



MONTANA
ARTS COUNCIL

Montana Circle of American Masters Nomination Information

Program Description

The Montana Circle of American Masters (MCAM) is a program of the Montana Arts Council that celebrates the contributions of the state's master artists in folk and traditional arts. A member of MCAM is a person who throughout their life in the folk and traditional arts has created a notable body of work. Of significant cultural and artistic stature, their work is representative of the historic, traditional, and innovative arts distinctive to the State and is worthy of note on both a state and national level. To date, 52 artists have been inducted.

For a full description of MCAM, review the complete program guidelines [HERE](#).

Nomination and Review Process

- 1) Nominations are submitted by someone who knows the nominee well; family members, friends, community members, or students may submit a nomination form on behalf of the artist. Each nominator may only nominate one artist per cycle. To nominate an artist, submit the information requested on **page 3** of this form via email to folkarts@mt.gov. You can also call 406-444-4700 or 406-209-8839 to complete a nomination over the phone. Print copies can also be submitted via mail—address on page 3.
- 2) Nominations will be reviewed by Montana Arts Council staff. Approved nominees are invited to submit a full application. To be considered for 2024, nominations need to be received by April 15.
- 3) Complete applications received by June 17, 2024 will be reviewed by a peer artist with expertise in the medium, and then a panel consisting of Montana Arts Council members and local and regional folklorists. The selection process is very competitive, and only a small number of artist receive the award.
- 4) Applications recommended by the panel are sent to the full Montana Arts Council governing board for final approval.

Eligible Applicants

- Individual artists at least 18 years of age, U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents, and residents of Montana for at least one full year before the application deadline. Upon request, applicant can provide proof of Montana residency.
- Currently practicing artists in folk and traditional arts.
- Artists producing work that reflects the culture or community to which they belong.

Ineligible Applicants

- Hobbyists, historical reenactment actors, historical restoration and individuals who produce their work using craft kits or who assemble purchased commercial objects will not be considered for this award. This award aims to honor those who have dedicated themselves to their craft as a primary pursuit or profession.
- Groups of artists, arts collectives, businesses, or nonprofit organizations.
- Deceased artists; no posthumous awards will be given.
- High school and degree-seeking students.
- MAC staff or members of its current governing body, or anyone connected to them by one degree of relationship, marriage or shared household.
- Applicants with outstanding overdue final reports on Montana Arts Council grants.

Review Criteria

1. **Mastery of their art form:** The artist demonstrates a high level of technical proficiency and artistic excellence in their craft or art form, including a deep understanding of its techniques and aesthetics. The artist should have an eye for detail and a commitment to quality craftsmanship or performance, ensuring that their work meets the highest standards of excellence.
2. **Cultural authenticity:** The artist demonstrates a deep understanding and respect for the cultural heritage of their art form, including knowledge of its historical context, traditions, aesthetics, and symbolism. Their work should reflect the values, techniques, and materials that are characteristic of their own cultural tradition and community.
3. **Contribution:**
 - a. Teaching and mentoring: The artist has mentored others in their art form, passing on their knowledge, skills, and passion to future generations. They demonstrate an ability to communicate effectively, inspire and motivate students, and foster a love for the art of their respective field.
 - b. Impact on the community: The artist has a positive impact on their community, whether by preserving and promoting cultural traditions, providing economic opportunities, or enhancing social cohesion and mutual understanding.
 - c. Creativity and innovation: The artist should show an ability to innovate and experiment within their art form, pushing the boundaries of tradition while still maintaining its integrity and authenticity.

Award Amount and Program Benefits

Artists inducted into MCAM are eligible to receive a \$3000 award. Additional benefits of induction include a feature article in MAC's quarterly newspaper *State of the Arts*, representation on MAC's website, professional photography of the artist's work, and a public ceremony at the State Capitol in Helena.

Montana Circle of American Masters

Nomination Form

Submit the following information via email to folkarts@mt.gov. Alternatively, call 406-444-4700 or 406-209-8839 to complete a nomination over the phone or to request a paper copy. Paper copies can be mailed to: Montana Arts Council, PO Box 202201, Helena, MT 59620.

Nominee Contact Information (Include First Name, Last Name, Mailing Address, Phone Number, and Email Address)

Nominator Contact Information (Include First Name, Last Name, Mailing Address, Phone Number, and Email Address)

Relationship of Nominator to Nominee

To the best of your knowledge, is the nominee eligible to receive the award?

Refer to the eligibility information on page 1.

Briefly describe the nominee's artistic practice

Include information about artistic medium

Why is the nominee deserving of this honor?