



TRADITIONAL ARTS APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

**Applicant Guidelines &
Evaluation Criteria**

APPLICATION DEADLINE:
Thursday, October 1, 2026
5:00pm PT

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About the Oregon Folklife Network (OFN)

Oregon Folklife Network documents, supports, and celebrates Oregon's diverse cultural traditions and tradition-bearers.

OFN creates public programs and exhibits, enhances archival collections, and connects resources across the state. The network facilitates interactions among all partners - from culture keepers, Tribes, and communities to state and national service providers such as the University of Oregon, the Museum of Natural and Cultural History, the Oregon Arts Commission, Oregon Cultural Trust, Oregon Historical Society, Oregon State Library, Oregon Heritage Commission, Oregon Humanities, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Oregon Folklife Network

- Invests in traditional artists and empowers culture keepers to maintain, develop, and pass on their living heritage
- Creates new opportunities for culture bearers to present their work to the public
- Provides a wide variety of accessible folklife programs for Oregonians
- Collaborates with Oregon organizations, Tribes, and communities interested in preserving, presenting, or promoting their cultural traditions
- Prepares the next generation of public folklorists through experiential learning and career opportunities



About the Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program (TAAP)

Traditional arts express a community's heritage and living cultural practices. The Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program (TAAP) recognizes the knowledge and skills of folk and traditional artists by assisting accomplished mentors to pass on their living traditions to promising apprentices from the same cultural heritage and community.

Apprenticeship teams outline and complete their own projects as proposed in their application. A capstone public presentation is a required component of apprenticeship projects. Applicants will be notified of award decisions in January. Awardees have until October to complete apprenticeship projects and public presentations.

A budget is not required in the proposal and is not a reporting requirement. This is an award, not a grant.

If you know qualified candidates for this program, please send us your recommendations.

TAAP Award Amount

OFN typically supports TAAP Awardees with a \$3,000 - \$4,000 award. Funds typically support mentors' instruction costs. Remaining funds cover travel plus necessary supplies (e.g. wood, grasses, leather, beads), but NOT permanent equipment (e.g. musical instruments, tools, electronic recording devices).



PROGRAM TIMELINE

Early July	Application Officially Opens
September 1	*Optional* Submit Rough Draft of Application to OFN Staff
October 1	Application Deadline
November	Panel Reviews Applications
Early January	Award Notification, Contracts Prepared
February	Public Announcement, First Payment Sent, Start of Projects
February to October	Awardees Conduct Lesson Plans, Public Performances
October to November	Program Evaluation Survey and Final Payment
December 31	All Award Activity Must Be Completed



STEP 1: ELIGIBILITY SCREENING

Step 1 in the application process is to **contact OFN** staff and complete an eligibility screening. Be prepared to share with staff your intended project title, mentor, and apprentice. Be ready to talk through the following eligibility requirements below:

- At least one person in the mentor / apprentice team must demonstrate permanent residence in the state of Oregon to apply.
- Mentor and apprentice(s) are required to be from the same cultural community (cultural community can be ethnic, occupational, sacred, or regional).
- Cultural appropriation is NOT eligible for TAAP. Folk-inspired art, which is produced by individuals and groups not part of the cultural community that originally developed the art form, will not be considered even if the quality of the art is excellent.
- TAAP Awardees cannot apply two years in a row; you must sit out for a year before you can reapply.

Once staff have verified your eligibility, they will send you the application.

The OFN office is available weekdays, 9am - 3pm.

Contact by email: ofn@uoregon.edu or by phone: (541) 346-3820.

STEP 2: APPLICATION GUIDELINES AND PROCESS

Step 2 in the application process is to **complete and submit your application**. OFN staff will provide you a blank application to fill out, or will schedule a time to fill out the application along with you via phone or ZOOM call. Below are descriptions and guidelines for all five parts of the application.

GENERAL APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

- Type in 12 pt. Times New Roman (or other legible) font, double spaced; or neatly handwrite.
- Please proofread your application before submission. Applications are not scored for grammar, but for clarity.
- Use the checklist provided on the application to double check you have included all required components

SECTION 1: COVER SHEET

Enter accurate and complete personal information for both Mentor and Apprentice. Sign and date the Oregon state residency and application information agreement.

