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*Honoring Tradition-Bearers*

**MSU’S MICHIGAN TRADITIONAL ARTS PROGRAM SEEKS 2025 HERITAGE AWARD NOMINATIONS, TRADITIONAL ARTS APPRENTICESHIP APPLICATIONS**

Honoring individuals who carry on traditions with excellence is the focus of two annual programs coordinated by the Michigan Traditional Arts Program (MTAP) of Michigan State University: the Michigan Heritage Awards, and the Michigan Traditional Arts Apprenticeships.

Nominations for 2025 Heritage Awards and applications for the apprenticeships are due Monday, January 6, 2025. Heritage Award nomination forms and apprenticeship application forms are available online at [http://www.traditionalarts.msu.edu](http://www.traditionalarts.msu.edu/). Anyone considering putting together an application for either program should contact coordinator Micah Ling, at [lingmica@msu.edu](mailto:lingmica@msu.edu).

About the Michigan Heritage Awards:  
  
Since 1985, the MSU Museum’s Michigan Traditional Arts Program has, through its Michigan Heritage Awards, honored the achievements and dedication of Michigan’s traditional artists and traditional arts advocates. The awards recognize these practitioners in the areas of performance, material culture, and community leadership. So far, 139 awards have been conferred.

“The attention and honor extended to these artists through the Michigan Heritage Awards are important not only to them but to all of us who cherish the state’s cultural heritage,” explains Marsha MacDowell, director of the Michigan Traditional Arts Program.  “We seek nominations from all over the state so that the awards continue to reflect the great diversity of skills, ethnicities, and cultural backgrounds of Michiganders,” she adds.

More about the Michigan Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program:

The Michigan Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program supports the continuation of traditional arts and folklife practices in Michigan that are learned informally from one another in small groups and families. Examples include everything from decoy duck carving to storytelling, mehndi (henna) art application to Irish step dance, and tamale making to Finnish kantele playing. A gallery of past awardees is available online to further illustrate the scope of the program. A mentor artist works with an apprentice artist, passing on skills and knowledge about their tradition. The apprenticeship program awards a $4000 stipend in support of the instruction time the mentor artist spends with the apprentice. The apprentice will also receive $1000 for their time and dedication to the partnership.

“Like its natural resources, Michigan’s cultural traditions are a treasured resource to be nurtured and sustained for future generations, which is why the apprenticeship program provides incentives to traditional artists to pursue their art and pass on these skills on to others,” says Micah Ling, coordinator of the apprenticeship program. “Many mentor and apprentice teams tell us that their apprenticeship was one of the most meaningful times of their lives, providing the opportunity, time, and means to pass on a living tradition to someone who will continue it.”

More about the Michigan Traditional Arts Program:

The Michigan Traditional Arts Program is a statewide program that advances cross-cultural understanding in a diverse society through the documentation, preservation, and presentation of the traditional arts, folklife, and everyday culture in Michigan.

This statewide program is based at MSU University Outreach and Engagement, with collections and archives housed in the MSU Museum and digital humanities projects support by MATRIX: Center for Digital Humanities and Social Sciences. MTAP is produced with funding support from the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity