

New
York **FOLKLORE**

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

129 Jay Street
Schenectady NY 12305

www.nyfolklore.org
518-346-7008

New York Folklore's Mission

New York Folklore collaborates with communities to identify, understand, and advocate for the needs of tradition bearers, artists, and everyday working people in the state, supporting cultural self-determination, agency, and sustainability.

Our organization continues to be strong through our excellent staff and through our continuous engagement with artists and communities. Founded on a cultural equity mission, New York Folklore continues to support the diverse artists and cultural communities throughout New York State. Artist-centered and community based, our work is driven by the desires and imaginations of our partner organizations and participating artists.

Our “on the ground” staff include the following:

-  Ellen McHale, Ph.D. Executive Director
-  Anne Berliner, Staff Folklorist/Capital District
-  Edgar Betelu, Folklorist/Hudson Valley
-  Ladan Nikravan, Folklorist/Utica and the Capital District
-  Laurie Longfield, Membership and Gallery Manager
-  Ellen LaQue, Gallery Assistant

“Voices: The Journal of New York Folklore” is managed by the following:

-  Ellen McHale, Ph.D., Managing Editor
-  Todd DeGarmo, Acquisitions Editor
-  Patti Mason, Assistant Editor
-  Laurie Longfield, Publications Assistant

VOICES: THE JOURNAL OF NEW YORK FOLKLORE

Voices: The Journal of New York Folklore
New York Folklore celebrated its 80th anniversary year in 2025. New York Folklore's journal saw its first publication as "New York Folklore Quarterly" in 1945. Since 1945, the journal has consistently served to "plow back" the folklore found in New York's diverse communities to our readers in accessible, non-academic language. Our readership extends well beyond state and national boundaries, as the current manifestation of the journal, "Voices: the Journal of New York Folklore," is mailed to at least four continents and is available on the web through New York Folklore's website: www.nyfolklore.org.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE



New York Folklore's support for artists continued in 2025. We were pleased to sponsor nine artists for NYSCA-supported individual artist grants and thirteen master artist/apprenticeship pairings. Artists come from multiple New York State counties, including Rensselaer, Schenectady, Albany, Westchester, Saratoga, Dutchess, Greene, and Tompkins. As always, New York Folklore continues to support artists for short-term mentoring and professional development through our ongoing technical assistance programs, providing skills-training and information for artists to build their capacity.

41ST ANNUAL FOLK ARTS ROUNDTABLE

The 41st annual New York Folk Arts Roundtable took place in Schenectady, NY. For this big milestone we were joined by one of our largest cohorts ever as we had 82 participants during the three-day meeting in Schenectady. For the third consecutive year, New York folklorists and artists joined together with colleagues from New Jersey, thanks to support both from the New York State Council on the Arts, and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. Support provides travel and lodging for participants.



The 2025 Roundtable included performances by participating artists.



ARTISTS' MICROENTERPRISE PROJECT

The Folk Arts Microenterprise Project continued into its second year, with support from the United Way of the Greater Capital District and TD bank. Artists in the Capital District and the Hudson Valley receive assistance with developing program strategies, branding, and marketing, with a goal of assisting artists with developing economic sustainability through their traditional arts.

OTHER PROGRAMS

In partnership with the Tri-County Arts Council, headquartered in Olean, and with support from the Ralph Wilson Foundation for Arts and Culture, New York Folklore continued its outreach to western New York. Nada Odeh provided documentation and programming involving the region's Lebanese and Arabic-American population for this project. The project continued in 2025, with a community documentation workshop led by Karen Canning (Glow Traditions) and TC Owens (Arts Council of the Southern Finger Lakes) that took place in Jamestown in April 2025.

New York Folklore continued its advocacy for folk arts collections statewide, with the second phase of a Collaborative Archives Project funded by the National Historic Records and Preservation Commission (NHPRC). This two-phase project began with appraisals and records surveys of nine archival repositories with folklife collections.

