

PLAN FOR THE

# Oregon Folklife Network

PREPARED BY BILL FLOOD



OREGON ARTS  
COMMISSION

“Do you remember a time someone taught you how to do something that seemed impossible – to tie your own shoes ... to apply for a job ... to survive a deep grief? Do you remember watching your own hands, awkward at first, but then with a smoother motion, achieve a trick like holding a baby, or making a gift of wood or cloth, or completing a tax return? Almost everyone takes a driving test, but maybe not everyone learns a new way to travel by singing a song, or sewing a bouquet made of beads. Yet each in our own way, we live these miracles, learning how to pass from one chapter of life into another. Sometimes the passage is invisible, leaving no trace. But other times, there is a tool, a story, a garment, or some other lasting souvenir of this passage. Where are yours?”

– JOANNE MULCAHY & KIM STAFFORD,  
MASTERS OF CEREMONY EXHIBIT, OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, 1997

**Oregon Folklife Stakeholders who participated in the planning sessions:**

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Shannon Planchon, Assistant Director  
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**University of Oregon**

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**Northwest Writing Institute/Lewis and Clark College**

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Kyle Jansson, Coordinator, Oregon Heritage Commission  
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Lillian Pitt, artist and member, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs  
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Willie Smythe, Folk Arts Program Manager, Washington State Arts Commission  
Cara Ungar-Gutierrez, Executive Director, Oregon Humanities  
Elizabeth Woody, artist and writer and Board Secretary, Native Arts and Cultures Foundation, Vancouver, WA

**Our great appreciation goes to the folklorists and writers who have provided such excellent work within Oregon's statewide folklore programs:**

Leila Childs	Joanne Mulcahy	Steve Siporin
Suzi Jones	Nancy Nusz	Kim Stafford
Laura Marcus	Gabriella Ricciardi	Carol Spellman

Many thanks to Milo Petroziello and Deidre Schuetz, graduate students in the University of Oregon Arts Administration program who provided valuable research to inform the folklife strategic planning process



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“The creative expression of Columbia River Plateau peoples produced masterworks that we see in museum collections around the world. What is not known is these works often were traded for equally crafted works, currency of the times and food stores throughout the seasons, and were active pieces, not heirlooms stored away, but used. A trade network went throughout the hemisphere, towards Russia, and to the Pacific Islands, connecting hub after hub. It was part of the technology of the peoples, to properly store items, as it was part of the legacy, as the items were mnemonic in content for the maker to tell its recipient of meanings, and its significance. The sculptural works of the Columbia River Plateau peoples are considered the finest and richest of the Americas and we have those people working in these areas today.”

— ELIZABETH WOODY, ARTIST AND WRITER  
AND BOARD SECRETARY, NATIVE ARTS AND  
CULTURES FOUNDATION, VANCOUVER, WA



Miracle Theatre's *Posada Milagro*, 2007. Photo: Stephanie Davis

“The dandelion (el dienta de leon) is born with only one root, which gets bigger and bigger, and that to me is very, very important in culture, because I advocate that our root, our culture gets bigger and better instead of smaller. That makes us a better mother or father, a better friend, a better everything.”

— EVA CASTELLONOS, FOLK ARTIST AND CURANDERA/HEALER FROM NYSSA, OREGON,  
SPEAKING AT THE 1998 OREGON ARTS AND CULTURE SUMMIT



# Executive Summary

## Statement of Purpose

From 1977 to 2009 statewide services supporting folklife and traditional arts in Oregon were provided under the aegis of several organizations, first through the Oregon Arts Commission, subsequently Lewis and Clark College, and finally the Oregon Historical Society. The Oregon Folklife Program, within the Oregon Historical Society, ceased program operations in June 2009, due to financial difficulties. Despite its financial struggles, the Oregon Folklife Program was known for its professional folklorists and offerings of high quality programs and services across the state.

With the collapse of the Oregon Folklife Program, this planning process was undertaken to consider new and sustainable systems for providing folklife services in Oregon. Services should be accessible to all parts of the state and by all Oregonians, being especially mindful of the history and contributions of tribal cultures. This new folklife support system must be innovative in knitting together Oregon's folklife stakeholders and folklife assets, current in its approach, and demonstrate clear strategies for sustainable financial support. It must build support for folklife and develop an institutional base in a way that the former iterations of the program were not able to accomplish.

## Planning Process

In fall 2009, the Oregon Arts Commission contracted with community cultural development consultant Bill Flood to facilitate this planning process. Central to this work has been the stakeholders listed in the inside cover of this report - persons representing cultural organizations who are knowledgeable and passionate about folklife. Stakeholders in fact went beyond their role of advisors on the plan elements to organizers around their preferred strategy - the development of the Oregon Folklife Network, conceived as being localized at University of Oregon, drawing on faculty expertise in both the Folklore and Arts and Administration programs, and supported by the assets of the Knight Library, the Museum of Natural and Cultural History, and the Northwest Many Nations Longhouse.

The specific goals of this planning process have been to develop:

- an inventory of current folklife and folks arts programs and assets;
- recommendations to sustain and stabilize folklife programs in Oregon for the short-term and long-term; and,
- processes to integrate folk arts efforts more actively and fully with the Oregon Arts Commission's on-going community development work and into the programs and activities of other agencies.



Gerald Skelton demonstrates basketry techniques to youth of the Klamath Tribe.

This plan includes data from:

- research on other statewide, regional, national folklife systems and interviews with staff;
- the review of strategic plans from state arts agencies;
- three facilitated stakeholder planning sessions;
- interviews with key Oregon stakeholders, including former staff of the Oregon Folklife Program of the Oregon Historical Society;
- comments from the Oregon Arts Commission's arts services and arts learning networks and Oregon Heritage Commission's network.

### **Key Recommendation: The Oregon Folklife Network**

Stakeholders involved in this planning process envisioned a new model for the delivery of folklife services through a newly created Oregon Folklife Network. The proposed network is a coalition of organizations and constituents sharing an investment in Oregon folklife. Oregonians are at the heart of the Folklife Network and Oregon's cultural assets are represented throughout (see Appendix B, Cultural Asset Inventory).

The essential principle of the Network is the effective utilization of the resources and strengths unique to each partner while reciprocally adding value to the Network partners. Partners will fund or otherwise contribute resources to the Network as well as receive benefits. Active engagement by partners and strong coordination/facilitation of the Network are seen as keys to success.

