

Folklife Visioning – a Report
Prepared by Maida Owens, Louisiana Folklife Program
December 1, 2010

Overview

The Louisiana Folklife Commission, a Governor-appointed advisory body, hosted a visioning process in September, 2010 in order to help the Louisiana Division of the Arts (LDOA), an agency within the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism (DCRT) Office of Cultural Development (OCD), identify priorities for its next five-year strategic plan and provide guidance to the Folklife Program in years to come. Over 800 people were invited by email to participate in two ways: a Folklife Visioning Workshop and an Online Survey.

Process

The Folklife Visioning Workshop was held on Wednesday, September 8, 2010, in Baton Rouge. Seventeen people attended the workshop, all of whom were cultural researchers or non-profit administrators. Dr. Michael Sartisky, Folklife Commissioner and Executive Director of the Louisiana Endowment of the Humanities, led the group through a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) process to assess the Folklife Program's current and past programs. See details in **Section I**.

The Online Survey was available from August 16 to September 22, 2010. A total of 108 people took the survey representing a 13.5% response rate. Of the respondents, 59.5% were cultural researchers, 38.1% were non-profit administrators, and 21% were folk artists or tradition bearers (see Table 1). Specific professionals and/or affiliations included non-profit board members, librarians, archivists, preservationists, museum administrators, K-12 teachers, college/university instructors, community-based researchers, folklorists, archaeologists, business owners, documentary filmmakers, government administrators, tourism professionals, arts administrators, contemporary and traditional artists, musicians, dancers, tradition bearers, immigrants, and art educators.

Respondents indicated varying degrees of familiarity with the Folklife Program: 57.1% were familiar with the program and had used its services, 23.8% were familiar with it but had not used its services, 15.2% had heard of the program but never used the services, and 4.8% had never heard of the program before taking the survey (see Table 2).

When asked about grants awarded by the Division of the Arts or the Decentralized Arts Grants Program, 51.9% had never participated in a grant (see Table 3). The survey included 19 questions. The response rate for questions 1-8, 11-12, 17-18 was 97-100%. The response rate for questions requiring comments was 40-75%. 94.3% were residents of Louisiana. 4.7% were not currently a resident, but had been a resident in the past. 0.9% had never been a resident (see Table 4). See details in **Section II**. Note: comments in [brackets] are clarifications added by the editor.

Conclusion

The Louisiana Folklife Program has an enthusiastic, engaged, and passionate constituency. The 13.5% response rate for the survey is high. For the most part respondent feedback was supportive of past efforts, but expressed concern about the current and future reductions of services and programs.

Table 1.

Please indicate whether you are any of the following. (Select as many as apply.)

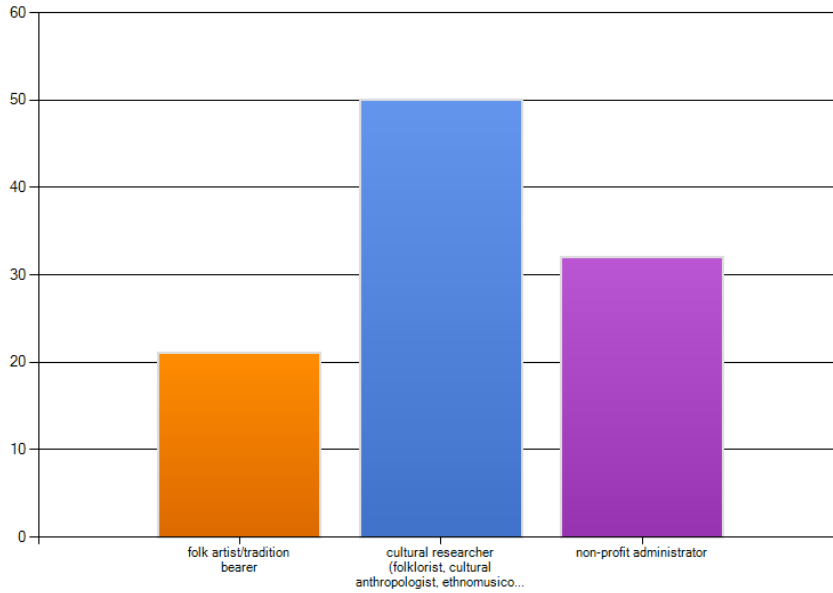


Table 2.

Please indicate how familiar you are with the Louisiana Folklife Program and/or the Regional Folklorists. Select all that apply.

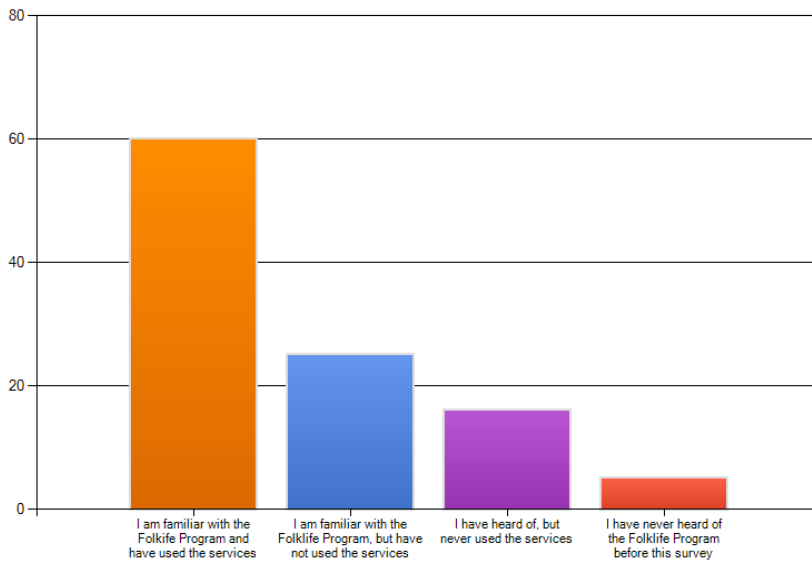


Table 3.

Below are all of the types of grants that the Division of the Arts or the Decentralized Arts Grants Program has offered that have supported folklife. Grants that are currently offered are marked with *. If you as an individual folk artist /cultural researcher or as an organization doing folklife activities have received one of these grants to support folklife, please select all that apply.

