NORTHWEST FOLKLIFE'S CULTURAL & CREATIVE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

HOST SITE: NORTHWEST FOLKLIFE
POSITION TITLE: PERFORMER EXPERIENCE APPRENTICESHIP

About Northwest Folklife & Cultural & Creative Workforce Development

Since 1972, Northwest Folklife (NWFL) has created opportunities for communities to celebrate, share, and participate in the evolving cultural traditions of the Pacific Northwest. Through the annual Northwest Folklife Festival and year-round programs, NWFL brings together artists, culture bearers, cultural organizations, and community members to share traditions, build relationships, and strengthen our region's cultural ecosystem.

Northwest Folklife's Cultural & Creative Workforce Development (CCWD) Program provides paid professional experiences for emerging cultural workers, connecting participants with mentorship, hands-on learning, professional networks, and meaningful career pathways in the creative sector.

As part of Northwest Folklife's broader Youth Pathways Initiative, CCWD apprenticeships are designed to move beyond observation and introductory work experience. Apprentices take on meaningful project responsibilities, develop specialized professional skills, and contribute directly to the work of cultural organizations while building their capacity as emerging leaders.

About the Performer Experience Apprenticeship

Northwest Folklife is hiring **two Performer Experience Apprentices** to support the planning, coordination, and delivery of the 2027 Northwest Folklife Festival. Working closely with NWFL's Programs and Production teams, apprentices will help coordinate the experiences of thousands of artists, performers, and culture bearers participating in one of the nation's largest community-powered arts festivals.

Through this paid, six-month apprenticeship, participants will gain hands-on experience in festival programming, artist relations, event production, project coordination, and community engagement while taking meaningful ownership of projects that contribute to the Festival's success.

Before You Apply

The Cultural & Creative Workforce Development (CCWD) Program is designed to support emerging cultural workers. Applicants must be between the ages of 16 and 26 at the start of the apprenticeship. This is a paid, six-month opportunity running from mid-December 2026 through mid-June 2027.

Apprentices must be available to work **in person on Mondays and Wednesdays** throughout the program, with additional hours scheduled as needed. While some flexibility is available for remote work, consistent in-person participation is a core requirement. Applicants must also be available for **all four days of the 2027 Northwest Folklife Festival (May 28–31)** and accommodate increased hours and potential evening or weekend work during the months leading up to the Festival. Applicants are encouraged to carefully review the Required Availability & Scheduling section below before applying.

Academic credit may be available through an applicant's college or university, with arrangements made directly through the sponsoring institution. Northwest Folklife can provide verification of hours and responsibilities as needed.

Required Availability

The Performer Experience Apprenticeship follows a seasonal schedule, with hours increasing as the Northwest Folklife Festival approaches. This is a paid, hourly position with a defined total number of hours over the six-month apprenticeship. Applicants must be able to accommodate the following anticipated workload:

Dec - Mar	15 hours/week
Apr	20 hours/week
May	30-35 hours/week, with possible overtime for the Festival weekend
Jun	15-20 hours/week

Regular Weekly Schedule & In-Person Work

Apprentices *must be available to work in person 10am – 4pm on Mondays and Wednesday*s, and available for work virtually on Tuesdays throughout the apprenticeship. These will serve as the primary, consistent workdays alongside the Programs Team and site supervisor.

Most of the hours each week will be required to be on-site. For example, during a typical 15-hour workweek, approximately 12 hours will be scheduled in person, including Mondays and

Wednesdays, with up to 3 additional hours available for flexible or remote work as appropriate. Hours for work Tuesday, Thursdays, and Fridays will be established with the site supervisor and CCWD Program Lead before the apprenticeship begins. These schedules will remain as consistent as possible throughout the placement, with adjustments planned in advance to accommodate Festival preparation, increased seasonal workloads, and other program needs.

As this is a paid, hourly position with a defined total hour allocation, any significant changes to the agreed-upon schedule must be discussed and approved in advance.

Required Festival Availability
All apprentices *must be available to work all four days of the 2027 Northwest Folklife Festival, Friday, May 28–Monday, May 31, 2027 (Memorial Day Weekend).* This is a required commitment for the position.

Apprentices should also anticipate increased responsibilities and scheduling needs during the weeks immediately preceding the Festival, including preparation, production coordination, and onsite activities. Evening and weekend work may be required, with schedules communicated as far in advance as possible.

CCWD Program Availability, Responsibilities, & Commitments
In addition to their responsibilities with Northwest Folklife's Programs Team, all apprentices are required to actively participate in the Cultural & Creative Workforce Development (CCWD) Program.

