



Additional Information

1. Please provide your mission statement and a brief summary of your organization's work.

The mission of The Folk School is to perpetuate the joy of hands-on learning. We offer year-round classes and programs for all ages in traditional crafts, woodworking, outdoor skills, and hands-on arts and sciences.

Our classes include woodworking, boatbuilding, pottery, carving, basket making, blacksmithing, sewing, tanning, book arts, survival skills, summer immersions for kids and adults, cooking, music, wild plant identification and sustainable harvesting, food preservation, farming, writing, journaling and drawing, navigation, botany, biology, and much more. Some are designed for students of all ages, many are focused on kids, and still others on adults.

We also have periodic classes and events for homeschooling families, to help provide a diverse education in arts and various skills.

2. How does your work align with Co-op Market's mission and values?

- *Mission: Co-op Market Grocery & Deli works for health and sustainability by providing healthful foods and products, promoting local suppliers, and offering consumer education in an open, community-centered environment, through a viable business.*

The Folk School regularly offers classes in cooking skills and sustainable harvesting of foods and materials that we are surrounded by in the boreal forest of Interior Alaska. We have had classes on using local berries and botanicals, gardening, mushrooms, cooking local game, preserving produce, and more.

One of our primary goals is to help the people of Interior Alaska reconnect with our natural environment, and sustainably harvesting the bounty that surrounds us is a way to keep both people and the earth healthy together.

- *Value: Service – We are committed to the joy of true service, putting the needs of others first in a way that touches lives and hearts. Our service is an honor and a privilege.*

Many of our classes focus on the student's well-being: physically, mentally, and spiritually. Music classes nourish the soul and mind, candle and salve-making classes can lead to a peaceful mind and healthy body, and the deep benefits that local whole

foods bring. And many of our outdoor classes lead to an appreciation of the benefits of physical labor and our natural world.

The Folk School actively works to support anyone in the community who wants to take our classes, whether limited by finances or physical or other challenges. We have a scholarship fund available through generous donations over the years--including from Co-Op Market owners--and we do our best to provide accommodations to overcome other limitations.

- *Value: Sustainability – We seek to sustain our co-op’s financial health and growth while working toward solutions to economic development that consider the health of our community and planet.*

One of our partners is Calypso Farm & Ecology Center, with whom we mutually support each other’s programs. And many of our instructors come from other local farms, as well as our other nonprofit partners, such as the Northwoods Book Arts Guild..

We believe that by teaching traditional skills--such as basketmaking with birch bark, woodworking to make useful objects for everyday use, and making music with instruments made with interesting local materials--our students are more confident and productive in their everyday life. And often what they begin to learn in class in a supportive environment can lead to a lifelong career.

Our classes encourage harvesting the student’s own materials from the forest or tundra, so they have context and appreciation for those resources. It is the difference between chicken on a styrofoam tray or carrots in a plastic bag, versus having a relationship with a farm or forest or tundra that provides the food. As one begins to gain familiarity and comfort while rummaging around finding these things, then the relationship between the person and that environment becomes intimate. That then is what can make us better stewards. We protect the places we love.

- *Value: Social Responsibility – We believe that our actions must benefit the global community at large. This means that we promote justice and equity in all of our relationships and are committed to the people who use and work for our business.*

The tradition of folk schools is one of empowering individuals through education in a tolerant and supportive community. This tradition compels us to speak out against racism. We value and support individual development as caring members of the community, and we cannot stay silent in the face of violence that is disproportionately used by police and the legal system against Black and Indigenous People of Color across the United States and here in interior Alaska. We stand in solidarity with those demanding justice, and with those seeking societal change to redress the harms that systemic racism causes.

You can read our full anti-discrimination statement [here](#).

3. How will the Lend a Hand funds be used?

We will use the funds to help cover the costs of our programs so that we can keep our registration fees as low as possible. In part, we do that by providing scholarships to help students that otherwise wouldn't be able to attend a program that they want to be a part of, and funds from the Lend-a-Hand program can help strengthen that fund.

4. If your organization has received funding from Co-op Market in the past, please describe how this funding supported your organization and mission.

We have used the funds donated to The Folk School by Co-op owners in previous years to provide scholarships for a variety of classes and programs, including Week in the Woods and various woodworking classes. The funds have also helped with repairs and improvements in our cabin at Pioneer Park, as well as to keep our class fees low and affordable.

5. What is your elevator pitch? Cashiers usually have about 10 seconds to describe our monthly recipient to a shopper. Please describe your organization and how the funds will be used in 100 words or less.

The Folk School offers year-round classes and programs in traditional crafts, woodworking, outdoor skills, and hands-on arts and sciences for students of all ages, from young kids to adults. Your donation will help keep fees affordable and to support people who otherwise might not be able to take a class for financial reasons.