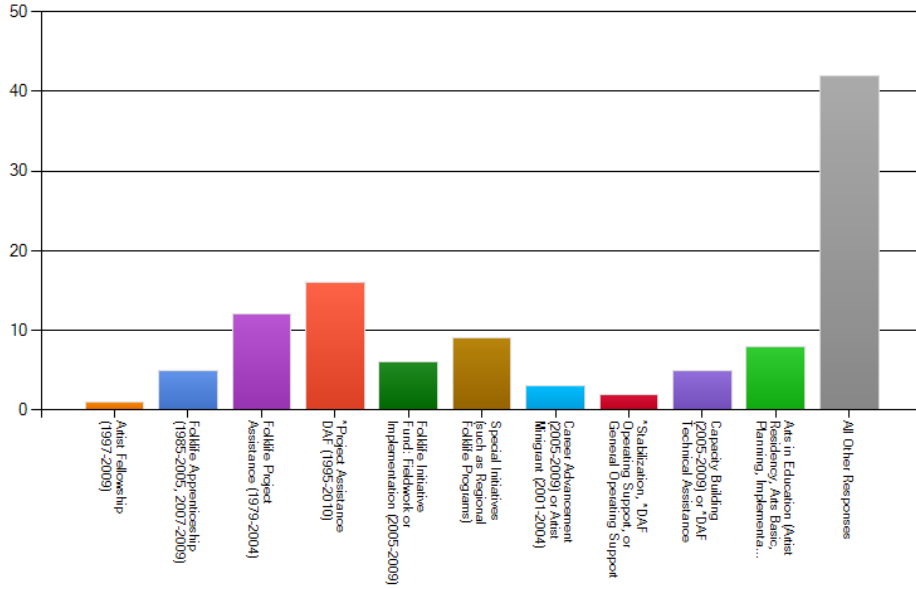
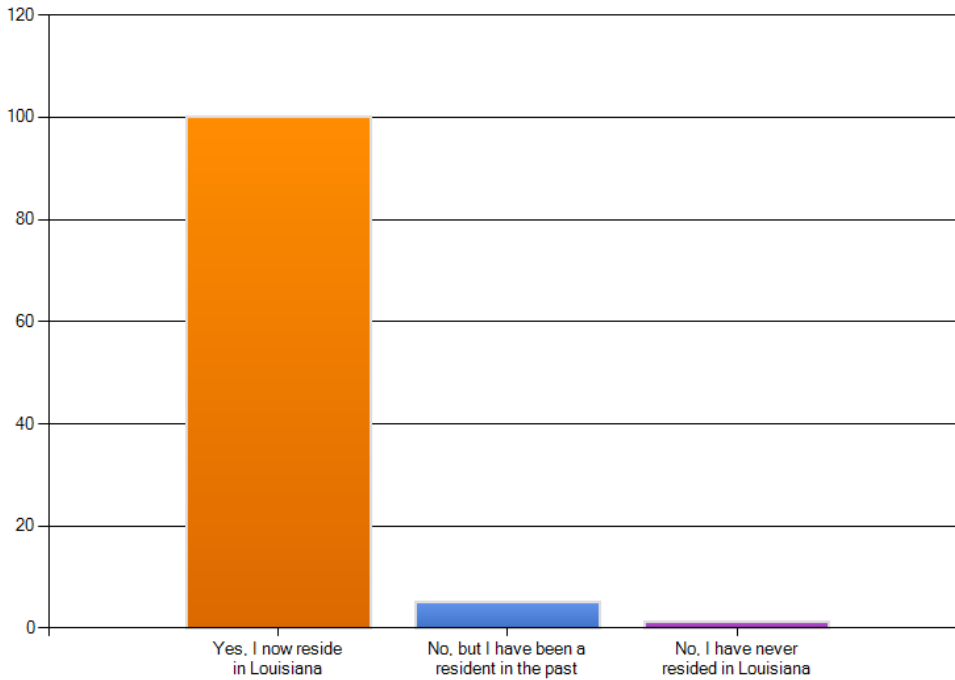


Table 4.

Are you a resident of Louisiana?



Section I -- The Workshop Response

Teresa Parker Farris, chair of the Louisiana Folklife Commission, welcomed the 17 people attending and introduced other Commissioners. Dána La Fonta, Louisiana Division of the Arts Executive Director, welcomed everyone and explained that the results of this day will inform the agency's strategic plan.

Maida Owens, Folklife Program Director, gave a brief introduction to the current status of the Folklife Program. The primary current folklife initiative is the New Populations Immigrant and Refugee Project. Other folklife duties include maintaining the program's two websites (www.louisianafolklife.org and www.louisianavoices.org), updating the folk artist database, and archiving program research. She also has LDOA duties not related to folklife. The program partnerships include the Louisiana Folklore Society, Louisiana Tech (Louisiana Quilt Documentation Project), and South Arts (southernartistry.com). Four of the Division of the Arts five grants programs are currently suspended with only Stabilization Grants receiving funded this year. These grants provide "operating support for cultural organizations that create, present, and preserve Louisianans unique cultural resources."

Owens explained how the last visioning in 1994 informed the Folklife Program's development of the website, the Louisiana Regional Folklife Program, Louisiana Voices Educator's Guide, the Folk Artist Database, and the archiving of program research at the LSU Library.

She closed by giving an overview of the preliminary findings of the online survey. As of September 9, she noted, 63 people had completed the survey, and it was evident that they were having trouble prioritizing the services. One message was clear: even though 54% of the respondents were cultural researchers and 46% were non-profit administrators, 68% felt that folk artists and tradition bearers should be the first priority of the Folklife Program.

Michael Sartisky, Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities President/Executive Director, then facilitated a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) process. The group finished by making recommendations to the Folklife Program regarding priorities of services.

A. Strengths

1. The Folklife Program, folklorists, and other organizations have many valuable archived materials that could be made more available.
2. Louisiana has many active folk cultures and tradition bearers that are of interest to the public and academics.
3. The folk artists in the state are active and highly creative.
4. Louisiana has several large Native American communities in addition to many clearly defined folk cultures and ethnic groups.
5. Folk culture is still being lived "unselfconsciously." It is still authentic and not only done to entertain tourists.
6. Folklife resources on www.louisianafolklife.org are scholarly validated.
7. Louisiana has a large number of diverse institutions dedicated to folklife.
8. Governmental validation strengthens the traditions.
9. Quality of the traditional practices is strong.
10. Louisiana Voices Educator's guide, www.louisianavoices.org, is a resource available to help connect K-12 education to folklife resources.

11. There is a true respect of folk traditions in Louisiana.
12. Louisiana has a large network of people working on folklife.
13. Being part of LDOA.
14. Radio stations KRVS in Lafayette and WWOZ in New Orleans have created niches based on indigenous music, and reach a large listening audience via online streaming.
15. Louisiana has many documentary filmmakers who do a good job of portraying folk culture

B. Weaknesses

1. Folk cultures and traditions can be taken for granted.
2. The Folklife Program lacks money and adequate resources.
3. There is a lack of political will to support the Folklife Program.
4. In general, Louisiana currently lacks entrepreneurial efforts to use folk materials that could create revenue streams.
5. There has been an over dependence on government support for folklife. Non-profit and for-profit sectors need to be stronger.
6. Louisiana folklife needs a “friends-of” group or state-wide folklife service organization.
7. Louisiana Partnership for the Arts did not support folklife, but then there is little folklife participation in LPA.
8. The relationship of folklife within LDOA is weak and needs to be strengthened.
9. The Folklife Program does not communicate effectively with folk artists.
10. Louisiana has few folklife non-profit organizations that are comparable to arts organizations.
11. There is a lack of valuing the culture and minimal awareness that we are all tradition bearers. The familiar is taken for granted.
12. The Folklife Program does not adequately partner with other organizations to communicate with the folklife constituency. For example, organizations, such as the Creole Heritage Center, have the means to communicate with large numbers of people, but the Folklife Program does not make use of this resource.
13. The program is in a transitional phase where it still needs to rely on “snail mail” and phone and not only email. Many tradition bearers do not have email.
14. There are no more efforts to provide K-12 teachers professional development with Louisiana Voices Educator’s Guide.
15. Losing the Regional Folklife Program meant a loss of outreach into folk communities.
16. Folklife resources are not used enough by state tourism efforts. There is a lack of networking between folklife and tourism.

C. Opportunities

1. The next generation of folklorists and folk artists can be recruited into the folklife network.
2. Diversifying funding sources will strengthen the entire folklife network.
3. The fiscal crisis might provide new opportunities. (Or, to quote one workshop participant, “Been down so long, it looks like up.”)
4. Exploring and strengthening relationships with organizations with related missions may present new opportunities.
5. New technologies (interactive website, social media, etc.) offer new opportunities, including online publishing.