CCWD supports emerging cultural professionals through mentorship, professional development, networking, and hands-on leadership experiences. These activities are a required component of the paid apprenticeship, and all time spent participating counts toward the program's 520 total paid hours.

Apprentices are expected to take an active role in their professional growth, maintain consistent communication with CCWD program staff and their site supervisor, and demonstrate accountability for scheduling, attendance, and participation.

Required responsibilities include:

- **Monthly CCWD Check-Ins** - Apprentices are required to participate in two CCWD check-ins each month:
    - **One in-person check-in:** A one-on-one meeting with the CCWD Program Lead at the Northwest Folklife office. These meetings provide opportunities to reflect

on progress, discuss challenges, establish professional goals, and receive mentorship and support.
    - **One virtual check-in:** A meeting with the apprentice, their site supervisor, and the CCWD Program Lead to review progress, learning goals, scheduling, workload, and professional development opportunities.
- **Monthly Professional Development & Cultural Outings -** *Apprentices are expected to participate in a monthly CCWD cohort activity, scheduled on the third Thursday of each month between 5:00–7:00 p.m.* Activities may be held in person or virtually and may include professional development panels, workshops, cultural outings, networking opportunities, and opportunities to connect with other emerging cultural workers. Participation is a required component of the apprenticeship. Apprentices may miss up to two of the six scheduled monthly activities during their placement and are expected to attend at least four. Any anticipated absences should be communicated to CCWD program staff in advance.
- **Program Communication & Scheduling -** Apprentices are expected to respond to CCWD program communications in a timely manner, proactively share updates on their apprenticeship activities and progress, and communicate any challenges or circumstances that may affect their participation. Apprentices will work with their site supervisor and the CCWD Program Lead to establish a consistent work schedule at the beginning of the apprenticeship. Any anticipated scheduling conflicts or significant changes to their agreed-upon hours should be communicated in advance.
- **Program Evaluation & Reflection -** Apprentices are required to complete CCWD surveys, evaluations, and feedback activities throughout the apprenticeship and upon completion of the program. They are also expected to actively reflect on their professional growth, skills developed, learning goals, and future career interests.
- **Paid Participation & Accountability -** All required CCWD check-ins, professional development activities, cohort outings, and program evaluations are paid work time and count toward the apprenticeship's total allocation of 520 hours. These commitments will be incorporated into the apprentice's regular work schedule in coordination with the site supervisor. Consistent participation and communication are expectations of the apprenticeship. Failure to meet these responsibilities may result in a review of program standing and continued participation, with consideration given to individual circumstances and any necessary accommodations.

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About The Role

Northwest Folklife is seeking two enthusiastic, organized, and collaborative **Performer Experience Apprentices** to play an integral role in the planning and delivery of the 2027 Northwest Folklife Festival. This six-month apprenticeship offers emerging cultural professionals the opportunity to take on meaningful responsibilities in festival programming, artist relations, and event production while working alongside experienced arts and cultural professionals.

The Performer Experience Apprentices serve as key points of connection between Northwest Folklife and the thousands of artists, performers, and culture bearers who bring the Festival to life. From coordinating performer communications and supporting programming logistics to preparing production materials and managing onsite experiences, apprentices help ensure that Festival participants have the information, resources, and support they need for a successful experience.

Working closely with the Programs and Production teams, apprentices will take ownership of assigned projects, collaborate across departments, and contribute to problem-solving and decision-making throughout the Festival planning process. This fast-paced, community-centered role requires strong communication, attention to detail, adaptability, and a commitment to creating welcoming and inclusive experiences for artists and participants.

As part of Northwest Folklife's Cultural & Creative Workforce Development (CCWD) Program, apprentices will also receive mentorship, professional development, and opportunities to build meaningful connections across the region's creative and cultural sector. The experience is designed to strengthen professional skills, build confidence in project leadership, and prepare emerging cultural workers for future opportunities in arts administration, festival production, programming, and community engagement.

While both apprentices will contribute to the full scope of Performer Experience activities, specific projects and areas of responsibility will be assigned in collaboration with the Programs Team, taking into consideration organizational needs and each apprentice's skills, interests, and professional development goals.

