AMERICAN FOLKLORE SOCIETY

Folklore Advocacy

TOOLKIT

Table of Contents

Main Menu

Click to jump to each section

Table of Contents

Continued

Table of Contents

Continued

Advocate As... (Continued)

Table of Contents

Continued

Table of Contents

Continued

Table of Contents

Continued

Reach Out To... (Continued)

Make a Plan 63

Appendices and Resources

Main Menu

The Folklore Advocacy Toolkit is a guide to promoting and sustaining folklore work in the United States, including tips specific to nonprofit organizations, higher education, independent folklorists, and community scholars. This version can be downloaded.

The Folklore Advocacy Toolkit was initially created in 2015 by Sue Eleuterio and members of the Public Program Section of the American Folklore Society, and designed by Meghan McGrath. In 2021, members of the AFS Media and Public Outreach committee Sue Eleuterio, Tom Mould, and Lynne McNeil along with the dedicated commitment of AFS staff members T.J. Smith, Lorraine Walsh Cashman, and Meredith McGriff, expanded and revised the toolkit to its present form. Sarah Steinhauer of Designed for Empowerment designed this updated version which can also be found on the web at:
https://americanfolkloresociety.org/our-work/folklore-advocacy-toolkit/.

Special thanks to all of the folklorists who have contributed case studies to model what strong folklore advocacy looks like. Please consider uploading your own story of advocacy here:
https://americanfolkloresociety.org/news/share-your-news/.

Using the Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to provide all folklorists (broadly defined) with concrete suggestions and examples for how advocacy may benefit their work. This guide is divided into five main sections:

Why Advocate?

Introduces the foundational concepts around advocacy for the folk and traditional arts and provides some basic examples for how we, as folklorists, can begin advocating in the communities we serve.

Advocate As...

This section focuses on the various roles as folklorists within which we may find ourselves advocating: whether as folklorists for the field generally, or public folklorists, academic folklorists, independent folklorists, and cultural practitioners.

Advocate For and With...

This section considers the recipient of the advocacy. What individuals, groups, or institutions can benefit from the advocacy of folklorists? Here you'll find recommendations for advocating for and with your local community, your programs and agencies, your own research and projects, and the field of folklore studies as a whole.

Reach Out To...

This section considers who we need to reach out to in order to spread the word, develop support, or raise funds. Here we discuss reaching out to the government, to the mass media, to social media, and through creative endeavors to share and support our work as folklorists.

Make a Plan

Ready to start advocating? This section will help guide you step by step through the process of developing an advocacy plan to meet your specific goals.

**Text in bolded dark blue can be clicked to link you to important resources.*

Why Advocate?

There are many ways to be a **folklorist**, and many job titles that a person working as a folklorist might inhabit: **curator, scholar, public servant, blogger, ethnographer, artist, student, teacher, archivist, practitioner**, and more.

Folklorists are united in our focus on everyday people and the ways that creativity and innovation emerge within traditional practices, arts, and beliefs. This unique area of expertise is currently gaining traction and appreciation in a wide variety of arenas, from popular and social media to politics and current events. It is imperative that all of us as folklorists be prepared to meet this growing interest with a solid understanding of how best to promote and advocate for ourselves, our work, and our field. This is an opportunity that we cannot afford to miss.

How Might We Advocate?

• A state folk arts specialist asks constituents to help advocate for state funding for the arts by writing letters of support

• A group of public folklorists advocate for an increase to funding for the Folk Arts Program at the NEA

• A newly minted PhD starts a blog highlighting segments of his dissertation fieldwork and commenting on the work of conducting an ethnography in one's own family

• A group of community artists attend a city council meeting to request permission to install a mural downtown

• A group of folklore students produce a series of fun, educational videos to teach others about how their field of study can inform other majors

• The curator of a local museum designs a series of posters to promote a new exhibit to their community

Zafiro Acevedo leads a piñata-making workshop, Rutherford, NJ, 2003. Photographer: Emily Socolov.

• A group of professional folklorists takes a stand on a current cultural issue

• An associate professor petitions the Dean of her college for funding to recruit and support graduate students from out of state

Defining Advocacy

We recognize advocacy as "a wide range of activities conducted to influence decision makers at various levels," including "not only traditional advocacy work like litigation, lobbying, and public education, but also capacity building, network formation, relationship building, communication, and leadership development."

Read more: ***Pathfinder, A Practical Guide to Advocacy Evaluation***

Advocate As...

Advocate as a **folklorist**, generally speaking, or in a particular role as **public folklorist**, **academic folklorist**, or **independent folklorist or cultural practitioner**.

No matter how you work as a folklorist, there are important ways for you to advocate. Here you will find ideas, strategies, and resources to help you advocate for your partners, communities, research, programs, and the field as a whol

Folklorists

Need for Advocacy

Lyndon Bilal interviews Nazim Abdul-Kariem, WWII veteran, for the Veterans History Project's "Do Your Part, DC" campaign. Photo courtesy of the Veteran's History Project. Photographer: Andrew Huber

Folklorists' attention to artistic excellence among ignored traditions and marginalized communities, as well as to the familiar and traditional has at times suggested to outsiders that the field itself can similarly be ignored or dismissed, unnecessary as a discipline of study or a subject of preservation. Of course, folklorists know that it is this very quality that makes our work so essential; when we look at the expressive culture that is produced and shared by people working in shared traditions, we are focusing on the heart of what it means to negotiate the relationship of the individual self to the community at large. In one sense, any specific act of advocacy is serving the field as a whole, letting more people know what folklorists do, and how and why we do it.

"Advocacy" is not a one-sized fits all concept. Just as there are many ways to be a folklorist, there are many ways that folklorists will need to advocate: for artists or communities we work with, for our students, for ourselves as scholars or creators, for our programs or agencies, and even for the field in general. Regardless of job title, all folklorists are in a position to influence decision makers in ways that benefit collaborators and ourselves.

Strategies

Owning the Name Folklorist

When it comes to the field in general, there are two levels on which any folklorist can be an advocate. At the most basic level, simply identifying yourself openly as a folklorist—whether in addition to or in place of any other relevant job title—communicates to a wide audience that "folklorist" is a job that some people have. You may find that some collaborators (or even family members!) will introduce you by a title that they find more impressive or professional. Being proud to clarify that you work as a folklorist can do wonders for how people perceive that job. Even casual interactions, whether in person or over social media, can intentionally incorporate the term "folklore" or "folklorist" in ways that simply normalize folklore as a field of study and a line of work.

Strategies (Continued)

Speaking Out for Folklore

Reaching out intentionally in more formalized ways—**contacting elected officials** or **writing opinion pieces**, for example—can help put the field of folklore on more people's radars.

The 1-2-3 Method

Sometimes this general form of advocacy will require you to have a few basic definitions in hand to share: a short definition of folklore, a brief explanation of the work you do, a quick overview of the diver-sity of professional folklorists. In ***Advancing Folkloristics***, Trevor J. Blank suggests that folklore schol-ars follow what he calls the "1-2-3 Method" in preparing their answers beforehand:"1-2-3" stands for one sentence, two paragraphs, three minutes" (2021).

In addition to explanations of folklore, this method can be used when talking about our programs, proj-ects, exhibits and research as well. Ideally, our answers should relate to our own areas of research (for the sake of effective elaboration) and to the discipline at large (for the sake of avoiding reductionism) (Blank 2021).

Step 1: First, folklorists should come up with their own succinct, catchy summation of what folklore is in one clear sentence, hitting on all the most important strokes possible, such as "vernacular expression in everyday life" or "informal, traditional culture" (McNeill 2013, 13).

Step 2: Come up with "two paragraphs," where the simple definition can be built upon with examples of genres, texts, or overarching lines of theoretical orientation that speak to the folklore discipline's purview. "

Step 3: "Three minutes" should feel like a mini-lecture with a succinct definition invoked, an overview of the big themes within the discipline explored, and an elongated rumination on the field and its components, with relatable examples and experiences on tap.

Case Study: Why Am I A Folklorist?

In this short video, folklorist Norma Elia Cantú explains why she is a folklorist. "I believe in the human spirit, and I believe the work we do nurtures that spirit." Norma explains why it's so important to proclaim the name folklorist in the work she does and the roles she is in.

"I call myself an undocumented folklorist because like many others in the field, my academic credentials are not in folklore but in English, specifically American Literature. Although I've done folklore work for almost 50 years ever since I helped edit a collection of children's folklore with two of my undergraduate professors, I didn't call myself a folklorist. I suppose it is in my nature not to use labels; it takes a while to own up to labels. I resisted calling myself a writer or a poet, although I had been publishing fiction and poetry for a while.

As an undergraduate in 1973, I helped my professors with local arrangements for the Texas Folklore Society meeting in my hometown of Laredo, Texas. Thinking back to that meeting in Laredo, I didn't feel I belonged because the presentations were all about Anglo tales or songs. But the next year, Orlan Sawey Chair of the English Department at Texas A&I, Kingsville was the President of the TFS, and I was an MA student in his class on the Literature of the Cattle Range Industry, which come to think of it, was nothing but a class on cowboy folklore! He hosted a meeting in Kingsville, Texas where I was invited to participate by my mentor Dr. F. Alan Briggs who also didn't have a degree in folklore but researched traditional cultural expressions. In that small gathering in Kingsville, I spoke about making tortillas, flour tortillas!—a subject I knew well as the oldest of 11 siblings in a family in South Texas in the 50s and 60s. I was fascinated. I could do scholarly work on my own traditional practices! So, when I chose the pastorela, a traditional Christmas shepherds' play for my dissertation work, I knew I was a folklorist, although my study was a semiotic analysis, unlike any of the folklore studies I was reading, so I hesitated to use the title "folklorist."

Continued on next page...

Case Study: Why Am I A Folklorist? (Continued)

In 1987, back in Laredo and teaching at the local university, I conducted field work and assisted the "real" folklorists from Austin who were identifying the traditional artists they would take to Washington, DC for the Smithsonian American Folklife Festival. When I was invited to come along, I felt that I had found my people. Of course, I knew of the work of Dobie and of Paredes, but I had never felt that I belonged. I also had been helping our university select traditional artists—quilters, dancers, singers, etc.—for the annual folklife festival that the University hosted over the July fourth weekend. The fact that what I was doing was folklore crossed my mind, but I was still reluctant to claim the title. Several years later, I was invited to contribute to an anthology of Texas foodways; I wrote about capirotada, the Lenten food delicacy that has been in my family for generations and finally, I saw that my work on traditional cultural expressions like the matachines, and Chicana rites of passage was folklore. I would often insert research projects on local traditions into writing assignments, and I had my students conduct fieldwork and surveys, although the classes I taught were not in folklore but in linguistics, children's literature, and in American literature. I can't claim that there was one epiphanous event that convinced me I was a folklorist; I grew into the label, slowly as one grows into an older sibling's hand-me down, by doing, by teaching, and most of all by researching and writing about the traditional knowledge of the people in my community, the ways of the folk.

So, yes, I am a folklorist and proud of the work I have done for almost 50 years to document and analyze the traditional practices of my community. I finally joined the AFS in the early 1990s when I attended the centennial celebration at the American Folklife Festival in 1992. I immersed myself in the Society as an active member presenting papers, moderating panels, as a convenor of the Folklore Latino, Latinoamericano y Caribeño Section, the co-creator of the Chicana/o Section, and co-chair of the CDC. I am a folklorist, and I claim that identity publicly and proudly. It is important to let others know that what we do is valuable. I truly believe that being a folklorist means doing what Anzaldúa would call "work that matters," that our work honors our ancestors and creates a better world for those that come after us."