6. Showcasing folk artists online with interactive features will make the website more appealing and further disseminate the resources.
7. Increasing networking and advocacy will increase awareness.
8. Partner with and support existing folklife festivals to identify and promote more folk artists.
9. Identify tipping points in various cultures/traditions. Folklife Program should do research to determine which traditions/cultures are endangered and at risk of dying, and then determine strategies to help them.
10. Create a clear message to communicate to the public and state legislators.
11. Find a way for the State Office of Tourism to link to folklife resources.
12. \$1 million in BP grants are available through the Office of Tourism to mitigate impact of the oil spill. Deadline is September 20, 2010.
<http://www.crt.state.la.us/tourism/grants.aspx>.
13. An “online festival” is an opportunity to create an online presence about Louisiana folk artists, regions, tours, etc.
14. Reorganization of Louisiana Folklore Society could possibly make a different kind of partnership possible.
15. One possible message is that promoting folklife is promoting community.
16. There will soon be new leadership in Office of the Lt Governor/Dept of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism who may transform the Cultural Economy Initiative into a program that would better support folklife.
17. The Louisiana Bicentennial is upcoming, which may allow for increased attention on the state’s traditional cultures.
18. Internships could provide opportunities to train new folklife administrators in public folklore.

D. Threats

1. The lack of funding.
2. A lack of legislative awareness.
3. The national and state economy.
4. People are leaving the state. Young professionals are leaving the state due to lack of opportunities. Academics are leaving due to state budget cuts.
5. Some senior folklorists are approaching retirement and are concerned whether replacements will be hired to continue their work.
6. Battle fatigue is a problem.
7. Some traditions are not being passed on.
8. The media stereotypes and thus negatively affects traditional culture.
9. Popular culture is overwhelming some traditions.
10. There is much fragmentation of practice and awareness of cultural forms. With so many subgenres now, it is difficult to reach the public.
11. The failure of the Louisiana film industry to support Louisiana documentaries and documentary filmmakers is a missed opportunity.
12. There is less support for north Louisiana folklife compared to south Louisiana. With the cuts to Northwestern State University threatening the Louisiana Folklife Center and the cutting of the Regional Folklorists at Louisiana Tech and Northwestern State University, there are few institutions focusing on folklife in north Louisiana.
13. CRT/LDOA has not demonstrated a commitment to sustain folklife programs and funding.

14. Folklife does not have an organized constituency.
15. The folklife network consists mainly of cultural researchers and non-profit administrators. It needs to be broader and include more community members and folk artists.
16. There is a lack of developed markets for folk products.
17. CRT/LDOA and LPA have not shown support for folklife during the last few years.
18. Folklife constituencies do not adequately network with the tourism industry.
19. There has been an ideological shift in the country that advocates a “Starve the Beast” attitude that likely makes the funding that has been lost to be permanent.

E. Recommendations

1. Folklife needs to make a plea for support that is distinct from LDOA. Folklife needs a distinct identity/brand.
2. The way to connect with funders is through their local folklife traditions.
3. The Folklife Program needs to identify and provide clear deliverables that will be easily understood not only by CRT, but the public.
4. Folklife needs to show the monetary value of the work and the marketable value of the resources.
5. The message needs to be that folklife is “not just different, but better.”
6. The Folklife in Louisiana website needs to be made more accessible and needs to include more than just text.
7. The Folklife in Louisiana website needs to link to other folklife partners.
8. The Folklife Program needs to develop a networking and communication strategy for folklife throughout the state that includes folklife organizations, cultural researchers, and folk artists.
9. The Folklife Program should inventory organizations with similar missions and partner with them.
10. The Folklife Program needs to determine what should be done by the state agency and what can be done by other organizations.
11. The Folklife Program needs to approach the six services it provides holistically (documentation, presenting/programming, preservation, education, promotion of folk artists, technical assistance). They cannot be prioritized; all of the services are needed and must work together.

Section II -- The Survey Response

Those taking the online survey were asked 19 questions. Questions 1-16 included the option for respondents to write comments. Questions 1-8 concerned the importance of the services currently or previously that have been offered by the Folklife Program. Questions 9-14 asked about past or potential partnerships, their involvement with Louisiana Division of the Arts grants, and their priorities for the focus of future fieldwork. Questions 15-19 asked about the respondent.

A. Respondents were asked to indicate the importance of five services provided by the Folklife Program. Their comments show the frustration felt about having to prioritize these services and some frustration with the survey structure. Below are some examples.

1. *All five of these services are extremely valuable, and I do not believe that they should be ranked. Forced to do so, I favor documentation—but I am not happy with a system that makes it look as if I feel "neutral" about preservation, which is a crucially important activity that I favor strongly.*
2. *All of the above: documenting, programming, education, preserving, promoting are essential to keeping our culture, to understanding our traditions, to interpret them for our time, so future generations will know & understand, so that current Americans will know & understand, indeed the world.*
3. *These are difficult, if not impossible to stratify. They are all interdependent aspects of work needed to identify and promote folklife in Louisiana.*
4. *The services are so integrated in the activities of the program that they cannot really be separated and prioritized. For example, the documentation of folk artists provides information for the presentation of those artists and indirectly can also preserve that art form. The documentation provides contact information on the artist that can alert the artist to the possibility of apprenticeships (if they existed). I think it's also important to provide technical assistance to the field. Since the program also has La. Voices, it is important to utilize this resource; therefore, we need to be sure that teachers know about it.*
5. *These are difficult, if not impossible to stratify. They are all interdependent aspects of work needed to identify and promote folklife in Louisiana.*

B. Several people provided general comments – both praise and criticism – about the value of the Folklife Program and concern about its future in addition to the effectiveness of the state's network of cultural researchers.

1. *The Louisiana Folklife Program is a great benefit to the state. For many years. It has been the best of its type in the nation! We await a return to glory!*
2. *From a distance, I've admired the work of the La. Folklife program. Preserving our history and culture is important to me and my community. We would like to be more involved in helping support your organization.*
3. *Remain committed to keeping the LA Folklife Program; assist it, promote it, fund it.*
4. *Our cultural researchers are invisible here. In the past 20 years we have not been contacted by anyone in Louisiana researching our culture except for HBO or outside media, filmmakers, etc. It is clear we are not getting the job done here. If we cannot do it we need to engage people who can and help fund the projects. We cannot rely on*

- LPB or community radio, we have got to get the message out through more progressive channels and just more channels period.*
5. *Previously there were too many "political" constraints in the program and many deserving groups were not even aware of what the state offered.*

C. Another took the opportunity to chastise the administration and the nation.

1. *This administration should be ashamed of itself. France spends 1% of its resources on the arts (including folk art and street artists). The United States spends less than 0.01% or less. Our priorities as a nation and a state are ignominious. The Division of the Arts should always be at the top of the list, and not at the bottom. Also, cutting taxes and cutting services pleases some people, but not those interested in nurturing the most fragile and glorious aspects of our culture.*

D. While another expressed concern about all DCRT agencies.

1. *The state should adequately fund all these entities. Each plays an important role in maintaining La. culture. Most were working, but now are broken!*

E. The visioning process clearly identified folk artists as the Folklife Program's primary constituency with 68% followed by cultural researchers (37.6%) as a second priority, but some were frustrated at having to prioritize at all.

1. *Very difficult to prioritize these categories. All projects should involve tradition bearers and cultural researchers.*
2. *All five of these groups are extremely valuable, and I do not believe that they should be ranked. I always favor direct support of folk artists, but the agency awarding such grants would have to know who, in the COMMUNITY's eyes, the artists really are. To have such knowledge, the agency needs to rely upon topnotch folklorists. Etc.*

The majority indicated that four Folklife Program services were *very important*: **Preservation** (69.5%), **Documentation** (66.0%), **Education** (61.3%), and **Programming** (50.5%). The majority indicated that **Promotion** (45.2%) was *more important* (see Table 5). These results were cross-referenced to ensure validity by comparing the priorities of those that indicated a preference for **Documentation**, **Preservation**, and **Education**. These three consistently were the more valued services (see Tables 5 and 6). More information is available upon request.

Table 5.

The Louisiana Folklife Program currently provides or has provided in the past the following SERVICES. Which of these -- or others -- would assist the overall development of folklife in Louisiana? Please select all that apply and indicate your preference.

