Our goal
$4 million

Our mission is to promote the understanding and sustainability of traditional culture and the vitality of grassroots communities in the United States and around the world. We integrate high-quality scholarship and public programming with strong community participation and educational outreach. The Smithsonian Campaign will enable us to build on our distinguished legacy by expanding collaborations to promote cultural scholarship, artistry and participation as forms of civic engagement.

Leadership Message

FOR HALF A CENTURY, we have brought millions of people together in celebration of cultural heritage through the annual Smithsonian Folklife Festival. We have shared more than 44,000 songs and 3,000 albums through Smithsonian Folkways Recordings.

Our work in cultural heritage policy and at the Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections has resulted in substantive collaborations with hundreds of diverse communities. These combined efforts have positioned the Smithsonian as an innovative leader in preserving traditional culture and music.

The Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage strengthens understanding, appreciation and sustainability of diverse cultures of, by, and for the people. Join us by participating in the Smithsonian Campaign, as we pursue an exciting new vision — a world that honors the principles of cultural democracy, where the arts that people create help them determine their future.

We see a future in which our staff, fellows, and interns deepen their commitment to and participation in the dynamic exchange of ideas, traditional culture and artistic expression. Our storied past — including a who’s who of the world’s most iconic folk artists and musicians — is the foundation on which we base this marvelous future.

Please help us safeguard what we have achieved and expand public engagement using new media to reach people everywhere. Your collaboration is key and we invite you on this exhilarating journey.

Michael Atwood Mason
Director
Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage
The Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage is deeply engaged in collaborative research and the continuity of traditional knowledge and artistry of diverse contemporary communities. We present this cultural scholarship through music, exhibitions, documentary films, symposia, publications, educational materials and major national events. Our Smithsonian Folklife Festival, now in its fifth decade, connects visitors with exemplary practitioners of diverse, authentic, living traditions, old and new. We will expand these offerings and add important works to Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, which document “people’s music,” spoken word, instruction and sounds from the United States and around the world.

Training Cultural Heritage Professionals

Campaign gifts will enable us to advance the scholarship of fellows and interns who enliven the center with new energy and ideas. Our scholarship, strong community participation and educational outreach lead to activities that affect cultural heritage policies and practices locally, nationally and globally.

Cultural Sustainability

Gifts to this new fund will enable us to create sustainable livelihoods for traditional artists. Support is needed for cultural leadership training in the communities with which we partner. Our goal is to increase the vitality and visibility of culture bearers, artists and traditions as we promote cultural expression critical to human well-being and community health.

Immigration and Migration

We seek to better understand how the forces of immigration, migration and cultural identity are transforming contemporary communities. A new program fund will support projects such as Folklife 360, a year-round extension of innovative Folklife Festival programming and The Social Power of Music, which includes the acquisition of 6,500 recorded tracks of zydeco, folk, global and other music, new multimedia lesson plans on our website, new teacher certification workshops in world music and the publication of original recordings with cultural and social significance.

Case for Support

The festival is a remarkable cultural crossroads for musicians, artists, scholars and all the visitors who embrace the opportunity to broaden their cultural horizons.

—YO-YO MA, CELLIST AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
THE SILK ROAD PROJECT, INC.

2014 Smithsonian Folklife Festival on the National Mall. This educational presentation featuring community-based cultural exemplars is free to the public and takes place for two weeks every summer. It draws hundreds of thousands of visitors.

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Our Campaign Priorities

Your campaign gift is an investment in sustaining cultural heritage and diversity in communities everywhere.

ENDOW FELLOWSHIPS AND INTERNSHIPS
We seek a total of $1 million to establish an endowment to train the next generation of cultural heritage leaders. Gift opportunities include $100,000 to support 50 interns for a summer term. We also seek funding to create a Junior Curators Program and to offer stipends to our fellows and internships to young students in underserved communities in Washington, D.C., and beyond.

IMMIGRATION AND MIGRATION PROGRAM FUND
Investments totaling $1 million will enable us to create this fund and will support research, mini-documentaries, music-related projects, women’s cultural heritage forums, events, publications and partnerships across the Smithsonian and with other organizations. Gift opportunities start at $25,000.

CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY FUND
Gifts totaling $2 million will enable us to produce Folklife Festival programs focused on the revitalization of endangered cultural traditions. We seek $100,000 to train emerging scholars from diverse disciplines. Gift opportunities include $200,000 for archival digitization and preservation and $200,000 for training of culture bearers through artisan initiatives.

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings is our nonprofit record label dedicated to cultural diversity, education and lively engagement with the world of sound. As a condition of our acquisition of it from founder Moses Asch, the Smithsonian agreed that virtually all titles would remain in print forever. Our collection continues to grow.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 202.633.1110 OR VISIT SMITHSONIANCAMPAIGN.ORG.

The Smithsonian Campaign will transform a national treasure into a catalyst for change. Please join us as we raise $1.5 billion to spark discovery, tell America’s story, inspire lifelong learning and reach people everywhere.

The Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage is raising $4 million of the Smithsonian Campaign’s overall goal.
This practitioner of the Gullah tradition of sweetgrass basket weaving, from Charleston, S.C., was a participant in the Forest Service program of the 2005 Smithsonian Folklife Festival.

PHOTO JOHN KORB