



New Jersey State Council on the Arts Folk & Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Project (FTAP) Fiscal Year 2027 Grant Program Rules & Instructions

Este documento también está disponible [en español](#).

ABOUT THE FOLK & TRADITIONAL ARTS APPRENTICESHIP PROJECT (FTAP) GRANT PROGRAM

FTAP grants provide \$10,000 to support an individualized, structured learning opportunity between an Apprentice artist and one or more Mentor Artists. By providing funds to support artists' time and project expenses, FTAP grants allow intermediate-level artists to significantly advance their skills and cultural knowledge in a specific folk and traditional art form. Strong apprenticeships foster the continuation of valued community traditions, contributing to the ongoing vitality of these specific folk and traditional arts. See more in "Eligibility & Supported Activities" (pages 3-4) and "About the Council's Folk Arts Program" and "Glossary" (pages 9-10), below.

The FTAP application process is a two-part process. After submitting Application Part 1, eligible applicants will be sent the link to Application Part 2. Please see the "How to Apply" section on page 2 below.

If you have questions about whether your art form or apprenticeship project is eligible for this grant, please contact Program Officer Sally Van de Water at sally.vandewater@sos.nj.gov or by phone 609-875-4948 (NJ Relay 711). Art forms that are not considered folk and traditional arts are not eligible for this opportunity. The Council offers Individual Artist Fellowship Awards annually in most generative contemporary art forms. To learn more about the Fellowship program, please visit our partners at [Mid Atlantic Arts](#).

For more about the State Arts Council and our Folk Arts Program, please see [pages 9-10](#).

KEY DATES & DEADLINES FOR THE FTAP APPLICATION PROCESS

Thursday, November 20	Program Rules & Instructions Released (<i>this document</i>)
December 2025 – February 2026	In-Person and Online Information Sessions (see page 8)
Thursday, January 8, 2026	Application Part 1 due by 12:00 PM ET (Noon). Staff reviews applications for eligibility.
Early February, 2026	Applicants notified of their eligibility status. Eligible applicants receive link and instructions for Application Part 2.
Thursday, March 5, 2026	Application Part 2 due by 11:59 PM ET.
March – June, 2026	Panel review; funding recommendations established
July 21, 2026	Arts Council Annual Meeting: grant awards voted on and announced
July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027	Project Period *Contracts are typically released in September, with the first payment usually available in October.

FY27 GRANT PERIOD

The grant period for successful projects is July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027. Project activities must take place within that period, but do not need to extend the entire year. *Please note:* due to the administrative process of awarding grants, funds will not be available to grant awardees until after the grant period has officially started, usually in the early fall. Please contact Program Officer Sally Van de Water (sally.vandewater@sos.nj.gov; 609-875-4948) if you have questions about how that might affect your proposed project.

MATCH AND FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS

There is **no** matching requirement. However, if the project activities cost more than the amount requested, the proposal must clearly demonstrate the applicant's intention/ability to provide the additional required funds.

APPLICATION HELP AVAILABLE

Folk & Traditional Arts Program Officer Sally Van de Water is available to help with questions specific to your application. Contact Sally (sally.vandewater@sos.nj.gov; 609-875-4948), or you may schedule an appointment for in-depth application questions.

Applicants seeking assistance are advised to contact staff well in advance of the application deadline. Please read these Rules & Instructions thoroughly prior to contacting staff.

ACCESSIBILITY

The Arts Council is committed to ensuring its programs are accessible to all people. For accessibility services related to filing an application, please contact Accessibility Coordinator Lindsay Dandeo at 609-984-7020 (NJ Relay 711) | lindsay.dandeo@sos.nj.gov.

HOW TO APPLY FOR A FY27 FTAP GRANT: INSTRUCTION STEPS AND TIMELINE

1. Fill out [Application Part 1](#) and submit it by **January 8, 2025 at 12:00 PM ET (Noon)**. *Late applications will not be accepted.*
2. Eligible applicants will receive an invitation to submit Application Part 2 online by Monday, February 5, 2026. See "Application Part 2: Application Components," below.
3. The FY27 Apprenticeship Application Part 2 must be submitted online on or before **Thursday, March 5, 2026**. *Late submissions will not be accepted. Applicants are strongly urged to submit applications well before the deadline. Once submitted, Part 2 applications may not be revised or re-submitted.*

After Application Part 2 is submitted, it will be reviewed by Council Staff for eligibility and completeness. If an Application Part 2 has an error in any of the supporting document uploads (i.e.: wrong website link, incorrect document), the applicant will have an opportunity to correct the error. Applicants will be notified by the Arts Council on or around March 20 if any of their documents need to be corrected.

