

Traditional Arts Apprenticeship 2025 - 2026

Montana Arts Council

About the Montana Arts Council

The Montana Arts Council (MAC) is the agency of state government established to develop the creative potential of all Montanans, advance education, spur economic vibrancy, and revitalize communities through involvement in the arts. The Montana Arts Council is governed by 15 individuals appointed by the Governor. It is funded by the state and federal government.

Traditional Arts Apprenticeships

MAC is committed to preserving and encouraging the folk and traditional arts of Montana. Folk and traditional arts embody unique skills and artistic expressions, developed over time by diverse communities within our state. Rooted in and shaped by the community, these traditions thrive within ethnic groups or those sharing a common region or occupation. In Montana, our cultural tapestry includes Native beading, cowboy poetry, leather work, Metis fiddling, metal work, musical instrument-making, and many more.

The skills, techniques, and stories of folk and traditional artforms are passed down person to person, instead of in a formal education setting. A mentor/apprentice relationship in a community setting is among the most effective ways to support the vitality of Montana's traditional arts. MAC's Folk and Traditional Arts Apprenticeship program aims to play a crucial role in both preserving and evolving cherished traditions by facilitating a direct and immersive transfer of skills from mentor artists to passionate and committed learners.

Program Definitions

To better understand if your art form and your intended project fits this program, consider our definitions below:

Tradition: A cultural skill (music, dance, craft, foodways, art, etc.) learned and shared among members of a cultural community or Tribe.

Artist: Broadly defined to include masters of:

- Fiber and textile arts (weaving, quilting, fiber dying and production)
- Occupational arts (blacksmithing, woodworking, leather work, instrument making, basket making)
- Visual arts (ledger art, beadwork, carving)
- Performing arts (music, dance, storytelling, spoken word)

Apprenticeship: A time-honored system by which an accomplished artist or craftsperson passes on skills, techniques, values, and artistry over an extended period of time and intensive training to a dedicated learner.

Community: A group of people with a shared common heritage such as ethnic, tribal, occupational, regional, or religious. Community members usually learn their culture's traditional arts over time, in face-to-face situations, and by observation and imitation.

Mentor: Someone recognized by community and peers as an exemplary practitioner of a tradition. Mentors must be members of the same cultural heritage and tradition they teach.

Apprentice: Someone with significant skills who deepens his/her knowledge and ability under the guidance of a mentor. Apprentices must be from the same cultural community as the tradition that is being taught.

Application Deadline

Applications are due on August 18, 2025 by 11:59 PM. Applications can be submitted electronically via the online grant system at <https://art.mt.gov/application>.

Hard copy applications are also accepted and can be mailed to:

Montana Arts Council
P.O. Box 202201
Helena, MT 59620

Applicants are strongly encourage to contact MAC staff for assistance with the application.

Taylor Burby, folkarts@mt.gov, 406-209-8839
Brian Moody, brian.moody2@mt.gov, 406-444-4700

Project Timeframe

Upon acceptance into the apprenticeship program, participants will have one year from their acceptance date to complete their project. The duration of the project will be based on the work plan created and submitted by the participants. Applicants should create a detailed work plan outlining the scope of their project, including key milestones and timelines. It is essential to prioritize realistic and achievable project goals within the constraints of the grant funding.

Review Criteria

Applications are reviewed and evaluated by a panel of cultural specialists and folklorists considering the following criteria:

- Quality of the Mentor's body of work.
- Readiness of both the Mentor and Apprentice.
- Relevance of the proposed work to the shared cultural community (ethnic, tribal, religious, occupational) where the tradition originates.

- Impact of the proposed work on the development of the apprentice.
- Feasibility of the work plan.
- Priority may be given to projects that involve endangered traditions and/or art forms.

Review Process

Applications are first reviewed by MAC staff to assess completeness and eligibility. A panel of in-state and regional folklorists and cultural experts will discuss applications and make recommendations. The Folk Arts Committee will then approve the recommendations.

Award Amounts

Awards will be given to up to three apprenticeship pairs, with \$3000 going directly to the mentor. Payment will be in three installments and will be based on contracted work plan: the first at the beginning of the apprenticeship, the second after the midway check-in, and the third upon completion of a public presentation. Awards are considered taxable income.

Eligible Applicants

- The Mentor and Apprentice must be Montana residents with at least 12 months of residency prior beginning the apprenticeship.
- The Mentor and Apprentice must be currently practicing artists in the folk and traditional arts.