Position Title	Performer Experience Apprentice
Number of Positions	2
REPORTS TO:	Sarah Kinney (NWFL Programs Manager) + CCWD Program Manager (NWFL)

HOURS:	520 total paid hours; variable weekly schedule as outlined in Required Availability
COMPENSATION:	Apprentice: $23.5 hourly

Responsibilities & Duties:

Program & Participant Support

- Serve as a primary point of contact for Festival performers, presenters, and community partners, managing inquiries through the programming hotline and inbox while providing timely, professional, and welcoming communication.
- Coordinate responses to participant questions, troubleshoot challenges, and identify appropriate solutions, collaborating with the Programs Manager and other team members when additional support or decision-making is needed.
- Manage assigned performer communications and follow-up processes, ensuring artists and participants receive accurate information, meet important deadlines, and feel supported throughout the Festival planning process.
- Collaborate with the Programs and Production teams to advance programming needs, track outstanding requirements, and proactively identify potential challenges affecting performer participation or Festival operations.

Administrative & Logistical Coordination

- Coordinate the collection, organization, and preparation of technical and production materials, including stage diagrams, input lists, emcee notes, and other documentation for approximately 70 stage books across 20+ Festival venues.
- Take ownership of assigned components of the Final Performer Packets, coordinating information across departments, tracking deadlines, and ensuring materials are accurate, complete, and distributed to performers in a timely manner.
- Manage the collection, tracking, and organization of artist paperwork related to payments, reimbursements, and evaluations, collaborating with appropriate NWFL staff to ensure accurate documentation and timely processing.

- Coordinate the compilation of Festival evaluation materials into a comprehensive Evaluation Book, supporting post-Festival documentation, archiving, and organizational learning.
- Collaborate with the Programs and Production teams to advance theatre performances and complex showcases, including gathering music files, developing show flows, tracking technical requirements, and communicating production needs with Community Coordinators.

Programming Support

- Participate in the review and evaluation of hundreds of applications submitted to the Northwest Folklife Festival, contributing thoughtful feedback and recommendations as part of the collaborative programming process.
- Collaborate with the Programs Team on Festival stage curation and scheduling, helping develop a diverse and representative lineup that reflects the breadth of cultural traditions, artistic disciplines, and communities of the Pacific Northwest.
- Support outreach, recruitment, and relationship-building with artists, community organizations, and special program partners for Festival activations, including the Fashion Show, Makers Space, Kuleana Corridor, and Foodways programs.
- Coordinate assigned programming projects and follow-up activities, tracking communications, deadlines, and logistical needs to help move programs from initial planning through Festival implementation.

Event Operations & Onsite Experience

- Coordinate assigned aspects of Festival stage programming and special program operations, including performer scheduling, partner communications, and final logistical preparations leading up to the Festival.
- Support the coordination and operation of the Performer Registration Booth during the Festival, ensuring staff and volunteers have the necessary materials, information, and resources to provide a welcoming and efficient check-in experience for participating artists.
- Oversee the preparation, placement, and maintenance of programming signage across Festival venues, coordinating with relevant teams to ensure accurate and accessible information throughout the event.

- Collaborate with the Programs and Production teams on the load-in, onsite coordination, and operation of special program activations, including Makers Space, Kuleana Corridor, Foodways, and the Fashion Show.
- Serve as an onsite point of contact for assigned performers, presenters, and program partners, responding to emerging needs, troubleshooting logistical challenges, and escalating issues to appropriate staff when needed.

Evaluation & Wrap-Up

- Coordinate the development and distribution of post-Festival communications, surveys, and evaluation materials for performers, presenters, and program participants.
- Collect, organize, and synthesize participant feedback and evaluation findings, identifying key themes, successes, challenges, and opportunities for improving future Festival experiences.
- Participate in the all-staff Festival debrief, contributing observations, reflections, and recommendations informed by their work with performers, community partners, and Festival operations.
- Support post-Festival documentation and project closeout, ensuring important materials, communications, and lessons learned are organized and accessible for future programming teams.

The responsibilities outlined above represent the general scope of the apprenticeship and may evolve based on Festival needs, team priorities, and individual professional development goals. Specific projects and assignments will be determined in collaboration with the Programs Team.

Desired Qualifications & Skills

We recognize that professional experience and skills can be developed in many ways, including through employment, education, volunteer work, community involvement, and creative practice. We encourage applicants with a range of backgrounds and experiences to apply, even if they do not meet every qualification listed below.

- **Communication & Relationship Building:** Strong written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to engage professionally and respectfully with artists, community partners, staff, and volunteers.