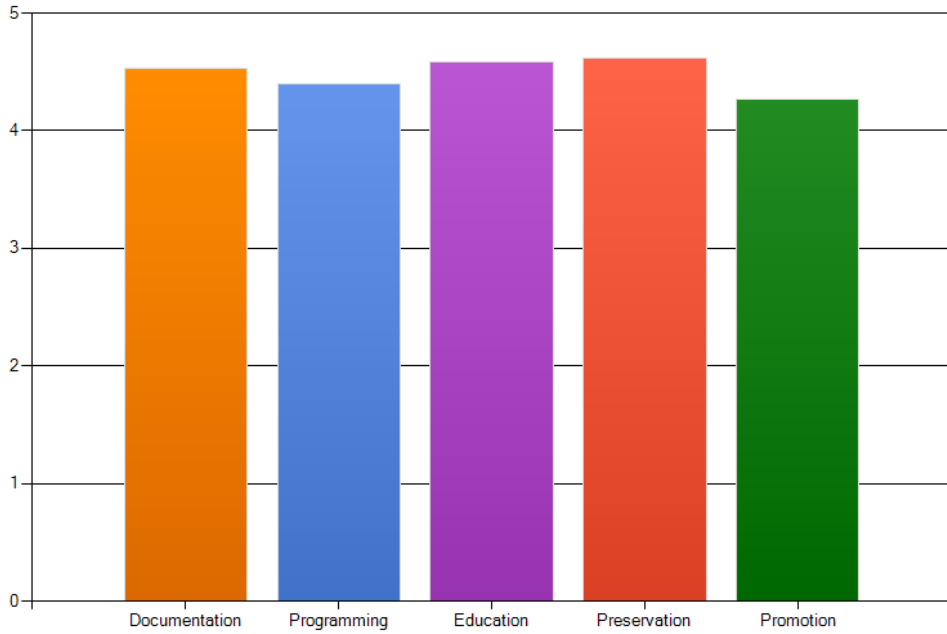
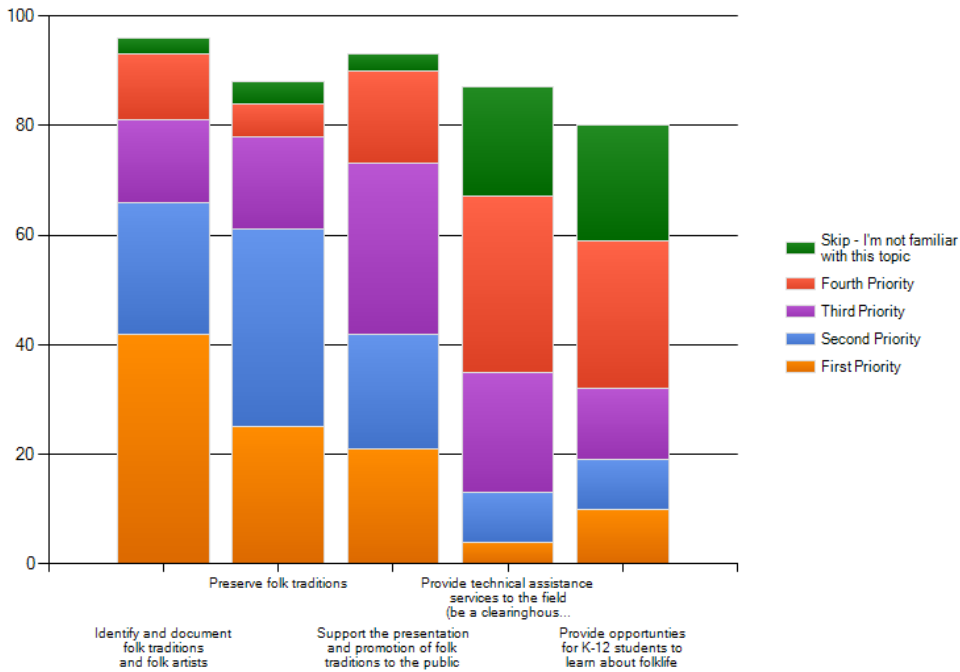


Table 6.

Of all the SERVICES that the Folklife Program offers or has offered, what types of services do you consider most important to folklife in Louisiana?



F. Documentation

Within **Documentation**, the strategies most valued are the Regional Folklorists and grants to support fieldwork, and Folklife Program initiated fieldwork (see Table 7). Below are additional survey comments about documentation.

1. *We believe the LA Folklife Program should be supporting publishing and documentary films about LA folk traditions. This would be an excellent use of funds and a progressive approach to getting the message out. It will help us better educate our own and the general public instead of allowing others to attempt to do this. We should expand the criteria of those eligible to access these funds. We need to generate more content and engage those who can help.*
2. *Increased grant monies are needed.*
3. *In order to preserve and document the wonderful traditions and cultures present in Louisiana, I think a good grant program for events, research, articles, restoration, and recovery, etc. are much needed.*
4. *Louisiana folklife is a rare and ephemeral resource. It needs documentation for those elements that are doomed to disappear and nurturing for those that can survive and prosper. All of these elements are important.*
5. *While grants to support fieldwork are valuable, they may not provide documentation of groups where it is really needed. In an ideal situation, regional folklorists covering the entire state would probably do more to document the state equally. Since the folklorist provides so much technical assistance and other services from the state office, there is not really enough time for technical assistance and documentation of the whole state by the state folklorist; therefore, regional folklorists can provide more coverage and outreach for the whole state. However, if this was not feasible, field projects initiated by the state program would be my second choice.*
6. *Grants are important because lots of people have ideas for documentation projects and are just lacking the funds to do it. Folklorists provided and projects proposed by the Folklife Program would also be very helpful, but not the most necessary to achieve this goal.*
7. *Identify a person in the community. Provide basic training and have them interview someone in their own community. This would help communities develop and maintain their cultural heritage, while recognizing the importance of members of the community. Bring the Folklife to the Folks. Or begin a program by which persons can become a Community Folklorist (working under the direction of an academic Folklorist.*
8. *Fieldwork at the state level will better inform marketing the cultural economy. Supporting other fieldwork projects through grants is also needed, and Regional Folklorists can serve as advisers and partners on these programs.*
9. *The loss of the Regional Folklife program will be immeasurable if it is not reinstated. Hopefully the powers that be will seriously consider reinstating the Regional Folklife Program soon. Can the wheels be reversed?*
10. *All are essential! We cannot rely on journalists to tell our story, or fiction writers; folklorists are TRAINED to do this scientifically by the best standards in the field.*
11. *Train tradition bearers in documentation so that they have these skills and can control what is being documented.*