Submitted Applications that have been deemed complete and eligible will be reviewed by an independent panel of folk and traditional arts specialists and evaluated against the published criteria.

ADDITIONAL APPLICATION INFORMATION

1. Materials submitted after the application deadline will not be accepted, other than corrections requested by Council staff to ensure a complete and accurate application.
2. Successful submission of a complete application does not guarantee an award.
3. Results of the Panel Review may be used to inform contract specifications.
4. An appeal process is not available for this grant opportunity.
5. If the Council receives insufficient eligible applications to move to the panel process, the program may be cancelled.
6. The Council may prioritize applications from the eight southern counties in order to help meet its State-mandated funding requirements.
7. Grantees will receive 90% of the grant funds upon execution of the Grant Contract (Fall 2026) and the remaining 10% upon completion of the Final Report (Summer 2027). A final report will be due 45 days after the completion of the grant period.

APPRENTICESHIP/FTAP ELIGIBILITY: WHO MAY APPLY?

Applications must be submitted by an individual artist only.

1. **Only Folk and Traditional Artists are eligible to apply for this opportunity.** If you have questions about whether you and/or your art form is eligible for this award, please contact Program Officer Sally Van de Water (sally.vandewater@sos.nj.gov; 609-875-4948). Ineligible applications will not be reviewed by the panel.
2. This grant is not for beginners; applicants must be able to demonstrate experience in their art form within its cultural context. Successful applicants to this program will be able to demonstrate their commitment to their art form and their understanding of its cultural context.
3. The applicant must be at least 18 years of age, and must be a United States citizen or legal permanent resident. Individuals with working visas are not eligible for this grant.
4. The applicant must be a current, permanent New Jersey resident at the time of application, award (July 2026), and contract submission (Fall 2026). Previous FTAP or Apprenticeship recipients may apply; applications must demonstrate what additional skills or knowledge will be attained through the project. Previous recipients may receive funding in a maximum of two sequential cycles (for example, FY25 and FY27).
5. Students enrolled in a credit-granting post-secondary program (college/university or trade school) in a related field are not eligible to apply. The learning plan must be designed with the Apprentice and Mentor(s) specifically for this project, and not be part of a pre-existing curriculum.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES/EXPENSES

This grant provides funds for planned, structured learning activities for folk and traditional artists during a one-year grant period. All project activities should support the applicant's further development in their folk and traditional art form. Awards are not granted on the basis of need; applications will be evaluated by a grant review panel against the criteria listed on pages 7 of this document.

Examples of allowable expenses include:

- Stipend payment to the Mentor Artist(s)
- Stipend payment to the Apprentice Artist (not to exceed 20% or \$2,000)
- Domestic travel costs, including mileage and tolls
- Supplies and materials required by the learning plan
- Other costs directly supporting the learning activities

This program ***does not support*** expenses for:

- International travel;
- Travel for anyone not named in the grant proposal;
- Food, beverages, or other refreshments;
- Study in a credit or non-credit course, online program, undergraduate or graduate program, or other pre-packaged educational program;
- Marketing (including websites, brochures, or advertisements);
- Any costs not directly supporting the FTAP project activities; and/or
- Capital expenses or Permanent Equipment with a value exceeding \$350 or having a life span over three years.

APPLICATION PART 1 *(due January 8, 2026)*

This first form of the application process, [found here](#), will be used to determine eligibility to submit a full application (Application Part 2). This form asks for the following information:

- Applicant Name
- Applicant Email, Phone, and ZIP Code
- Applicant County
- Art Form
- Brief description of the Proposed Project

[Application Part 1](#) also requests optional demographic information; this is *not* part of your application and will *not* be used to determine your eligibility for this program. None of the demographic information will be seen by the review panel, and will be used in the aggregate only. Please note, you may select “I choose not to answer” for any of these questions.

Your project details do not need to be finalized for you to submit Application Part 1. However, this step will be used to determine eligibility for this funding category, so please submit as many details as possible. **Based on the information provided in Part 1, eligible applicants will receive the link to Application Part 2 (see below).**

APPLICATION PART 2 *(Due March 5, 2026)*

The application portal, CaFÉ, will be shared with eligible applicants beginning February 2, 2026. Applicants will need to create an account in CaFÉ and upload their work sample materials to their profile. Below is a preview of the Application materials. Submit your application via the CaFÉ portal no later than Thursday, March 6, 2026 by 11:59 PM ET.