-Folklorist Norma Elia Cantú

Resources

Advancing Folkloristics. 2021. Edited by Jesse Fivecoate, Kristina Downs, and Meredith A. E. McGriff. Indiana University Press.

What Folklorists Do: Professional Possibilities in Folklore Studies. 2021. Edited by Timothy Lloyd. Indiana University Press.

Public Folklorists in Non-Profit Organizations

Need for Advocacy

Folklorist Karen Canning (black flowered shirt) with tradition bearers Adriana Alatriste and daughter Emily, Marta Aguilar, and tasters at traditional Mexican foods demo, weekly farmers market, Geneseo NY, 2015. Photographer: John Rutigliano.

Public folklorists who work through nonprofit organizations often put their efforts towards obtaining funding and resources that support the cultural life of their community-whatever size that community may be. Organizations may overlook advocacy in favor of projects that seem to more directly and immediately impact their audience. As our case studies demonstrate, however, funding is dependent on relationships and knowledge of need that rest on being ready to advocate, not only in real time, but ahead of time. In this way, public folklorists will be able to more skillfully and effectively campaign for funding or legislative policies that have a lasting impact on both the organization and the community it serves.

Some folklorists may worry about whether they are permitted to conduct advocacy work, especially if they work for a nonprofit 50l(c) (3) organization. All nonprofits and their staff have the right to advocate.

Strategies

• Invite funders (including indirect funders such as legislators who vote on state budgets) to events on a regular basis. **Sample Invitation Letter**

• Invite journalists to cover programs and events and include information about funding sources in press releases.

• Ask members, participants, and clients to write letters of support/post on social media/share invitations to events.

Public Folklorists in Non-Profit Organizations

Case Study: Saving the Folk Arts at the State and National Level

Robert Baron, who teaches in the Master's Program in Cultural Sustainability at Goucher College describes how folklorists banded together over the years to save the New York Folk Arts Coordinator position, the American Folklife Center, and the NEA Heritage Awards.

NYC Folk Arts Coordinator Position

In 1983 the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) decided to eliminate the Folk Arts Coordinator position. The folk arts constituency responded by organizing a campaign through a coalition, The Emergency Committee to Save New York State Folk Arts. This coalition included a wide diversity of ethnic and regional organizations from throughout the state, from within the folk arts field as well as other kinds of organizations representing culturally specific groups. The administration of NYSCA ignored the campaign while promising that folk arts would continue to be supported through its existing funding programs. They didn't take the campaign seriously, failing to recognize the strength and commitment of the folk arts field.

The campaign made the case that folk arts required professional expertise to develop the field and evaluate funding applications. They also asserted that losing a folk arts position would result in neglecting and underfunding ethnic and rural communities. They wrote an open letter signed by more than 70 organizations and individuals, wrote to and met with elected officials, and brought up their concerns with the governor at a public meeting. Folk arts advocates got friends, family and neighbors to write as well. Elected officials representing the entire range of the political spectrum supported the campaign, including both Democratic and Republican leaders of the state senate where Republicans were in the majority, and the majority Democratic assembly. Support for the campaign was so overwhelming that it threatened the very existence of NYSCA. After several months of continuous protest of the elimination of the folk arts coordinator position, NYSCA relented by establishing a folk arts program with an initial funding budget of one million dollars.

Continued on next page...

Public Folklorists in Non-Profit Organizations

Case Study: Saving the Folk Arts at the State and National Level (Cont.)

American Folklife Center and the National Endowment for the Arts Heritage Awards

In the late 1990s, the Librarian of Congress planned to eliminate the American Folklife Center (AFC). Joe Wilson, Executive Director of the National Council on the Traditional Arts, drew on his own contacts and also got in touch with other people in the folk arts field who knew key senators to get them to tell the Librarian of Congress at a hearing that the AFC couldn't be eliminated. The Librarian of Congress, who always got what he wanted from Congress, was blindsided by this confrontation, which succeeded in getting permanent authorization for the AFC.

Similarly, when the Chair of the National Endowment for the Arts planned to eliminate the National Heritage Awards, folk arts advocates got a congressman at a hearing to definitively tell him that the awards could not be eliminated.

In both cases, heads of federal cultural agencies did not expect that the folk arts field could garner the support of elected officials, and they were completely surprised when they were confronted at congressional hearings.

Case Study: Advocating for the Nevada Humanities Council

Christina Barr has served as executive director for the Nevada Humanities Council since 2009. She has advocated on behalf of folklore and the humanities at the local, state, and federal level. In this case study, she describes responding to a drastic reduction in funding and the need for relationship building and information sharing ahead of crisis situations.

When I first came here [to the Nevada Humanities Council], the first day on the job, all our funding was zeroed out on our budget by the governor. We went from $100,000 to $0 in funding.

That set the bar for us needing to build an advocacy program. We needed to reinstate that funding and make sure we had the support we needed at the state level. It was trial by fire—I had never done advocacy of that sort before. Some people took me under their wing, and we created a strong and effective advocacy group around our organization.

Continued on next page...

Public Folklorists in Non-Profit Organizations

Case Study: **Advocating for the Nevada Humanities Council (Cont.)**

One of the things I quickly learned is that it's about relationship-building and information-sharing. You need to be able to talk effectively about what you do and why it matters why public funds should support it. What we do as arts administrators is critical to our nation's health and our community health. I spend a lot of time refining those arguments so we can present legislators with very clear talking points. When they go to committee meetings, they have one sheet of paper they can take with our points clearly outlined. We have to provide them with the tools to make our case without us being in the room.

Our lobbyist is amazing, and she does a lot of relationship building. She can walk into the office of someone new and introduce me. She'll tell them that I need to talk with them for about five minutes. Then she looks at me, and it's up to me to make the case. That point of entry is pretty critical.

People who don't have an advocate at their disposal can also do that work, though. You don't need that, especially at a federal level. It's the duty of our elected officials to welcome us into their office, and they know that.

Keep in mind that the staff are equally important. and you need to build relationships with the people in those offices. Even if it changes, it's critical to get to know them while they're there.

They control access and take notes for the agenda. Be as gracious as you would be with the elected officials and they will appreciate that.

We are always writing and coordinating and communicating our message to organizations about how they can support state humanities councils, and us in Nevada.

We track data in our organization so we can share with elected officials. We can tell them how many people we've served, how many in that person's district. and so on. Sometimes we'll tailor our conversation with elected officials to specific parts of the state. If we need to talk about what happens at a district level instead of a state one, we can narrow it down.

When you get in the business of tracking and creating a competitive evaluation structure, and you're talking with people in a position to make decisions about public policy, it really helps to say how you're serving their constituents.

Continued on next page...

Public Folklorists in Non-Profit Organizations

Case Study: **Advocating for the Nevada Humanities Council (Cont.)**

We can go to them and say we can track the dollar-per-dollar ration of the investment of federal dollars in our community. For every dollar of funding, we've leveraged two dollars or six dollars of local money towards this program. The match that we're able to bring in for federal funds, that ratio is very valuable. That's when they raise their eyebrows. It's not that we're using federal money, but using local resources too. It shows that we're able to garner local support and engage people in what we are doing.

You're sitting in somebody's office, and the question is "Why should I support you instead of school lunches for kids and public health?" I hope we've all come to understand that what we do contributes the same kind of urgent value to our communities as healthy school lunches. I think they're on par to provide educational opportunities for our kids and provide full lives.

A great resource would be the website of Amy Kitchner, who is the Executive Director of Alliance for California Traditional Arts. She has a briefing on traditional arts and community health. She's really smart and that would be a great place to get ideas for how to talk about the value of traditional arts on many levels. It's not frivolous, it's something that's vital to maintaining the critical and physical health of our nations and communities.

Just do it and do it often. Become familiar with the process. There's a structure you need to know about, and if you actually want to have a conversation with elected officials in their office, you have to follow that structure to get there.

Familiarize yourself. Go with someone who is used to this process the first time and see how they do it. I remember the first time they told me "fifteen minutes, fifteen minutes max."* I thought," how can I do that? "But now I've got it down to a five-minute meeting, which everyone is grateful for. It's about respecting somebody's time and getting the message across in a cheerful and passionate way.

*Sue Eleuterio notes, this is often called an "elevator speech." Imagine you are in an elevator with the person you are advocating with and you only have from the 1st floor to the 10th floor to talk to them. What can you say in that time to engage their interest in your program?

The Legality of Lobbying

The Alliance for Justice, located in Washington DC, offers regular "Worry-Free Advocacy Workshops" and access to legal and accounting advice through their Advocacy Lawyers and Accountants Network (ALAN.) Some organizations may be able to obtain pro-bono legal assistance more locally. Outside of DC, nonprofits can apply for pro bono legal counsel through **ProBono Partnership.**

For examples of other nonprofits who have benefitted from collaborating with lobbyists, see: **Lobbyists Feel Good By Doing Good.**

Finally, here are guides for **Senate Lobbying** and **Lobbying at the US House of Representatives**.

Resources

General Resources

Americans for the Arts State Arts Action Network

Americans for the Arts Advocacy Hub

The Advocacy Capacity Tool (ACT): A self-assessment tool that nonprofit organizations, coalitions, and groups can use to assess their current capacity – or readiness – to engage in advocacy efforts.

Virtual Advocacy

American Folklore Society US Public Folklore List: Students and community scholars in search of funding for public folklore projects can find a list of state folklore agencies here.

Funding Resources for Organizations

NEH Museums, Libraries, and Cultural Organizations. **NEHGrantsPublicHumanities** Planning grants are used to refine the content, format, and interpretive approach of a humanities project; develop the project's preliminary design; test project components; and conduct audience evaluation.

NEH Digital Projects for the Public: These grants support projects that significantly contribute to the public's engagement with the humanities using digital platforms.

Academic Folklorists in Higher Ed

Need for Advocacy

As a folklorist working in academia, you will often need to advocate 1) for your own programs, courses, and students, and 2) for the communities in which you work.

Dr. Pravina Shukla, Professor of Folklore at Indiana University, with doctoral students Ross Brillhart, Ben Danner, and Suyash Neupane.

Strategies

Advocating for Your Program, Courses, and Students

Folklife and folklore programs based at universities often must compete for funding, staff, and support with other academic programs. Further, folklorists often find jobs in departments such as Anthropology, English, or American Studies and may be tempted to adopt the disciplinary identity of their department. For the health of the field, your curriculum, and your students, however, it is important to identify as a folklorist and advocate for folklore as a vital area of a study.

• Meet with university administrators such as chairs, deans, and the provost to discuss new initiatives and programming, including hosting an academic journal on your campus.

• Meet with institutional development staff about crafting a pitch to highlight folklore research as a way to fundraise.

• Meet with related academic departments to discuss cross-listed coursework, collaborative research projects, and team-teaching.

• Stay in touch with alumni and put them in touch with your current students to help mentor them.

• Use the term “folklore” in course titles and descriptions.

• Always identify yourself as a folklorist.

Case Study: Getting Universities to Host Academic Journals

Academic journals do not generate enough revenue to support themselves. They typically rely on societies or universities for support along with volunteer and unpaid labor. Many universities are no longer motivated to support journals, though they continue to require faculty, students, and staff to publish in them.

In 2019, the folklore faculty at George Mason University (GMU) applied to serve as the editorial team for the Journal of American Folklore (JAF). In this case study, Lisa Gilman and Deb Shutika describe how they were able to get the support they needed to host the journal.

Background

The *Journal of American Folklore* [JAF] has historically been supported jointly by the American Folklore Society and the university where the journal editors are employed. The typical editorship term is 5-years; thus, every five years, a new institution is asked to take on partial support.