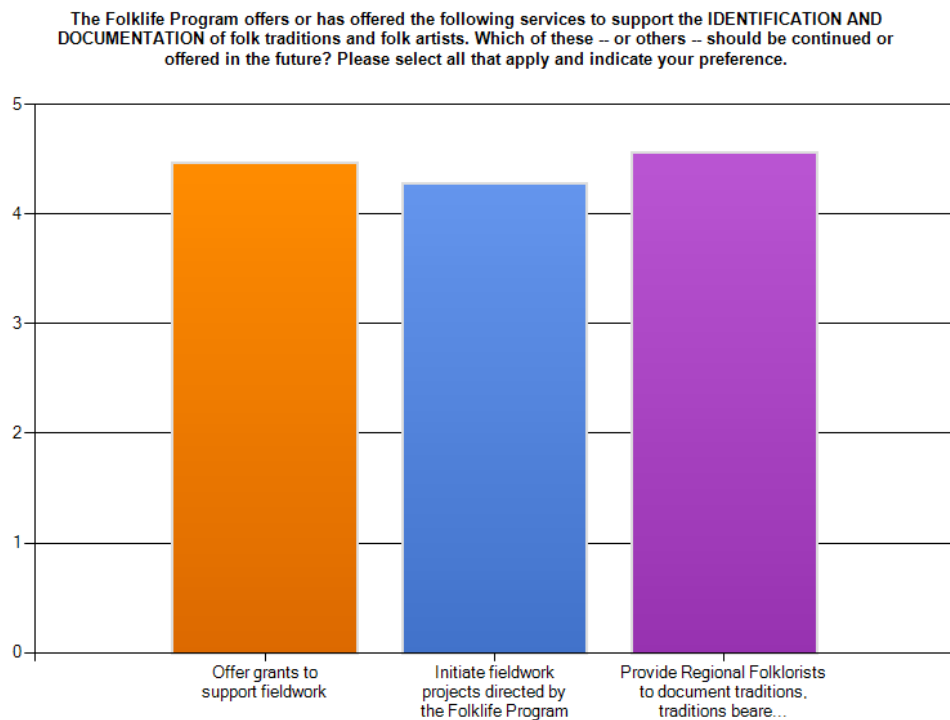
One respondent felt that the Regional Folklife Program should have focused on stimulating the cultural economy.

12. *There has been no great amount of fieldwork done in our rural Creole communities in 20-25 years to illustrate the evolution of a dynamic music (zydeco) tradition that is being recognized now with a dedicated GRAMMY category, known all over the world and has helped to shape the cultural identity of this state. Please do not waste money on a regional folklorist unless they have monetized something in their career, because without this sensibility they are just another out of touch academic stuck in a book or in research (limited most of the time) who is not helping create opportunities for our artists, cultural workers, and tradition bearers. Sorry to be so blunt, but it's not working this way and never really has.*

Respondents offered suggestions about documentation strategies, including the following.

- 13. *Folklife practitioners and researchers could be first line of recipients of RFPs and expanded opportunities. Folklife efforts and current news should be reported by these agencies regularly as a valued part of Louisiana's cultural infrastructure. There should be invitations to folklife practitioners and researchers to events and meet and greets within those agencies.*
- 14. *Unfortunately, the ultimate fate of folklife lies in the hands of those who nurture and perpetuate it. Folklore continues to evolve with society and some elements may be doomed to disappear. Hopefully those will be documented before doing so.*
- 15. *Support non--profit groups dedicated to particular cultural or ethnic groups.*

Table 7.



G. Within **Preservation**, the strategy most valued is archiving existing research (see Table 8). Other strategies scored as statically valid are offering apprenticeships, preserving the Creole State Exhibit artifacts, and offering fellowships.

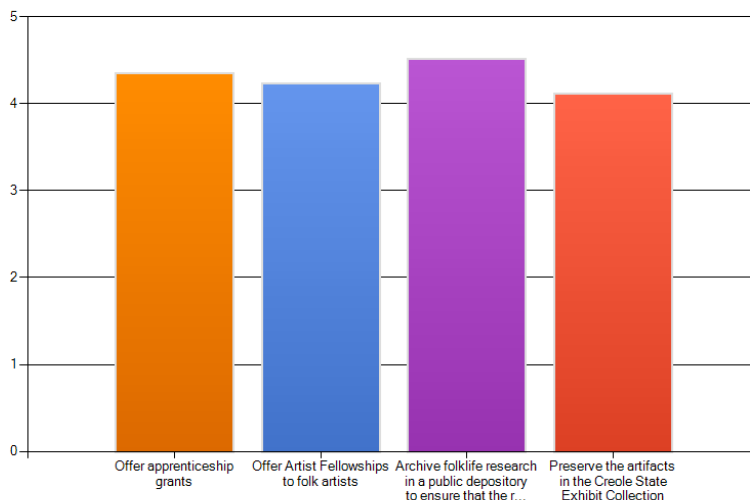
1. *Apprenticeships do more to perpetuate traditions probably than fellowships, which are mainly to honor the tradition bearer. I'm not really neutral about fellowships; I just see them as less important than apprenticeships. I believe that the artifacts in the Creole State are important resources that represent some of the major traditions and tradition bearers. It would be a shame for these artifacts and their interpretive information to be lost.*
2. *Without fellowships being offered to the artists who are keeping the traditions alive and dynamic all of this "fieldwork" (limited as it is) is just stagnant information.*
3. *If we do not preserve our culture, our traditions, who will? The LA Folklife Program is best suited for this role and has demonstrated excellence in this task with professional leadership and a body of substantial work as proof.*
4. *I think the Creole Exhibit should be preserved by a museum and not the Folklife Program. [The Creole State Exhibit artifacts are now on loan to the Louisiana State Museum.]*
5. *Ideally, the "public depository" of archived folklife research would be housed on www.louisianafolklife.org (rather than in an actual storage facility).*
6. *All of these elements are very important. Would you choose between IV antibiotics and oxygen for a patient in the ICU? Of course not.*

Respondents offered suggestions about preservation strategies, including the following.

7. *Get your archives digitized; backup the physical record with an accessible digital record!*
8. *Other agencies should have a budget line for traditional culture: acquisitions, compensation for folk artist, exhibitions, etc. They should also hire a resident folklorist, cultural resource person or cultural anthropologist.*

Table 8.

The Folklife Program offers or has offered the following services to support the PRESERVATION of folk traditions. Which of these -- or others -- should be continued or offered in the future? Please select all that apply and indicate your preference.

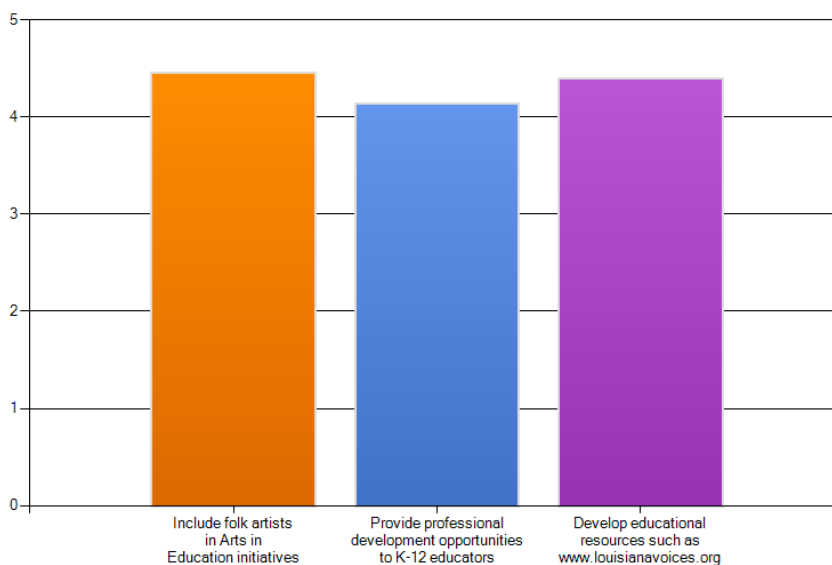


H. Within **Education**, the strategies most valued are including folk artists in Arts in Education and further developing folk arts in education resources such as www.louisianavoices.org (see Table 9).

1. *I think that we need to do more to promote the use of the current Louisiana Voices by finding ways to let teachers know about its existence and then to provide professional development as needed. We have a good product, but it needs promoting. I don't know if we need further resources.*
2. *As a student I have benefited directly from the AIE and Louisiana Voices folklife-education connections in the past and I believe all three of these services are crucial to the promotion, dissemination, and preservation of Louisiana folklife. Lâche pas! [Don't drop it!]*
3. *Please notify those of us who are not in-state of opportunities for participating in your programs and activities.*
4. *We do an arts education program all over the world, but rarely do we present here in Louisiana. Our educators are not even knowledgeable of their own folk traditions so how can our students or general population become more aware?*
5. *Education services can only expand the Louisiana Folklife Program's ability to generate further knowledge, understanding, sensitivity, appreciation to develop new generations of citizens aware of the greater good.*
6. *The key to the future of the culture of Louisiana, our best resource, is the students in schools today.*
7. *Bring folklife artists into classrooms and libraries.*
8. *The face-to-face contact between traditional artists and students is a great thing; I favor all three services.*

Table 9.