Applicant Page/About Me: Name (Professional/Publicity and Legal, should you be awarded a grant); Permanent NJ Address; Phone; Email; Website (optional)

Project Description: Please summarize your project in a few words. This statement may be used in award announcements and/or other public communication. It should contain the basic “who, what, where, and when” information.

Narrative Responses: The application form will ask for four short-answer narrative responses to specific questions, to be answered by the Applicant/Apprentice:

1. What is your Folk and Traditional Art form, and why is it important to you?
2. What is your proposed Apprenticeship Project, and why is it important for you to learn this way?
3. Which Mentor Artist(s) do you wish to work with, and why? Why is it important to work with this/these Mentor(s) specifically? If you are proposing to learn from family, please explain why this grant is essential to your learning. *If the Mentor artists are not in New Jersey, please explain why you cannot study with a New Jersey based Mentor in this art form.*
4. How will this Apprenticeship Project affect you and your community in the future?

Learning Plan: Please upload a Learning Plan that describes your learning project in as much detail as possible. This should include a timeline and identify specific learning goals. If you previously received support for a FTAP or an Apprenticeship award, please share what you learned previously, and how this new FTAP grant will build additional skills or knowledge to advance your mastery of the art form.

Mentor Artist(s) Bio and Statement of Support: Upload a biography of the proposed Mentor Artist(s) and a statement from the proposed Mentor Artist(s) explaining why they wish to work with you. This statement may be a letter, email, audio or video recording. (When adding materials in languages other than English, please also include translations, either written or on the same recording.) If a prospective Mentor Artist plans to work with any other apprentice that are applying for this grant program, they should clarify with whom and in what capacity.

Budget: Fill out the provided Budget Form, estimating your expected costs. Funds may be used for Mentor Artist honorarium, travel costs, supplies, Apprentice honorarium, and other direct costs related to the project. You may include up to 5% of the total costs as “miscellaneous.”

Successful grantees will be required to provide receipts with reporting on the grant expenditures. Contact Sally Van de Water (sally.vandewater@sos.nj.gov; 609-875-4948) if you have questions about expense eligibility.

Work Samples from Apprentice and Mentor Artist(s): Upload work samples that demonstrate the Apprentice’s work, Mentor Artist(s) work, and/or other important information necessary to understand the proposed project. These may include:

- Up to five (5) images each for Apprentice and Mentor Artist(s), with descriptions
- Up to five (5) minutes of video per artist; if linking to a longer piece, please indicate the time stamp at which you would like the panelists to start/stop their review
- Not more than five (5) pages of supplementary material that demonstrates the importance of

this Apprenticeship/learning opportunity, and/or the strength of the Apprentice and the Mentor Artist(s)

TIPS FOR SUCCESS: APPLICATION RECCOMENDATIONS

The following tips are ways that some applicants have improved their applications. Please use them if you feel it would help your application.

- Create your CaFÉ profile as soon as you receive the instructions and invitation to submit Application Part 2; you will be able to save and work on your profile and application later.
- Imagine that you are explaining yourself and your art form to someone who has never seen it before. Although our panel will include professionals from within the field of folk and traditional arts, they may not be familiar with your specific art form. Avoid jargon and acronyms.
- If you have unusual or unique circumstances that are important to your application, please find the best place to include them. For example, if you are related to your proposed mentor artist(s), please explain in that section of the application why funds are necessary to learn from family members.
- Draft your narrative responses in a separate document and copy and paste them into the online application narrative boxes.

HOW FOLK & TRADITIONAL ARTS APPRENTICESHIP PROJECT APPLICATIONS ARE EVALUATED

A panel of folk and traditional arts specialists will review each application and use the following Panel Review Rubric to evaluate:

- Appropriate skill level and commitment of the Apprentice.
- Appropriate skill level, cultural and artistic expertise, and commitment of the Mentor Artist(s) to work with the Apprentice.
- Learning Plan: The proposed learning plan and timeline are clear and designed to help the applicant achieve their learning goals within the context of the tradition. The likelihood that this Apprenticeship Project will contribute to the long-term strength of this art form in the community.
- Priority will be given to projects in which the Apprentice and Mentor Artist(s) share a common cultural identity, such as ethnicity, family, religion, language, occupation, or geographic region, and in which they learned the art form in traditional community settings and not in formal educational institutions.
- Priority will be given to less commonly practiced and/or endangered folk art forms, folk arts that help preserve endangered languages, and/or art forms not previously supported by the Council.
- Applications that seek to work with Mentor artists who repeatedly engage with FTAP funded projects year over year may be declined in order to prioritize new art forms, apprentices and Mentors.

