



Living Traditions Fellowship

Nomination Deadline: April 6, 2026 at 6 p.m. CT

Missouri's Living Traditions Fellowship seeks to recognize the excellence and lifetime achievement of living traditional artists and community scholars in the Show Me State. The fellowships will honor those individuals' deep-rooted contributions to Missouri's traditional arts and their vibrant communities.

Living Traditions Fellows will receive a stipend for a scope of work, including a public presentation and recorded oral history with Missouri Folk Arts.

Nominations close April 6, 2026 at 6 p.m. CT. Missouri's Living Traditions Fellowship will be determined by an independent panel, then celebrated at a public reception.

Folk and Traditional Arts Definition

Living Traditions Fellowships are modeled on the National Heritage Fellowships presented by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). For Missouri's fellowship, we use the NEA's definition of folk and traditional arts:

The folk and traditional arts embody the expressive culture that grows out of shared activities in everyday life. Rooted in and reflective of the cultural life of a community, folk and traditional arts are constantly evolving, shaped by values and standards of excellence passed from generation to generation, most often within family and community, through demonstration, conversation, and practice. Vital and varied activities may coalesce around a wide range of commonalities, including ethnic heritage, cultural mores, language, religion, occupation, or geographic region. Genres in folk and traditional arts include but are not limited to, music, dance, crafts, foodways, dress/adornment, occupation, ceremony, and oral expression, including stories, poetry, and language.

Eligibility

Nominees must be current Missouri residents at time of nomination. Nominees must be worthy of statewide recognition and exhibit a sustained record of ongoing accomplishments. Nominees must be actively participating in the traditional arts as practitioners, artists, teachers, and/or community scholars, who work to sustain and share their knowledge of the traditional arts in the present for the future.

Accessibility

Missouri Folk Arts intends for the nomination process to be accessible to all. Please notify staff well before the deadline for assistance per the Americans with Disabilities Act or issues organizing nomination materials.

Criteria

- Current and longstanding record of excellence
- Significance of nominees within the context of their community's traditions in Missouri
- Current availability at time of nomination

Multiple Nominations

Nominators may submit multiple nominations.

Selection Process

Nominations and support materials will be reviewed by a panel of traditional arts and community specialists. Competitive nominations will address the role of the nominees in their communities as well as in the traditional arts. Nominators should demonstrate the nominees' lifetime achievements through key support materials. Nominations will be retained automatically for three cycles of panel review.

Funding Support

This project is made possible through funds received from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Missouri Arts Council with administrative support from the Museum of Art and Archaeology at the University of Missouri. *This fellowship program is contingent upon continuation of funds from both the NEA and the MAC.*

Missouri Folk Arts Program

In the mid-1980s, the Missouri Arts Council and University of Missouri formed a partnership that established statewide traditional arts projects supporting traditional artists, communities, and organizations with substantive grant funds from the National Endowment for the Arts and Missouri Arts Council.

Since 1993, Missouri Folk Arts Program has been anchored at the Museum of Art and Archaeology, where programming includes an apprenticeship program, annual folk arts grants, regional traditions discovery surveys, and public outreach with funds from established partners and individual donors.

Missouri Folk Arts strives to build understanding by documenting, sustaining, and sharing our state's living folk arts and folklife in collaboration with Missouri's citizens.

Submitting a Nomination

Missouri Folk Arts invites nominations from individuals and organizations. Self nomination is welcome. In the text, staff recommends nominators use a larger font size (12 pt or larger), sans serif fonts, and sufficient white space. Please submit nominations and support materials via email in Microsoft Word and/or PDF to the following address: mofolkarts@missouri.edu

Information Required

1. Contact information for both nominee and nominator (1 page):

Nominee:

- a. name,
- b. address, city, state, zip,
- c. county,
- d. email,
- e. and phone number

Nominator (if different than above):

- a. name,
- b. address, city, state, zip,
- c. county,
- d. email,
- e. and phone number

2. Narrative (1-4 pages):

- a. Provide a brief biography about the nominee, focused on their life as a traditional arts practitioner, teacher, or community scholar in Missouri.
- b. Include statements about the significance and magnitude of the nominee in relation to the traditional arts in Missouri.
- c. Discuss their impact in Missouri.

d. Describe ways the nominee has passed their skills and knowledge onto others in Missouri.

e. List evidence of the nominee's excellence (e.g., participation in relevant festivals, projects, exhibitions, events, or awards).

3. Letters of Support: Provide 1-3 letters from community members addressing the nominee's significance to the Missouri traditional art and/or community.

4. Support Materials: Nominators are encouraged to include additional materials to illustrate the nominee's lifetime achievements for reviewers. A cover sheet should list each item, providing the date published, released, recorded, etc. and a brief description. For images, briefly note the location, date, and relevance. For audio or video materials (Vimeo and YouTube links), indicate the specific tracks/timestamps for panelists' review.

Support materials may include:

- a. resume/bio,
- b. web links (e.g., YouTube, Google Drive, etc.),
- c. images,
- e. and copies of news stories.

Submit all support materials as PDF files. Please **do not** send external materials (CDs, DVDs, original artwork, objects, etc.). The maximum length for the full nomination package is 20 pages.

Nomination Checklist:

The following items should be included in your application:

- Contact information for nominee and nominator (1 typed page)
- Narrative (1-4 typed pages)
- Letters of Support (1-3 pages, PDF)
- Support Materials (11-14 pages, PDF)

For more information and assistance, please contact Missouri Folk Arts' director and allow ample time before the deadline for questions and replies.

Lisa L. Higgins, Director: mofolkarts@missouri.edu or (573) 882-6296 (voicemail)