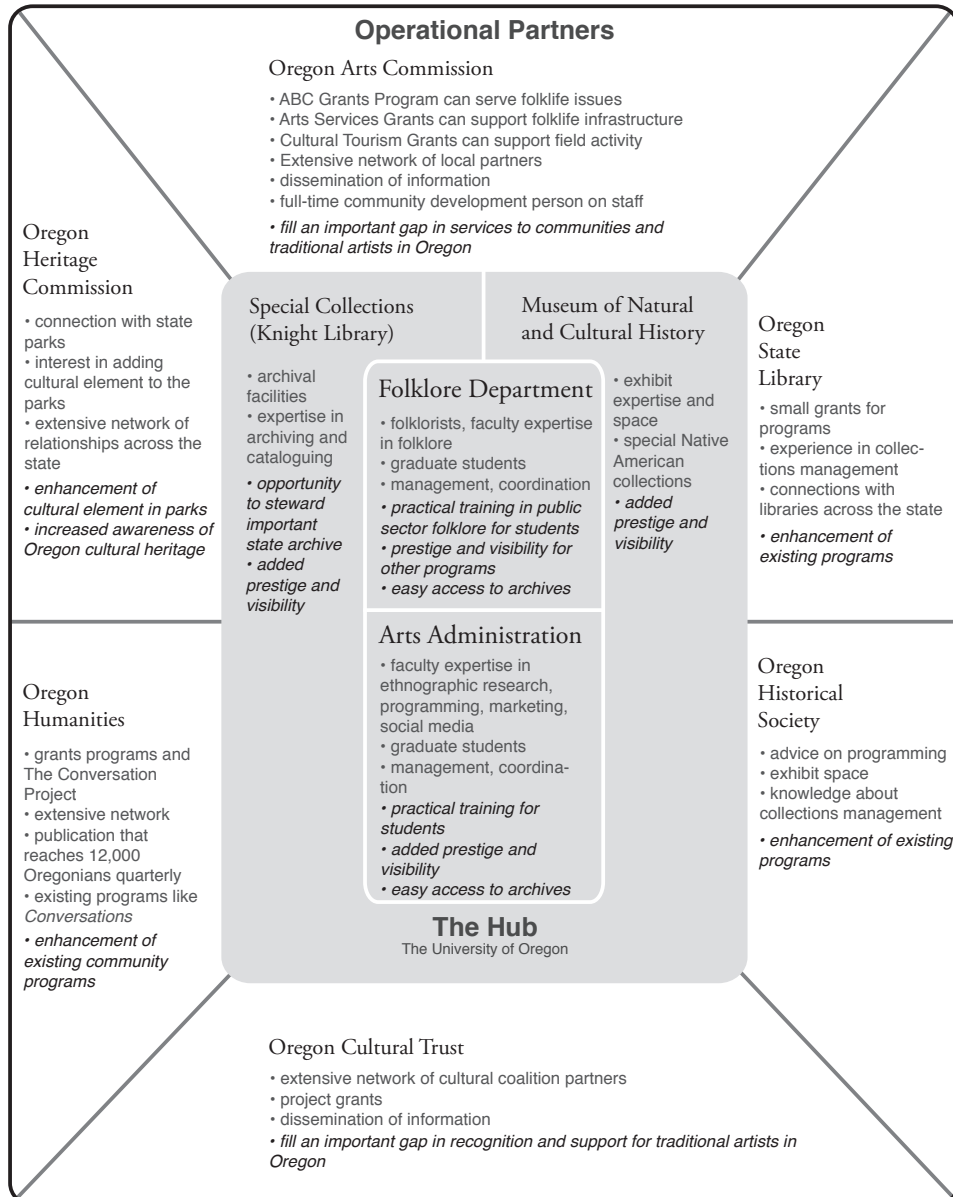
The following goals developed during this planning process are offered to lead the Oregon Folklife Network (see Goals and Action Steps for expanded goals).

1. Create public value around folklife and traditional arts.
2. Focus on sustainability of the Oregon Folklife Network.
3. Document, preserve, archive our cultural assets so they are not lost.
4. Develop phased process for program development.
5. Be relevant, current, entrepreneurial in approach

The diagrams that follow illustrate the proposed structure of the Oregon Folklife Network and an assessment of what each Network Operational Partner brings to the Network and what each might gain from participation in it.

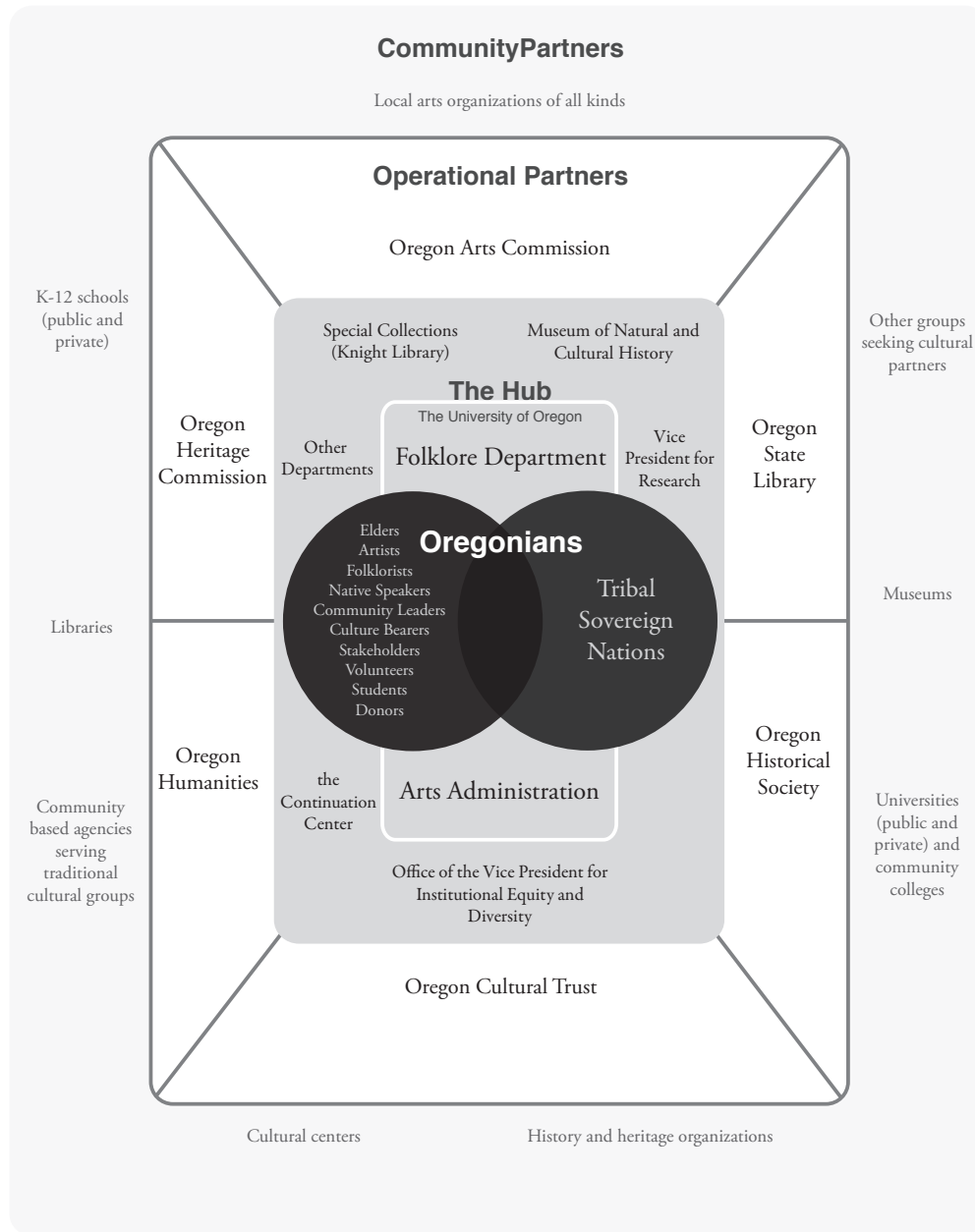
**The mission of the Oregon Folklife Network is to make a meaningful difference in Oregon communities and Tribes by documenting, supporting, and celebrating our diverse cultural traditions and by empowering our tradition-bearers.**

