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DATE: June 19, 2017

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Southwest Folklife Alliance Awarded NEA Funding for Annual Tucson Meet Yourself Festival and Year-round Programs Supporting Traditional Artists

[Tucson]—The Southwest Folklife Alliance, the parent-producing organization of Tucson Meet Yourself is pleased to announce it has received two grants from the National Endowment for the Arts to support the annual festival as well as ongoing programs that provide opportunities to traditional artists.

A grant of \$35,000 will support the 44th annual Tucson Meet Yourself folklife festival, which presents performances, exhibits, and demonstrations exploring family, ethnic, regional, and occupational folklife communities in Southern Arizona and Northern Mexico. The event occurs Oct. 13-15, 2017 in downtown Tucson, AZ. It is free and open to the public.

An additional \$45,000 grant will help the organization expand its support of traditional artists through its Master-Apprentice Award program; grow its monthly e-journal “BorderLore” on art, culture, and heritage in the Borderlands; develop new educational opportunities in folklife and ethnographic fieldwork; and expand its work into the Phoenix metro area. Funds will also support the organization’s End-of-Life Continuum initiative in partnership with hospices and the reissue of an educational curriculum in partnership with Smithsonian Institution.

SFA Executive Director Maribel Alvarez says the funding is particularly significant given the recent proposed cuts to NEA funding. “Our work is about serving the public and connecting people to the heritage and culture of the region in respectful and caring ways. Supporting artists who’ve learned their craft not from books but from masters before them allows us to play a small role in ensuring that a traditional artform, and by extension culture itself, is not only passed onto next generations but also shared with broader audiences to appreciate and learn from it. In our minds, this is the beauty of being human in a diverse world. Sharing, appreciating, and learning from those who may have different expressions—whether culinary, musical, linguistic, artisanal—than our own.”

Awards made to SFA are part of \$82 million awarded to local arts projects across the country in the NEA’s second major funding announcement for fiscal year 2017. The NEA received 1,728 Art Works applications and will make 1,029 grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$100,000.

“The arts reflect the vision, energy, and talent of America’s artists and arts organizations,” said NEA Chairman Jane Chu. “The National Endowment for the Arts is proud to support organizations such as the Southwest Folklife Alliance, in serving their communities by providing excellent and accessible arts experiences.”