

SCANDINAVIAN FOLK ARTS AND CULTURES IN THE UPPER MIDWEST



Wooden ale bowl by Phillip Odden; Photo by Else Bigton

The American-Scandinavian Foundation (ASF) announces a new program to support Scandinavian folk arts and cultural traditions in the Upper Midwest (North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan).

Broadly defined, folk arts are expressions of community identity and values. They are cultivated informally among individuals by word of mouth or example. Whether **practicing a traditional craft, art, technical or occupational skill; performing music or dance; or marking important moments of life or the year with special foods or customs**, folk arts are deeply rooted in community life and foster human creativity.

The American-Scandinavian Foundation is committed to celebrating and preserving Nordic (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sápmi, Sweden) cultures throughout the United States. **By supporting folk arts and traditional cultures in the Upper Midwest**, in particular, ASF will recognize and celebrate the mastery of individual artists or practitioners, facilitate the cultivation of skills and understanding among younger generations, bring greater visibility to Scandinavian arts and traditions, and highlight the centrality of cultural expression to all of our lives.

Two categories of support will be available – **fellowships for artists and/or scholars** and **grants for public programs and community projects**. All of our grants will encourage both the practice of folk arts and cultures and the presentation of those arts to public audiences.

FELLOWSHIPS FOR ARTISTS AND/OR SCHOLARS

Fellowships for artists and/or scholars will:

1. Deepen the skills of master artists.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES¹

- Master artists – individuals who are among the finest practitioners of a tradition in their community and who are held in high regard by their peers for their skill, knowledge, and cultural practice – might apply for a fellowship to advance their skills. These projects could include study trips and/or artist residencies within the Upper Midwest or in Scandinavia.

2. Foster relationships among masters of artistic and technical skills and their apprentices, thereby encouraging the development of traditional skills as well as the perpetuation of skills from generation to generation.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

- Masters and apprentices could apply for support to continue their learning and teaching relationship.
- Masters and apprentices could travel to Scandinavia to gain inspiration from historical records of traditional skills or from contemporary art influenced by the traditions. They could study with artists and/or participate in artist residencies or folk school programs; take part in workshops or festivals; and/or visit museums and collections of traditional art, outdoor folklife museums, installations of historic living and working environments where traditional skills are perpetuated as part of cultural programming.

3. Provide opportunities for scholars to bring to light the wealth of active folk arts and traditional skills practiced in the region.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

- A folklorist could seek a fellowship to identify, study, and document the work of traditionbearers in a state or region within a state.
- Students or post-graduate students could seek an internship in a cultural or educational organization with a long-term commitment to the study of traditional arts and skills to document practitioners or collaborate with them in a study of their work and the traditions from which it emerges.
- A scholar could engage in research that will result in a publication, exhibition, public presentation, web resource, or documentary film.
- A community scholar/master artist could request assistance to transcribe traditional tune books so that the music may be shared and performed more widely.

¹ All of the sample activities listed are offered as examples of the kinds of projects that the Foundation may support. The examples are meant to be suggestive and should not limit your thinking about the kinds of projects for which you might request support.

GRANTS FOR PUBLIC PROGRAMS AND COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Grants for public programs and community projects will be awarded to nonprofit (501(c)3) organizations. These grants will:

1. **Encourage the perpetuation of Scandinavian cultural traditions** through the support of community festivals, celebrations, and heritage events as well as workshops, performances, classes, and demonstrations.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

- A local arts organization could bring tradition-bearers together in a festive setting for a public celebration of their work. The artists (e.g. wood carvers, rag rug weavers, braided rag rug makers, knitters, embroiderers, and lace makers) may demonstrate and exhibit their crafts, and musicians and dancers lead workshops before and after a traditional lunch.
- A regional group could organize a 'folk arts trail,' a daylong event during which the public may visit folk artists in their homes to see them at work and learn about their traditions.
- A museum could develop plans for an exhibition to feature the traditional arts and cultures of the Upper Midwest. The exhibition might eventually travel to all Upper Midwest states and artists from Scandinavia could be invited to participate in a series of week-long programs complementing the exhibition to demonstrate comparable traditions.

2. **Heighten the visibility of Scandinavian folk traditions by creating innovative community projects with wide visibility and public appeal.**

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

- A non-profit organization (e.g. a local community center, civic group, museum, or school) could collaborate with a master practitioner to create an artwork or other traditional construction for the community (e.g. a mural). This could involve the construction of new expressions that are grounded in traditional heritage.
- A 'red list' of endangered traditional skills could be created to build awareness of these traditions and devise ways for both documenting them and encouraging their perpetuation.
- Culture-sharing events involving traditional arts, food preparation and cooking traditions, music and/or dance could occur between traditional groups (e.g., a local indigenous community and Sámi groups) to encourage inter-cultural dialogue and discussion.