SECTION 2: WRITTEN RESPONSES

Complete both Mentor and Apprentice Written Response sections to the best of your ability. Answer all sub-question bullet points and keep your responses limited to the recommended page/word count amount.

Reference the Evaluation Criteria / Grading Rubric (provided at the end of this document) when completing your written responses. The quality of both Mentor and Apprentice written responses are critical to the overall score of your application.

SECTION 3: PROJECT PLAN

TAAP teams are required to complete a public presentation highlighting their projects. OFN funds support broad public presentations, specific cultural community events, or both. Please discuss the proposed location and potential dates. Public libraries, parks, and community centers can be good performance/demonstration sites. Please inquire with OFN staff if you are interested in partnering with the Museum of Natural and Cultural History on the University of Oregon campus for your presentation.

Public presentation details do not need to be final upon application submission.

SECTION 4: WORK SAMPLES

Submit at least three (3) examples of the Mentor's best work. Work samples - recordings, pictures, or videos - should demonstrate the Mentor's skill with the cultural tradition proposed for this apprenticeship. These examples should demonstrate excellence. Submit at least two (2) examples of the Apprentice's best work. Work samples - recordings, pictures, or videos - should demonstrate experience with the cultural tradition proposed for this apprenticeship. The examples should demonstrate the Apprentice's great promise.

Do not send original artwork. OFN prefers digital work samples (e.g. photos, audio/video recordings) submitted as a PDF email attachment or as a list of web links to online materials. Materials submitted via US Mail can include USB drive, CD, DVD, or print photos. To have support materials returned, please enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope or packaging.

Work samples on the application should include:

- Title of each work sample
- Format (photo: jpeg, hard copy; audio: CD, mp3, web link; video: DVD, web link)
- A brief description of each work sample (1 sentence)
- A brief note about each work sample's relevance to the proposed apprenticeship.

Additional Notes:

- Each individual photo, audio file, video, news article, etc. equals one (1) support item.
- **Review panelists will review no more than three (3) minutes of each audio or visual work sample.** Either indicate start and stop times for audio or video submissions over three (3) minutes, or samples will be played for three (3) minutes from the beginning.

Applications submitted without work samples are not eligible for review.

SECTION 5: RECOMMENDATIONS and ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Mentors and Apprentices must provide contact information for individuals from their cultural community who are willing to be contacted by OFN staff. They should be familiar with your art form and how you engage both your art form and cultural community. Examples of good references include workshop attendees, former teachers, arts agency staff, Tribal or community members/leaders, etc.

OPTIONAL ADDITIONAL SUPPORT MATERIALS

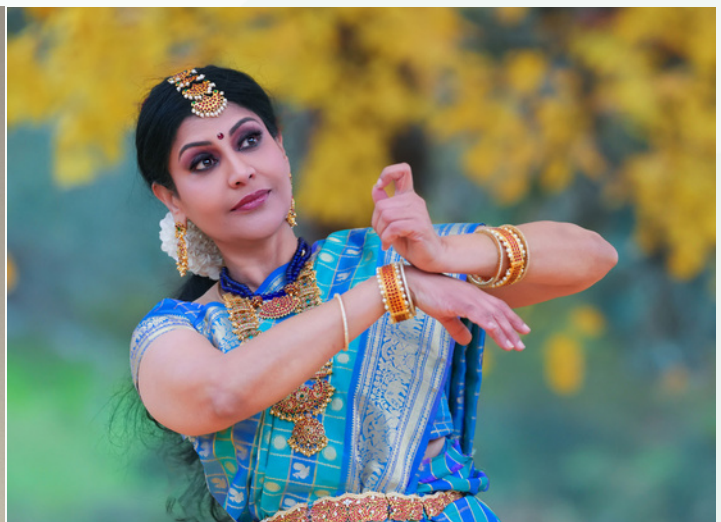
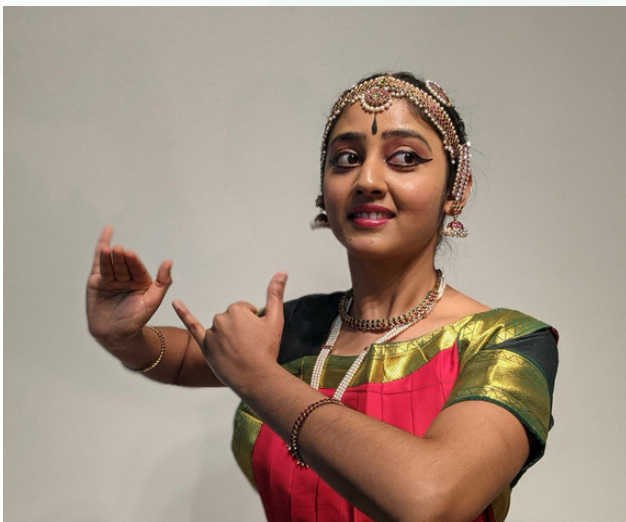
Each mentor/apprentice team may submit up to five (5) additional support materials (program notes, brochures, news clips, flyers, etc.). If you include additional pages, we will NOT review beyond the first five (5) pages.