- **Organization & Project Coordination:** Demonstrated organizational skills, attention to detail, and the ability to manage multiple tasks, track deadlines, and follow projects through to completion.
- **Initiative & Problem-Solving:** Ability to take initiative, navigate unfamiliar situations, identify potential challenges, and work toward solutions both independently and collaboratively.
- **Collaboration & Adaptability:** Experience working as part of a team, with the flexibility to adjust priorities, respond to changing circumstances, and contribute in a fast-paced environment.
- **Professional Accountability:** Dependability, proactive communication, and a willingness to take ownership of assigned responsibilities, participate actively in meetings, and give and receive constructive feedback.
- **Interest in Arts & Cultural Programming:** Demonstrated interest in festival production, event coordination, artist relations, community-centered programming, or the broader creative and cultural sector.
- **Technology & Administrative Skills:** Familiarity with common workplace tools such as Microsoft Word, Excel, Outlook, and databases, with a willingness to learn new systems and processes.

Additional Skills & Experience That Are a Plus:

- Experience supporting events, performances, festivals, community programs, or other collaborative projects.
- Familiarity with the diverse cultural traditions, artistic communities, and creative practices of the Pacific Northwest.
- Oral and/or written fluency in multiple languages.
- Experience working with artists, culture bearers, community organizations, or culturally diverse groups.

Identified Learning Outcomes

Through this apprenticeship, participants will strengthen their professional skills, develop meaningful relationships within the cultural sector, and gain hands-on experience in the planning and production of a large-scale, community-centered arts festival.

By the conclusion of the apprenticeship, participants will have opportunities to:

- **Project Management & Leadership:** Develop the ability to coordinate projects from planning through execution and evaluation, including managing timelines, tracking deliverables, navigating competing priorities, and taking ownership of assigned responsibilities.
- **Artist Relations & Community Engagement:** Build and maintain professional relationships with artists, performers, culture bearers, and community partners while developing skills in inclusive communication, relationship management, and participant-centered programming.
- **Festival Programming & Production:** Gain a comprehensive understanding of large-scale festival planning and operations, including programming processes, technical production coordination, artist advancement, stage documentation, onsite logistics, and post-event evaluation.
- **Cross-Departmental Collaboration:** Strengthen communication, teamwork, and collaborative problem-solving skills by working alongside Northwest Folklife's Programs, Production, Development, Communications, Volunteer Engagement, and Finance teams.
- **Creative Problem-Solving & Professional Judgment:** Build confidence in navigating complex projects, responding to changing circumstances, identifying solutions, and making informed recommendations within a collaborative professional environment.
- **Cultural Programming & Stewardship:** Deepen their understanding of community-centered cultural programming, including how festivals collaborate with artists and culture bearers to celebrate, sustain, and share the diverse cultural traditions of the Pacific Northwest.
- **Professional Networks & Career Development:** Expand their professional networks, identify transferable skills, and build a portfolio of experiences and accomplishments that support future opportunities in arts administration, cultural programming, event production, and creative leadership.

How to Apply

Northwest Folklife is hiring two Performer Experience Apprentices for the 2027 Northwest Folklife Festival. Email your statement of interest to internships@nwfolklife.org with the subject line: 2027 Performer Experience Apprenticeship Application A resume is welcome but not required. A separate cover letter is not necessary.

Application Review Begins: November 16, 2026. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis until both positions are filled. Ideal start date is December 14, 2026.

To apply, please submit a brief statement of interest (2–3 paragraphs) addressing the following:

1. **Your Interest:** What excites you about this apprenticeship and the opportunity to work with artists, culture bearers, and community-centered cultural programming?
2. **Your Experience & Strengths:** What skills, experiences, or perspectives would you bring to this role? We welcome examples from employment, education, creative practice, volunteer work, or community involvement.
3. **Your Professional Growth:** What are you hoping to learn or develop through this apprenticeship, and how might this experience support your future goals?
4. **Required Age & Availability Confirmation:** Please include a brief statement confirming that you have reviewed the age requirements as well as the Required Availability section and can commit to the anticipated work schedule, including all four days of the 2027 Northwest Folklife Festival (May 28–31, 2027).

We encourage you to apply even if you do not meet every desired qualification. Northwest Folklife values the diverse experiences, perspectives, and strengths that emerging cultural workers bring to our organization. If you have questions about the position, application process, or accessibility accommodations, please contact internships@nwfolklife.org. Selected candidates will be required to complete standard employment documentation, including Form I-9, before beginning their apprenticeship.

All applicants are considered for all positions without regard to race, religion, color, sex, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, age, national origin, ancestry, physical/mental disability, or any other protected classification, in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws. By applying for this position, you are seeking to join a team of hardworking people dedicated to consistently delivering outstanding service to accomplish Northwest Folklife's vision and mission. Equal access to programs, services, and employment is available to all qualified persons. Those applicants requiring accommodation to complete the application and/or interview process should contact a management representative. Northwest Folklife is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.