Plan
- Part D: Budget
- Part E: Work Samples
- Part F (Optional): Letters of Support
- Part G: Required Signatures



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## Work Sample

Both teaching artist and apprentice can submit up to 10 work samples (images, video, and/or audio) of the highest quality available for evaluation by the review panel. **The majority of work samples should be from within the past 5 years.**

**For audio and video samples:** Individual samples should not exceed 10 minutes (if clip exceeds 10 minutes, indicate which portion of the <10 minutes the panel should review).

**For image work samples:** Please submit no more than 10 images per artist.

## Work Sample Labeling Instructions:

- Teaching Artist/Apprentice (indicate which artist is represented).
- Media format: online links, MP3, MP4, CD/DVD track number, etc.
- For a video or audio sample, please include the length of work(s) and time stamp for where the panel should review.
- Year/date that the work was created.
- Title and description about the work, including artist's role in development of work, location(s) recorded, artistic style, form, content, and/or process. Please include any contextual information that will help the review panel understand the work samples.

**File sharing links to application and work sample materials must be emailed to State Folklorist Jennie Williams at [williams@wvhumanities.org](mailto:williams@wvhumanities.org) by August 26, 2024 at 11:59 p.m.**

Please submit work samples electronically—as an email attachment, link to a site such as YouTube or a personal website, or a link to a file sharing site such as Dropbox or Google Drive. Support materials will be returned only upon request.

If you are unable to submit your application electronically, please mail the printed application and a thumb drive containing your work samples postmarked by August 26, 2024 to:

West Virginia Humanities Council  
Attn: WV Folklife Apprenticeship Program  
1310 Kanawha Blvd. E  
Charleston, WV 25301

## Letters of Support

We welcome up to three letters written by those who can speak to the excellence or mastery of the teaching artist, commitment to their cultural community and traditional art form, and suitability for this program. Letter writers could include mentors, community leaders, colleagues, or fellow practitioners of the traditional art form. While optional, letters of support may offer important information not covered in the application questionnaires.



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## Review Criteria

A panel will review each application based on the following criteria:

- **Traditional nature of the proposed art or skill**—defined as an art form or cultural expression based in and reflective of traditional knowledge and connection to cultural communities (20 points)
- **Teaching Artist Excellence**—connection to cultural community, training, technical ability, knowledge of the art form, and commitment to the apprenticeship (20 points)
- **Apprentice Fit**—connection to cultural community, basic technical competency, commitment to the apprenticeship and to sustaining the art form or tradition (20 points)
- **Potential impact** of the apprenticeship on the preservation and development of the art form or tradition within the cultural community (20 points)
- **Quality and feasibility of the work plan** including proposed goals, learning approach, appropriate budget, and schedule (20 points)

## Application Assistance and Draft Review

We can offer feedback on an application draft prior to submission and answer questions. Applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss their proposed apprenticeship *in advance* of the deadline.

Contact Jennie Williams at [williams@wvhumanities.org](mailto:williams@wvhumanities.org) or call (304)346-8500. Please understand our time will be limited as we approach the application deadline on August 26, 2024.

## 2024-2025 Apprenticeship Timeline:

July 1, 2024	Application and Guidelines become available
Before August 23, 2024	Contact West Virginia Folklife for assistance
August 26, 2024	APPLICATION DUE
September 2024	Review panel meets and makes recommendations
October 2024	Award letters distributed and apprenticeships begin
October TBD 2024	Virtual orientation meeting
Jan 2025 - October 2025	Apprenticeship site visits, local public presentations
Fall 2025	Apprenticeship showcases (locations and dates TBD)
Winter 2026	Apprenticeship activities completed, final report due

The next West Virginia Folklife Apprenticeship program year will occur in 2026-2027 contingent on funding.