Provide a brief note about each additional support material's relevance to the proposed apprenticeship in the provided "Optional Support Materials" section of the application (within Section 5: Letters of Support).

STEP 3: *OPTIONAL* STAFF SUPPORTED REVIEW

Step 3 in the application process is optional. OFN staff will review and provide **feedback on a draft of any application** submitted for review by **September 01, 2026**. This allows sufficient time for staff feedback and for you to implement recommended changes.

OFN staff is committed to assisting *all* applicants with producing their highest quality application for best possible scoring.



STEP 4: SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Step 4 in the application process is to **submit your final application**.

**ALL APPLICATION MATERIALS ARE DUE ON
OCTOBER 1, 2026 at 5:00pm PT**

Two Options to Submit:

1. Email submissions

Sign, scan, and email your completed application (including ALL support materials) as attachments to **ofn@uoregon.edu**. If your files are too large to email, please use WeTransfer: <https://wetransfer.com> to share up to 2GB for free. Do NOT use DropBox, OneDrive, or other platforms that require permissions to access.

2. Hard Copy Submissions

Mail or hand-deliver a signed hard copy of your completed application (including ALL application materials) to the address below. Applications must be postmarked by October 1st. We recommend using a tracking service to ensure that your application materials reach OFN. We recommend UPS or FedEx for that purpose.

Send all mail to:

Oregon Folklife Network
ATTN: TAAP Application
242 Knight Library

6204 University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97043-6204

If you have any questions regarding how to submit your application, please contact the OFN office by emailing OFN@uoregon.edu or by calling (541) 346-3820.

AWARDEE SELECTION AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

AWARDEE SELECTION PROCESS

A panel of culture bearer peers, cultural experts, and arts professionals will review, discuss, and score all applications. This panel makes recommendations to OFN's Director for final selections. These recommendations then require approval from the Oregon Arts Commission and Museum of Natural and Cultural History leadership.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

All panelists review each application using the same evaluation criteria. A sample of the scoring sheet is included at the end of this document. There are six (6) categories of review criteria that total a maximum score of fifty (50) points.

Applications must clearly demonstrate:

1. Traditional / Cultural Role (5 Points)
2. Community Accountability (5 Points)
3. Mentor's Commitment to Artistic Excellence (5 Points)
4. Apprentice's Commitment to Artistic Excellence (5 Points)
5. Need / Urgency (20 Points)
6. Lesson Plan Feasibility (10 Points)



Evaluation Criteria

Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program

Traditional / Cultural Role				5 Points
Applicants clearly describe the tradition/artform itself, providing rich detail/context for the artform's traditional/cultural role.				
Applicants clearly describe the cultural importance of the artform.				
		Scoring: Select One Category Below		
		Vague	Fair	Clear
		(+) 1 Point	(+) 3 Points	(+) 5 Points