The Folklife Program offers or has offered the following EDUCATION SERVICES to support the field of folklife in the state. Which of these – or others – should be continued or offered in the future? Please select all that apply and indicate your preference.



I. Presentation and Promotion were less valued but still statistically significant, as 33-66 % of respondents considered them *very important*. Within Presentation and Promotion, the strategies most valued were producing exhibits, maintaining the Folklife in Louisiana website, and offering State Project Assistance grants in folklife that would enable others to present folklife (see Table 10).

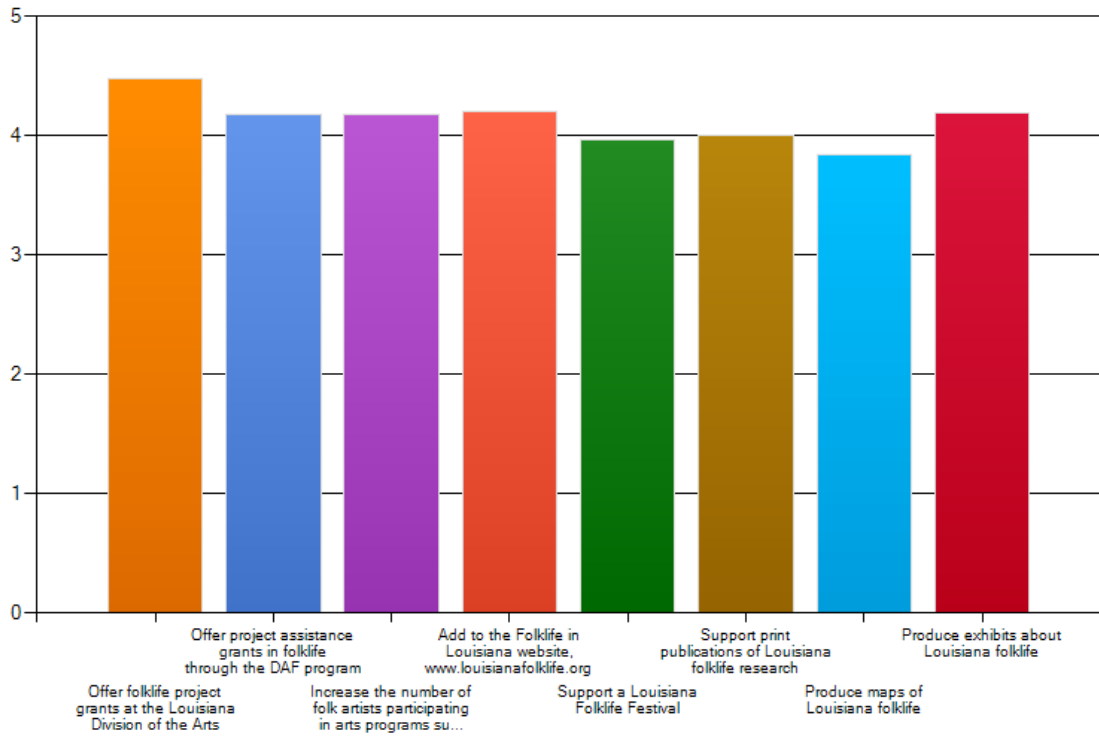
1. *The more accessible the information on Louisiana's traditional arts is, the more they will thrive. Perhaps, using maps and exhibits, the staff could strengthen outreach to new groups of citizens.*
2. *We have been folklife entertainers for over 16 years and have NEVER heard of Louisiana Presenters Network! We wonder what the state is doing with the funds since we may be like many others and LEFT OUT OF THE LOOP!*
3. *These activities keep the program visible to constituents.*

Respondents offered suggestions about presentation and promotion strategies, including the following.

4. *A compilation of lists (academic venues) through which folk artists can get performance dates. Some sort of booking agency/service would be helpful.*
5. *Create traveling folklife festivals. Once a month the festival troupe would present a weekend festival in a different venue. In addition to the headliners, local folk practitioners could be included to promote awareness of regional folk traditions. Make it a self revenue generating operation by selling festival cups, t-shirts, posters, selling food, paid. Admission for some features, craft sales, etc.*
6. *At one time there was a listing of all festivals which was user friendly. Sadly it was replaced with a very useless site where you have to know what you are looking for. Bring back the yearly listing of all festivals in the state and their contact info. [This calendar was provided by the Office of Tourism.]*
7. *I would like to see more assistance provided to artists, such as musicians and Cajun comedians to help them obtain work. Perhaps there would be some way to connect the artists looking to get hired with groups searching for them. Anything that the department can do to help connect the artists with the groups looking to hire them would be most helpful.*
8. *Provide a list of folk artists, musicians, practitioners that are partially paid for thru the state to make them available to local venues at a lower fee.*
9. *More opportunities should be granted to folklife researchers to speak publicly about their findings/research.*

Table 10.

The Folklife Program offers or has offered the following services to support the PRESENTATION of folklife and PROMOTION of folk artists. Which of these -- or others -- should be continued or offered in the future? Please select all that apply and indicate your preference.



J. When asked about **Technical Assistance Services** offered, the most valued service is the Louisiana Folk Artist Database followed by the Folklife Program serving as a clearinghouse of information about Louisiana folklife, providing research to other state agencies, and organizations, and convening meetings (see Table 11).

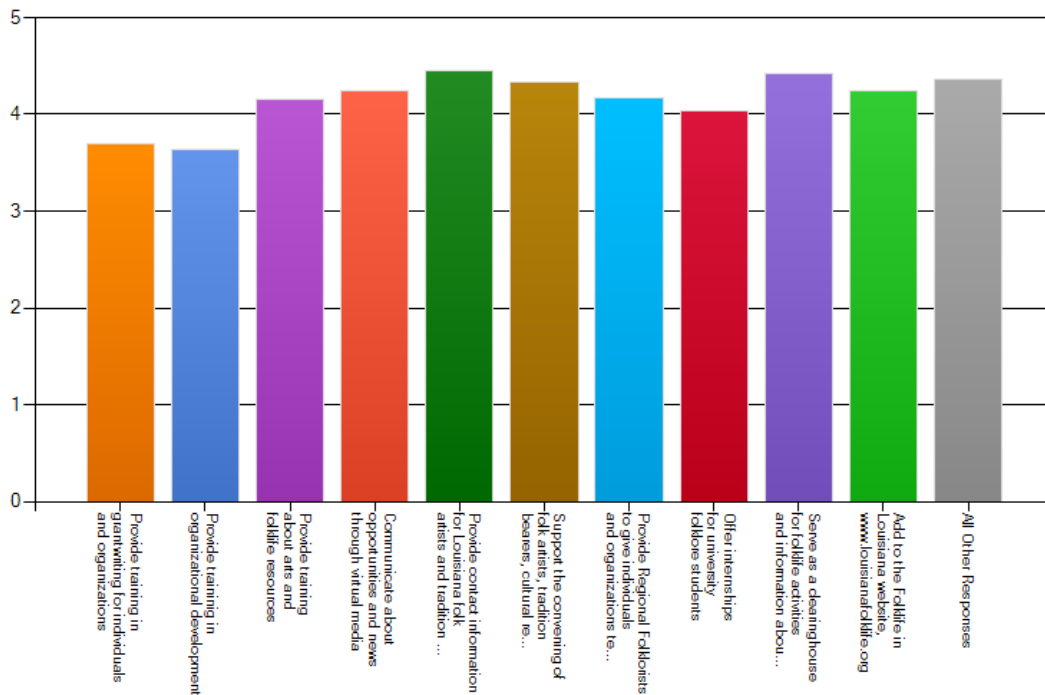
1. *I think the last is very important [i.e., Provide research to cultural tourism efforts, Main Street Programs, Cultural Districts, etc.]. People living in historic areas are often ignorant of their history and its influence on their lives. All the little towns need help to preserve and value what is there before it is lost.*
2. *Have a designee in each region or each major city, i.e., New Orleans, Lafayette, New Roads, Alexandria, Natchitoches, to serve as liaison for folklife.*
3. *Website content is excellent but so much information seems to be buried and hard to find.*
4. *The Louisiana Folklife Program is a model for the rest of the state. I am certain that it generates more revenue for the state than it consumes, which is in itself an important reason not to gut the program in the name of belt-tightening. It would be acting upon faulty logic to do so. Once more, I object to a system that allows me to make only 2 positive evaluations among 11 crucial programs.*