GRANT DEADLINES	
August 1, 2017	August 1, 2018
AWARD ANNOUNCEMENTS	
October 2017	October 2018

Fellowships for individuals will range from \$3,000 to \$10,000

Grants for public programs and community projects will range from \$5,000 to \$20,000.

WHEN WILL THE PROJECTS TAKE PLACE?

Projects for the 2017 deadline may take place between November 1, 2017, and October 30, 2018. The American Scandinavian Foundation does not offer retroactive funding.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

FELLOWSHIPS are available for individual artists/practitioners and scholars who live and work in the Upper Midwest (defined as North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan). Scholars may be affiliated with a university or other educational or cultural organization or they may be community scholars and/or artists who work and study within their community.

GRANTS FOR PUBLIC PROGRAMS AND COMMUNITY PROJECTS are available for nonprofit organizations only. Proof of an organization's nonprofit status (as a 501(c)3 or equivalent) is required.

HOW TO APPLY?

Requests for **FELLOWSHIPS** should include the following:

ASF Scandinavian Folk Arts and Culture Fellowship Project Grant Application that includes:

I. PROJECT SUMMARY

Summarize your project briefly on the application cover sheet with reference to one of the three main objectives of the program:

- Deepen the skills of master artists
- Perpetuate traditional skills
- Encourage a broad public awareness of folk cultures and traditions

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Describe your project in detail, outlining the activities that will take place during the fellowship period.

- Who will be involved? What will they do? How will they contribute to the goals of the project?
- Discuss who will benefit from the project and how they will benefit. How will you determine that? For example, what skills or knowledge will be learned?
- Describe the proposed work schedule or project timeline.

For **masters**:

- Describe your background and experience in relation to the traditional form you will be working in. Include how, when, from whom, and why you learned the traditional art/skill.
- If you are working on a project that will deepen your skills, describe how and why.
- Describe how your community recognizes your work.
- Biographical information about the artist, practitioner, or scholar involved in the project. The master artist or practitioner involved in the project must demonstrate that they have earned recognition from their cultural community for advanced technical skill and accomplishment in their art form. The master must also submit a sample of his or her work either by attaching images to the application or by providing a link to a website. Musicians and dancers may submit mp3s or links to videos.

For **apprentices working with masters**:

- Describe your background and experience in relation to the traditional art form or skill you wish to study. Describe your previous experience working with the master and how you will benefit from additional time working with him/her.
- What are your plans for continuing the traditional art or skill after the grant period ends?

For **scholars**:

- Describe your previous field work experiences. Where did you work? What was the focus of your research? Were your research materials deposited in a public repository? If so, please provide details. How did you communicate the results of your work with the public?
- Please provide detail about the places where research will be conducted, what the product of the work will be, how the work might be used in the future, and where the research materials will be deposited. Materials must be deposited in a repository where they will be accessible for use by others in the future. **Scholars conducting field work must show evidence that they will seek informed consent and comply with research ethics.**

For all applicants, please attach a recent resume or curriculum vitae.

III. PROJECT BUDGET

On the form provided, please submit a project budget, detailing the projects costs, reflecting any other sources of support that the project may have, and specifying the amount requested from ASF.

IV. WORK SAMPLES

Photographs, CDs, mp3s or other documentation of the artist's work should be submitted with the application. You may include links to websites with images or music.

V. LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Master artists should append one or two letters of support that demonstrate that their work is recognized by their community. Folklorists should have a letter of support from each organization with which they are working.

Requests for **PUBLIC PROGRAMS AND COMMUNITY PROJECTS** should include:

- ASF Scandinavian Folk Arts and Culture Public Programs and Community Projects Grant Application cover sheet.
- A brief project summary with reference to the objectives of the program.
- A project description that details the activities that will occur during the project period, who will be involved, and who will benefit from the project, and provides a timeline for project activities.
- A description of the projected audience for the project. How will you reach the audience to promote the program? How large do you expect it to be? How will the audience benefit from the project? How will you determine that? What is the benefit to the audience, including what skills or knowledge will they learn and what will they experience?
- A project budget, detailing the projects costs, reflecting any other sources of support that the project may have, and specifying the amount requested from ASF.
- Biographical information about all artists, practitioners, or scholars involved in the project.
- History or background of the organization or institution presenting the proposal, including experience in presenting similar projects.
- Proper observance of U.S. visa obligations, if the project involves bringing Scandinavian citizens to the U.S.
- Letter from the IRS certifying nonprofit status of the applicant organization.