Community Accountability				5 Points
Application clearly demonstrates a shared cultural background between Mentor and Apprentice.				
Application clearly demonstrates how both applicants are supported / acknowledged by the community in which the tradition originates. Supplemental materials (letters of recommendation) enhance the reader's understanding of the applicants and their shared community.				
Applicants clearly demonstrate how their apprenticeship will influence/impact broader cultural community.				
		Scoring: Select One Category Below		
		Vague	Fair	Clear
		(+) 1 Point	(+) 3 Points	(+) 5 Points

Mentor's Commitment to Artistic Excellence				5 Points
Mentor shares how they practice their tradition/artform. Mentor describes a robust and culturally informed learning journey of their tradition/artform. Clear description of Mentor's teachers and/or other cultural learning resources, including their significance and quality.				
Mentor provides a culturally informed definition of quality/excellence. Mentor describes the depth of quality/excellence/skill they have so far achieved in their tradition/artform.				
Mentor has experience working towards community acknowledgement (titles, awards, honors, recognitions)				
Supplemental materials (work samples, letters of recommendation) enhance the reader's understanding of the Mentor applicant's commitment to culturally defined quality/excellence standards.				
		Scoring: Select One Category Below		
		Vague	Fair	Clear
		(+) 1 Point	(+) 3 Points	(+) 5 Points

Apprentice's Commitment to Artistic Excellence				5 Points
Application clearly describes how Mentor and Apprentice are familiar with one another and how long the Apprentice has been practicing the tradition/artform.				
Application details the depth of experience/skill the Apprentice has achieved and what they have yet to develop.				

Application clearly demonstrates Apprentice's commitment and potential to develop their skills during the apprenticeship and beyond.				
Supplemental materials (work samples, letters of recommendation) enhance the reader's understanding of the Apprentice applicant's commitment to culturally defined quality/excellence standards.				
		Scoring: Select One Category Below		
		Vague	Fair	Clear
		(+) 1 Point	(+) 3 Points	(+) 5 Points

Need / Urgency				20 Points
Clear explanation of any factors or concerns that make funding for this apprenticeship urgent.				
If applicable, clear justification provided for a family apprenticeship, a repeat mentor/apprentice team, or mentor artist who also teaches their tradition as a business.				
	Scoring: Select all those that apply			
	Clear risk of artform being lost	Timing of apprenticeship urgent to the cultural community	Timing/funding of this apprenticeship project urgent to the Mentor	Timing/funding of this apprenticeship project urgent to the Apprentice
	(+) 5 Points	(+) 5 Points	(+) 5 Points	(+) 5 Points

Lesson Plan Feasibility 10 Points

Application clearly articulates overarching goals for the apprenticeship as well as what skills will be taught/gained.				
Clear lesson plan conveys Mentor and Apprentice's ability to complete their goals in the time the program permits.				
	Scoring: Select all those that apply			
		Detailed Goals and What Skills will be Gained	Demonstrated Lesson Plan	Checked statement boxes
		(+) 4 Points	(+) 4 Points	(+) 2 Points

KEYWORDS AND DEFINITIONS

Cultural Community: A group of people with a shared common heritage such as ethnic, Tribal, occupational, sacred, or regional. Community members often learn their culture's traditions over time, in face-to-face interaction, by observation, imitation, and relationship.

Culture Keeper: A traditional artist, culture bearer, or lifeways practitioner who actively passes on and sustains the heritage of their community/Tribe and is recognized and acknowledged by that community.

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

Apprenticeship: A time-honored system by which an accomplished mentor teaches a dedicated student the necessary skills techniques, values, knowledge, and artistry of a shared cultural tradition over an extended period of time and through intensive training.

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

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

Folklife: Also referred to as lifeways or traditions, encompasses the everyday knowledge, art, and lore that are passed within communities through imitation, conversation, and practice. Folk arts are rooted in the cultural life of a community whose members share a common language, ethnic heritage, religion, occupation, or geographic region. Our folklife changes as people change, as our environment changes, and as new and established groups interact. Folklife includes forms as new as hip hop and as old as Native American basket weaving.

Folk and traditional arts **do not** include folk-inspired art, which is produced by individuals and groups who are not part of the cultural community that originally produced/created/developed the art form, even if the quality of the art is excellent.