Central Appalachia Living Traditions: Folk & Traditional Arts Experiences Grants

Program Guidelines 2025-2026

Application Opens	Application Deadline	Decision Notification By	Funded Projects Take Place
November 18, 2024	March 10, 2025	June 20, 2025	July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

ACCESSIBILITY

These guidelines are available in .PDF format and as an accessible Word file at

To request accommodations during your application process, reach out to Program Associate, Folk & Traditional Arts, Joel Chapman at jchapman@midatlanticarts.org or 667-401-2488 x 117. Please request accommodation at least 10 business days before the application due date so we can best serve your needs.

CONTACT US

Our Folk & Traditional Arts staff are available to discuss your project and help you build a strong application. We recommend you get in touch more than 48 hours before the due date, so we have time to answer your questions. We'd love to discuss your application with you!

- Ellie Dassler, Program Director, Folk & Traditional Arts: edassler@midatlanticarts.org or 667-401-2587 x 115
- Joel Chapman, Program Associate, Folk & Traditional Arts: jchapman@midatlanticarts.org or 667-401-2488 x 117

See Application Resources for webinars and other opportunities to meet our staff.

ABOUT FOLK & TRADITIONAL ARTS

Often defined as the "art of everyday life," folk and traditional arts reflect the aesthetics, practices, values, and beliefs of community groups, such as families, geographic communities, occupational groups, ethnic heritage groups, faith communities, and more.

Traditional arts are often learned orally or by observation and imitation, rather than in institutional or academic settings. All traditions are connected to the history of the communities that practice them, but they are not just art forms of the past. Instead, they are "living traditions" that adapt to remain relevant in a changing world. Individuals and communities use traditional arts to build collective power, engage in healing, and strengthen their identity.

Mid Atlantic Arts' region is home to diverse folk and traditional cultures. Examples of folk and traditional art forms in Central Appalachia include Appalachian blues; folk and old-time music; basketmaking; instrument building; woodworking; quilting; weaving and spinning; cultural traditions of Rwandan communities in Virginia and West Virgina; gender-inclusive square dancing; expressive Latinx cultures of Southern Ohio; diverse gardening and foodways traditions; and much more.

ABOUT CENTRAL APPALACHIA LIVING TRADITIONS

Central Appalachia Living Traditions (CALT) is a multi-part program that invests in communities, seeds new folk and traditional arts experiences, and honors under-recognized practitioners of Central Appalachian traditions. CALT serves the counties of Ohio, West Virginia, and Virginia designated by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). For a full list of eligible counties, see Eligibility.

ABOUT CALT EXPERIENCES GRANTS

CALT Experiences grants fund public-facing projects and events in Appalachian counties of Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia that bring community members together around folk and traditional arts practice and traditional knowledge. Funded projects will meet at least one of the following CALT Experiences goals.

CALT EXPERIENCES GOALS:
- Encourage broad public awareness, understanding, and appreciation of living traditions.
- Grow and share artistic skills and cultural knowledge within communities.
- Diversify and expand the types of folk arts activities available throughout the region.

Non-profit organizations and folk and traditional artists/practitioners may apply for $1,000 - $10,000. No match is required. The majority of project activities must take place in ARC-designated counties.

ELIGIBLE PROJECT ACTIVITIES MAY INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:
- Hands-on learning experiences
- Workshops where traditional art forms are taught or demonstrated to the public or a group of peer practitioners
- Public art projects
- Exhibitions of folk and traditional art
- Performance projects or series
- Film/video creation and/or screening
- Podcasts and radio broadcasts
- Archival collections or fieldwork with a significant public-facing component, such as community meetings, presentations, or accessible digital archives

Fundraisers or benefits are not eligible projects for this program.

We will prioritize funding projects that engage multi-generational participants and/or serve under-resourced or marginalized communities, including the most geographically removed counties in the region.

ELIGIBILITY

To receive a CALT Experiences grant, you must be:

- An individual traditional artist/practitioner **OR**
- A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, unit of state or local government, or federally recognized Tribal government
    - Units of state or local government must provide a document on official letterhead to confirm your status as a government entity.
    - Fiscal sponsorship is not allowed for this program.
- Located in a county designated by the [Appalachian Regional Commission](#) in Ohio, Virginia, or West Virginia. Eligible counties include:
    - **Ohio:** Adams, Ashtabula, Athens, Belmont, Brown, Carroll, Clermont, Columbiana, Coshocton, Gallia, Guernsey, Harrison, Highland, Hocking, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Lawrence, Mahoning, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, Pike, Ross, Scioto, Trumbull, Tuscarawas, Vinton, and Washington
    - **Virginia:** Alleghany, Bath, Bland, Botetourt, Buchanan, Carroll, Craig, Dickenson, Floyd, Giles, Grayson, Henry, Highland, Lee, Montgomery, Patrick, Pulaski, Rockbridge, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, and Wythe, as well as the independent cities of Bristol, Buena Vista, Covington, Galax, Lexington, Martinsville, Norton, and Radford
    - **West Virginia:** Barbour, Berkeley, Boone, Braxton, Brooke, Cabell, Calhoun, Clay, Doddridge, Fayette, Gilmer, Grant, Greenbrier, Hampshire, Hancock, Hardy, Harrison, Jackson, Jefferson, Kanawha, Lewis, Lincoln, Logan, Marion, Marshall, Mason, McDowell, Mercer, Mineral, Mingo, Monongalia, Monroe, Morgan, Nicholas, Ohio, Pendleton, Pleasants, Pocahontas, Preston, Putnam, Raleigh, Randolph, Ritchie, Roane, Summers, Taylor, Tucker, Tyler, Upshur, Wayne, Webster, Wetzel, Wirt, Wood, and Wyoming
- In good standing with Mid Atlantic Arts, with no overdue or outstanding required reports and/or grant documents.

REQUIRED APPLICATION MATERIALS

To apply, visit our online application portal at [midatlanticarts.smartsimple.com](#). See [Application Resources](#) to preview the Project Narrative questions and other tips.

PROJECT BUDGET

You may request $1,000 – $10,000 for your CALT Experiences grant.

You must use awarded funding for specific, direct project expenses. You may not use grant funding for indirect expenses.

Examples of direct expenses include:
- Program staff salary

- Technical personnel fees
- Artist/practitioner fees, travel, and lodging
- Audience development, marketing, and promotion expenses
- Expenses related to accessibility, such as American Sign Language interpretation, physical access accommodations, or translation
- Technical and equipment rental
  - Equipment paid for by a CALT Experiences grant must be specific to your proposed project—for example, renting stage and sound equipment for a performance. You may not use CALT grant funds to purchase equipment for your organization's general operating needs. Please contact us with any questions about eligible expenses.
- Expenses related to public health measures for in-person engagements

There is **no match requirement** for this grant program.

REVIEW CRITERIA

Note: If you have applied in the past, you may notice that this year's criteria look slightly different. We have kept the priorities for scoring applications consistent, but changed the language we use to help streamline panel review. Our goal when re-shaping criteria is always to create a fairer, more consistent process for our applicants and panelists. Please contact us with any questions.

A diverse panel of folk and traditional arts specialists, including folklorists, cultural workers, artists, and culture bearers, will review applications based on the below criteria and provide program feedback.

Make sure your application shows evidence of each criterion in your narrative and/or work samples. Work samples should complement your written responses and show reviewers extra evidence of the criteria.

1. **Traditional Art Form (20 points):** The project's featured tradition/art form(s) is important and relevant to the community it engages.
2. **Project Personnel (10 points):** The staff and featured artists are experienced and appropriate for the project, as defined by their community, audience(s), outside recognition, or some combination of the three.
3. **Program Goals (20 points):** The project clearly addresses at least one of the three CALT Experiences goals.
4. **Community Collaboration (20 points):** The project puts collaboration with the community and featured artists at the center, including in project design, execution, and evaluation.
5. **Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, & Inclusion (20 points):** The project serves and reaches artists/communities whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited by geography, race and ethnicity, economics, or disability. The project considers and defines a clear plan for accessibility accommodations.
6. **Evaluation (10 points):** There is a clear plan for how to define "success" for your project, and how you will measure it.

GRANT AWARD LIMITATIONS

You must use awarded funding for specific, direct project expenses. You may not use grant funding for indirect expenses. Fundraisers or benefits are not eligible projects for this program. Fiscal sponsorship is not allowed for this program.

Your organization may not receive a Central Appalachia Living Traditions: Experiences grant and a Folk & Traditional Arts Community Projects grant in the same year. If you have any questions about how this affects your eligibility, please contact us.

GRANT PAYMENTS AND FINAL REPORTS

If awarded, your grant payment will be sent 30 – 45 days prior to your project start date, as long as Mid Atlantic Arts has received and approved all necessary award documents. For projects starting in July and August 2025, the payment will be sent 14 – 21 days after we have received and approved all necessary materials.

If awarded, a final report will be due 30 days after your project end date, no later than July 30, 2026. The final report will be available in our online portal when your grant is awarded. The report requires brief descriptions of the completed project, evidence of funder crediting, a record of how grant funds are spent, and at least two photos documenting the project.

READ MORE ABOUT CENTRAL APPALACHIA LIVING TRADITIONS: EXPERIENCES GRANTS HERE.

Application Resources

WEBINARS AND DROP-IN SESSIONS

We encourage you to get in touch with our Folk & Traditional Arts staff at any time for a personalized conversation about your application. There are also several public opportunities to meet staff and ask questions.