Ineligible Applicants

- 501c3 organizations, units of government, or LLCs. The award can only be paid to an eligible individual artist.

Ineligible Projects

- The work of contemporary studio artists, historical reenactors, or re-creations of historical repertoires or antiques.
- Academic research or formal student toward an academic or professional degree.
- Workshops or conferences.
- Applicants are not permitted to apply to both the Traditional Arts Apprenticeships and Montana Circle of American Masters in the same year.

Support and Accessibility

MAC is committed to helping qualified applicants get their applications submitted. If you need assistance completing the application please contact MAC staff (contact information below). If you have specific accessibility requests, contact Kristin Burgoyne, kburgoyne@mt.gov, 406-444-6449.

Taylor Burby, folkarts@mt.gov, 406-209-8839
Brian Moody, brian.moody2@mt.gov, 406-444-4700

Project Name*

Character Limit: 100

Mentor Information

1. Cultural Tradition*

Describe the cultural tradition you will teach and share why this cultural tradition is important to you and your community.

*If this traditional artform is at risk, please share that information here.

Character Limit: 5000

2. Biographical Info*

Tell us about yourself. Where are you from and/or how did you come to Montana?

Character Limit: 3000

3. Tradition Learned*

How long have you practiced this tradition? Who taught you this tradition?

Character Limit: 3000

4. Teaching Experience*

Describe ways you have taught or shared this tradition or other traditional arts in your cultural community.

Character Limit: 3000

5. Apprentice Information*

Work with the apprentice to provide the following information:

- Why do you wish to work together?
- What does the apprentice already know about the tradition, and what do they need to learn?
- Describe the apprentice's cultural background and the importance of this art form to their background.
- What is the apprentice's plans for continuing this art form after the apprenticeship is finished?

Character Limit: 6000

Artist Website

Character Limit: 2000

Work Plan

1. Skills to be Taught*

Describe the skills the mentor will teach during the apprenticeship.

Character Limit: 3000

2. Schedule of Lessons*

What is your tentative schedule for the lessons? How many meetings will you have, how long will they be, how many times do you plan to meet, and where will you meet?

Character Limit: 3000

3. Use of Funds*

The grant awarded for each project is \$3,000. Pairs are encouraged to develop a work plan that is feasible and appropriate for the allocated grant amount. Regardless of the proposed project's duration, applicants should carefully consider how to utilize the funds effectively to achieve their project goals. Below, please list how you will utilize these funds to cover the anticipated expenses required for this process. Please consider the costs associated with mentor stipends, materials, travel expenses, and other project-related costs.

Character Limit: 1500

4. Apprentice Accomplishments*

What will the apprentice have accomplished by the end of the apprenticeship?

Character Limit: 3000

5. Public Presentation*

Apprenticeships must include a public presentation of the funded tradition, please describe your proposed presentation.

- Presentations may take a variety of forms but they must be free and accessible to the public.
- Consider details such as the potential location and date. Public libraries, parks, schools, and community centers can be good demonstration/performance places.
- Participation in the Montana Folklife Festival in Butte in July is an option. Travel and lodging will be paid for if this option is preferred.

Character Limit: 3000

Work Plan Agreement*

Both the mentor and apprentice need to agree to the work plan and design it as a team. In order for the application to be considered complete, you need to agree to the statement below.

Choices

The work plan has been agreed to by both the mentor and apprentice.

Work Samples

Work Samples are critical for the panel to evaluate the application. Work samples--such as individuals photos, audio files, videos, news articles, etc.--should show mastery of the cultural tradition proposed for this apprenticeship. They should demonstrate excellence in the mentoring artist and great promise in the apprenticing artist.

- Each work sample should be relevant to the apprenticeship.
- Audio or visual clips should be no more than 3 minutes.
- Indicate start and stop times for longer audio or video submissions. If no segments are indicated, samples will be played from the beginning.

Mentor: Work Sample 1

Use the "Upload a File" button below to add a photo, article, audio, video, or other file.

Use the narrative box below to provide a description of the work sample. Please use the following format:

Title

Medium, materials used, or genre

Size (if applicable)

Start/Stop Times (audio/visual only)

Description

Character Limit: 500 / File Size Limit: 19 MB

Mentor: Work Sample 2

Use the "Upload a File" button below to add a photo, article, audio, video, or other file.