**Rules & Instructions continue on next page.*

PANEL REVIEW RUBRIC: FOLK AND TRADITIONAL ARTS APPRENTICESHIP PROJECT GRANT

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Evaluation Criteria	Little or no evidence that the project will succeed	Weak/Some evidence the project will succeed	Good; solid evidence the project will succeed	Very Good to Excellent; project very likely to succeed	Truly Exemplary; project likely to succeed well beyond goals
<i>Appropriate skill level & commitment of the Apprentice</i>	Apprentice has no experience in art form	Apprentice has some experience in art form and/or related art forms	Apprentice is at emerging to mid-career level with good knowledge of the tradition and its cultural context	Apprentice demonstrates clear skills/knowledge in an aspect of the art form or tradition; this will help push them to a higher level of mastery	Outstanding apprentice who has demonstrated commitment to the art form in other ways, already practicing and active in the community
<i>Appropriateness and Commitment of Mentor(s)</i>	Mentor artist not at the level of mastery of the art form/tradition; unclear what the Mentor Artist(s) will teach	Mentor artist(s) have some skills to teach; unclear or tepid interest in working with the Apprentice	Mentor artist(s) at an appropriate level of mastery beyond the Apprentice; clear skills, demonstrating knowledge of the art form technically and within its cultural context	Very Strong Mentor(s) who have relevant skills and appropriate knowledge; willing to work with the Apprentice	Truly outstanding mentor(s) immersed in the tradition who are excited to work with this apprentice
<i>Learning Plan</i>	Work plan does not demonstrate learning goals and/or clear path to learning	Work plan has some elements	Work plan shows clear progression in learning	Plan is well thought-out, shows clear progression and nuanced goals	Exceptionally detailed with, nuanced goals; demonstrates how this will affect the community going forward.
<i>FTAP Contribute to Long-Term Strength of the Art Form within the Community</i>	Unclear commitment to the community; Apprentice seems invested in only their own learning	Apprentice has some connections to cultural community, unclear the role they play currently	Apprentice is active in the community, that is likely to continue and strengthen with the support of this award	Clear indication that the Apprentice will pass this knowledge on and contribute to its vitality over time	Apprentice is already passing on aspects of the culture within the community; Apprentice will likely become a future Mentor Artist for others. Community in support of this pairing due to its potential to make a difference long-term
<i>Shared cultural identity as defined by Apprentice and Mentor(s)</i>	Apprentice and Mentor(s) from unrelated communities, unclear why they are paired	Apprentice and Mentor(s) share some commonalities, some merits to their pairing	Apprentice and Mentor(s) have clear commonalities, their pairing makes sense; Apprentice has identified	Apprentice and Mentor(s) share common cultural community and will see/influence each other outside the scope of this project;	Common cultural community with ongoing interactions outside this project. The pairing will likely engage other aspects of cultural life beyond the FTAP art form

In addition, panelists will be asked to indicate whether an application represents a less common and/or endangered folk and traditional art form.

APPLICATION HELP: ONLINE AND IN-PERSON INFORMATION SESSIONS

Folk and Traditional Arts Program Officer Sally Van de Water is available to help answer any questions you have regarding your application. You may contact Sally at Sally.VandeWater@sos.nj.gov or 609-875-4948. You may also attend one or more of our online or in-person information sessions:

Online Application Information Sessions

Interested applicants can attend online workshops to ask questions about the grant program. These meetings are held by Zoom, which requires a [free software download](#) to your phone or computer. Participation is free; however, registration is required.

Prior to Application Part 1 Deadline:

Friday, December 12, 2025 | 12:00 PM [Register here.](#)

Wednesday, December 17, 2025 | 1:00 PM [Register here.](#)

Tuesday, December 30, 2025 | 10:00 AM [Register here.](#)

After Application Part 1 Deadline: only eligible applicants should register:

Wednesday, February 11, 2026 | 3:00 PM [Register here.](#)

Monday, February 23, 2025 | 12:00 PM [Register here.](#)

Application Assistance: In-Person Information Sessions

Interested applicants can attend free workshops hosted by one or more of the New Jersey Folklife Network partner organizations. Registration is required. (All times below are ET.)

