



Folk & Traditional Arts Community Projects

Program Guidelines 2026-2027

Application Opens	Application Deadline	Decision Notification By	Funded Projects Take Place
Wednesday, January 7, 2026	Thursday, April 30, 2026	July 2026	September 1, 2026 – December 31, 2027

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACCESSIBILITY	2
CONTACT US	2
ABOUT FOLK & TRADITIONAL ARTS.....	2
ABOUT FOLK & TRADITIONAL ARTS COMMUNITY PROJECTS GRANTS	2
ELIGIBILITY	3
REQUIRED APPLICATION MATERIALS	4
___ APPLICATION NARRATIVE QUESTIONS.....	4
___ WORK SAMPLES	4
___ PROJECT BUDGET	5
___ MATCH REQUIREMENT	6
REVIEW CRITERIA.....	6
GRANT AWARD LIMITATIONS	6
GRANT PAYMENTS.....	7
FINAL REPORTS	7
APPLICATION SUPPORT RESOURCES	8

ACCESSIBILITY

These guidelines are available in .PDF format and as an accessible Word file at www.midatlanticarts.org.

To request accommodations during your application process, reach out to Program Associate, Folk & Traditional Arts, Joel Chapman at jchapman@midatlanticarts.org or 667-401-2488 x 117. Please request accommodation **at least 10 business days** before the application due date so we can best serve your needs.

CONTACT US

Our Folk & Traditional Arts staff are available to discuss your project and help you build a strong application. We recommend you get in touch **more than 48 hours** before the due date, so we have time to answer your questions. We'd love to discuss your application with you!

- Joel Chapman, Program Associate, Folk & Traditional Arts: jchapman@midatlanticarts.org or 667-401-2488 x 117
- Ellie Dassler, Program Director, Folk & Traditional Arts: edassler@midatlanticarts.org or 667-401-2587 x 115

See [Application Support Resources](#) for webinars and office hours.

ABOUT FOLK & TRADITIONAL ARTS

Often defined as the “art of everyday life,” folk and traditional arts reflect the aesthetics, practices, values, and beliefs of community groups, such as families, geographic communities, occupational groups, ethnic heritage groups, faith communities, and more.

Traditional arts are often learned orally or by observation and imitation, rather than in institutional or academic settings. All traditions are connected to the history of the communities that practice them, but they are not just art forms of the past. Instead, they are “living traditions” that adapt to remain relevant in a changing world. Individuals and communities use traditional arts to build collective power, engage in healing, and strengthen their identity.

Mid Atlantic Arts’ region is home to diverse folk and traditional cultures. Examples include Appalachian blues, folk, and old-time music; Indigenous beadwork and tanning; beatboxing and hip-hop traditions; instrument building; woodworking; *quelbe* music of the U.S. Virgin Islands; quilting; weaving and spinning; Japanese *taiko* drumming; diverse gardening and foodways traditions; Puerto Rican mask-making, *bomba*, and *plena* music; and much more.

ABOUT FOLK & TRADITIONAL ARTS COMMUNITY PROJECTS GRANTS

Folk and Traditional Arts’ Community Projects grants support the vitality of traditional arts and cultures in Mid Atlantic Arts’ region.

Non-profit organizations may apply for \$1,000 - \$5,000 to support community-based projects that engage folk and traditional artists, practitioners, and culture bearers.

ELIGIBLE PROJECT ACTIVITIES MAY INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

- Performances and festivals
- Public art collaborations
- Workshops, trainings, and folk arts education programs

- Exhibitions of folk and traditional art
- Fieldwork and documentation projects
- Commission/creation of new traditional arts work

Fundraisers or benefits are not eligible projects for this program.

Projects must include some publicly accessible component, such as a:

- Public performance, festival, or exhibit
- Video/radio broadcast or podcast
- Q&A session
- Public interest meeting
- Accessible archival collection
- Website
- Published report

Project activities should take place in Mid Atlantic Arts' region. We strongly encourage projects that serve under-resourced artists, practitioners, traditions, or communities whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited. Projects may focus on reaching a particular audience, however they may not be exclusionary under [national civil rights laws and policies](#).

ELIGIBILITY

To receive a Folk & Traditional Arts Community Projects grant, your organization must be:

- Located in Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Virginia, West Virginia, or Native nations that share this geography.
- A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, unit of state or local government, or federally recognized Tribal government.
 - Units of government must provide a document on official letterhead to confirm your status as a government entity.
 - Fiscal sponsorship is not allowed for this program.
 - Applicants must have a confirmed [SAM.gov Unique Entity ID \(UEI\)](#) number by the application deadline.
- In good standing with Mid Atlantic Arts, with no overdue or outstanding required reports and/or grant documents.

Organizations may not apply for a Folk & Traditional Arts Community Projects grant in the same year as either of the following Mid Atlantic Arts grant programs:

- [Central Appalachia Living Traditions Experiences](#)
- [Mid Atlantic Presenters Initiatives](#)

Please contact us with any questions about which program is right for you.

REQUIRED APPLICATION MATERIALS

To apply, visit our online application portal at midatlanticarts.smartsimple.com. The application includes applicant information, narrative questions, work samples, and budget. Applications are due by **11:59pm ET on Thursday, April 30, 2026**.