The folklore faculty at George Mason University (GMU) applied to serve as the editorial team in 2019. For the faculty to take on this role, university support was required, specifically the College of Humanities and Social Sciences [CHSS]. A host university's responsibility typically includes: space, sometimes equipment (use of printers, phones, etc.), course release(s) for editor(s), and support for graduate editorial assistants.

The JAF editorial team that will serve through 2023

Continued on next page...

Case Study: Getting Universities to Host Academic Journals (Cont.)

Asking for Money

Lisa, as the prospective Editor-in-Chief, and Deb, as the director of the Folklore Program and the head of the English Department, the home department of the folklore program faculty, took the lead in seeking support from the dean. Prior to our meeting, we met to strategize, critical for determining what we needed and for developing through strategies.

Setting the Stage

As Department head, Deb emailed the dean to explain the situation and ask if it was appropriate to move forward. She strategically explained that universities "typically provide a 20 hour/week editorial assistant and one course release for the editor," as previous universities who hosted JAF had done. She also mentioned that the associate editors would serve without compensation (the assoc. editors had already committed to taking on this role). This language indicated that we knew our request was appropriate and we expressed generosity/good citizenship in offering staffing of associate editors without asking the dean for anything.

How Much to Ask For

We came up with two scenarios: the minimum that we needed and what would be ideal:

Ideal: [Total Cost: $41,000]

- Course release for Lisa as editor
- 12 month/20 hr. week support for a Graduate Assistant (package includes tuition, etc.)
- Editorial assistant
- Space

Acceptable: [Total Cost: $20,500]

- Course release for Lisa as editor
- 12 month/20 hr. week hourly support for a graduate student
- Space

We shared both scenarios. Yet we emphasized the rationale for the ideal option.

Deb offered that the English Department would allocate a GA from its pool for the next year, so the college wouldn't have to take the responsibility until the year after.

Continued on next page...

Academic Folklorists in Higher Ed

Case Study: Getting Universities to Host Academic Journals (Cont.)

The Outcome

- The dean agreed to support the journal at the ideal level.
- However, she only committed to 3 years rather than the 5 requested.
- She also indicated that there was no available space.

Strategies

Relationships: Already having good relationships and being known as a team player, generous colleague, and someone willing to compromise going into the negotiation is invaluable!

Personalities: know the person with whom you are negotiating. Pick approaches and strategies that you think would be most effective with their personality and priorities.

What is the benefit to the university? Instead of asking for help, position the request as something that is beneficial to the university. In this case, we emphasized:

Research: The university had just been granted Research 1 status. Housing a flagship journal could help raise national and international research profile of the university.

Grad Student Support: The editorial assistant position would be an invaluable opportunity to the student(s) for skill-building, developing a professional network, and hands-on mentoring. The position could also be used for recruitment and retention of outstanding students. We emphasized the importance of the assistantship versus the hourly wage in terms of recruiting and retaining excellent students and not wanting to be exploitative.

Universities Need Academic Journals: Some universities no longer consider supporting journals to be part of their mission while they rely on journals to evaluate their faculty and for the faculty's professional activities. If universities want journals to continue to exist, they have to support them.

Diversity: The journal would contribute to diversity initiatives on campus. We shared Lisa's application that included as one of her editorial priorities: "the publication of scholarship that challenges the 'canon' of U.S folklorists. Examples would be intellectual histories that center important people whose contributions have been largely overlooked, such as scholars of color or women." Our priorities aligned with and would contribute to the university's diversity initiatives.

Accept Some Now and Ask for More Later: Though we only committed to serve for 3 years, once we have the support for three years, we can ask for smaller commitments later.

Continued on next page...

Academic Folklorists in Higher Ed

Case Study: Getting Universities to Host Academic Journals (Cont.)

Ongoing PR

Now that we have support, we try to make visible how our editorship is contributing to university goals, especially around diversity (big priority right now). We published a piece about JAF diversity initiatives on the George Mason Folklore Program website that we made sure to share with the dean whose staff then posted it on the college website. We will make noise around special issues, etc. If we do go back to ask for an extension beyond 3 years, we can point to JAF's diversity initiatives as a benefit the college and university are receiving for their expense.

Strategies

Advocating for the Communities in Which You Work

Research ethics have shifted dramatically in the past few decades, with greater expectation that researchers will collaborate with communities to develop research projects that are useful to all those who participate. Often, that means folklorists will want and need to advocate for the people in the communities in which they work.

• Structure your research project according to collaborative models such as Participatory Action Research (PAR), Community-Based Research (CBR) or any of a number of related models that stress equity, ethics, and engagement.

• Build research projects into your courses with service learning, benefiting both students and community members.

• Develop outcomes that benefit community members, including sharing data, developing materials and research summaries for general audiences, and contributing directly to grassroots initiatives.

• Develop public-facing outcomes for your research that engage audiences who are positioned to facilitate change such as community organizers and local politicians.

Academic Folklorists in Higher Ed

Case Study: Creating a Course-Based Collaborative Research Project

Academic folklorists can serve as advocates for the communities in which they work without ever having to take off their researcher hats. In this case study, Tom Mould describes the creation of a collaborative research project that brought community members, program leaders, and students together to study the personal experience narratives and legends about poverty and welfare in the U.S. in order to help dispel the stereotypes and stigma around these programs and people.

Tom Mould, Professor of Folklore and Anthropology, working with Elon University students Rosie Towchik, Liv Dubendorf, John Tricoli, and Dan Koehler on their video ethnography projects.

“

In 2011, I heard a story at a cocktail party about a woman dressed in a fur coat with jewelry and designer clothes who tried to buy dog food with food stamps, setting on buying steak instead. The story was a scurrilous and spurious legend of “the welfare queen” that I thought had died out years ago. I was wrong. But I wasn’t ready to let go of it. So I sought out some folks I knew who worked in the area of poverty alleviation in my city, who introduced me to others doing similar work. Intellectually, I was interested in the role legend and narrative play in constructing perceptions of welfare and poverty; but socially and politically, I shared their interest in dispelling the stereotypes and stigma surrounding those in need. So we set up a few meetings to talk about how we might bring our various skills and expertise to address our joint concern.

During the next few months, we worked to flesh out the parameters of a project that would examine and ultimately work to dispel the stereotypes and misperceptions surrounding public assistance and the people who receive it. We agreed the project would also involve students, developing a model of research as service learning that would, among its many advantages, offer the practical benefit of greater capacity.

Continued on next page...

Academic Folklorists in Higher Ed

Case Study: **Creating a Course-Based Collaborative Research Project**

Here is a video of a panel we participated in on "***Community Connections /Re-Envisioning Welfare in Alamance County***."

Over the course of the next year, we met monthly to establish a list of ten outcomes: six to serve community agencies and community members, four geared toward academic audiences. Additionally, we determined a timeline, submitted grant applications to fund the project, set the structure and learning goals for the service-learning course, received institutional review board (IRB) approval, and developed fieldwork protocols, including interview questions, field note templates, and processes for how to identify and approach participants. Initial conversations helped us establish the nature of our collaboration together. Following the model of community-based research that embraces a division of labor, the students served primarily as fieldworkers; I served as the principal investigator for the research and was involved in all aspects of the project; and community partners served as project developers, advisers, facilitators, advocates, and researchers in gathering and providing statistical and policy information.

Our most important collaborators, however, were the women and men receiving public aid. As with all ethnographic fieldwork, we worked carefully to earn the trust of the people with whom we worked. Some of those relationships deepened as we returned again and again over the course of the next few years, joining them for meals, youth football games, and school events. In other cases, a single interview was all that was feasible, as with many of the people we met at the homeless shelter, where transience was the norm. With all, however, we asked a crucial question: how would you like to see your story shared? The discussions that followed not only helped us meet the outcomes we had set at the beginning of the project, but encouraged the development of others, such as a photo exhibit, cheat sheet on poverty for public officials, and an expanded website with aid recipient's stories. When we began to publicize the work of our project, a neighboring county asked us to develop a similar project with them, which we did.

Folklore research is increasingly collaborative, part of a recognition of the importance of agency among our participants, and the ethical obligation we have to the communities in which we work. Using CBR, models of service-learning, and methods of collaborative ethnography provided a valuable way to work as an advocate within the community while never taking off my researcher hat.

Continued on next page...

Academic Folklorists in Higher Ed

Case Study: **Creating a Course-Based Collaborative Research Project**

For a more detailed description of the project in terms of service learning, see ***"Collaborative-Based Research in a Service-Learning Course: Reconceiving Research as Service"*** by Tom Mould. Partnerships: A Journal of Service-Learning and Civic Engagement, 5(1): 1-21.

For a more detailed description of the project in terms of methods, confidentiality, and find-ings, see ***Overthrowing the Queen: Telling Stories of Welfare in America*** by Tom Mould. 2020. Indiana University Press.

Resources

Alan Lomax Fellowship in Folklife Studies The John W. Kluge Center at the Library of Congress offers a post-doctoral fellowship for advanced research based on the Alan Lomax Collection.

NEA Folk and Traditional Arts Funding The NEA offers several grant opportunities for individuals and organizations.

NEH Planning Grants Planning grants are used to refine the content, format, and interpretive approach of a humanities project, develop the project's preliminary design; test project compo-nents; and conduct audience evaluation.

NEH Implementation Grants Implementation grants are for projects in the final stages of prepara-tion to "go live" before the public. Grants support final scholarly research and consultation, design development, production, and installation of a project for presentation to the public.

Independent Folklorists and Cultural Practicioners

Need for Advocacy

Independent folklorists and cultural practitioners often need to advocate both for themselves and for the communities with which they work. If you don't broadcast information about your work, no-one will think to hire you as an independent folklorist. Cultural practitioners also need both advocacy support and the willingness to present their work in public forums.

Luke Mitchem conducting interview with Glen Simpson, retired coal miner, Matewan, WV. 2018 WV Field School.

Strategies

• Consider **media and social media coverage** of the work, especially culminating events and projects as a form of advocacy

• **Send letters and invitations** to funders and supporters to see the work in progress

• **Present** at conferences and regional gatherings

• **Publish and co-publish**

Case Study: Advocating for Indigeonous Peoples, Collaborative Methodologies, and Sustainable Archives

Amber Ridington is an independent folklorist with a specialty in digital humanities based in Vancouver, BC. In this case study, she describes her work with First Nations communities and the many strategies she has developed to advocate for ethical approaches to fieldwork, data collection, and data sharing. *www.amberridington.com*

As part of my work with First Nations groups, I've started to advocate for the development of sustainable archives. I've also advocated for changing methodologies and making sure that there are methodological standards. The Cloud Lake group asked me to make a methodological guide that anyone they are working with has to comply with. Part of it says that you have to hand over any of the interviews you do and upload them into the database. You can't just do the research and keep the raw materials inaccessible. Oral histories can be used for many, many purposes outside of that project. They're valuable to the community, and so should be collected with later uses in mind; for instance, for language, for genealogical research, or for the history of colonization and settlement in that area. There's valuable information in almost all of those interviews. This is not just true for the First Nations, however. It can be useful for any community. I like the idea of the community having control over the materials. They should be able to choose what public programs—radio shows, websites, exhibits, etc.—can be done with them. It can be really important. It's a matter of community-building, building people's pride in their heritage, and an overall sense of belonging.

I've worked on and off for years for a First Nation in British Columbia. When I finished my Masters, they invited me to come and do grant writing. They were interested in doing virtual exhibits and community-based documentation.

Continued on next page...

Case Study: Advocating for Indigenous Peoples, Collaborative Methodologies, and Sustainable Archives (Cont.)

