



West Virginia Folklife Awarded NEA Grant to Support Statewide Folklife Apprenticeship Program

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Charleston—The West Virginia Folklife Program, a project of the West Virginia Humanities Council, will receive \$35,000 by the National Endowment for the Arts to support the new West Virginia Folklife Apprenticeship Program. This Art Works grant is among the \$82 million that NEA Chairman Jane Chu has approved to fund local arts projects across the country in the NEA’s second major funding announcement for fiscal year 2017. The NEA received 1,728 Art Works applications and will make 1,029 grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$100,000.

“The arts reflect the vision, energy, and talent of America’s artists and arts organizations,” said NEA Chairman Jane Chu. “The National Endowment for the Arts is proud to support organizations such as the West Virginia Humanities Council, in serving their communities by providing excellent and accessible arts experiences.”

The West Virginia Folklife Apprenticeship Program will support five pairs of master traditional artists and their apprentices to engage in a ten-month apprenticeship, culminating in a final public showcase in Charleston. Master/apprentice pairs will also give a public presentation in their home communities. “We are grateful to the NEA for their support of this program that will strengthen the transmission of cultural heritage traditions between generations in local communities across the state, inspire new practitioners, and recognize existing masters,” says state folklorist Emily Hilliard. This initiative reinvigorates a similar program run by folklorist Gerry Milnes at the Augusta Heritage Center from 1989-1993 and 2007-2010. Milnes is a member of the Humanities Council board and serves as a West Virginia Folklife advisor.

The West Virginia Folklife Program is a project of the West Virginia Humanities Council and is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Folk & Traditional Arts Program. West Virginia Folklife is dedicated to the documentation, preservation, presentation, and support of West Virginia’s vibrant cultural heritage and living traditions.

For more information on the West Virginia Folklife Program, visit wvfolklife.org and <http://wvhumanities.org/programs/west-virginia-folklife-program/> or contact Emily Hilliard at hilliard@wvhumanities.org or (304)346-8500. To join the Twitter conversation about this announcement, please use **#NEASpring17**. For more information on projects included in the NEA grant announcement, go to arts.gov.

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The West Virginia Humanities Council is a nonprofit corporation governed by a board of directors whose members are drawn from all parts of West Virginia. It is the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, supported by the NEH, the State of West Virginia, and by contributions from the private sector. The purposes of the West Virginia Humanities Council are educational, and its mission is to support a vigorous program in the humanities statewide in West Virginia.