WEBINARS
Accessibility: We will provide live captioning in English for all webinars, and post a recording with English and Spanish captions on the Mid Atlantic Arts website and YouTube channel.

To request other accommodations, or if you have any questions about webinars, please contact Program Associate, Folk & Traditional Arts, Joel Chapman at jchapman@midatlanticarts.org or 667-401-2488 x 117. Please request accommodation **at least 5 business days** before the webinar.

December 5, 2024, 3:00pm ET: CALT Experiences Grants: The Basics
- **Register: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_XfoIKGlRSy6Z_AWNkQc4PQ**

January 15, 2025, 3:00pm ET:
For Appalachian Applicants: CALT Experiences Grants vs. Folk & Traditional Arts Community Projects Grants
- **Register: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_6HyA-BjzRaOWbtmQk3Gxew**

DROP-IN SESSIONS
Join Drop-In Sessions via Zoom: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86978654670
Our Folk & Traditional Arts staff are available at these times to discuss your application:
- **Wednesdays at 1:00pm ET:** January 22, January 29, February 12, February 19, February 26, March 5

If the above times don't work for you, reach out for a conversation on your schedule:
- Ellie Dassler, Program Director, Folk & Traditional Arts: edassler@midatlanticarts.org or 667-401-2587 x 115
- Joel Chapman, Program Associate, Folk & Traditional Arts: jchapman@midatlanticarts.org or 667-401-2488 x 117

PREVIEW ONLINE APPLICATION NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

You will answer the following questions in your application in the online portal at midatlanticarts.smartsimple.com. Word limits are just suggestions—you do not need to use all available space in your responses.

1. **Project Summary** (50 word limit)**:** In one or two sentences, clearly describe the project you would like us to support, who the project will serve, and why the project is important.
   If your project is chosen for funding, this is what Mid Atlantic Arts will use in web, social media, and other content describing your project.
2. **Project Description** (350 word limit)**:** Describe the project you would like us to support. Be as specific as possible about the activities that will take place during the project period. Tell us about the venue(s) and target audiences.

3. **Traditional Art Form** (350 word limit)**:** Describe the tradition/art form(s) that your project will engage. What is the role/history of the art form in your community, and why is it important?
   Program Goals (250 word limit)**:** Choose at least one of these [CALT Experiences goals](#) and describe how your project will achieve it:
   - Encourage broad public awareness, understanding, and appreciation of living traditions.
   - Grow and share artistic skills and cultural knowledge within communities.
   - Diversify and expand the types of folk arts activities available throughout the region.
4. **Project Personnel** (350 word limit)**:** Tell us about you, your organization, featured artists/practitioners, and any major partners that will be involved in the project. Briefly describe what makes them a good fit for this project.
5. **Project Timeline** (250 word limit)**:** Provide a proposed timeline for all project activities. Be as specific as possible.
6. **Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, & Inclusion** (350 word limit)**:** How will your project serve and reach artists/communities whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited by geography, race and ethnicity, economics, or disability? How will you make sure your project is accessible, in terms of physical, financial, and/or language access (when applicable)?
7. **Evaluation** (250 word limit)**:** How will you define success for this project? How will you evaluate whether the project is successful?

WORK SAMPLE TIPS

Work samples are a critical part of your application. Panelists will consider your work samples carefully, to help them understand the traditions and activities your project will engage.

Be selective. Work samples should be recent, concise, high-quality, and as relevant to the project as possible. Panelists will spend no more than 15 minutes per application reviewing work samples.

For example, if you are proposing:
- **A performance:** Submit samples of the engaged artists' work.
- **An exhibit:** Submit an exhibit plan and examples of the works and information in the exhibit.
- **An educational or training program:** Submit a sample of work by the artists/teachers and/or a curriculum plan.
- **A media project (film, radio, or podcast):** Submit a sample of previous work by key partners and a sample of the subject you will portray
- **A fieldwork project:** Submit a fieldwork plan, a sample of previous work by the fieldworkers, letter(s) of support from the community, and/or an example of similar past work by your organization.
- Other possible work samples may show your organization's programmatic experience and ability to carry out the project.

Please reach out if you have questions about how to pick the right work samples for your application.

WORK SAMPLE SPECIFICATIONS:
- **For audio and video samples:** 3 per application

- o Each sample should be no longer than 5 minutes. If your clip is longer, indicate in the description which 5-minute portion panelists should view. If you do not specify, reviewers will view only the first 5 minutes.
- o Make samples available online on YouTube, Vimeo, Soundcloud, Spotify, Instagram, etc. Provide the URL for panelists to access the sample and the password, if needed.
- **For image work samples:** 5 per application
  - o We recommend photos in .JPEG/JPG or .PNG format.
- **For document work samples:** 3 per application. Maximum of 6 pages total.
  - o We recommend documents in .PDF format.