I've also worked as a consultant for the cultural heritage part of environmental impact assessments. These assessments are meant to evaluate the impact upon aboriginal rights and cultural practices. The government's term is "heritage values." They need a report on which heritage values the First Nations need them to consider in the face of a proposed development. I'll testify, giving the results of my survey and traditional use studies. I describe the heritage values, and how the proposed development would adversely affect the culture in certain ways. Quite often, they'll ask me for ways to mitigate the effects. They want to know what effects will occur if the plan goes ahead. Then the government and First Nations negotiate to decide how they can reconcile that. Sometimes they'll say, "you can't build it; change the development so it's not around these heritage sites of ours," or, "you can build it but should compensate us for the loss in money or land," such as a hunting location in a different area. They're always relying on the report to see what values will be lost.

As part of that work, what I've started doing is advocating for the development of sustainable archives. Community archives. Every time you do a traditional study like the ones I do, you often start from scratch. The First Nations don't have great record-keeping-their funding is quite tight and they don't have a budget for that. So, I've started building that into the budgets for compliance studies. That way, when we find all these oral history interviews and things, instead of giving them back as just DVDs, we're giving them back in the form of web-based archival database systems. We work with the community so they can manage them. They're starting to integrate with the lands departments-each First Nation has a lands department linking the oral history materials and other archival materials to the land through a database.

So often, any databases exist in a university or museum. There's been a lot of movement over the last 10-20 years to virtually repatriate that material and give access back to the communities, but I think that's quite different from them actually managing the materials themselves. It's still owned by the museum. Staff from the museum are getting paid to manage it; the communities aren't. We want to work towards moving the infrastructure to the community itself, and ideally getting the developers to pay for that. We want to find sources of funding for indigenous-centered heritage management.

Continued on next page...

Case Study: Advocating for Indigeonous Peoples, Collaborative Methodologies, and Sustainable Archives (Cont.)

Let's say I get one of those projects-the archive will just become part of the project. We'll start a database and keep populating it throughout the project. At the end they get their report but also this database that they can keep adding to and then the community has access to this multimedia archive of their heritage materials. It can include PDFs of ethnographer's reports from the 1800s (which are hard to find and often go missing from libraries.) It can include oral history audio files and videos and transcripts. There are also lots of photographs.

We created a community archive for Cloud Lake as part of a study from 2012-2013. Lawyers have begun using that database. It was for a separate project-looking at the impacts of a proposed dam in traditional territories. For related but different use cases, lawyers have been contacting us for the use of that database. The information has so many different uses. So far, we've kept the records open only to the community and their trusted researchers. We wanted it to be more indigenous-centered than the current model-virtually repatriating material, but keeping the funding and ownership with a museum or university. Generally speaking, the communities will make the material available to people who request it.

The Dane Wajich Virtual Museum Project had a lot of sponsors. It had the Virtual Museum of Canada, the Volkswagen Foundation (endangered language support), the school district for providing teaching resources and curriculum development. and the First Nations. Plus, we brought in a number of specialists to work on the project. A professor from San Francisco State did video production mentorship and taught the youth to do video and audio documentation. We had a linguist from UBC. So it was professionals from multiple institutions contributing. We also had multiple funding sources. so it was a big partnership grant-wise. But it was also a community-directed project. The community was really involved in choosing the exact materials that went onto the website. It was a long-term project. so the idea of the website changed, and different materials ended up being featured than were at the beginning. Community review and building in community goals of self-representation in their culture-that was important. Also skill development and engaging youth with elders. Cross-generational teaching opportunities.

Continued on next page...

Case Study: Advocating for Indigenous Peoples, Collaborative Methodologies, and Sustainable Archives (Cont.)

I try to rely on participatory action-based methodologies for project development. You work with a community to address some type of issue, usually some type of social injustice, and help them achieve their goals. With this virtual museum project. they really wanted to present their own culture from their own perspective-not just have websites or books written about them. We talked about the text and language that's used. They chose to use a first-person voice on the site, so it's very clear that it's their project. On the homepage, it says, "Our Doig River First Nations…worked to create…" This is all from their own perspective.

For the elders, oral tradition is still their primary means of communication. They much prefer it over written form. So the site was built around oral histories. The stories and songs included in the exhibit are taken from oral histories collected specifically for this project. The videos of them talking about their culture-the elders felt this was the core of the project.

The key to all this has been building it into compliance projects. The developers have to do the project. they have to do oral history-based research. So we build in a digital archive of the material we collect. plus the background research materials, and that's been the best way to fund that. Afterwards, the First Nation has control over the documents. If you went through a university, the university would want to control the material and use it in their teaching. But this way, the First Nation gets to control the data and use it as they see fit.

The developers don't always pick the most experienced oral historians. though, and sometimes the history suffers. I've started advocating for changing methodologies and making sure that there's methodological standards. The Cloud Lake group asked me to make a methodological guide that anyone they are working with has to comply with. Part of it says that you have to hand over any of the interviews you do and upload them into the database. You can't just do the research and keep the raw materials inaccessible. Oral histories can be used for many, many purposes outside of that project. They're valuable to the community, and so should be collected with later uses in mind. For language, for genealogical research, for the history of colonization and settlement in that area. There's valuable information in almost all of those interviews.
This is not just true for the First Nations, however. It can be useful for any community. I like the idea of the community having control over the materials. They should be able to choose what public programs-radio shows, websites. exhibits. etc.-can be done with them. It can be really important. It's a matter of community-building, building people's pride in their heritage, and an overall sense of belonging.

Resources

Here are some of the grant and fellowship opportunities available to independent folklorists and community scholars. The American Folklife Center also sponsors several awards which can be found here.

AFS Public Folklore List Students and community scholars in search of funding for public folklore projects can find a list of state folklore agencies here. To contact folklorists working at the state level for information about potential contract work and for projects which may involve community scholars, see the **Public Programs Section** of the American Folklore Society.

NEA National Heritage Fellowship The NEA National Heritage Fellowships recognize the recipients' artistic excellence and support their continuing contributions to our nation's traditional arts heritage.

NEH Summer Stipend Summer Stipends support individuals pursuing advanced research that is of value to humanities scholars, general audiences, or both. The stipend covers two months of continuous, full-time work and often results in the publication of articles, books, or other scholarly resources.

NEH Public Scholar Program The Public Scholar program aims to encourage scholarship that will be of broad interest and have lasting impact.

The National Coalition of Independent Scholars A number of resources applicable to independent folklorists, including this list of up-to-date funding opportunities.

Henry Reed Fund The Henry Reed Fund was established to provide support for activities directly involving folk artists, especially when the activities reflect, draw upon, or strengthen the collections of the American Folklife Center.

Advocate For and With...

No matter the particular role we fill as folklorists, our advocacy can be diverse, geared towards people, groups, issues, programs, performances, and research.

*Here you will find ways to collaborate with others to advocate for **local communities**, **programs and agencies**, **research projects**, and **folklore as a field**.*

Local Communities

Need for Advocacy

Folklorists who work with local communities often advocate for and with them, working to help ensure their lives and traditions are protected and respected. Local community scholars, artists, activists, and folklorists also need to think about advocacy for preservation, sustainability, and funding opportunities.

"Nothing About Us Without Us is For Us"
Hopewell Crescent, Shankill Road area, Belfast, Northern Ireland
Created with hundreds of images of the community
By Elizabeth Thomsen--is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Strategies

• Invite local elected representatives to events and consider asking them to make brief remarks

• Create a relationship with local media representatives so that when you send a press release about your activities and programs, they already know something about your cultural work

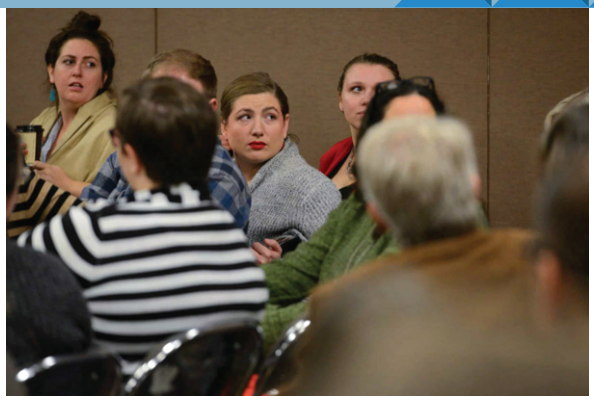
• Share photographs and create hash tags with specific cultural terms which can be shared by your participants

Case Study: Telling Stories that Change the World

***In this Ted Talk**, Kiran Singh Sirah, The President of the International Storytelling Center, talks about how to tell stories that change the world. Notice how he makes the case for storytelling and folklore.*

Need for Advocacy

Nonprofit folklore organizations, community arts programs, agencies and departments, have a long history of advocacy in the United States, and many of them owe their existence to this type of work. These tools and practices can also be used to promote the longevity of existing folklore organizations and programs. When used effectively, they help organizations not only grow, but actively participate in conversation around policies that affect them and their audience.



Audience members listen intently to comments at the 2018 Annual Meeting of the American Folklore Society in Buffalo, New York. Photographer: Eleanor Hasken.

Strategies

• One of the strongest ways for local advocates to support state or federal advocacy is through data tracking. Numbers can be a powerful and persuasive tool when effectively demonstrating the organization's level of public support.

• Organizations can benefit from recording not only the number of participants engaged, but also information about which congressional districts are being served by the organization's activities.

Case Study: Raising Money for Underserved Audiences

Here is an example of creating additional funding for underserved audiences by the Committee on Responsive Philanthropy. Their campaign, Philanthropy's Promise, has persuaded over 100 funders to designate at least half of their grant dollars for underserved communities.
Philanthropy's Promise

This effort developed from research done by CRP including a report by Holly Sidford, ***Fusing Arts, Culture and Social Change***, which was done in collaboration with several folklorists, and highlighted the disparities in funding in the arts.

Case Study: Saving National Heritage Fellowships

In 2011, folklorists learned that there was a proposal to eliminate the NEA's National Heritage Fellowships by folding them into a more generic program. The target audiences were arts administrators at the NEA and legislators in Congress on the US House of Representatives Interior Appropriations Committee where the change would be introduced. The message was the significance of the National Heritage Fellowships to the artists, communities, and states they represented. It was delivered by a combination of emails, a letter writing campaign, in person meetings with relevant administrators, and a follow up plan to deliver additional letters if needed. The timeline was dictated by the Appropriations Committee's schedule for budget hearings. Resources needed included knowing who had personal connections to legislators, understanding the appropriation process in Congress, and being able to work behind the scenes.

As one respondent in our survey noted: "I learned it is important to think beyond political boundaries, and to cultivate support in both houses."

2013 NEA Heritage Fellow Veronica Castillo.
Photographer: Tom Pitch

Recent Research, Projects and Exhibits

Need for Advocacy

In the attention economy, we need to advocate for our work so that it gets seen by broad, diverse audiences. Publishing in top-tiered journals, and exhibiting in premiere museums and venues is an excellent start, but if we want our work to make an impact, we have to do some additional work to publicize it.

Local and Regional Festivals are a great place for advocacy . This regional festival was the culmination of years of research by state based folklorists in the Midwest and provided an opportunity to reach a variety of audiences with information about traditions in their states.

Strategies

• **CREATE** an advocacy plan using **the guide provided at the end** of the Folklore Advocacy Toolkit

• **UPDATE** your information in AFS's **"Find an Expert" database**

• **SIGN UP** for **online services** to help the media find you

• **WRITE** a **Press Release** and share with local media

• **WRITE** **op-eds** to the local paper that draw on your work.