Use the narrative box below to provide a description of the work sample. Please use the following format:

Title

Medium, materials used, or genre

Size (if applicable)

Start/Stop Times (audio/visual only)

Description

Character Limit: 1000 / File Size Limit: 19 MB

Mentor: Work Sample 3

Use the "Upload a File" button below to add a photo, article, audio, video, or other file.

Use the narrative box below to provide a description of the work sample. Please use the following format:

Title

Medium, materials used, or genre

Size (if applicable)

Start/Stop Times (audio/visual only)

Description

Character Limit: 1000 / File Size Limit: 19 MB

Apprentice: Work Sample 1

Use the "Upload a File" button below to add a photo, article, audio, video, or other file.

Use the narrative box below to provide a description of the work sample. Please use the following format:

Title

Medium, materials used, or genre

Size (if applicable)

Start/Stop Times (audio/visual only)

Description

Character Limit: 1000 / File Size Limit: 19 MB

Apprentice: Work Sample 2

Use the "Upload a File" button below to add a photo, article, audio, video, or other file.

Use the narrative box below to provide a description of the work sample. Please use the following format:

Title

Medium, materials used, or genre

Size (if applicable)

Start/Stop Times (audio/visual only)

Description

Character Limit: 1000 / File Size Limit: 19 MB

Work Sample URL 1

For online hosted images, articles, or audio/video samples, please use the URL box below.

If providing an audio/visual sample, indicate the start/stop time for a 3 minute clip.

Character Limit: 2000

Work Sample URL 2

For online hosted images, articles, or audio/video samples, please use the URL box below.

If providing an audio/visual sample, indicate the start/stop time for a 3 minute clip.

Character Limit: 2000

Work Sample URL 3

For online hosted images, articles, or audio/video samples, please use the URL box below.

If providing an audio/visual sample, indicate the start/stop time for a 3 minute clip.

Character Limit: 2000

Letters of Support

One letter from a person who knows your work is required, and is helpful to the review panel when judging your application--additional letters are optional. These letters may be from workshop attendees, teachers, community members, arts agencies, Tribal leaders (etc.) and should address your knowledge and skills of the tradition; your cultural ties to the community that the tradition represents; why it is important to your cultural community/Tribe to continue this cultural tradition. Signed letters should be addressed to the Montana Arts Council and must be submitted with this application.

Mentor: Letter of Support 1

File Size Limit: 1 MB

Mentor: Letter of Support 2 (Optional)

File Size Limit: 1 MB

Mentor: Letter of Support 3 (Optional)

File Size Limit: 1 MB

Assurances

Sign Up for MAC Publication & News

MAC is proud to produce the State of the Arts, a free quarterly newspaper. To sign up for a paper or electronic subscription, and to view archived digital issues go to <https://art.mt.gov/soa>

To receive periodic email updates about the arts in Montana or upcoming funding opportunities, go to <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MTARTS/subscriber/new>

Indian Arts and Craft Act*

The Indian Arts and Crafts Act (IACA) of 1990 (P.L. 101-644). IACA is a truth-in-advertising law that prohibits misrepresenting of Indian art and craft products within the United States. It is illegal to offer or display for sale, or sell, any art or craft product in a manner that falsely suggests it is Indian produced. Under the IACA, and Indian is defined as a member of any federally or officially State recognized tribe of the United States, or an individual certified as an Indian artisan by an Indian tribe. For the full text of the law, click the following link: <https://www.doi.gov/iacb/act>

Choices

I am in compliance with the Indian Arts and Craft Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-644).

Add Montana Arts Council to Email Contacts*

The Montana Arts Council sends grant notifications to applicants via this online grant system. Some email providers will classify these messages as "SPAM". Please add "administrator@grantinterface.com" to your contact list or safe sender list to ensure you don't miss important emails about your application's status.

Choices

I have added administrator@grantinterface.com to my email contacts.

Please type your name in the box below.*

Character Limit: 75

Date*

Character Limit: 10

Signature Verification*

By clicking "I agree" below and by typing my name in the box above, I am affirming that all the information provided is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Choices

I agree

Apprentice Information

Third Party Email*

Character Limit: 254

Name*

Character Limit: 100

Street Address*

Character Limit: 250

 **Phone Number***

Character Limit: 15

 **Email Address***

Character Limit: 100