## The Oregon Folklife Network Operational Partners: Resources Contributed and Value Added



Key: Resources Contributed | *Value Added*

## The Oregon Folklife Network





# The Oregon Folklife Network: Structure and Next Steps

## Coordination

Stakeholders explored five basic options for coordination of the Network:

- 1) University of Oregon serves as hub/coordinator/manager of the Network. This is the preferred option, provided that the University demonstrates institutional leadership, the capacity for program development and management, and ensures financial support.
- 2) Develop a new 501 (c)(3) organization (e.g., Friends of Oregon Folklife), or work with an existing private non-profit organization to develop funding base. Stakeholders feel that developing a new 501 (c)(3) is risky at this time, primarily due to reluctance of potential funders in launching and sustaining a new stand-alone organization.
- 3) Initiate the Network at University of Oregon (#1 above) and develop the 501 (c)(3) organization (#2 above) to raise individual/member donations and write for grants.
- 4) The Oregon Arts Commission or Oregon Heritage Commission could potentially host the Network. However, both organizations find it difficult, if not impossible, to gain legislative approval to fund new staff positions. It is possible for this option to work on a temporary basis, if needed. Note also that the Heritage Commission's primary funding source (Oregon Lottery) may not be able to be used for this purpose.
- 5) Initiate and build the Network with option #1 or #4 above, but eventually spin it off as a separate 501 (c)(3) organization.



School children visit the Lan Su Chinese Garden in Portland.

Ultimately, the stakeholders meetings and the SWOT analysis led to a recommendation that the University of Oregon Folklore Program host/coordinate the Network, in cooperation and coordination with the University of Oregon Arts and Administration Program, Knight Library Special Collections, and Museum of Natural and Cultural History.

Through this program matrix the University of Oregon offers:

- a demonstrated interest in and commitment to folklife;
- faculty and graduate students in both folklore and arts administration;
- faculty expertise in ethnographic research, programming, marketing, social media, event planning, exhibition development, and public programming;
- archival facilities and expertise in cataloging;
- existing folklore archives;
- exhibition space and expertise in exhibit planning and management;

- administrative resources that can initially help in launching the new Network; and,
- strong interest and experience in program evaluation and assessment.

In order for the Folklife Network to succeed, the University of Oregon should demonstrate commitment in the following areas:

- Institutional leadership. Will top-level leadership (deans, provost, president) make a long-term commitment to the Network?
- Fund development. Will the University of Oregon Foundation support the Oregon Folklife Network or be a roadblock to its success?
- Integration with academic departments. Can the Network be successfully integrated with academic departments to ensure long-term sustainability?
- Maintaining a statewide Network. How can the university develop and coordinate the operations of the Network statewide?

A corollary discussion in stakeholder planning meetings concerned the best physical location for this program. There are advantages to basing the program in Portland as it is the commercial and cultural activity center of Oregon and home to many newcomers to Oregon. However, it is also quite possible that basing the program in Eugene could create greater opportunities to serve the entire state. If the Network is based in Eugene, the University of Oregon should utilize its resources and facilities at other locations including Portland and Bend.

## **Leadership**

Developing leadership and advocates for folklife and the Oregon Folklife Network is essential to its success. Advisory body(ies) to ensure that all Oregonians are represented in the programs of the Oregon Folklife Network should be created.

Partnering with Oregon Tribes is also an essential element of the Oregon Folklife Network. The Tribes have extensive experience in providing services in support of local and regional cultural traditions and artists. Tribal cultural leaders should be respected and utilized as key advisors to the Network.

## **Communications**

Clear, consistent communications will be key to Network success. A public presence for the Network must be created and public value built. A strong website is absolutely essential (“Wisconsin Folks” is a good example of a clear, easy-to-navigate website with useful resources for students, educators, and the general public. – see <http://arts.state.wi.us/static/folkdir/index.htm>).

The communications plan and strategies for the Network must be based on the values in this document and utilize constantly changing forms of social media to keep folklife relevant and current. For example, carry on an ongoing public discussion about folklife via blogs, Wikis, etc.

## Funding

Potential Network funding sources are listed in Appendix F. A funding plan is essential for success. Some things to consider:

- A 501 (c)(3) Friends of Oregon Folklife organization will probably be needed for fund development. It's recommended that organizers of the Oregon Folklife Network members explore new non-profit and for-profit hybrid models.
- Consider a fee-based system (such as a small business network) where a range of services are provided at cost. This system might include:
  - online distribution of cultural products
  - cultural tourism loop tours
  - licensing of the Network brand for other products
  - organizing folklife festivals, fairs, events
  - ethnographic research, writing
  - If the Network is hosted at the University of Oregon, additional resources may be accessed (students, business faculty, etc.) that can provide ideas for future income streams.

At the same time, all Network programs should be mission-driven first and entrepreneurially-based only secondarily. While some time may be needed to develop substantial income streams through the sales of services, programs, or products, it is nonetheless important to demonstrate a forward-thinking approach to funders from the beginning.

Finally, the creation of an advocacy coalition to pursue consistent funding from the state of Oregon is essential. Without this effective advocacy, the Network may not be sustainable.