Respondents suggested technical assistance strategies, including the following.

5. *Folklife Program's most important function is to provide an accurate list of ALL folklife activities, entertainers, demonstrators, etc. in the State of Louisiana and to insure that listing is published and easily accessible to all entities that may be interested in using those participants. This would naturally be intertwined with Department of Tourism so that this access could be made **WORLDWIDE**. Louisiana has one of the richest folklife varieties in the world and we are not making best use, **NO MATTER HOW MUCH MONEY THE STATE OF LOUISIANA PUTS INTO THE PROGRAM!***
6. *Offer staff development for staff of other agencies to familiarize them in the traditions associated with their organizational focus. They will be more likely to incorporate folklife in their core programming.*
7. *Liaison work with cultural writers and media people and tourism contractors, so as to create jobs for people more intimately involved with authentic goings on in the field or landscape of Louisiana. [The Office of Tourism works with the tourism media.]*
8. *Have a central database where all folk artists, etc. could register their names and the work they do.*
9. *Support a speakers' bureau of folk artists that can travel and present in rural communities.*
10. *More regional meetings.*
11. *Promote volunteerism. [Louisiana Serve's mission is to enhance volunteerism.]*
12. *FOLKLIFE should be the central location for accessing information/services/folklife talent and all entities of the state should be **ENCOURAGED** to utilize that list first!*
13. *It seems a natural intersection for folklife to permeate all of these types of agencies. I guess that is where the technical assistance would come in handy—to help people realize, identify, and develop what they might already have and just don't know about.*
14. *More integrated use and support of research and field work by including researchers at the planning table, especially to develop new products or opportunities or infrastructure.*

Table 11.

The Folklife Program offers or has offered the following TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES to support the field of folklife in the state. Which of these -- or others -- should be continued or offered in the future? Please select all that apply and indicate your preference.



K. When asked **what genres or groups should be documented in the future**, the most people indicated oral traditions (62.7%) to be *very important* followed by music (60.4%), ritual traditions (53.5%), traditions not documented recently (52.0%), regions of the state that have not been documented (49.0%), ethnic groups (46.3%), and younger folk artists (45.0%) (see Table 12).

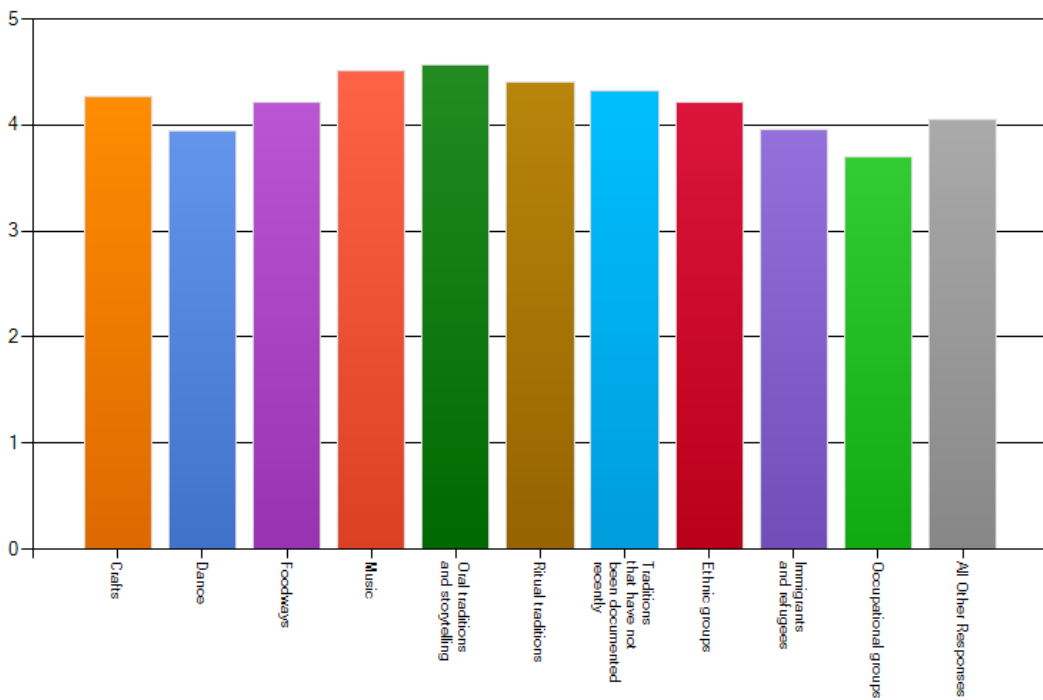
Respondents provided many suggestions and comments regarding folklife documentation including the following.

1. *Another way to organize folklife, other than by ethnicity, geography, and/or performance genre, is with regard to areas of "traditional knowledge" (TK). Examples could be: traditional plant knowledge, traditional ecological knowledge, traditional knowledge of the seasons and weather, etc. All areas of knowledge that depend on face-to-face human/nature interaction are endangered today. These "TK" topics could provide basis for large and long-term projects that have greater impact on society.*
2. *Foodways ranked as "less important" with the hope that SOFAB [Southern Food and Beverage Museum] or University of Mississippi's Southern Foodways Alliance could document foodways. Music ranked as "less important" because there are many ethnomusicologists/scholars actively researching/writing about the state's music traditions. (This genre already receives a fair amount of attention).*

3. *My expertise is Cajun foodways. You must focus on projects out in the field. Universities have too many political agendas that affect the outcome and too many dollars have been wasted already.*
4. *All of these groups and traditions are essential parts of folk culture and it would be a disservice to all of them to rank them.*
5. *A high priority for me: Spoken Language/Languages and Dialects of ethnic enclaves: Native American groups, Cajuns, Creoles, African-Americans, Upland South, New Orleans.*
6. *I feel like foodways and music are consistently and thoroughly documented, as they are more accessible. The crafts, oral traditions, ritual traditions, and ethnic groups are things that are not as widely explored.*

Table 12.

Much of the Louisiana Folklife Program's FIELDWORK identifying and documenting folk artists and folk groups was done in the 1980s and 1990s. Which genres or groups would you prefer the Folklife Program to focus documentation efforts on in the future? Please select all that apply and indicate your preference.



When asked to suggest **possible partnerships**, they offered many suggestions within DCRT and beyond. Within DCRT, they suggested the following.

