

Performer applications are closed for 2018.
Applications for the 79th National Folk Festival will open on September 1, 2019
2019 Performer Application

Deadline to apply: APRIL 30, 2019

The National Folk Festival presents the nation's finest traditional artists from across the nation representing a broad array of America's cultural communities. The National also strives to showcase the traditions of cultural communities historically identified with the host city, state or region, as well as the arts of newer immigrant communities that are contributing to the state's cultural landscape.

What exactly is folk? From a musical perspective, the Festival will include everything from blues, rockabilly, gospel, klezmer, jazz, bluegrass, breakdance, cowboy, polka, tamburitzza, old-time, and mariachi to western swing, honky-tonk, beat box, rhythm and blues, and zydeco, as well as traditional music and dance from Cajun, Native American, Celtic, Middle Eastern, Caribbean, Asian, Appalachian, Latin American, African and Pacific Islander cultures. Over three days, audiences will have the chance to see hundreds of artists representing cultural traditions from throughout Maryland, the nation and the world.

Selection Criteria

Quality and authenticity are the primary selection criteria for artists. The Festival's approach to programming focuses on presenting arts passed on through time in families and communities and in tribal, ethnic, religious, regional, and occupational groups. We present artists who are firmly rooted in the community from which their music derives, rather than "interpreters" of tradition, such as contemporary singer-songwriters or "revivalist" performance groups—no matter how accomplished. The Festival strives to be inclusive in terms of race, ethnicity, and region.

Most importantly, all applicants are held to the same standards. The selection of festival participants is guided by the definition of folk and traditional arts established by the National Endowment for the Arts:

Definition of "folk and traditional arts"

The folk and traditional arts are rooted in and reflective of the cultural life of a community. Community members may share a common ethnic heritage, cultural mores, language, religion, occupation, or geographic region. These vital and constantly reinvigorated artistic traditions are shaped by values and standards of excellence that are passed from generation to generation, most often within family and community, through demonstration, conversation, and practice. Genres of artistic activity include, but are not limited to, music, dance, crafts, and oral expression.

Source: National Endowment for the Arts

How to apply: If you're interested in performing at the National Folk Festival, there are two ways to submit your materials. All artists must follow these guidelines.

When submitting your materials, you must include the following:

- audio and/or video samples/links

- biographical information, and
- press materials.

Note that these materials will NOT be returned.

The **PREFERRED METHOD** for applying to perform at the National Folk Festival is electronically through **SONICBIDS**

The **ALTERNATE METHOD** is to mail a hard copy of your materials to:

NFF Programming Committee
% Salisbury Arts & Entertainment District
110 North Division Street
Salisbury, MD 21801

All materials received will be logged in, and will receive a preliminary review to assess quality, authenticity and appropriateness. Qualified submissions will be brought before the programming advisory group for further consideration.

Artists will NOT be contacted unless the festival is interested in pursuing festival performance possibilities. The high standards of excellence to which the National Folk Festival adheres makes the selection of performing artists a highly competitive process.

It is the policy of the National Folk Festival to present an entirely new festival each year, with no repetition of artists.

Typically, the festival receives submissions from about 2,000 artists each year, although only 25-30 can be selected. Over the course of the National's three-year residency in Salisbury, it will present a dazzling diversity of performers and traditions.

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