APPLICATION NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

You will answer the following questions in your application. Word limits are just suggestions—you do not need to use all available space in your responses.

1. **Project Summary** (50 word limit): In one or two sentences, clearly describe the project you would like us to support, who the project will serve, and why the project is important.
If your project is chosen for funding, this is what Mid Atlantic Arts will use in web, social media, and other content describing your project.
2. **Project Description** (350 word limit): Describe the proposed project you would like us to support. Be as specific as possible about the activities that will take place during the project period. Tell us about the venue(s) and target audiences.
3. **Traditional Art Form** (350 word limit): Describe the tradition/art form(s) that your project will engage. What is the role/history of the art form in your community, and why is it important?
4. **Project Personnel** (350 word limit): Tell us about your organization, featured artists/practitioners, and any major partners that will be involved in the project. What makes them a good fit for this project? How will you approach your collaboration with them?
5. **Project Timeline** (250 word limit): Provide a proposed timeline for all project activities. Be as specific as possible.
6. **Community Collaboration** (250 word limit): How will you center collaboration with the community and featured artists/practitioners throughout this project, including in project design, execution, and evaluation?
7. **Inclusion and Accessibility** (350 word limit): Who do you consider the target participants for this project, including artists/communities whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited by geography, race and ethnicity, economics, disability, or other factors? How will you make sure your project is accessible to them, in terms of physical, financial, and/or language access (when applicable)?
8. **Evaluation** (250 word limit): How will you define success for this project? How will you evaluate whether the project is successful?

WORK SAMPLES

Work samples are a critical part of your application. Panelists will consider your work samples carefully, to help them understand the traditions and activities your project will engage.

Be selective. Work samples should be recent, concise, and as relevant to the project as possible. Panelists will spend no more than 15 minutes per application reviewing work samples.

For example, if you are proposing:

- **A performance:** Submit samples of the engaged artists' work.
- **An exhibit:** Submit an exhibit plan and examples of the works and information in the exhibit.

- **An educational or training program:** Submit a sample of work by the artists/teachers and/or a curriculum plan.
- **A media project (film, radio, or podcast):** Submit a sample of previous work by key partners and a sample of the subject you will portray.
- **A fieldwork project:** Submit a fieldwork plan, a sample of previous work by the fieldworkers, letter(s) of support from the community, and/or an example of similar past work by your organization.
- Other possible work samples may show your organization's programmatic experience and ability to carry out the project.

Please reach out if you have questions about how to pick the right work samples for your application.

WORK SAMPLE SPECIFICATIONS:

- **For audio and video samples:** 3 per application
 - Each sample should be no longer than 3 minutes. If your clip is longer, indicate in the description which 3-minute portion panelists should view.
 - Make sure samples are available online on YouTube, Vimeo, Soundcloud, Spotify, etc. Provide the URL for panelists to access the sample and the password, if needed.
- **For image work samples:** 5 per application
 - We recommend photos in .JPEG/JPG or .PNG format.
- **For document work samples:** 3 per application.
 - We recommend documents in .PDF format.

PROJECT BUDGET

You may request \$1,000 - \$5,000 for your Folk & Traditional Arts Community Projects grant.

Please note: This available grant request range is different than in previous years. We made this change to help us serve as many organizations as possible at the full amount of their grant request. Please contact us with any questions.

You must use awarded funding for specific, direct project costs. You may not use grant funding for indirect costs.

DIRECT COSTS MAY INCLUDE:

- Program staff salaries
- Technical personnel fees
- Artist/practitioner fees, travel, and lodging
- Audience development, marketing, and promotional expenses
- Expenses related to accessibility, such as American Sign Language interpretation, physical access accommodations, or translation
- Technical and equipment rental
 - Equipment paid for by a Folk & Traditional Arts Community Projects grant must be specific to your proposed project—for example, renting stage and sound equipment for a performance. You may not use Community Projects grant funds to purchase equipment for your organization's general operating needs. Please contact us with any questions about eligible equipment expenses.
- Expenses related to public health measures for in-person engagements

Your budget is **not** shared with the panelists and does **not** contribute to your application score. Instead, staff will review your budget to make sure it follows the program requirements and request revisions as needed.

MATCH REQUIREMENT

This program requires a 1:1 cash match. This means you must have additional funding for your project from a different source that is at least equal to the amount of your grant request. This may include grants from a state or local agency, private donations, or ticket sales. You will need to identify your anticipated source(s) for this match in the project budget in your application. See [Grant Award Limitations](#) for more information.

EXAMPLE: If you request \$5,000 in grant funding, your match may include \$500 in ticket sales, a \$3,000 grant from your local arts council, and an additional \$1,500 investment from your organization. In this case, the total direct project expenses would equal \$10,000: \$5,000 to be paid for by a Folk & Traditional Arts Community Projects grant + \$5,000 by matched funds.

In your application under “Grant Expenses,” list **only** those project expenses that would be paid for by a Folk & Traditional Arts Community Projects grant and the 1:1 match. The maximum expenses you can include is \$10,000. Under “Project Income,” list **only** income you plan to use for your required 1:1 match.

