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EDITOR'S PICK

Appalachian History Initiative seeks proposals

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A new project housed at Virginia Tech with a focus on untold histories seeks proposals from community members, community groups, educators, activists, and regional artists for publicly engaged projects.

Projects can receive up to \$300,000 for staffing, artistic processes, design, materials, installation, and products.

Monuments Across Appalachian Virginia (MAAV) is focused on creating the kinds of events and exhibits that may not immediately be recognized as monuments but nevertheless document and celebrate the area's diversity and rich history, according to a MAAV news release.

Proposed projects should be aligned with MAAV's directive to assist communities'

efforts to reclaim, amplify, imagine, reinterpret, document, and display histories and experiences that highlight collective struggles for the vitality of people and our shared environment, especially by and for people whose stories have been silenced, denied, or excluded, according to the release.

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“We believe that monuments can foster a sense of belonging, honor collective struggles, and invite people into public spaces to share stories,” said Emily Satterwhite, project co-lead and director of the Appalachian Studies program in the Department of Religion and Culture at Virginia Tech, in the release.

“Monuments that tell new stories help people reimagine and reclaim Appalachia. It is not a white, static, simple, rooted place but a dynamic and complex region where migration, displacement, and the experiences of many different groups of people are central to our history.”

MAAV is looking for historians, educators, arts groups, and social justice organizations to partner with to celebrate local history through creative works such as murals, performances, exhibitions, statues, and art installations, according to the release. The group is especially interested in movement across the landscape via migration and population displacement; resource extraction and environmental change; and struggles for social justice including feminist, anti-racist, environmental justice, and pro-labor movements.

MAAV has been awarded \$3 million to fund up to 10 monuments across the region, and hopes the community will bring forward untold histories and

experiences to be recognized by the project.

“We bring a mindset of working with the community, not coming in and saying, “This is how you should build a monument to your history,”” said Katrina Powell, project co-lead and director of the Center for Refugee, Migrant, and Displacement Studies at Virginia Tech, in the release. “We have resources and would like to work with you on what you see is important to your community.”

Applications are open for submission and must be submitted by Jan. 10.

There will be a live Q&A on zoom on Dec. 4. Register at **moremountainstories.org/events**.

The MAAV team is also available to discuss proposal ideas and answer questions until Dec. 15. Contact **maav@vt.edu** for more information.

MAAV is part of a \$250 million initiative the Andrew Mellon Foundation started in 2020 to support public projects across the country.

— *The Roanoke Times*

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