Wednesday, December 17, 2025

5:00 PM - 6:30 PM

Arts Institute of Middlesex County

9 Livingston Ave., 3rd Floor Multi-Purpose Room
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

To register, please email Shannon Cole:

shannon.cole@co.middlesex.nj.us

Monday, December 8, 2025

10:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Tuckerton Seaport

Folklife Center Building

120 W. Main St., Tuckerton, NJ 08087

To register, please call 609-296-8868 or email

AdrianaA@tuckertonseaport.org

Monday, January 5, 2026

6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Perkins Center for the Arts, Collingswood

30 Irvin Ave

Collingswood, NJ 08108

[Register here.](#)

**Rules & Instructions continue on next page.*

ABOUT THE NEW JERSEY STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

The New Jersey State Council on the Arts (Council) is a division of the New Jersey Department of State, created in 1966 by Public Law Chapter 214 and consists of 17 Governor-appointed members, and three ex-officio members representing the New Jersey Secretary of State, the Senate, and the Assembly. The Council's volunteer members are supported by a professional staff who carry out the Council's programs and services from the State Capital in Trenton.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

We believe the arts are central to every element we value most in a modern society, including human understanding, cultural and civic pride, strong communities, excellent schools, lifelong learning, creative expression, and economic opportunity.

OUR MISSION

In 1966, the Legislature passed, and the governor signed, a bill creating the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and directing us to do all that is necessary and appropriate to: support, encourage, and foster public interest in the arts; enlarge public and private resources devoted to the arts; promote freedom of expression in the arts; and facilitate the inclusion of art in every public building in New Jersey.

HOW WE ARE FUNDED

Public support for the arts in New Jersey comes from a dedicated, renewable revenue source—the Hotel/Motel Occupancy Fee—established in 2003. Under this law, a percentage of the fees collected are annually allocated to the State Arts Council. Additionally, the Council receives an annual competitive grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

As the largest funder of the arts in New Jersey, the Council is committed to providing annual and multiyear grants to New Jersey's nonprofit arts organizations, arts projects, and artists. Strategic, responsive, and responsible grantmaking is the Council's highest priority, ensuring programs and services are equitable, accessible, and have the greatest possible statewide impact.

COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC BENEFIT AND EQUITY

In New Jersey, we know that diversity is one of our greatest strengths. The Arts Council embraces the principles of diversity, equity, access, and inclusion in all aspects of our work. With a focus on learning, data, and accountability, we will continue to assess and challenge inequities, identify gaps in engagement and service, and focus on the details that shape systemic change.

ABOUT THE COUNCIL'S FOLK ARTS PROGRAM

The National Endowment for the Arts defines Folk and Traditional Arts (sometimes referred to as "folk arts") as art forms that are rooted in and reflective of the cultural life of community. Community members share a common identity, usually ethnicity, family, religion, language, occupation, or geographic region. These vital and constantly reinvigorated artistic traditions are shaped by values and standards of excellence that are passed from generation to generation, most often within family and community, through demonstration, conversation, and practice. The Council recognizes that diversity is one of New Jersey's most significant and valuable characteristics, and aims to provide support for

the continuation of the State’s diverse folk and traditional arts. The Council has supported Folk Arts Apprenticeships since 1995 in many different cultural communities, reflecting the rich array of traditional arts in our state.

GLOSSARY

Folk and Traditional Arts/Art Forms: Artistic expressions that develop and grow in specific cultural communities. These communities can be defined by family, geographic region, religion, ethnicity, occupation, recreational group, or other common factor. These art forms are usually NOT taught in schools, but are often passed down across generations through direct one-on-one or small group interaction. Folk and traditional arts are the aesthetic practices we grow up doing and seeing in everyday life, like bridal mehendi, Carnival stilt dances, and Barnegat Bay decoy carving.

Apprentice Artist: An artist with intermediate skills, not a beginner, who learns from one or more Mentor Artist(s). Someone who might be called an “emerging” or “mid-career artist” in other contexts, the Apprentice artist is someone who has some knowledge of and skills in the art form but who is not yet at a level of mastery of the art form or tradition.

Mentor Artist: Sometimes called a “master artist,” the mentor artist is someone with a very strong knowledge of the art form and its cultural context. The Mentor Artist is someone who has practiced the art form or tradition for a long time and has the skills and knowledge necessary to teach others. They have knowledge about the art form and its cultural context that goes beyond the scope of the FTAP learning plan.

End of Guidelines