You may apply for funds to support part of a broader program with a larger budget. If you want to include more context about the budget beyond your grant request and match, please do so in the “Budget Notes” section of the application.

REVIEW CRITERIA

A diverse panel of folk and traditional arts specialists, including folklorists, cultural workers, artists, and culture bearers, will review applications and provide program feedback. Panelists will review applications based on the following criteria. Each criterion corresponds to a question in the application.

1. **Traditional Art Form (20 points):** The project’s featured tradition/art form(s) is important and relevant to the community it engages.
2. **Project Personnel (20 points):** The staff and featured artists are experienced and appropriate for the project, as defined by their community, audience(s), outside recognition, or some combination of the three.
3. **Community Collaboration (20 points):** The project centers collaboration with the community and featured artists, including in project design, execution, and evaluation.
4. **Inclusion and Accessibility: (20 points):** The project thoughtfully serves and reaches artists/communities, including those whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited by geography, race and ethnicity, economics, disability, or other factors. The project defines a clear plan for accessibility accommodations.
5. **Evaluation (20 points):** There is a clear plan for defining and measuring the “success” of the project.

GRANT AWARD LIMITATIONS

You must use awarded funding for specific, direct project expenses. You may not use grant funding for indirect expenses. Fundraisers or benefits are not eligible projects for this program. Fiscal sponsorship is not allowed for this program.

This program requires a 1:1 cash match. This means you must have additional funding for your project from a different source that is equal to the amount of your grant request. This may include grants from a state or local agency, private donations, or ticket sales. The match may not include federal funds, whether they are received directly from a federal agency or indirectly, such as through a state agency or other entity. If you are selected for funding, your Folk & Traditional Arts Community Projects grant and the match may not be used to match any other directly or indirectly received federal funds.

Organizations may not apply for a Folk & Traditional Arts Community Projects grant in the same year as either of the following Mid Atlantic Arts grant programs:

- [Central Appalachia Living Traditions Experiences](#)
- [Mid Atlantic Presenters Initiatives](#)

Please contact us with any questions about which program is right for you.

GRANT PAYMENTS

Mid Atlantic Arts anticipates notifying all applicants on the status of their applications in July 2026.

If awarded, your grant payment will be sent 30 – 45 days prior to your project start date, as long as Mid Atlantic Arts has received and approved all necessary award documents. For projects starting in September and October 2026, the payment will be sent 14 – 21 days after we have received and approved all necessary materials.

FINAL REPORTS

If awarded, a final report will be due 30 days after your project end date, no later than January 31, 2027. The final report will be available in our [online portal](#) when your grant is awarded and is available to preview below. The report includes questions about project information, project activity locations, project narrative, expenses and income, and documentation of funder crediting.

READ MORE ABOUT FOLK & TRADITIONAL ARTS COMMUNITY PROJECT GRANTS AND PREVIEW THE FINAL REPORT QUESTIONS [HERE](#).

Folk & Traditional Arts Community Project grants are supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts' Regional Engagement Program.

Application Support Resources

We encourage you to get in touch with our Folk & Traditional Arts staff for a personalized conversation about your application. There are also several public opportunities to meet us and ask questions.

WEBINARS

ACCESSIBILITY: We will provide CART translation/live captioning for all webinars, and post a recording with English and Spanish captions on the [Mid Atlantic Arts website](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

To request other accommodations, or if you have any questions about webinars, please contact Program Associate, Folk & Traditional Arts, Joel Chapman at jchapman@midatlanticarts.org or 667-401-2488 x 117. Please request accommodation **at least 5 business days** before the webinar.

Tuesday, January 20, 2026, 1:00pm ET: Folk & Traditional Arts Community Projects: The Basics

- Register: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_CvaE8-BeQt-pe8KWhr3btg
- Spoken content and live captioning for this webinar will be in English.

Jueves el 22 de enero de 2026, 13:00 ET / Thursday, January 22, 2026, 1:00pm ET:

Subvenciones para Proyectos Comunitarios de Artes Tradicionales (Español)

- Inscripción: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_8iCSp8n5RjSG9lZGoygqWw
- Para este seminario web, el contenido hablado y los subtítulos en vivo estarán en español.
- Spoken content and live captioning for this webinar will be in Spanish.

OFFICE HOURS

Our Folk & Traditional Arts staff are available to answer quick questions without an appointment at our weekly office hours:

- **Wednesdays @ 1:00pm ET:** Jan. 14, Jan. 21, Feb. 4, Feb. 11, Feb 18, Feb. 25, Mar. 4, Mar. 11, Mar. 18, April 1, April 8, April 15, April 22, April 29
- **Join Office Hours via Zoom:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85894149405>
No registration is required. You will enter a Zoom waiting room and staff will see you in order of joining.

If the above times don't work for you, reach out for a conversation on your schedule.

- Joel Chapman, Program Associate, Folk & Traditional Arts: jchapman@midatlanticarts.org or 667-401-2488 x 117
- Ellie Dassler, Program Director, Folk & Traditional Arts: edassler@midatlanticarts.org or 667-401-2587 x 115