• **PARTNER** with organizations such as **"The Conversation"** to get your research in front of a huge online audience

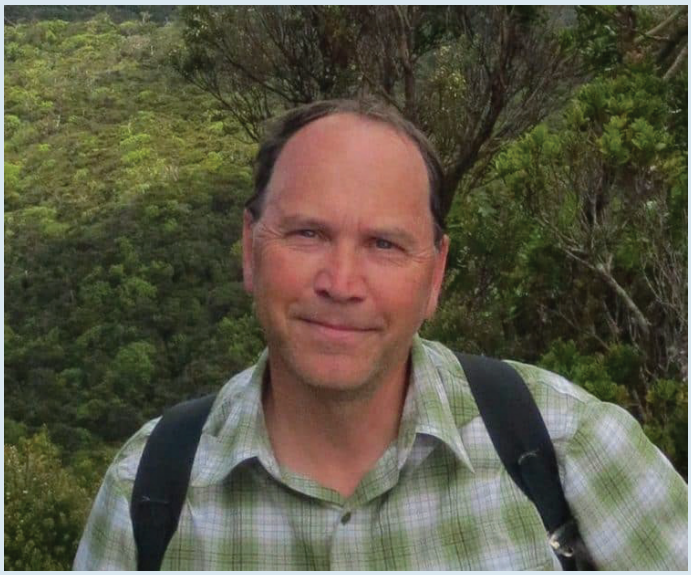
• **USE** **social media** to spread the word about recent publications, projects, exhibits

• **WORK** with **local media** to cover your events and exhibits

Recent Research, Projects and Exhibits

Case Study: Riding the Coattails of Conspiracy

In 2020, folklorist Tim Tangherlini and his collaborators ***published an article*** *on how narrative frameworks could help people distinguish between conspiracy theories and real conspiracies. Within months, his research was being written about and talked about by the BBC, Ars Techni-ca, Axios, the Conversation, and NPR's "Science Friday," to name just a few. How did he get so much national coverage? Tim likens it to surfing: being in the right spot at the right time to ride the wave all the way in.*



Tim Tangherlini, Professor Danish Literature and Culture, University of California, Berkeley

But his success was also built on groundwork begun much earlier. In this **seven minute video** Tim talks about what he did to get his research out into the public eye. As an academic folklorist in a university setting, Tim established a strong and collaborative relationship with the staff of the press office at his school. Whenever they needed someone to speak about a folk tradition such as an upcoming holiday, he always made sure to say yes. He also made sure to keep them apprised of his current research in case they identified any useful media connections. When he had research that he thought would have general appeal, he approached these folks and pitched his idea. Because he established a strong relationship with them, they were much more amenable to helping him promote his work. In this video, Tim also discusses the importance of preparing a brief, jargon-free explanation of your work, and seeking opportunities to collaborate and present across fields to encourage the sharing of ideas and research in ways that can be understood by general audiences.

Reach Out To...

Once you know who or what you want to advocate for, it's time to figure out how to reach out to the **government** and the **mass media** and how to leverage tools, such as **social media** to get your message to the right audience. Finding the right people to help is crucial to effective advocacy.

Reach Out To...

The Government

Need for Advocacy

Nearly all public and community based folklore programs depend on government funding for not only their existence, but for the ability to create and support new initiatives.

Strategies

Numbers can be a powerful and persuasive tool when effectively demonstrating a community or organization's level of public support.Organizations can benefit from recording not only the number of participants engaged, but also information about which congressional districts are being served by the organization's activities.

• ***Participate in Advocacy Days and Events***
  • **Americans for the Arts Advocacy**
  • **National Humanities Alliance Advocacy**
  • **Performing Arts Alliance Advocacy**

• Staff for Congress will tell you they ***count numbers of phone calls, letters or emails*** when there is an organized campaign, so if you are part of a coalition which is advocating for a general issue (arts education funding, for instance) you can help make the case with this method.

• Most experienced advocates recommend an ***in-person visit***, so if you are going to be in DC, it's worth arranging a visit ahead of time. You might wish to join your state's delegation to an advocacy day in DC (see below). If the issue is time-sensitive, phone calls are recommended over emails because you will speak to a staffer (most of the time).

• ***Federal Government Advocacy:*** In communicating with Congress, the most important word to use is "constituent." As a constituent (and as the representative of other constituents in your community) you have the right (and some would say the responsibility) to communicate with your elected representatives.All members of Congress hold town hall meetings in their districts. These are good opportunities to let your legislator know about an upcoming or ongoing program and to say, "thank you" for legislation which funds your programs and/or work. (**Public Policy Action Tips**)

• ***Local and State Government Advocacy:*** Communicating with legislators and other political representatives holds many similarities to that of federal representatives with two important differences. First, you will typically have many more opportunities to communicate in person. Secondly, you can make use of things like writing a letter/email to the editor of a local paper, inviting a representative to an event, or making a phone call with more impact than you might have nationally.
Americans for the Arts Facts and Figures

The Government

Case Study: Conflict Prevention Act Advocacy

Kiran Singh Sirah is a folklorist, poet and president of the International Storytelling Center. He heads the National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough, Tennessee—the oldest festival of its kind in the world and a driving force behind the renaissance in storytelling. Kiran talks about creating community through stories, the ability of story to transcend petty politics and connect us to what is essential.

All the training I've had as a Rotary Peace Fellow, a storyteller, folklorist, and as an educator has taught me to think about how important it is to try to leave the world a better place than it was when we found it. Those of you that know me will also know that before I was born, my own parents fled their home under threat of genocide. This is why I am alive today and why i support genocide prevention. So it was a no brainer for me when a couple of years ago, some DC based colleagues asked if I could help tell a story of an important piece of bipartisan legislation designed to build peace and prevent murders and atrocities all over the world.

Since I live in Tennessee, I decided to reach out to Senator Bob Corker's staff (chairman of foreign relations committee) and after some phone calls and emails a meeting was set up at the Senate building in our nation's capital to discuss this initiative. I was invited to attend but found myself facilitating that roundtable meeting which just so happened to take place one week after the 2016 US national elections.

I led a story circle, told some personal stories about peace, encouraging the group to tell theirs. The participants were people that came from different backgrounds, belief systems, faith and political affiliations. We all shared stories and found common ground. I remember walking away feeling as though it might have been some of the most important work I'd ever done.

Since that time, I've kept up with the progress on that initiative and I'm pleased to report that the initiative named in honor of Nobel Peace Prize winner and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel, was passed by both the House and Senate! The Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act received an overwhelming 367 to 4 vote and was signed into law by the President on January 14, 2019.

Building peace and preventing genocide should always be a cause that goes beyond political affiliation or nation. In the memory of everyone around the world who has died by genocide, we must try to come together to support prevention and peace efforts in any way we can. I'm grateful to have played even just a small role in this grassroots initiative, to not only save the lives of Americans but people around the world.

The Government

Strategies

Writing to Congress

Writing to your legislator can be an effective way of drawing attention to an urgent issue. E-mail is now the most efficient and inexpensive way to do this, and it eliminates the delays of traditional mail. In some cases, an in-person letter-writing campaign may be preferred as a fun, social way to boost the enthusiasm of a group doing advocacy work.Whether sending letters or e-mail, be sure to include your name and address at the top of your message. This helps staffers identify whether or not you are a constituent. Not sure which congressmen and women represent your area? Websites like the **Americans for the Arts Action Fund** will let you enter your zip code and connect with your representatives without even leaving the screen.

Key Points for Writing to Congress

• Know your issue and provide data if you have it available. State how it affects your organization directly.

• Identify the issue at stake within the heading/ first paragraph of your message.

• When working from a form letter, add your own "voice" wherever possible, as personalized letters are given higher priority by many congressional offices.

• If you are writing in support or opposition to specific legislation, name the measure's House or Senate bill number and/or title.

• If the legislation addresses your issue, but offers an incomplete solution, feel free to write with constructive alternatives or modifications (but be brief!)

• Keep your requests concise and reasonable.

• Cover only one issue per letter.

Continued on next page...

Strategies (Cont.)

Meeting with Legislators

Setting up the Meeting

The first thing you will want to do is make an appointment, either with the congressperson's DC office, or at a local branch. Ask to speak with the person who makes appointments. You will need to provide information about yourself, your organization, the topic you'd like to discuss, and a range of dates or times when you would be available

Some nonprofit groups work with a pro-bono lobbyist, who can arrange these meetings on their organization's behalf.

What to Expect

First-time visitors to a legislator's office will often meet with staff members, rather than the actual legislator. Staff members play a critical role in the office, and such meetings can be equally or even more productive. It is especially valuable to establish a good working relationship with staff if, for example, your organization plans to continue meeting with the office once or twice a year.

Key Points

• Keep it brief-meetings should not exceed 30 minutes. Aim for 10-15 minutes, leaving room for questions.

• Meet with staff. If the representative is not available, meeting with staff can be a terrific way to get your message through. Be gracious and appreciative of their time.

• Make specific, concrete points-they are easier to remember and share.

• Bring your unique perspective. Use real, personal anecdotes to explain how the legislator's action (or failure to act) would impact the individuals and organizations in your community.

• Clearly identify the action you are requesting.

• If you ask the legislator's position on the issue, and they are undecided, explain how you arrived at your position and ask them to inform you by mail or e-mail when they make a decision.

• Thank the legislator or staffer and leave them with your contact information.

Continued on next page...

Strategies (Cont.)

Writing Thank You Letters

Letter Template: After Meeting with Member of Congress

Letter Template: After Meeting with Congressional Staff

Email Template: After Meeting with Congressional Staff

Glossary of Legislative Terms

A familiarity with several key words and phrases will help you understand the landscape of public policy around your issue and communicate effectively about the issue with legislators.

Key Legislative Terms

Source: National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)

Appropriations Bill: A bill passed by Congress that provides the legal authority for spending U.S. Treasury funds. There are 12 regular annual appropriations bills, each one covering hundreds of programs or spending lines. In the Senate as well as in the House there is one Appropriations subcommittee for each of the 12 bills. In addition, Congress often passes a supplemental appropriations bill midway through the fiscal year.

Authorization Bill: A bill passed by Congress that provides authority for a program or agency to exist and sets guidelines for its policies and activities. The bill may recommend spending levels for programs, but they are not binding. Generally an authorization must be enacted before an appropriation is made for a program or agency, though there are exceptions. Most authorizations are multi-year, and subsequent versions are called reauthorizations.

Budget Resolution: An annual Congressional document that provides a broad framework within which Congress fits the 12 annual appropriations bills that fund the government, and in some cases sets reconciliation instructions. The Budget is not a law, but its assumptions and statements are a basis for future decisions, and its spending ceilings impose restrictions on the actions of Congressional committees.

Caseworker: The Caseworker is the staff member usually assigned to help with constituent requests, typically focused on helping to resolve problems constituents present in relation to federal agencies, e.g., Social Security and Medicare issues, veteran's benefits, passports, etc. There are often several Caseworkers in a congressional office

Continued on next page...

The Government

Glossary of Legislative Terms

Chief of Staff: The Chief of Staff reports directly to the member of Congress, and usually is responsible for evaluating the political outcome of various legislative proposals and constituent requests. He/she is also usually in charge of overall office operations, including the assignment of work and the supervision of key staff.

Cloture: A process for ending debate in the Senate. Senate rules permit unlimited debate, so the Senate does not vote on a bill if someone wants to keep debating it. The exception to this rule is that the Senate can close off debate by cloture, which requires 60 votes (out of 100) to pass. Since there is often a split between the two parties (along with some Independents), cloture is usually difficult to achieve. The House has no comparable provision for unlimited debate, and thus no cloture provision.