## Staffing

Oregon's statewide folklife programs have always utilized skilled, professional folklorists with strong reputations. This commitment to professional excellence should be sustained. Recommended staffing (see Appendix E, Draft Budget):

Year One: full-time manager to develop the program, with a .5 FTE administrative assistant.

Year Two: the manager becomes a .5 program manager after the program director is hired.

Year Three: the program manager goes back to full-time.

To succeed, the Network needs a strong manager with excellent communication skills and the ability to manage multiple and complex relationships and partnerships.

With the University of Oregon hosting the Network, graduate student assistance with this project could start as early as fall 2010.

## Programming

Initial programming for the Network should clearly demonstrate the values identified in this plan, build visibility, and demonstrate program success. There is interest in organizing a gathering of Oregon traditional artists in the first year of the program which could afford an excellent opportunity to both meet these goals and coalesce partners. This gathering could also connect

with broader economic and community development goals of the state by focusing on occupational and workforce issues of traditional artists, and by providing training for artists.

### **Assessment**

The success of the Oregon Folklife Network should be evaluated and assessed on an annual basis through a process that includes input from all Network partners. The annual assessment should address progress and develop benchmarks for programming and resource development for short- and long-term objectives. Each annual assessment should allow for adjustments and re-focusing of Network objectives.

### **Next Steps**

- 1) The Oregon Arts Commission should work with University of Oregon Folklore and Arts Administration programs to determine whether the capacity exists for the university to host the Oregon Folklife Network. This capacity can be demonstrated through:
  - letters of support from institutional leadership (program heads, deans, president);
  - vision and mission of U of O programs to embrace leadership of the Oregon Folklife Program;
  - letter from the University of Oregon Foundation demonstrating its willingness to assist Network with fund development;
  - Three-year budget developed with funding commitments in place for Year One;
  - a plan for hiring an initial Network manager who will further develop the Network, programs, and advisory group.
- 2) The University should begin strategic planning for program development and the internal strategies necessary to serve as Folklife Network host. These host strategies should, at a minimum: engage the Folklore and Arts & Administration programs, affiliated faculty, Knight Library, and the Natural and Cultural History Museum. Further, organizing an interdisciplinary advisory group is recommended. The vision, mission, values, goals and action steps from this plan should serve as a foundation for strategic planning for the Network. Former Oregon Historical Society Folklife Program should be consulted about the extensive database and programs developed and managed by that agency.

“We should challenge ourselves and consider revenue streams from products or fees for services. This kind of entrepreneurial thinking is important for potential investors.”

— NORM SMITH, CHAIR, OREGON CULTURAL TRUST  
(PRESIDENT, THE FORD FAMILY FOUNDATION)



Portland Taiko. Photo: Chris Iwasaki

“Preserving and sharing traditional arts  
plays a vital role in inspiring contemporary  
artists to use those rich resources for  
inspiration.”

— VALERIE OTANI, ARTIST,  
PORTLAND TAIKO AND OREGON NIKKEI ENDOWMENT

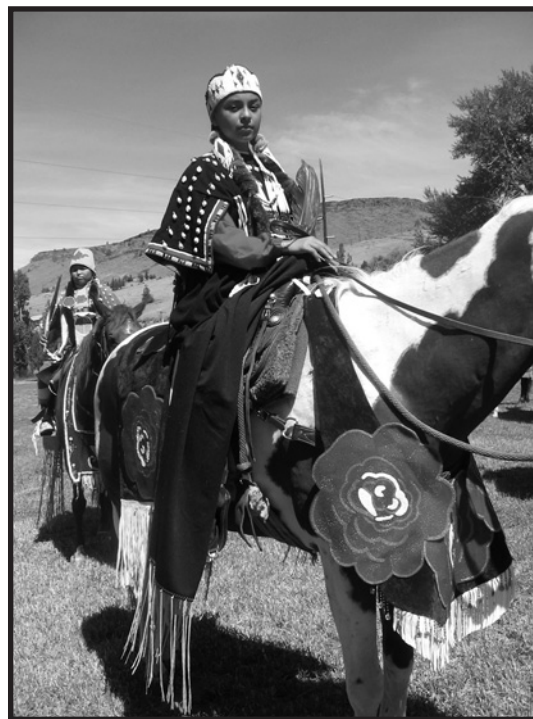




Obby Addy performs with Homowo African Arts and Culture in Portland.



Above: Loan Vu, apprentice, worked with master artist Huong Pham in a traditional apprenticeship program. Photo: Oregon Historical Society. Right: Shayla Frank at the Museum at Warm Springs. The designs on her shawl, dress, bag and cuffs match exactly the designs on the horse bridle, breast collar, and trappings. Photo: Evaline Patt



# Value of Folklife

Why is it important to develop and sustain a statewide support system for folklife in Oregon?

Folklife, folklore, and traditional arts:

- Are accessible and relevant to all ... they embody everyday life and values.
- Help people understand and celebrate their own cultures and the cultures of others.
- Connect people across cultural groups, generations, regions, and countries, and build awareness that culture crosses geographic and political boundaries.
- Build individual, family, community, regional, and state pride and identity. Losing one's culture (history, language, stories, and connections with one's peoples) can lead to an emptiness which may be filled with self-doubt, prejudice, or violence.
- Illustrate that culture, place, and the natural environment are deeply connected. Traditional artists can show how to overcome adversity and live with the land.
- Embrace community heroes. Often these heroes are elders, native speakers, healers, or natural organizers. These people are community role models for citizenship, entrepreneurship, creative thinking, etc.
- Support traditional artists as they share their commitment to craft, excellence, and maintaining cultural traditions. These artists infuse creativity and innovation with daily life, and again, serve as important role models. Traditional artists teach us to reach for what is possible, even when we cannot clearly see it.
- Encourage people to embrace multiple identities. I am German-American, I am a Portlander, I am an Oregonian.
- Teach people about the value of listening and "story" and how to pay attention to the untold, the hidden.
- Place high value on education and passing on history, values, skills, as well as humor as a way of reaching people.
- Support community development, economic development, state identity.

Another way to consider the value of folklife is to consider what we are currently missing in Oregon without a statewide folklife program.

- Missed opportunity to provide technical assistance and financial support to Oregon traditional artists.
- Lack of current resource materials for parents, youth, families, schools in Oregon's increasingly multi-cultural society.
- Lack of technical expertise shared with other cultural and civic groups and institutions seeking to include folklife in their programs.
- Lack of Oregon folklife representation at key state and national meetings, including planning sessions which could benefit from utilizing assets of traditional artists and everyday culture with building local and state identity.
- Limited use of the existing archives of the former Oregon Folklife Program which are minimally accessible and not visible to the public.