The 2025 continuation of the project with another year of support from the National Heritage and Preservation Records Commission provided regular meetings of the steering committee and the development of a survey instrument with shared cataloguing. Developed in 2025, the cataloguing instrument will be field tested in 2026.

New York Folklore's expansion as a leader in folk arts in education continued in 2025. With encouragement from the City of Schenectady School District, New York Folklore supported ongoing after-school instruction by Ghanaian drummer, Zorkie Nelson in Schenectady's three middle schools to teach the instruments and skills of Ghanaian drumming.



New York Folklore provides ongoing fiscal sponsorship for the Schenectady West African Youth Orchestra, an initiative by Zorkie Nelson to introduce a unique ensemble to the Capital District which is modeled on the Pan African Youth Orchestra of Ghana. Students meet weekly to learn the instruments of the ensemble, including the atenteben (bamboo flute). Still in its early phases, the ensemble continues to receive fiscal support through New York Folklore.

A new initiative for 2024-2025, New York Folklore is part of a consortium of organizations, led by Local Learning, who have come together through a "Teaching with Primary Sources" grant from the Library of Congress. Rachel Wolfe of the Salamanca High School has been working with curriculum specialists and archivists to ensure that materials of William Fenton that are held in the Recorded Sound Collection of the Library of Congress are now able to be accessed through curriculum materials. These previously inaccessible materials on Seneca social dance and song are now able to be accessed for educational purposes.

Community cultural documentation continued in 2025, with the involvement of community fieldworkers Akilah Briggs-Melvin in Binghamton, Ladan Nikravan in the Capital District and Utica, and folklorists Anne Rappaport Berliner (Capital District and Mohawk Valley) and Edgar Betelu (Capital District and Hudson Valley).

New York Folklore continues to forge new ground and to work collaboratively with new partners. Community advocate and Seneca artist, Bill Crouse, is the artistic lead for the Indigenous Places project, developing artwork based upon oral historical interviews with Seneca elders to ascertain places of significance to Indigenous communities within New York's watersheds. This project, initially supported by the Our Town Program of the National Endowment for the Arts, has expanded to the Mohawk and Schoharie Watersheds, through support from the Mohawk Basin Grants Program of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and into the Susquehanna Watershed through a grant from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

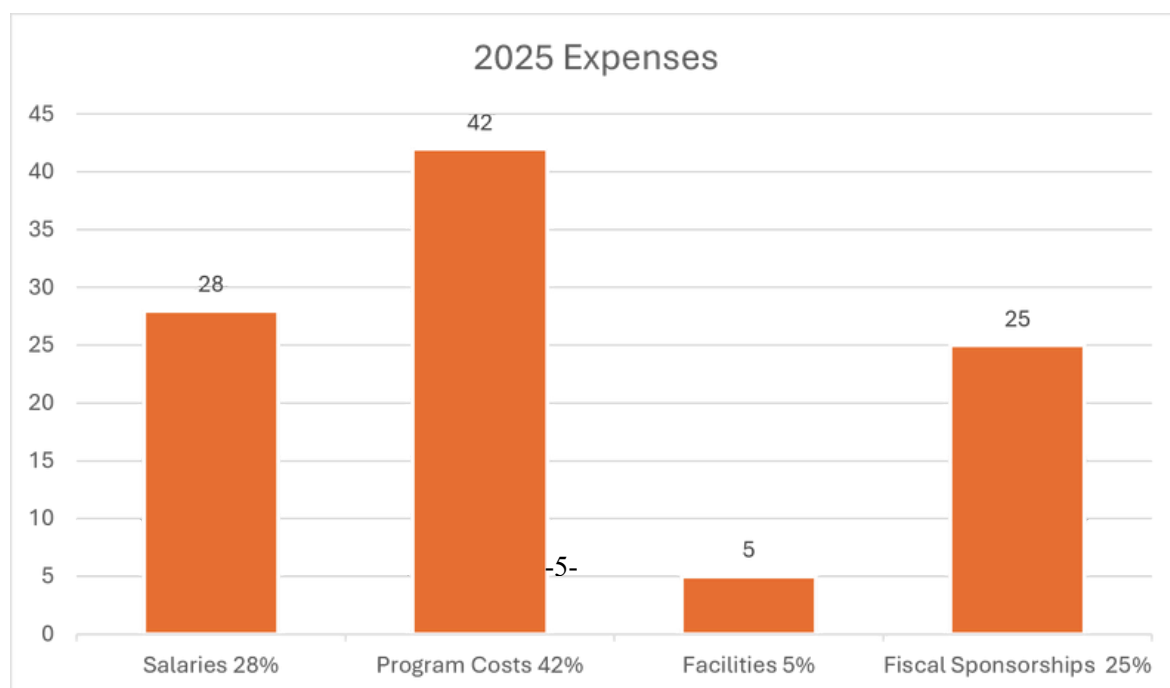
With support from a Facilities Grant from the New York State Council on the Arts, New York Folklore renovated its restroom facilities, creating an ADA compliant restroom.