Conference Committee: A group of officially appointed Representatives and Senators that works out the differences between the versions of a given bill passed by the two chambers. Its leaders are the chairs and ranking minority members of the committees that wrote the bill in each chamber. Once agreed on, the conference committee report goes back to each chamber for final passage. Some conference committees leave much of the work to staff (who may "pre-conference" a bill before the conferees are appointed).

Continuing Resolution (CR): A bill passed by Congress as a stop-gap when the new fiscal year begins. The CR sets continued spending levels for a specified period of time if any regular appropriations bill has not been signed into law. Often the CR continues spending at the previous year's levels, though it may be at levels marked up by appropriations subcommittees.

Cosponsor: A Senator or Representative who formally lists his/her name as a supporter of another member's bill. Generally - but not always - done before mark-up.

Discretionary Spending: Government spending enacted by annual appropriations. A government agency cannot spend more than the total appropriated for a discretionary program in a given year. Discretionary spending is projected to make up about one-third of total FY12 federal spending of $3.8 trillion; about two-thirds of discretionary spending goes for security (military, homeland security and international) activities, while the remaining third is for all "domestic" programs. Domestic discretionary spending includes: education, community and economic development. transportation, housing, national parks, energy, etc.

Fiscal Year: The official year for the government runs from October 1 through September 30.

Continued on next page...

The Government

Glossary of Legislative Terms

Legislative Director, Legislative Assistant/Aide, Legislative Correspondent: The Legislative Director is usually the staff person who monitors the legislative schedule and makes recommendations regarding the pros and cons of particular issues. In most congressional offices there are several Legislative Assistants whose responsibilities are assigned based on particular expertise in specific areas. For example, depending on the responsibilities and interests of the member, an office may include a different Legislative Assistant for health issues, seniors issues, appropriations, etc. Legislative Correspondents are junior staffers, typically not directly responsible for specific issue areas, who support Legislative Assistants/ Aides and have responsibility for constituent communications.

Mandatory Spending: Sometimes called entitlement spending or nondiscretionary spending. These are government programs for which there is no annual spending ceiling. As events unfold and people qualify, the government spends the money needed. Although there are not many mandatory programs, they comprise over half of all federal spending. Major mandatory activities are Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security and interest on the debt. Spending on mandatory programs is noted in appropriations bills, but is not limited by those bills. Legislation that revises a mandatory program (e.g. Medicare) is an authorization for which there is no corresponding appropriation.

Mark-Up: A business meeting of a subcommittee or full committee to debate, amend and vote on a bill. A bill passed in a committee mark-up session can be scheduled for a vote in the full chamber.

Pay-As-You-Go (PAYGO): Budgeting rules that require that most new spending (including revenue reductions due to tax cuts) is offset by corresponding spending cuts or increased revenues. Congress can waive PAYGO rules, and the current statute defining the rules, the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, automatically exempts over 150 programs, funds and activities.

Reconciliation: A complicated part of the Congressional budget process that directs changes to already-existing legislation in order to cut spending. Because reconciliation bills are not subject to a 60-vote cloture requirement in the Senate, and thus can move forward with only 51 votes, reconciliation is sometimes favored as a vehicle for moving controversial changes. A reconciliation bill is subject to a Presidential veto.

Continued on next page...

The Government

Glossary of Legislative Terms

Scheduler or Appointment/Personal Secretary: The Scheduler is usually responsible for allocating a member's time among the manv demands that arise from congressional responsibilities, staff requirements, and constituent requests. He/she may also be responsible for making necessary travel arrangements, arranging speaking dates, coordinating visits to the district. etc.

Scoring: The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) analyzes every bill and determines the effective cost of the proposed legislation. The score that CBO gives a bill may shape its future, e.g. whether it will attract cosponsors and whether the relevant committee chairman will hold a mark up session.

Subcommittees and Committees: All members of Congress serve on committees. Every member of a subcommittee is also a member of the full committee to which the subcommittee reports. All committees and subcommittees are chaired by someone from the majority party in that chamber, and they all (with minor exceptions) have a majority of members from the majority party. The lead member from the minority party is designated the ranking member. Much important work (both mark-ups and hearings) is done in subcommittees, and everything done by a subcommittee goes next to the full committee for action.

Resources

Americans for the Arts Advocacy Resources: Includes a legislative issue center, an advocacy tool kit for the arts, facts and figures to use in advocacy, and a “take action now” section

Americans for the Arts Reports

Congressional Humanities Caucus

National Assembly State Arts Agencies Advocacy Resources: Includes federal updates and a set of tools for advocacy

Mass Media

Need for Advocacy

Never before have there been so many options, platforms, and outlets in the mass media for pushing the work of folklore beyond the ivory tower, niche audiences, and local interest groups to the broader public. Just like good fieldwork, success depends on building strong, mutually-beneficial relationships.

Strategies

Making Connections

• People working in the mass media—journalists, podcasters, bloggers, etc.—need new stories every day, so they can be as happy to work with you as the reverse. But don't wait until you have the perfect story. It's helpful to establish a relationship with reporters, writers, podcasters and bloggers ahead of time so the lines of communication are open and ready when the time comes.

• To help members of the media find you, **add your profile to the "Find an Expert"** database on the AFS website. When journalists come to our website looking for a source for a story, they can search this database and find you.

• Of course, journalists won't always know to come to the AFS website or look for a folklorist at all. Be proactive and add your profile to other sites as well where journalists regularly go looking for a source for all kinds of stories. Do your part to **advocate for the field**.

• Just as in all relationships, don't be a pest. If you overwhelm a reporter with information, they are less likely to reach out to you. If a reporter calls, texts, tweets or emails you, try to respond as quickly as possible. Their deadlines are often tight and a few hours can make the difference between inclusion and being ignored. As the old proverb goes, "The early bird gets the worm." For more tips on establishing relationships with local media, **click here**.

Continued on next page...

Strategies (Cont.)

Being Interviewed

Bad interviews are easy; good ones not so much. Here you'll find some strategies for giving interviews that result in you actually showing up in the story and being called on again for future stories.

Tips for Giving Good Interviews

• **Prepare:** Offering a clear, concise explanation of your topic takes time and preparation. Practice what you are going to say and how you are going to say it.

• **Speak for a General Audience:** Be relaxed, be polite and use accessible language. It is incredibly easy to fall into using jargon. Use analogies if your subject is complex. Have brief examples to illustrate your point.

• **Take Control of the Story:** Prepare before being interviewed. Know the central message of the publication, and what assumptions the reporter may bring to the table. Be ready to clarify any actual misconceptions that arise in the conversation.

• **Stay on Point:** Know your message and practice it. Commit it to memory, so you can share it easily and on the spot. You may find that a one-page **Message Map** can help you prepare quickly. You can also use the ABCs when a reporter asks you a question way off topic: Acknowledge the question, Bridge back to your Content (the message.) For example: "I think the real point is…" or "I think the important issue is…", etc.

• **Be Accurate—The Truth is on Your Side:** It's okay to say "I don't know that," or "I'll get back to you."

• **Be a Connector:** If the journalist asks you a question about a topic where you are not the expert, but you know someone who is, then refer the reporter to the better source.

• **Be Helpful:** Remember that while you are talking to the reporter, you are also talking through the reporter to reach your target audience. The more helpful you are, the more likely you are to be quoted in the story. And the more likely you are to be asked back for future interviews.

• **Be Brief:** Most print media interviews last about 20 minutes, and for radio and TV they can be much, much shorter; you might only get a quick quote or sound bite. So make sure you can state your message quickly and clearly. You can find more tips on how to be brief **here**.

• **Be on Time:** If you show up late, you risk being left out of the story.

• **Always Close With Your Key Message:** At the end of the interview, the reporter will say, "Thank you so much for your time. Do you have anything else to add?" The answer this is ALWAYS "yes." This opening gives you one more time to get your key message heard.

Continued on next page...

Strategies (Cont.)

Writing and Sharing Press Releases

Press releases remain an excellent way to get your story to the media. But journalists typically receive dozens of press releases daily. Crafting your story for a particular media outlet is crucial to getting it picked up.

Ideally, a press release will encourage a journalist to follow up with you to develop an even more thorough story, but don't count on it. You need to be brief, but complete. A press release should provide all the information a journalist needs to write a story. Include the basics—who, what, when, where, and why—but also include a few quotes and a colorful example or story.

Tip Sheet: Press Releases and Pitches

Before You Start: If you are at a university or sizable institution or agency, check with your public relations office and see what resources they can offer to help you connect with the media.

How to Write a Good Press Release:

- Choose your topic carefully. Journalists are looking for stories with the following characteristics:
    - Exclusive research (39%)
    - Breaking news (27%)
    - Emotional stories (15%)
    - Other (19%). Often, "content relevant to my audience"
- Grab attention with a strong headline
- Get straight to the point
- Be brief: no more than 400 words
- Add quotes to bring your story to life
- Add numbers to support your point if possible
- Proofread: Even a single grammatical error can send your press release to the trash bin
- Include links: your press release needs to be brief. So include links to additional information like your organization's homepage
- If you need to include photos, attach them, never embed them in the message.
- Include your contact information

Continued on next page...

Mass Media

Strategies (Cont.)

Writing and Sharing Press Releases (Cont.)

How to Distribute a Press Release

• Specifically target relevant publications and journalists. How do you find them?

- Go to Google and use search terms related to your topic and click the "News" tab at the top to narrow your results.
- Look for recent stories related to your topic and write down the outlet, the journalist's name, and their contact info (ideally an email). If the contact info isn't there, try a Google search for the writer or search Linked-In. You can also search Twitter.

• Develop a relationship with the media

- Once you have found relevant media outlets, take the time to get to know reporters who cover stories related to your work.
- 30% of journalists say it is very important or important to have a personal connection with the writer before pitching content. An additional 33% say it is moderately important. Only a third of journalists say it is of little or no importance.
- Problem: Most journalists also say they don't want to be called about a story, they just want the pitch. So consider email as a way to introduce yourself to a journalist before you want to pitch a story. An email that highlights the overlap between their beat and your work that doesn't require them to respond (though you should certainly invite them to) is a good way to start. Then, when it's time to pitch, you can reference your earlier email.

• Reach out through email: 92% of journalists prefer email for story pitches. Only 2% prefer the phone, 1% public pitch on social media, 1% private pitch on social media, and 4% "other."

Continued on next page...

Strategies (Cont.)

Writing and Sharing Press Releases (Cont.)

How to Pitch Your Story

• **Pitch your story:** Don't just send a press release. Pitch it with a brief, compelling intro tailored to journalist and their publication.

• **Write a Good Subject Line:** 85% of journalists decide whether or not to open an email based on the subject line. Make sure it is descriptive and fits their publication.

• **Get To the Point:** Your pitch should get straight to the point with a single sentence that captures your news and ask if they would like to cover it.

Examples:

- "I just published a book that explains how stories can help subvert stereotypes about the poor in the U.S.—would you be interested in covering this?
- "My organization is hosting a state-wide folk festival that I believe your readers will want to attend."
- "For the first time ever, folk weavers from Ghana will be in our town sharing their art and culture—it's an event your readers won't want to miss."

• **Significance:** Follow up with a few sentences to clarify exactly what is new and significant about your work, but keep it short. 88% of journalists want to be pitched in 200 words or less (45% of those journalists prefer 100 words or less).

• **The Press Release:** Then add a line spacer and cut and paste your press release into the body of the email message. Do not send the press release as an attachment. Journalists do not like opening attachments for fear of viruses and malware.

• **Send Your Pitch in the Morning on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday:** Mornings ensure your message is at the top of their inbox. Tuesday is often when folks are putting together special interest stories for weekend publications, where stories related to folklore are likely to appear. Friday is often too late for anything but breaking news.