- No formal framework for accessing federal dollars which would flow to Oregon (approximately \$30-50,000 annually from the National Endowment for the Arts).
- Missed opportunities to replicate known best practices in other states without a central coordinating entity focused on folk and traditional arts.
- Potential of deterioration of the state's current folklife assets.
- Loss of public recognition and honoring of community traditions, language, and values.
- Loss of local identity within broader cultural and social patterns influenced by emerging non-place-based community networks.
- Diminished representation in public programming of Oregon's diverse ethnic and cultural communities.



Wendy Rawlins participated in a traditional arts apprenticeship project in leathercarving in 2009. Photo: Oregon Historical Society

# Vision, Mission, Values, Goals and Action Steps

The following vision, mission, values and goals are offered to guide the Oregon Folklife Network. They were developed from rich discussions during three statewide folklife stakeholder planning sessions.

## Vision

All Oregonians should have opportunities to understand and participate in their cultural traditions within the spirit of respect for all cultures.

Our collective folkways provide the foundation for rich community and Tribal life. They are grounded in the knowledge that:

- community and cultural traditions are constantly changing and evolving;
- cultural traditions are a powerful nourishment that may connect or separate us;
- documentation and preservation of cultural traditions are an important living, legacy for future generations;
- culture, place, and the natural environment are deeply connected;
- our elders, traditional artists, and other bearers of culture should play significant roles in our communities and Tribes.

## Mission

To make a meaningful difference in Oregon communities and Tribes by documenting, supporting, and celebrating our diverse cultural traditions and by empowering our tradition-bearers.

## Values

Our values and aspirations are rooted in what it takes to create healthy individuals, families, and communities, specifically:

- developing awareness of one's own identity and culture with the ability to empathize with others;
- respecting people's wishes for both self-determination and privacy;
- connecting people within and across cultures and across generations;
- building awareness of local history, pride of place, and everyday culture;
- infusing all elements of daily life with creativity ;
- acknowledging culture's relevance to community, tribal, and state identity;
- building awareness that culture crosses geographic and political boundaries;
- understanding and developing the vital relationship between culture, place, and nature.

## Goals and Action Steps

**Goal #1: Create public value around folklife and traditional arts.**

- Develop leadership and advocates for folklife and the Oregon Folklife Network.
- Create advisory body(ies) to ensure that all Oregonians are represented in the programs of the Oregon Folklife Network.
- Demonstrate through all programs, communications, and materials the value of folklife, cultural assets, and the Network.



- Emphasize connectivity to other programs and cultural assets.

Goal #2: Focus on sustainability of the Oregon Folklife Network.

- Identify the most appropriate host institution and location to maximize effectiveness of the Network.
- Identify advisory board and staffing structure to support vision, mission, goals, values of Network.
- Hire interim manager to solidify organizational structure, hire director, plan programs, develop funding and communications mechanisms.
- Develop clear communications and public education strategies, looking closely at Oregon Humanities as a model.
- Develop prospectus (describing major features of Network) for potential investors and a strategic business plan.

Goal #3: Document, preserve, archive our cultural assets so they are not lost.

- Transfer archives of Oregon Historical Society to new home, potentially one with other folklife holdings.
- Apply for NEA grant to catalogue former Oregon Folklife Program collection and prepare it for transfer to new home, followed by digitization.
- Inventory various traditional arts collections across the state.

Goal #4: Develop phased process for program development.

- Continue the excellence of the former Oregon Folklife Program with program models based on the vision, mission, values in this plan.

Goal #5: Be relevant, current, entrepreneurial in approach

- Research and analyze earned income strategies in alignment with the vision and goals for the program.
- Ensure a diversity of funding sources and strategies for leveraging donated resources.
- Design and launch a strong website with current resources for artists, teachers, parents, and others seeking to better understand and access Oregon's diverse cultural traditions.



# History of Statewide Folklife Programs in Oregon

In 1977, with funds from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Oregon Arts Commission initiated the Oregon Folk Arts Project. The Project's aim was to "help maintain and make more accessible to the public those artistic practices which have emerged from communities or families, have endured through several generations and contain a sense of the community's aesthetic. The program assists and honors people of skill and authority in the traditional arts, and encouraged communities to continue nurturing their own traditions."

Specific goals of the Oregon Folk Arts Project were: "to identify Oregon folk artists and traditional arts; to make Oregon folk arts more visible through traditional folklife festivals, publications, exhibitions, media presentations, and workshops; and to document and preserve folk cultural heritage."

In 1988, The Oregon Folklife Program (OFP) was established at the Northwest Writing Institute at Lewis and Clark College. A draft plan prepared by staff of the OFP in December, 1991 lists the following program goals:

- develop a resource center for folk arts activity in Oregon;
- provide a solid advisory structure and funding base for folk arts programming; support folk artists and arts organizations by providing information and technical assistance;
- conduct ongoing fieldwork to document folk arts traditions in Oregon; and,
- broaden public understanding of Oregon folk arts as multicultural expression.

In 1992 OFP moved to the Oregon Historical Society. Its purpose was to document, present, and encourage the preservation of the traditional arts and cultures of all people in Oregon. Its work was supported through funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Oregon Arts Commission, the Regional Arts and Culture Council, as well as private foundations, corporations and individuals. OFP's staff of folklorists and other cultural specialists used ethnographic fieldwork techniques to work within communities, identifying and documenting tradition bearers as well as the activities and expressions of everyday life. OFP's programs included school programs, community documentation projects, instructional materials, exhibits, presentations of the state's folk artists and tradition bearers through community events and celebrations, archives management and special projects to serve under-represented regions, communities, and cultures. OFP staff sought to work closely with the Oregon Arts Commission's arts education network and local and regional arts councils throughout Oregon. The Oregon Historical Society ended the program in June, 2009 because of organizational budget shortfalls.

The Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO), based in Portland, developed its Arts for New Immigrants Program (ANIP) as a collaborative partnership between the Oregon Folklife Program and IRCO from 1998 to 2006. The Arts for New Immigrants Program assisted



Thomas Morning Owl teaches basket making.

80 refugee and immigrant artists in connecting with local arts resources and the Oregon Folklife Program, obtaining rare musical instruments and traditional arts materials, and documenting and exhibiting their folk arts with videos and a statewide exhibit. ANIP ended in 2007 due to lack of sustaining resources.

The Oregon Folklife Program was known for its professional folklorists and excellent services as well as for its commitment to empowering ethnic and traditional communities. The program was consistently understaffed and underfunded and never enjoyed an institutional home which could provide the solid, long-term foundation for the support of traditional arts and folklife in Oregon.



Guitar builder Thomas Haynes in Baker. Photo: Ormond Loomis

“Traditional arts in daily life comprise the functions of library (knowledge), museum (artifacts), school (learning), and studio (making).”

