

William B. Pratt Endowment Guidelines

Traditional and Folk Arts in Montana

Honoring Montana's Heritage: Preserving Stories, Traditions, and Cultures for Future Generations

About the Donor: This fund was established by William B. Pratt who has a life-long interest in Traditional and Folk arts, with experience as a musician working in the folk tradition and as a living history and production artisan in forged iron. This fund also honors his work in documentary and industrial film/video production, fostering community video efforts, and his extensive experience in grants administration, the development of arts and nonprofit organizations, and fostering philanthropy in the state.

PURPOSE

The William B. Pratt Endowment Fund is a legacy gift to the people of Montana to help them tell and share stories – especially the untold ones – about Montana's arts, culture, and history and to learn about the traditional art forms and cultures of this unique state. The Fund's Traditional and Folks Arts Program will provide small grants (up to \$2,000) to support the building awareness, involvement, and the preservation of Traditional and Folk Arts in Montana.

Traditional Arts are creative expressions that originate within a distinct and identifiable group, such as those defined by ethnicity, tribe, geography, language, religion, or occupation. These arts can also emerge within familial traditions. They are deeply connected to the group's identity, reflecting the values, beliefs, and aesthetics of the community from which they arise. Often passed down through generations, traditional arts serve as symbols of heritage, conveying a group's cultural values both internally and to the outside world.

Traditional arts include Indigenous Traditional Arts. Traditional Indigenous art refers to creative works that originate from the cultural practices, beliefs, and values of Native American tribes in Montana. These arts are deeply rooted in the history, customs, and spiritual traditions of the specific tribes, passed down through generations. These art forms serve as powerful expressions of identity, heritage, and connection to the land, preserving the cultural narratives of Montana's Indigenous peoples.

Folk Art refers to artistic creations that are deeply rooted in cultural traditions but often reflect an idiosyncratic style unique to the individual artist. Unlike art created within formalized institutions, folk art is grounded in personal statements or visions that express the artist's connection to their community, heritage, or personal experience. It is often crafted using traditional methods, passed down informally, and reflects a direct link to the artist's way of life, beliefs, and environment.

Traditional and Folk art forms may include:

- Fine handcraft
- Decorative arts
- Dance
- Poetry
- Instrumental and vocal music
- Storytelling and oral literature
- Foodways
- Local architecture

WHAT WE FUND

- Public projects that support Montana Traditional and Folk arts, with an educational component that highlights the art form and its cultural significance.
 - Public projects may include exhibits, performances, apprenticeships, festivals, community celebrations, in-school and after school community learning programs, and print or audio/visual documentation.
 - Educational components within festivals or events (performance, lectures, demonstrations etc.) as opposed to the marketing or commercial elements of the event and specify when and where (community and venue) event will take place.
- Projects must involve recognized, living Traditional or Folk artists, meaning cultural practices actively maintained and passed down within communities.

Eligible costs: Recognized traditional artist(s) fees and honorarium, and associated program costs for their involvement. Limited capital costs may be considered (e.g., temporary exhibit design or preparation costs, materials, stabilization), especially if it involved other costs such as insurance for exhibit objects or materials relating to the exhibit, e.g., signage, brochure, audio-video presentations, etc.

WHO MAY APPLY

- 501(c)(3) nonprofits, local/state/federal/Montana tribal governments, or unincorporated nonprofit organizations applying through a fiscal sponsor.
- One application per organization per year. Organizations serving as fiscal sponsor for one or more unincorporated nonprofit organizations may submit multiple applications, including an application for the organization's own programmatic purposes.
- We encourage applications from a broad range of distinct and identifiable groups in Montana that have produced traditional art form(s) and encourage applications that involve recognized bearers of traditional culture who are women, or are from Montana tribes, rural communities or underserved communities.
- Cooperative field-building projects – such as forming traditional arts associations (local, regional, or statewide), offering technical or business assistance to artists, or encouraging arts organizations to offer traditional programming – may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Indigenous Involvement: The Fund aims for at least 25% of annual grants to benefit Montana Indigenous artists, organizations, tribes and/or urban Indian communities.

- If the project includes Indigenous traditional artists, submit documentation confirming the artist(s) enrollment in a federally recognized tribe in Montana.
- If your project represents Indigenous communities but is not Indigenous led, describe how the community is involved in the project, including consultation or letters of support when possible.

WE DO NOT FUND

- General operating support
- Contemporary or non-traditional art forms
- "Folkloric" or interpretive programs by artists outside the culture being represented, historical and oral historical programs, or reenactments.
- Marketing or commercial elements of festivals or events.

GRANT AMOUNTS

- Grants range from \$500 to \$2,000.
- Small grants requests less than \$750 can apply using a simplified application form.
- Partial funding may be awarded.
- A dollar-for dollar match is encouraged but may be waived if it is a barrier.

APPLICATION PROCESS

- Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact MCF staff to discuss their proposed project.
- Apply online at MTCF.org.
- Reporting consists of a short reflection (written) within 12 months and must be completed before additional grants are made.
- Applicants should be prepared to answer the following questions:
 - From which culture, community, tribe, ethnic, or occupational group does this traditional art form originate?
 - What is the traditional art form practiced by this group that is the focus of your application, and what purpose do they serve beyond aesthetics?
 - Who is the recognized practitioner(s) of this art form, and how is their expertise demonstrated? How and from whom did the artist learn this art form?
 - Describe the public event or outreach component of this project aimed at educating the public about the art form and its cultural significance.
 - If a festival or event, when and where (community and venue) the event will take place.

REVIEW PROCESS

Grants are awarded through a competitive review process. A committee knowledgeable in the traditional arts field evaluates and scores all applications and makes funding recommendations based on available funds.

A Special Note: We do not fund general operating or broad event support (e.g., powwow operational costs). We do support specific educational elements within events—such as workshops, mentorships, or demonstrations—that directly connect traditional artists and cultural bearers with communities and emerging artists.