

2025-2026 Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Information & Application Guidelines

What is a traditional arts apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a face-to-face learning opportunity in which an experienced artist instructs a novice. This instruction addresses both the skills and techniques of an art form, as well as its cultural meaning and use within the communities in which it is practiced.

This program supports master artists and apprentices who have already decided to work together. Vermont Folklife staff do not match apprentices and master artists. The purpose of VTF's traditional arts apprenticeship program is to provide funding to help compensate the master artist for their time and to cover the cost of travel and of materials used during the apprenticeship. The program does not oversee interactions between the master artist and apprentice or evaluate the progress of the apprentice.

What kinds of arts can be learned in an apprenticeship?

The traditional arts are expressions of shared identity within a family, community, regional, tribal, ethnic, occupational or religious group. These arts reflect the values and aesthetics of the group that practices them. They are passed from generation to generation in an informal face-to-face setting rather than through formal classes. The traditional arts include performing arts such as music and dance, craft arts such as basket making or quilting, occupational trades such as boat-building and blacksmithing, and ceremonial arts related to religion, the seasons, or life cycles.

Who is a traditional arts master artist?

Mentor artists are longtime practitioners who have reached a high level of expertise in their art form and are recognized within their community as being among the very best artists in their field. Since several of Vermont's ethnic and regional cultural groups extend into neighboring states and Canada, applications will be accepted from master artists living outside Vermont.

Who can be an apprentice?

Apprentices must be residents of the state of Vermont. Apprentices should already have some skill in the art form they wish to study and demonstrate a serious commitment to the mastery of the art form. In cases where

apprentices wish to recover traditions that are no longer actively practiced within their local community, exceptions may be made to the required previous experience. Preference is given to apprenticeship proposals that can demonstrate the apprenticeship's value to the participants, their community/ies, and the sustainability of the art form. Apprentices may be of any age (for apprentices under the age of 18, a parent or guardian will need to co-sign their application form).

How long does an apprenticeship last?

Apprenticeships usually span from 3 to 12 months but alternative intensive schedules will be considered if appropriate. The master and apprentice should apply as partners and together develop a teaching plan that specifies where, when, and how often they will meet and how long each session will last.

What support can Vermont Folklife offer?

Financial support consists of stipends up to \$2,000. Support is limited to a stipend for the master artist and materials and travel expenses for the master artist and/or apprentice. Pairs also receive recognition for their artistic practice and are listed on the Vermont Folklife website. There may be opportunities to display, demonstrate, or perform your art form through other Vermont Folklife programs.

INFORMATION ON HOW TO APPLY:

1. Applications should be submitted via the [online application form](#). If you would like to review the questions and write out your answers ahead of time, we encourage you to download the word document version of the application. If it is easier for you to fill out your application using the word document and submit it to us by mail or email, you may do so.
2. Before you complete this application it is important for the master artist and apprentice(s) to meet together and talk through your ideas for the apprenticeship. A clear, shared understanding of what is to take place and why will result in a more successful application and apprenticeship experience. If you have questions or need help with the form contact Kate Haughey (khaughey@vtfolklife.org) or Mary Wesley (mwesley@vtfolklife.org). We strongly suggest you get in touch before applying in order to be sure that your art form is eligible.
3. As you plan the budget for your application, remember that most of the funds should go to the master artist as a stipend for their teaching--it's up to the master and apprentice(s) to decide what this amount should be. One way to think about this is to consider how much time you plan to spend together, and what a reasonable hourly rate would be for the master artist, then multiply that by the number of hours. If either the master or apprentice needs to purchase supplies or materials for the apprenticeship, please list these on the application and include their total cost. Travel costs should be figured at 67 cents a mile. Estimate your materials and travel costs as closely as you can. If your needs for funds are different from those mentioned here, please contact Kate.
4. You must each submit documentation that gives evidence of your skills and abilities with this art form. Include photos, audio or video (up to 5 minutes), whichever is most appropriate to the art form you'll

be studying and teaching. Be sure to clearly label these materials. Contact Kate if you need assistance documenting your work.

5. Applications will be reviewed by a panel including folklorists, cultural specialists, traditional artists, and community scholars. Applications will be evaluated according to:
 - Traditionality of the art form.
 - Mentor artist's first-hand knowledge of the cultural context of the art form.
 - Significance of the art form to the community that practices it.
 - Quality of work of both the master artist and apprentice.
 - Apprentice's commitment to the art form.
 - Feasibility of the timetable and teaching plan.

6. THE DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS IS MONDAY, AUGUST 4, 2025, AT MIDNIGHT.

7. Apprenticeships may begin as of September 1, 2025 and must be completed by August 31, 2026.

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Vermont Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program - vtfolklife.org/apprenticeship-program

Vermont Folklife

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