— KIM STAFFORD, WRITER,  
FROM AN OREGON FOLKLIFE STAKEHOLDER  
PLANNING MEETING

# Summary of Research

Extensive research was conducted seeking current best practices and delivery models for statewide folklife services. Research focused primarily on contacting leaders in the field.

## Folklife Systems

National Endowment for the Arts  
 American Folklore Society  
 Alabama Arts Council  
 California Alliance for Traditional Arts  
 Louisiana Division of the Arts  
 Minnesota State Arts Board  
 Montana Arts Council  
 New York State Council on the Arts  
 North Carolina Arts Council  
 Wyoming Arts Council  
 Kentucky Historical Society  
 University of Arizona South/Southwest-Folklore Preserve  
 Wisconsin State Arts Board/Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures, University of Wisconsin at Madison

Data was also gathered from:  
 Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art  
 Oregon 150  
 Community Folk Arts Council of Toronto  
 Te Awe Wellington Maori Business Network  
 Matatau (Maori Business and Professional Association)  
 Maori Customs Network  
 Kea (New Zealand Global Talent Community)  
 Carleton University, School of Canadian Studies (Ottawa Ontario)  
 Canadian Folk Art Council of Toronto

Former staff members Nancy Nusz and Carol Spellman of the Oregon Historical Society's Oregon Folklife Program were also interviewed.

## Summary of Key Points

- Most statewide folklife operations are housed within either state arts, heritage, or humanities organizations, universities, or private non-profit organizations serving the entire state. Strong partnerships between these three are common.
- Strong institutional leadership and ongoing financial support are key to program success.
- Statewide presence is difficult to sustain primarily due to costs associated with statewide coverage.

- Web presence is very important. This is key to providing accessible resources to many people.
- The Oregon model must be specific to Oregon, our vision and goals, and our resources.

### **Key Interviews and SWOT Analysis: Potential Hosts of Folklife Network**

Representatives from the following agencies were interviewed specifically about the resources that each brings to supporting folklife and the potential to host the Oregon Folklife Network. Notes from these interviews are in Appendix C.

Oregon Arts Commission  
Oregon Humanities  
Oregon Heritage Commission  
Oregon Historical Society  
Lewis and Clark College  
Marylhurst University  
Regional Arts and Culture Council  
University of Oregon

Staff of the Collins Foundation and Ford Family Foundation were interviewed, specifically concerning funding potential for the Oregon Folklife Network.

### **Summary of Key Points**

- Each cultural institution brings a unique set of resources and assets. These need to be accessed in this new system, while providing services in return.
- Development of both a funding plan and a communications/ marketing plan is central to the success of the Oregon Folklife Network. The funding plan should include consideration of revenue streams based on product sales and fees for services.
- Creation of a private, nonprofit 501 (c)(3) organization for fund development will be necessary, even if hosted by the University of Oregon.
- University of Oregon is the only institution that has access to a library and museums, has the most content expertise in folklife with faculty and students in this field, and the willingness to explore hosting the Network.

**Appendix A****Definitions and Language**

Stakeholders participating in this planning process felt strongly that the language and definitions of the Oregon Folklife Network should be inclusive of all Oregon cultures and reflect current times and cultures which are constantly evolving. Stakeholders were “taken” with the concept of living culture, with the relevance of folklife, and with the desire for an entrepreneurial focus while keeping with the program’s mission.

The following language is offered from other folklife programs to aid in shaping definitions for the Oregon Folklife Network.

**Folklife and Folklore**

“The term ‘American folklife’ means the traditional expressive culture shared within the various groups in the United States: familial, ethnic, occupational, religious, regional; expressive culture includes a wide range of creative and symbolic forms such as custom, belief, technical skill, language, literature, art, architecture, music, play, dance, drama, ritual, pageantry, handicraft; these expressions are mainly learned orally, by imitation, or in performance, and are generally maintained without benefit of formal instruction or institutional direction.”

– *US Congress definition of folklife – used when Folklife Center was created.*

*See Public Law 94-201, 1976*

“Folklife includes forms of human expression generally learned informally and passed from one person to another, from one generation to the next. Folklife reflects the history, arts, culture and values of families, ethnic, regional, religious and occupational groups that make up Oregon.”

– *From Oregon Folklife Program materials.*

“Folklife can be found in many forms: handmade objects, stories, customs, musical traditions, poetry, folksongs, jokes, dances and legends are only a few. Every group that shares a common identity also shares folklife, from people with a common ethnic heritage, to individual families, to the local Elks chapter and the road construction crew.”

– *Montana Arts Council*

“Folklore and folklife (including traditional arts, beliefs, traditional ways of work and leisure, adornment and celebrations) are cultural ways in which a group maintains and passes on a shared way of life.”

– *New York Folklore Society*

**Folk Arts and Traditional Arts**

There are numerous and conflicting definitions of folk art that are often market and profession driven. Such definitions are often not in the best interests of those people represented in the definitions (for example, naive, outsider, untrained). As a consequence, we define folk art as the material manifestations of folklife. As such everyone can be considered as being a member of one or more folk groups. We concur with Michael Owen Jones belief that there is more to the study of folk art



than a preoccupation with the objects or an attempt to set the makers within a cultural context as simply transmitters of tradition. We also concur with Jones in that defining folk art is less important than asking: Why do [people] make the things they do? How do they conceptualize form? What experiences affect their creativity, the way they proceed in construction, the forms they produce? What do the items-and the making of them-mean, express, or symbolize? What values inform manufacture, selection, and use?

– Michael Owen Jones, *Exploring Folk Art* (Ann Arbor: UMI Press, 1987).

“Folk/traditional arts include arts indigenous to an identifiable group. This group could be any community defined by such qualities as its ethnicity, geography, language, religion, or occupation. In some instances, it can also include familial groups.” *Montana Arts Council*

“The set of creative practices and aesthetic choices emerging from a dynamic of continuity and change, and anchored in community. Often refers to that body of artistic heritage connected to the identity of a community.”

– John Fenn and Doug Blandy, *University of Oregon Arts Administration Program*

“Traditional arts are living arts, connected to tribal life ways as lived now. The relationship of traditional arts to tribal communities is multi-layered and complex. Some tribal arts are utilitarian, used in everyday life, and, though they are works of art, they are not created for art markets, collections, or museums. Some traditional artworks are made for a particular purpose or occasion; some are given away for a particular reason. Other traditional artworks reinforce cultures or embody cultural metaphors; still others are connected to the sacred or tied to stories. Some traditional arts convey political structure, social status, cultural mores, rituals, and occupational and ceremonial activities. And all traditional arts serve as living documents of historical changes – changes in materials, locations, neighbors, and cultures.”