• **Additional Tips:** Includes 300 responses from the top media outlets in the US and UK responding to the Q: "If you could give 1-3 points of feedback to people who pitch you, what would you say?"

Continued on next page...

Strategies (Cont.)

Writing Letters to the Editor

Press releases remain an excellent way to get your story to the media. But journalists typically receive Writing to your local newspaper can be an effective way to draw attention to a local issue. Letters to the editor are shown to be among the most-read sections of a newspaper, and are often read by government officials to get a "pulse" on public sentiment in an area.

When writing to a newspaper, keep in mind the average length of letters published in that outlet. Many prefer short letters (around 100 words) which respond to recently-published news articles or other editorials.

Although relatively small, these letters can make a big impact especially when paired with good story-telling. Including your personal experiences, interests, and ideas can help personalize the letter. Identify any clear solutions or actions to be taken in response to the issue at hand.

Keep in mind that, as with any publication, some newspapers receive many more submissions than they are able to publish. If your letter isn't accepted, feel free to adapt it for another publication or platform. Letters to the editor can make great inspiration for personal or community blog posts.

Writing Op-Eds

Op-eds offer folklorists a chance to weigh in on important issues that can be informed by the work we do. The general rules of writing for the mass media apply here, including ensuring that our writing is clear, jargon-free, brief, makes a clear point, and offers evidence to support our claims.

Before writing an op-ed, consider the following:

- Is the topic relevant and timely?
- Do I have something new and useful to say?
- Why should people listen to me? What roles, identities, or expertise do I have that would make an audience trust me on this issue?
- What is my distinctive voice? As opinion pieces, op-eds need to establish themselves not as the authority, but certainly an authority. "But the range of voice used in columns can be wide: contemplative, conversational, descriptive, experienced, informative, informed, intro spective, observant, plaintive, reportorial, self-effacing, sophisticated, humorous, among many other possibilities" **(Harvard Kennedy School of Government)**.

Continued on next page...

Strategies (Cont.)

Writing Op-Eds (Cont.)

When writing, be sure to hook the reader from the start. The folks at the Op-Ed Project suggest:

- Reference a recent news story
- Tie into a recent anniversary
- Cite a major new study
- Tell a dramatic anecdote
- Tell a personal anecdote
- Reference popular culture
- Turn conventional wisdom on its head
- Use with and iron to point out a contradiction

Writing Research Stories

With the increase in online content, there are more and more opportunities for folklorists to write about their research for a general audience. Rather than convince a journalist to write a story about your work, you can write the story yourself. It is more work to be sure, but you have much more control over the story.

The Conversation is one example of an organization that helps researchers get their work out to the public while offering media outlets free content. Scholars pitch an idea to staff at The Conversation, and if they are interested, they assign an editor to work with you to craft your story. Once your article is published on The Conversation website, media outlets around the country can pick it up and include it in their own publications.

Mass Media

Resources

Being Interviewed

News Media Interviews from Crystal Clear Communications

Press Releases

Writing Press Releases about Research:

How to Write a Viral Press Release on Academic Research
Identifying the Right Format

Writing Press Releases about Events and Organizations:

How to Write a Non-Profit Press Release
11 Tips for Making Nonprofit Press Releases Social and
Shareable Sample Press Release for Nonprofit

Letters to the Editor

National Council on Aging "Leveraging Media"

Op-Eds

Harvard Kennedy School of Government - Useful Tips on Writing Op-Eds

The Op-Ed Project : A terrific resource for anyone looking to strengthen their op-ed writing. It provides tips on op-ed writing, suggestions about basic op-ed structure, guidelines on how to pitch op-ed pieces to publications, and information about top outlets that publish op-eds. Started as an effort to increase the number of women op-ed writers, The Op-Ed Project also regularly runs daylong seminars around the country. We encourage you to start at **Op-Ed Basics**

How to Write an Op-Ed Article: Prepared by David Jarmul, Duke's associate vice president for news and communications, provides great guidelines on how to write a successful op-ed.

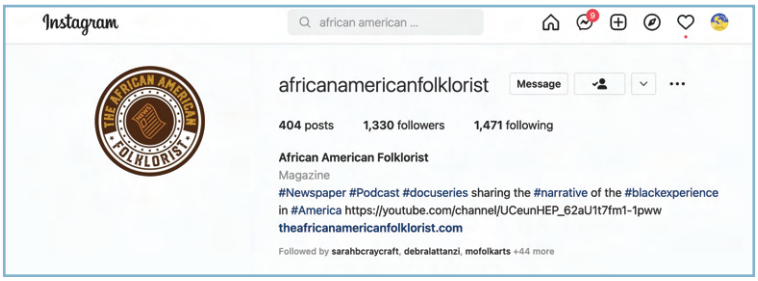
How to Write Op-Ed Columns: Prepared by The Earth Institute at Columbia University, is another useful guide to writing op-eds. It contains a useful list of op-ed guidelines for top-circulation newspapers in the U.S.

And Now a Word from Op-Ed: Offers some advice on how to think about and write op-eds from the Op-Ed editor of The New York Times.

Social Media

Need for Advocacy

Social media has always been a great way to reach niche audiences, but as reporters increasingly use social media to find stories, social media platforms have become important communication tools no matter the size or nature of the group. To advocate effectively, consider using social media like Twitter, You Tube, Instagram, Facebook and others to reach out when you are advocating.



*Instagram Account for **African American Folklorist***

Strategies

Social media platforms offer a convenient and adaptable way for folklore organizations to connect with audiences. regardless of how large or small that audience may be. Many provide built-in analytics that let organizations track the growth of their audience, identify the best time of day to connect with followers, and learn which category of posts (photographs, links, etc.) are most successful.

Though posting on social media may be relatively easy and fast, the organization's "voice" should always be considered. A nonprofit is responsible for the content under its editorial control, and even indirect actions ("liking" the photo of an external organization or person, sharing or retweeting external content. responding to comments. etc.) factor in this. Messages that are polarizing in nature can harm the organization's ability to facilitate dialogue, or possibly threaten the group's nonprofit standing. To effectively advocate through social media, it can help to establish ahead of time what the tone of the organization will be going forward, and to maintain that consistently. (Center for Media Justice "The Digital Culture Shift," BolderAdvocacy "Legal Tips On Using Social Media For Advocacy")

Continued on next page...

Strategies (Cont.)

Getting Started with Twitter

At the 2020 Annual Meeting of the American Folklore Society, folklorists Andrea Kitta and Virginia Siegel hosted a workshop that introduced attendees to the world of Twitter, the social media platform that has become the digital communications tool of choice for everyone from scholars to pop stars to, yes, high-profile politicians. In their presentation, which you can watch on the **AFS YouTube channel**, Kitta and Siegel walked attendees through the process of setting up a Twitter account and demonstrated how to best leverage the platform to gain visibility for projects, programs, and other relevant work. Here, we've provided a downloadable .pdf version of the workshop presentation.

Case Study: Getting Digital with Folkwise

Folkwise *brings together a community of folklorists to leverage social media and outreach through an infor-mal educational model, seeking to engage with audi-ences at every level. COVID-19 foregrounded the importance of community building and formation through digital spaces. As digital natives working to build stronger communities online, they took the com-munity creation into our own hands.*

The establishment of a weekly virtual Folklore Happy Hour allowed folklorists to build closer friendships and working relationships beyond AFS. They met weekly for months over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. The closeness formed in these digital gathering spaces compelled them to create some-thing the field at large had been missing: multimedia outreach projects focused on folklore and the cele-bration of everyday culture we experience online.

Continued on next page...

Social Media

Case Study: Getting Digital with Folkwise (Cont.)

Their digital projects are more important than ever for communicating to diverse audiences because of the shifting understandings of community potential on the internet across generations. The Folkwise Team wanted to combine their skills as internet-literate folklorists to build an educational platform to discuss the field of folklore in ways that speak to audiences where they are at. What started as a YouTube channel and social media presence, morphed into a dedicated Twitch stream and weekly show, which built community among diverse viewers.

Simultaneously, they developed an accessible community through their Discord server to share information, host discussions, and organize their video streams. They made memes to explain folklore concepts, videos about their research, and most recently moved towards a live streaming model, where the video platform Twitch has allowed them to form public-access style folklore-based educational content. While the projects are engaging and entertaining, they also provide a platform for folklorists to share their research interests to new audiences, build the field's visibility, and present an alternative to academic venues for discussions surrounding folklore.

Folkwise Values

• **Accessibility:** Removing barriers to make engagement with folklore scholarship more accessible to a general audience. This includes creating content in spaces with audiences not traditionally reached by academia, creating content with universal design in mind, and eliminating financial barriers.

• **Visibility:** Meeting audiences where they are through consistent engagement across digital media platforms, such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, YouTube, Discord, and Twitch. Folkwise also promotes other folklore organizations and projects through these accounts, helping existing projects shine online.

• **Community:** Providing a platform to highlight the work of folklore colleagues and community members, supporting them through their journey engaging folklore. They share non-traditional opportunities for professional development in folklore beyond conferences and classroom guest-lectures.

• **Public Education:** Creating a "knowledge commons" to share folklore to the widest possible audiences online. Folkwise decenters academic and other established institutions as a realm for these conversations.

Continued on next page...

Social Media

Case Study: Getting Digital with Folkwise (Cont.)

The Folkwise Team is made up of folklorists from a variety of affiliations and backgrounds, and the only requirement to participate is a love of folklore. We collaborate with individuals who have a vested interest in folklore across the world, from professional folklorists, to artists, to folklore enthusiasts. Our efforts are publicly available and accessible online indefinitely, and are funded at the grassroots level by some of our viewers through Patreon and Twitch Subscrip-tions. We are developing a community of supporters who have the opportunity to participate in the growth of that community and Folkwise.

Folkwise is opening the gates of opportunity for individuals interested in folklore to connect across time and space–decentering institutional knowledge to create a new model for sharing folklore content and scholarship online. We hope you'll join us on our platforms and help our community grow.

Folkwise Team Members (alphabetical): Daisy Ahlstone, Kerry Kaleba, Sam Kendrick, Kaitlyn Kinney, Caroline Miller, Dr. Anna Morel, Jared L. Schmidt, Shirley Shields, Dr. Dominick Tartaglia, David Tauber, Christine J. Widmayer

Find Folkwise Across Social Media

Resources

Online Organizing Guide by Green Memes: A pdf with effective ways to use social media for community organizing.

Make a Plan...

Once you know who or what you want to advocate for, it's time to figure out how to reach out to the **government** and the **mass media** and how to leverage tools, such as **social media** to get your message to the right audience. Finding the right people to help is crucial to effective advocacy.

Steps for Advocacy

1. Identify the type of advocacy you want to conduct: (e.g. support important initiatives in local community, fight against regressive legislation, get a new hire for a folklorist in your academic department, publicize a new program, event, or book, etc.)

2. Determine key audiences: (e.g. legislators, journalists, podcasters and bloggers, the general public, co-workers and colleagues, etc.)

3. Assess what those audiences currently know or believe: (e.g. What has press been publishing on the topic? What have politicians said on the issue? What do strategic plans at organizations and universities reveal about related priorities? What can a web search reveal?)

4. Establish measurable objectives for each audience: (e.g. Legislators will approve a particular bill, institutions will apportion funds and space for an event, your program or research project will be written up in local media, the job ad will be rewritten to exclude language that requires a PhD in English or Anthropology)

5. Gather data to make your case: (e.g. comparative data from similar projects, quotes from stakeholders about the importance of the work, testimonials from local leaders or scholars)

6. Define a message for each audience: While a consistent message can be highly effective, tailoring your message to a particular audience is always a good practice (e.g. significance of folklore scholarship to the Arts and Sciences, importance of the preservation and exhibition of folk arts to local legislators, relevance of folklore in the modern world on a podcast).

