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City of Salisbury Announces Maryland Folk Festival Will Not Be Held in 2026

SALISBURY, Md. — The City of Salisbury has announced that the Maryland Folk Festival will not take place in 2026 due to funding challenges following a difficult sponsorship and grant cycle.

After careful evaluation, the City determined that it is not possible to produce the Festival at the level of quality and experience that the community has come to expect.

“This was not an easy decision,” said Caroline O’Hare, Events & Culture Manager for the City of Salisbury. “The folk festival has become a meaningful tradition for our community—bringing people together through music, dance, food, and shared experiences. We are incredibly proud of what has been built over the years.”

Since its transition from the National Folk Festival, the Maryland Folk Festival has welcomed tens of thousands of attendees to downtown Salisbury each year, featuring nationally and internationally recognized artists alongside regional performers and cultural traditions. The event has served as a cornerstone of the City’s arts and culture programming and a significant driver of downtown activity.

The City of Salisbury expresses its sincere appreciation to the many sponsors, volunteers, artists, local businesses, and city employees who contributed to the festival’s success over the past decade. Their support helped create a welcoming, family-friendly event that celebrated cultural diversity and community connection.

While the Festival will not take place this year, the City of Salisbury’s Arts, Business, and Culture Department remains committed to creating opportunities for residents and visitors to experience the arts, engage with diverse cultural traditions, and connect with one another.

“We’re taking this time to reflect and look ahead,” said O’Hare. “Our goal is to continue building meaningful experiences for our community in new and thoughtful ways. We’re already beginning conversations around future community-centered programming and exploring what a new event in Fall 2027 could look like for Salisbury.”

Additional updates from the City of Salisbury Arts, Business, and Culture Department will be shared as future programming takes shape.

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About the City of Salisbury, Maryland

Founded in 1732, Salisbury is the county seat of Wicomico County, a place where John Smith touched land in 1608 during his exploration of the Chesapeake Bay, bringing him in contact with the Wighcocomoco or Wicomico, the Nause, the Kusk'arawack and the Nantaquack or Nanticoke tribes who had lived in the region for several millennia. Situated on Maryland's historic Eastern Shore at the crossroads of the Delmarva Peninsula, Salisbury is now one of the region's largest cities, and serves as the capital of the Eastern Shore, a rural area defined by its agricultural and maritime traditions, landscapes and industries. The Chesapeake Bay is central to this distinctive identity. Though a relatively small city, Salisbury is the geographic and economic hub of one of the nation's fastest-growing Metropolitan Statistical Areas. <https://salisbury.md/>

ABCD Events

The Arts, Business, & Culture Department is responsible for fostering Salisbury's thriving economic climate through supporting businesses, expanding economic opportunity, promoting artistic expression, hosting unique experiences, and maintaining regional heritage attractions such as Poplar Hill Mansion and Downtown Salisbury's growing arts and entertainment district. By producing signature events, facilitating business incentives, and collaborating with stakeholders, this department strives to make Salisbury a place where arts, business, and culture intersect and flourish. <https://salisbury.md/departments/arts-business-culture>

About the Maryland Folk Festival

After more than five years as the host of the National Folk Festival (2018-2022), produced in collaboration with the National Council for the Traditional Arts (NCTA), the City of Salisbury's Arts, Business and Culture Department launched its own legacy festival in 2023. This large-scale, multi-day outdoor event celebrated the roots, richness and variety of American culture. It featured hundreds of the nation's finest musicians, dancers, craftspeople and other keepers of culture in performances, workshops, and demonstrations, plus children's activities, non-stop participatory dancing, storytelling and more. <https://mdfolkfest.com/>