– Artist and writer Elizabeth Woody, *on traditional arts within tribal communities*

## Traditional Artists

- Traditional artists work organically from within a community to which they belong. Community is defined as a group of people who share something in common such as ethnicity, region, religion, or occupation.
- Traditional artists usually learn informally from someone within their community.
- Traditional artists create contemporary, living forms whether a song, a dance, or handmade object.
- The aesthetic sensibilities that evaluate traditional art are defined by the community and not by some outside set of standards.
- While the work of traditional artists is rooted in the past, it is also innovative, constantly affected by technology, and subtly influenced by such factors as migration or mass media.

– From *Traditional Arts Indiana*, a partnership between Indiana University’s Folklore and Ethnomusicology Program and the Indiana Arts Commission

**Appendix B**

# Inventory of Oregon's Cultural Assets

**Organizations**

- Universities, public and private
- K-12 Schools, public and private
- Libraries
- Museums
- Local and regional arts agencies
- Historical societies
- Local heritage organizations
- Tribal cultural programs and cultural centers
- Cultural centers such as Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center and Centro Cultural
- Statewide agencies
  - Oregon Arts Commission
  - Oregon Heritage Commission
  - Oregon Humanities
  - Oregon State Library
- Organizations serving specific traditional cultural groups
  - Immigrant and Refugee Organization
  - Churches
  - Youth organizations
  - Occupational-based groups

**Individual Oregonians**

- Folklorists
- Elders
- Artists
- Native speakers
- Community leaders
- Culture bearers
- Stakeholders
- Volunteers
- Students
- Donors

**Material Culture**

- Gathering places of all kinds, including facilities, parks, and public gardens
- Sites of historic and cultural significance
  - Sacred places
- Innovative neighborhood and urban design
- Public artwork
- Informal and private folklife collections and archives

**Appendix C**

# Summary of SWOT Analysis

## (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

Representatives from the following agencies were interviewed specifically about the potential for their institution to host the new folklife system.

**Oregon Arts Commission****Strengths**

Mission of OAC is compatible with the mission of folk arts and folklife. Staff care deeply about folklife. History of funding support for folklife with the Commission. Good alignment with Arts Education and Arts Build Communities programs. Successful history of limited duration positions and contractors. Data systems in place to track and store information. Experience in digitizing collections

**Weaknesses**

Physical office space is limited and OAC pays for office space. Additional staff support needed. Lack of flexibility in government. Challenge to raise private funds from within government; would likely require working in tandem with a 501(c)(3) organization.

**Opportunities**

OAC knows how to be proactive, is motivated to seek and secure new public funds. Has flexibility with contractors and other partners.

**Threats**

State budget threats and the potential for future budget cuts.

**University of Oregon****Strengths**

Collaborative leadership style (across programs, disciplines). Existing infrastructure within Arts Administration and Folklore Programs: expertise and enthusiasm. Students with expertise: internships, workforce. Folklorists on faculty. Existing folklore archives at U of O Museum of Natural and Cultural History: including archival expertise. Center for Arts and Cultural Policy within Arts Admin. Library at U of O. Administrative support for existing programs. Existing programs are networked internationally. Faculty networked with both academic and public sector folklore. College of Education, potential resource. Business School, potential resource. Expertise in and current focus on assessment

**Weaknesses**

Resources: space issues, both physically and electronically/computer. Limited FTE. Limited \$. Development limitations within University. Need seed \$. Just like starting a new academic program: integration with an academic program is essential to save this from a later chopping block

**Opportunities**

Fits well with mission and strategic planning of university: especially around broadening ethnic diversity. Would strengthen existing Folklore Program. Think digitally and make that a strong element of the program. Basing program in Eugene might be a plus: focusing the program

more around the state than primarily Portland. Expanding profile of U of O around the state. Coordinating with OSU's new multicultural archive

#### **Threats**

Stress on existing faculty and staff (without new funds and resources). New program could reinforce the perception of U of O "taking over." Future funding cuts might put program at risk.

### **Oregon Heritage Commission**

(within Heritage Conservation in Oregon State Parks and Outdoor Recreation Department)

#### **Strengths**

Good fit with Heritage Commission and local partners (historical societies, museums, local governments). Some staff within Parks are involved with traditional arts themselves. Existing Heritage and Museum grants programs could be expanded to include folklife. Existing ties with federally-recognized Tribes. Because of Measure 66 lottery funds, funding for Parks has not been as tenuous as with other state agencies. Good work environment.

#### **Weaknesses**

Some public perception that Lottery funds should be limited to Parks, not to include heritage. Also, potential that Lottery funding has peaked. Disadvantage of raising private funds from state agency (same as with OAC). Limited staffing: difficult to add FTE (same as with OAC).

#### **Opportunities**

Having folklife program and folklorists on staff could enhance dimensions of existing Heritage programs. Increasing interest from communities in heritage-related resources (National Heritage Program).

#### **Threats**

Changing government administration. Folklife could be seen as even more tangential than heritage: could be the first to go in budget cuts.

### **Oregon Humanities**

Oregon Humanities has indicated that it will not take on any new major programs within the next two years. However, Oregon Humanities is an important partner/part of Network and could provide:

- small grants program for folklife activities
- significant network of people and institutions
- strong communications network, including a magazine, which could help publicize Network programs
- experience in re-visioning and branding
- teachers' institute
- Conversations Programs
- scholars working in all counties in state

Oregon Humanities could potentially serve as a 501(c)(3) for folklife but would require a more detailed assessment of its impact on their organization, and possible benefits.

## **Oregon Historical Society**

If OHS is successful at gaining a heritage tax district, it would consider restoring the Oregon Folklife Program.

In the meantime, OHS is very willing to transfer the archives from the former Oregon Folklife to an agency with the capacity to properly care for the collection (e.g., University of Oregon or Oregon Arts Commission). The collection should be available for access under certain conditions (i.e., with the assistance of an educator) and not simply “put in the stacks”.

OHS can provide the new Folklife Network with valuable advice on programming, exhibit space, and collections management.

## **Regional Arts and Culture Council**

RACC’s mission is to serve the tri-county region, not the state. Also, RACC currently has two new very large initiatives underway which are their top priority.

## **Lewis and Clark College and Marylhurst University**

Both of these institutions are important to keep connected with the Folklife Network, but neither are in a position to host the program at this time.