NEW YORK FOLKLORE SOCIETY, INC.

STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

Year Ended December 31, 2025

	Program Service	Management and General	Totals
Salaries	\$ 186,803	\$ 20,756	\$ 207,559
Payroll taxes and benefits	22,592	2,510	25,102
Total salaries, payroll taxes and benefits	209,395	23,266	232,661
Advertising	2,323	-	2,323
Bank fees	937	-	937
Consultants, contract labor and artists fees	236,636	-	236,636
Cost of goods sold	208	-	208
Depreciation	4,139	1,182	5,321
Dues and subscriptions	5,780	75	5,855
Equipment rental	1,050	-	1,050
Grants to individuals	206,205	-	206,205
Insurance	3,793	948	4,741
Occupancy	24,430	2,715	27,145
Postage	2,056	-	2,056
Operating lease obligation, current	2,186	-	2,186
Professional fees	-	14,426	14,426
Professional development	23,760	-	23,760
Supplies	12,924	-	12,924
Operating lease obligation, net of current portion	14,150	-	14,150
Travel	33,327	-	33,327
Total functional expenses	\$ 783,299	\$ 42,612	\$ 825,911



New York Folklore Board of Directors

Wilfredo Morel, President.
Vice President for Immigrant Health, Sunriver Healthcare

Nada Odeh, Vice President
Independent Artist

Aaron Paige, Secretary
Folklorist, Arts Westchester

James Cameron Hall, Treasurer
Chair of Individualized Studies, RIT

Camilla Ammirati
Director of the Freshman Experience, St. Lawrence University

Violet Baron
Long Island Traditions

Sandra K Bell
Founder and Director, JouVay Fest

Evelyn D’Agostino Sasso
Founder, Grupo Cultural Latinos en Rochester

Mira Johnson
Local Learning Network Coordinator/Bronx Community College

Hayden Haynes
Independent Artist

MacKenzie Kwok
Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation

TC Owens
Folk Arts Director, Arts Council of the Southern Finger Lakes

Will Walker
Professor, Cooperstown Graduate Program in Museum Studies

Key Partners and Funders

Partners:

Local Learning: the National Network for Folk Arts
in Education

Schenectady City School District

Hudson City Library, Hudson

West Hill Refugee Welcome Center, Albany

William G. Pomeroy Foundation, Syracuse

Vermont Folklife Center

New Jersey State Council on the Arts, Folk Arts
Program

Funders

Our members and supporters!

New York State Council on the Arts
National Endowment for the Arts
National Historic Records and Preservation
Commission
New York State Department of Environmental
Conservation
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
United Way of the Greater Capital Region
New York Foundation for the Arts
The Schenectady Foundation
Schenectady County Youth Bureau/Schenectady
Connects
Schenectady County Arts and Culture Initiative
Arts Center of the Greater Capital Region
William G. Pomeroy Foundation
Upstate Theater Coalition for a Fair Game
Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation
Stewarts Shops Foundation