L. OFFICE OF TOURISM

1. *Tourism could help promote folk artists and presentations of folk activities; however, they would need to be educated about these resources.*
2. *Tourism should fund research, documentation, and presentation because this will bring more tourism dollars to the state.*
3. *Tourism could do more to spread information about the resources currently available and the opportunities for experiencing the diversity Louisiana folklife (beyond food and music).*
4. *National Heritage Areas could support public interfaces for the products of research. DAF offices could organize and encourage local contributions.*
5. *The State Office of Tourism could promote folklife traditions across the whole state. In addition, it would be great if the State Folklife Program and State Tourism could partner to produce a state folklife festival. A state festival could present and promote folk traditions from across the state, but it would need funding.*
6. *The Scenic Byways could include folk artists and folk events along each byway. Folklorists would have to work with the byways, or the state folklorist would have to provide resources for such inclusion.*
7. *Byways can include the folklife program as a partner to interpretive initiatives along the byway.*
8. *A central listing for all of the programs to utilize when planning events, etc. Encourage all agencies to use people/services from that list.*
9. *Tourism could put on a travelling show of Louisiana artists and musicians along with local foods to travel around the country, hopefully self supporting, to introduce other areas to the richness of our culture.*

M. STATE PARKS/STATE MUSEUM/STATE LIBRARY/TOURISM WELCOME CENTERS

1. *Museums and Parks could exhibit artifacts and promote folk artists.*
2. *Parks and tourism centers could serve as locations for the display of folklife materials.*
3. *Parks could certainly include exhibitions and shows where local musicians and artists are offered a venue.*
4. *Museums and libraries could offer programs where artists come to tell tales, do music, or introduce a craft to local people.*
5. *The state library could help publish and disperse information on Louisiana folklife.*

N. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

1. *Historic Preservation could make a special effort to preserve important folk structures and study them within their cultural contexts.*
2. *Assist in providing Feasibility Studies for historic buildings.*
3. *Historic preservation could help with research on history of older buildings in smaller communities. Perhaps they could offer classes to show people how to do research on*

- their own homes and businesses and then provide markers for places that are of significance.*
4. *Historic Preservation could provide technical assistance and grants to folk architecture projects.*

O. CODOFIL

1. *CODOFIL could do much more to document and preserve oral traditions in both French AND Creole, rather than focusing on almost exclusively on education.*
2. *CODOFIL could apply for at-risk language grants and implement them. Careful choice of fieldwork topics would render both language and folkways info.*

Beyond DCRT, respondents often mentioned Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities supporting projects; universities providing internships, expertise, and services; museums sponsoring exhibits; and libraries providing resources and venues. Some provided specific suggestions including the following.

P. UNIVERSITIES

1. *Universities could support community documentation centers (see Elon College [Program for Ethnographic Research and Community Studies]) and include field work as a service learning component for many classes.*
2. *Universities could provide lab and computer facilities, student interns, graduate student, and professional researchers for large and/or long-term projects and initiatives.*
3. *Partner with **Tulane's Center for Public Service** to train/manage students in executing folklife documentation projects. Tourism entities could be approached to help support a folklife festival.*
4. *LSU could help with storing and making manuscripts, research, and folklife research materials available through Hill Memorial Library.*
5. *Collaborate with **Folklife Center** [at NSU] on specific interpretation projects.*

Q. NON-PROFITS

1. *The **Louisiana Folklore Society** could be the convener of the folklorists, folk artists, etc. If the society had a newsletter and an executive director, it might be able to take over communication.*
2. *Include folklife programs from **Louisiana Folklife Society** as on-going parts of their annual program events.*
3. *Perhaps instead of the Folklife Program having its own festival, it should seek out other folklife-oriented festivals and events in which to participate in various ways. One such event is the **Dewey Balfa Cajun and Creole Heritage Week**.*
4. ***SOFAB** [Southern Food and Beverage Museum] and/or **Southern Foodways Alliance** to document foodways traditions.*
5. *Partner elementary schools with **nursing homes / retirement homes**.*

6. *Volunteer programs with **AARP** chapters. Senior citizens have a wealth of knowledge, as they may have folklore information to share. In addition, may be looking for opportunities to be "involved" with projects.*

R. CULTURAL BUSINESSES / CULTURAL ECONOMY

1. *Where are **cultural businesses** in this formula for success? They should be number one to help navigate all aspects of folklife.*
2. *Folklife and other state agencies must extend their partners to the **private sector**.*
3. ***CRT**, the **Cultural Economy Foundation** and tourism can all be more effective than the others have been because they understand the economics of our folk traditions. Our universities simply don't understand how to monetize our folk traditions. Regional tourism is limited in what they can do, but they can help in their communities if given more funds to do so, but they should be more transparent and accountable. In other parts of the country the state parks and heritage play a larger role, but in Canada (the model we prefer) it is the Ministry of Culture and its many arms that provides most arts funding. It is so vast and well funded that there are so many streams of support. Organizations like **CODIFIL**, **Creole Heritage Center**, **Creole, Inc**, even **LA Folklife** are failing to message properly and there is no oversight, no one guiding them to make sure their message is accurate and progressive. There are horror stories coming out of these fragmented organizations that have not proven to be an asset to our communities. I simply don't trust the ability of these other entities to effectively promote, simulate opportunities and monetize folk traditions.*
4. ***Not for profit trade associations** (seafood, forestry, transportation, crafts, restaurateurs, etc.) should contribute toward projects that illuminate their industries.*
5. *Consider places like **LITE** [Louisiana Immersive Technologies Enterprise, a cooperative effort between Louisiana Economic Development, the Lafayette Economic Development Authority, and the University of Louisiana at Lafayette].*

S. TOURISM BUREAUS

1. *The state folklife program could provide relevant information about regional folk artists to their **parish tourism bureaus**.*

T. MUSEUMS

1. *Folklife apprenticeships could be connected to museum or university programs or to technical high schools (in the case of occupational traditions or foodways).*
2. ***Louisiana Association of Museums** would be a wonderful partner for clearinghouse management, information exchange, collaborations with museums within the state, finding folklife specialists, and more.*
3. *Offer direct support to museums in Louisiana that do folklife preservation work and folklife education work.*
4. ***LAM** might be a forum for presenting information on how museums might include more folklife exhibitions.*
5. *The **LA Association of Museums** may have documentation of folk artists in which Folklife may not be aware and vice versa.*

U. LOUISIANA ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

1. *LEH could publish folklife-oriented articles (thus eliminating need for separate folklife program-funded publications); also could incorporate a folklife page on their website.*
2. *LEH could publish relevant research/studies in KnowLA, the online encyclopedia, removing some of the burden for maintaining a LFP web page (giving LFP full credit, of course).*
3. *LEH could help with grant distribution and review. State Museums and Secretary of State museums could help with preservation of collections and materials.*
4. *Grant support from LEH would be crucial.*
5. *Include a monthly column on Louisiana folklife in LEH's Cultural Vistas.*

V. LOCAL PARKS AND LIBRARIES

1. *Parks affiliated with cities and state could be partners in sending out calls and promotions of folklife events.*
2. *Public libraries could host exhibits and promote education among local k12 education resources as well as speaking opportunities for folk artist demonstrations.*

W. FEDERAL AGENCIES

1. *BITNEP should be a regular partner; they should contribute to larger projects also.*
2. *Jean Lafitte National Park should contribute to larger projects involving culture bearers.*
3. *NPS and other Federal agencies are looking for ways to help. Louisiana agencies should contact them and assess their available resources, tell people what is needed.*
4. *NPS uses the folklife resources but since the park (Jean Lafitte) has cut back on folklife programs to some degree (funding deficits) - less now. Perhaps a workshop with such agencies discussing partnerships is in order. We talk a lot about partnerships but how much is really done?*

X. CONSORTIUM

1. *One thing that has happened in Mississippi and other states is that the cultural/historical organizations have banded together to form a consortium. This consortium picks a project and they all work together to fund different aspects of one larger project. In some states these groups have started an endowed fund from which the organizations will draw yearly so they are not at the mercy of state funding as much.*