## **Foundations Interviewed**

### **Ford Family Foundation**

- Create a business plan/prospectus that you would take to a lender to seek funding. Prospectus will invite the funders in. Build 3-5 years of sustainable support into the prospectus. Prospectus needs commitment from funders. Someone has to step forward before others will. Have serious discussion about the business of operating this program.
- How can Cultural Trust partners put \$ into folklife?
- Definitely develop a revenue stream from cultural products, mine the entrepreneurial efforts of traditional artists while getting publicity for folklife and this program. Cultural Trust license plate is example of such a revenue stream.

### **The Collins Foundation**

- Ideally folklife would be an important program of another organization...but has to be important.
- How could folklife be part of Cultural Trust? What happened with the idea of cultural coalitions having a staff person? Could a folklife staff person also serve the county and tribal cultural coalitions?
- Product development is a good idea for creating both an income stream and visibility, creating public value, showing traditions that not everyone knows about.
- Consider a Friends of Oregon Folklife 501(c)(3) for this program. Jordan Schnitzer Museum at U of O has a separate 501(c)(3).
- Make this a public/private venture.
- An advisory board appointed by the Governor is probably a good idea.



**Appendix D****Toward an Organizational Model for the Oregon Folklife****What are the qualities that we want to see in this Network?**

- Values-driven – based on the values of this plan
- Relevant to Oregonians – current in approach, yet clearly mindful of need for cultural preservation
- Respectful – of all cultures in Oregon, and especially of the need to honor cultures that have been disrespected and to value cultural privacy. Cultural groups should be engaged as partners and experts on their own cultures.
- Accessible – to all people, places and groups in Oregon
- Flexible – to keep programming current with the needs and desires of Oregonians
- Visible – with a strong, consistent public presence and messaging
- Stable – widely supported and deeply imbedded into University of Oregon academic programs
- Excellent – to build on the prior work of the former Oregon Folklife Program.
- Focus on education – understanding cultural traditions of Oregon
- Strongly collaborative – a vibrant hub as a resource center for collaborations
- Integrated – with other agencies, communities, plans, ways of thinking across the state. For example, clearly integrated with the identity of Oregon and Oregon communities.

**What does this new Network need to succeed?**

- Strong manager who can implement and manage this new Network, communicate clearly with multiple partners, stakeholders, and can successfully implement development strategies.
- Strong leadership – from the institutional home, advisory board, staff, etc.
- Professional folklorists who continue and expand the quality of programming (including fieldwork) of the former program.
- Governor-appointed advisory board.
- Ability to raise funds – will need business plan, possibly grants for multiagency collaborations to jump start the Network, consider revenue streams coming from cultural products.
- If located within a public agency will need a “friends of folklife” 501(c)(3) organization for fundraising.
- Strong, effective, strategic communication systems.
- Memos of understanding between partners.
- Very strong web presence with clear and useful on-line resources.
- Ability to house, care for, and make public the former Oregon Folklife Program’s archives and collections.

## Appendix E

# Draft Budget – Oregon Folklife Network

### Expenses

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
	7/10-6/11	7/11-6/12	7/12-6/13
Manager	\$100,000	\$65,000	\$120,000
Director	0	100,000	110,000
Administrative Support (.5 FTE)	40,000	44,000	48,000
Archives/Collection	15,000	20,000	20,000
Programming	20,000	45,000	100,000
Travel	17,500	25,000	30,000
Recruitment costs	4,000	4,000	0
Development of web and web materials		15,000	20,000
Contracted services: development, web, communications			30,000
<b>Cash Total</b>	<b>196,500</b>	<b>318,000</b>	<b>478,000</b>
U of O in-kind: indirect costs	30,000	20,000	10,000
U of O in-kind: office space, phone, utilities	20,000	20,000	20,000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$246,500</b>	<b>\$358,000</b>	<b>\$508,000</b>

### Revenue

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
	7/10-6/11	7/11-6/12	7/12-6/13
National Endowment for the Arts		50,000	50,000
Oregon Cultural Trust (Cultural Partners)	50,000	50,000	50,000
Oregon Arts Commission	25,000	25,000	25,000
Oregon Humanities	5,000	5,000	5,000
Oregon foundations, including Tribal sources	50,000	50,000	70,000
Sales of products, services			30,000
To be raised	66,500	138,000	248,000
<b>Cash Total</b>	<b>196,500</b>	<b>318,000</b>	<b>478,000</b>
U of O in-kind:	50,000	40,000	30,000
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>246,500</b>	<b>358,000</b>	<b>\$508,000</b>

#### Notes:

- 1) Manager's role in first year is to establish the program. Manager (at half-time) in year 2 becomes a program manager, once director is hired. In year 3, program manager becomes full-time.
- 2) Archives/collection: Year 1 focuses on transferring from OHS and creating a catalog, year 2 on digitization of archives, year 3 on ongoing care and management.
- 3) Programming: Year 1, statewide gathering of traditional artists; year 2 bringing back Traditional Arts Apprenticeship or other programs; year 3 program expansion, hopefully with a small grants program.
- 4) Recruitment costs: Year 1 for director, year 2 for program manager.
- 5) Revenues from Oregon Oregon Cultural Trust are probably not sustainable much past three years.
- 6) Revenues from the National Endowment for the Arts are estimated at \$30,000 annual operating/staff support and \$20,000 project grants.

## Proposed Workplan/Timeline

### Year 1

- Hire interim manager to complete pre-planning
- Survey range of programming possibilities
- Transfer archives/collection from OHS, catalogue
- Integrate U of O and OHS collections
- Host gathering of traditional artists (maybe at Willamette University?)
- Create fund development plan...including entrepreneurial vision
- Create external advisory body
- Create internal advisory body (cross-disciplines)
- Create ongoing communication systems for Network
- Clarify expectations and develop memos of understanding between operational partners and the Network
- Conduct assessment of Network

### Year 2

- Digitize collection
- Much of this year is spent planning programs: exhibits, tourism initiatives, traditional arts apprenticeship program, etc.
- Continue organizational development (advisory groups, fund development, etc.)
- Conduct assessment of Network

### Year 3

- Deliver programs, services
- Contract with fund development, web, communications specialists
- Conduct assessment of Network

## Appendix E

# Potential Funding Sources

National Endowment for the Arts

staff support

project support

National Endowment for the Humanities

project support

Oregon Humanities

project support

Oregon Arts Commission

potentially request new state funding for 2011 - 13 biennium

Oregon Cultural Trust

cultural partner grant support

project support

Oregon State Library

project support

Oregon Heritage Commission

project support

Request new state dollars through the Oregon Arts Commission

Local, regional, national foundations

multi-disciplinary grants to fund Network/collaborative work

Individual donors, "angels" who support vision/mission Oregon Folklife

Product line, fees for services/events

Partnerships with Travel Oregon and other related business and tourism networks

Hopefully host institution will contribute toward office overhead and other costs