7. Use the most appropriate medium for reaching your audience: (e.g. journalists may prefer email pitches, politicians may prefer phone calls, university deans may prefer a white paper or face to face meetings, constituents might prefer town hall meetings)

8. Determine the communication activities to deliver your message: Tweet about your upcoming program, pitch a story to a local media outlet, write an op-ed for a regional paper, email a mailing list of supporters, call your legislators, etc.

9. Decide what resources are needed to complete each activity: (e.g. time to develop materials, additional people with specific skill sets like design or tech skills, budget for printing, transportation)

10. Establish a timeline and responsible party for each activity: Deadlines are key but consider adding benchmarks along the way to chart progress.

11. Evaluate whether you have reached your objectives: Track your goals and progress; goals reached are useful data for future initiatives.

Resources

The Advocacy Action Plan Workbook: Created by the American Library Association, this is an easily adapted workbook to help you develop a clear and robust advocacy plan.

Campaign Canvas: From vision and strategy to storytelling and metrics, the canvas ensures you've touched on all the essentials of an effective campaign.

Six Elements of Open Campaigns: This worksheet outlines the many ways in which a campaign can be opened up for wider ownership, leadership and participation.

The Mobilisation Integration Toolkit: To win big, teams need to work seamlessly together. Take a look at systems and tools used by Greenpeace offices around the world.

Council of Nonprofits Everyday Advocacy Resources: Includes toolkits and case studies of advocacy efforts by Nonprofits.

Download this Toolkit

Download this Toolkit as a PDF

View this Toolkit in Webpage Format

Appendix A

Complete List of Resources

ADVOCATE AS FOLKLORISTS

Advancing Folkloristics. 2021. Edited by Jesse Fivecoate, Kristina Downs, and Meredith A. E. McGriff. Indiana University Press.

What Folklorists Do: Professional Possibilities in Folklore Studies. 2021. Edited by Timothy Lloyd. Indiana University Press.

ADVOCATE AS PUBLIC FOLKLORISTS IN NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

General Resources

Americans for the Arts State Arts Action Network

Americans for the Arts Advocacy Hub

The Advocacy Capacity Tool (ACT): A self-assessment tool that nonprofit organizations, coalitions, and groups can use to assess their current capacity – or readiness – to engage in advocacy efforts.

Virtual Advocacy

American Folklore Society U.S. Public Folklore List: Students and community scholars in search of funding for public folklore projects can find a list of state folklore agencies here.

Funding Resources for Organizations

NEH Museums, Libraries, and Cultural Organizations. **NEHGrantsPublicHumanities** Planning grants are used to refine the content, format, and interpretive approach of a humanities project; develop the project's preliminary design; test project components; and conduct audience evaluation.

NEH Digital Projects for the Public: These grants support projects that significantly contribute to the public's engagement with the humanities using digital platforms.

...Continued on next page

Appendix A

Complete List of Resources (Cont.)

ADVOCATE AS ACADEMIC FOLKLORISTS IN HIGHER ED

Alan Lomax Fellowship in Folklife Studies The John W. Kluge Center at the Library of Congress offers a post-doctoral fellowship for advanced research based on the Alan Lomax Collection.

NEA Folk and Traditional Arts Funding The NEA offers several grant opportunities for individuals and organizations.

NEH Museums. Libraries. and Cultural Organizations: Planning Grants Planning grants are used to refine the content, format, and interpretive approach of a humanities project, develop the project's preliminary design; test project components; and conduct audience evaluation.

NEH Museums. Libraries. and Cultural Organizations: Implementation Grants Implementation grants are for projects in the final stages of preparation to "go live" before the public. Grants support final scholarly research and consultation, design development, production, and installation of a project for presentation to the public.

Bayou Culture Collaborative

ADVOCATE AS INDEPENDENT FOLKLORISTS OR CULTURAL PRACTITIONERS

AFS Public Folklore List Students and community scholars in search of funding for public folklore projects can find a list of state folklore agencies here. To contact folklorists working at the state level for information about potential contract work and for projects which may involve community scholars, see the https://americanfolkloresociety.org/our-community/sections/-public-programs/ section of the American Folklore Society.

NEA National Heritage Fellowship The NEA National Heritage Fellowships recognize the recipients' artistic excellence and support their continuing contributions to our nation's traditional arts heritage.

...Continued on next page

Appendix A

Complete List of Resources (Cont.)

ADVOCATE AS INDEPENDENT FOLKLORISTS OR CULTURAL PRACTITIONER (CONT.)

NEH Summer Stipend Summer Stipends support individuals pursuing advanced research that is of value to humanities scholars, general audiences, or both. The stipend covers two months of continuous, full-time work and often results in the publication of articles, books, or other scholarly resources.

NEH Public Scholar Program The Public Scholar program aims to encourage scholarship that will be of broad interest and have lasting impact.

The National Coalition of Independent Scholars A number of resources applicable to independent folklorists, including this list of up-to-date funding opportunities.

Henry Reed Fund The Henry Reed Fund was established to provide support for activities directly involving folk artists, especially when the activities reflect, draw upon, or strengthen the collections of the American Folklife Center.

...Continued on next page

Appendix A

Complete List of Resources (Cont.)

REACH OUT TO THE GOVERNMENT...

Americans for the Arts Advocacy Resources: Includes a legislative issue center, an advocacy tool kit for the arts, facts and figures to use in advocacy, and a "take action now" section

Americans for the Arts Reports

Congressional Humanities Caucus

National Assembly State Arts Agencies Advocacy Resources: Includes federal updates and a set of tools for advocacy

Glossary of Legislative Terms

REACH OUT TO MASS MEDIA

Being Interviewed

News Media Interviews from Crystal Clear Communications

Press Releases

Writing press releases about research:

- **How to write a viral press release on academic research**
- **Identifying the right format**

Writing press releases about events and organizations:

- **How to Write a Non-Profit Press Release**
- **11 Tips for Making Nonprofit Press Releases Social and Shareable Sample Press Release for Nonprofit**

...Continued on next page

Appendix A

Complete List of Resources (Cont.)

REACH OUT TO MASS MEDIA (CONT.)

Letters to the Editor

NCOA "Leveraging Media"

Op-Eds

Harvard Kennedy School of Government Useful Tips on Writing Op-Eds

The Op-Ed Project: A terrific resource for anyone looking to strengthen their op-ed writing. It provides tips on op-ed writing, suggestions about basic op-ed structure, guidelines on how to pitch op-ed pieces to publications, and information about top outlets that publish op-eds. Started as an effort to increase the number of women op-ed writers, The Op-Ed Project also regularly runs daylong seminars around the country. We encourage you to start at **Op-Ed Basics**

How to Write an Op-Ed Article: Prepared by David Jarmul, Duke's associate vice president for news and communications, provides great guidelines on how to write a successful op-ed.

How to Write Op-Ed Columns: Prepared by The Earth Institute at Columbia University, is another useful guide to writing op-eds. It contains a useful list of op-ed guidelines for top-circulation newspapers in the U.S.

And Now a Word from Op-Ed: Offers some advice on how to think about and write op-eds from the Op-Ed editor of The New York Times.

Research Stories

The Conversation

REACH OUT TO SOCIAL MEDIA

Online Organizing Guide by Green Memes: A pdf with effective ways to use social media for community organizing.

...Continued on next page

Appendix A

Complete List of Resources (Cont.)

STEPS FOR ADVOCACY

The Advocacy Action Plan Workbook: Created by the American Library Association, this is an easily adapted workbook to help you develop a clear and robust advocacy plan.

Campaign Canvas: From vision and strategy to storytelling and metrics, the canvas ensures you've touched on all the essentials of an effective campaign.

Six Elements of Open Campaigns: This worksheet outlines the many ways in which a campaign can be opened up for wider ownership, leadership and participation.

The Mobilisation Integration Toolkit: To win big, teams need to work seamlessly together. Take a look at systems and tools used by Greenpeace offices around the world.

Council Of Nonprofits Everyday Advocacy Resources: Includes toolkits and case studies of advocacy efforts by Non-profits.

Appendix B

Complete List of Case Studies

ADVOCATE AS FOLKLORISTS

Why Am I a Folklorist? - Norma Elia Cantú explains why she is a folklorist

ADVOCATE AS PUBLIC FOLKLORISTS IN NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Saving The Folk Arts at the State and National Level - Robert Baron, who teaches in the Master's Program in Cultural Sustainability at Goucher College describes how folklorists banded together over the years to save the New York Folk Arts Coordinator position, the American Folklife Center, and the NEA Heritage Awards.

Advocating for the Nevada Humanities Council - Christina Barr, executive director for the Nevada Humanities Council, describes responding to a drastic reduction in funding and the need for relationship building and information sharing ahead of crisis situations.

ADVOCATE AS ACADEMIC FOLKLORISTS IN HIGHER ED

Getting Universities to Host Academic Journals - Lisa Gilman and Deb Shutika, folklore faculty at George Mason University, describe how they were able to get the support they needed to host the Journal of American Folklore in 2019.

Creating a Course-based Collaborative Research Project - Tom Mould describes the creation of a collaborative research project that brought community members, program leaders, and students together to study the personal experience narratives and legends about poverty and welfare in the U.S. in order to help dispel the stereotypes and stigma around these programs and people.

ADVOCATE AS INDEPENDENT FOLKLORISTS AND CULTURAL PRACTITIONERS

Advocating for Indigenous Peoples, Collaborative Methodologies, and Sustainable Archives - Amber Ridington, independent folklorist with a specialty in digital humanities based in Vancouver, BC. describes her work with First Nations communities and the many strategies she has developed to advocate for ethical approaches to fieldwork, data collection, and data sharing.

Continued on next page...

Appendix B

Complete List of Case Studies (Cont.)

ADVOCATE FOR AND WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Telling Stories that Change the World - Kiran Singh Sirah, president of the International Storytelling Center, talks about how to tell stories that change the world to make the case for storytelling and folklore.

ADVOCATE FOR AND WITH FOLKLORE AND COMMUNITY ARTS PROGRAMS, AGENCIES, AND DEPARTMENTS

Raising Money for Underserved Audiences - The Committee on Responsive Philanthropy's campaign, Philanthropy's Promise, has persuaded over 100 funders to designate at least half of their grant dollars for underserved communities.

Saving National Heritage Fellowships - In 2011, folklorists advocated against a proposal to eliminate the NEA's National Heritage Fellowships.

ADVOCATE FOR AND WITH RECENT RESEARCH, PROJECTS, AND EXHIBITS

Riding the Coattails of Conspiracy - In 2020, folklorist Tim Tangherlini and his collaborators published an article on how narrative frameworks could help people distinguish between conspiracy theories and real conspiracies.

REACH OUT TO THE GOVERNEMENT

Conflict Prevention Act Advocacy - Kiran Singh Sirah, folklorist, poet and president of the International Storytelling Center, talks about creating community through stories, the ability of story to transcend petty politics and connect us to what is essential.

REACH OUT TO SOCIAL MEDIAL

Getting Digital with Folkwise - Folkwise brings together a community of folklorists to leverage social media and outreach through an informal educational model, seeking to engage with audi-ences at every level.

Share Your News and Advocacy

We love hearing about folklore-related news, projects, programs, and events happening around the world. Share your news for AFS to post on our website and social media channels.

All submissions will be reviewed by AFS staff before posting. We will contact you if we need further information. Just be sure to fill out the submission form completely to ensure that we have everything we need to get your information out there.

Go here to share your news:
https://americanfolkloresociety.org/news/share-your-news/

AMERICAN FOLKLORE SOCIETY