

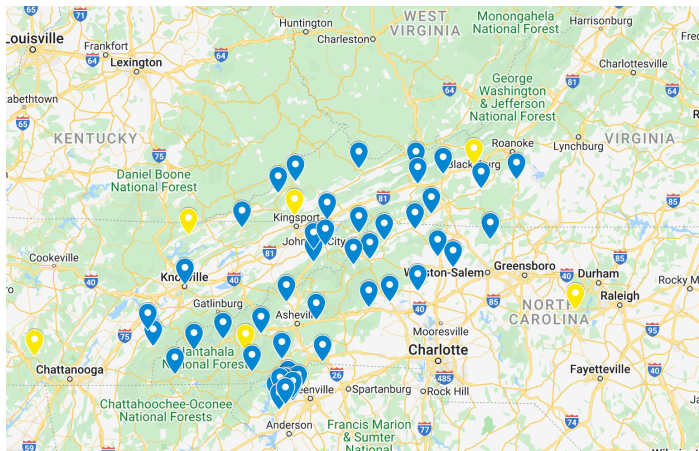


Junior Appalachian Musicians

We believe that children who are actively engaged in traditional mountain music are more connected and better prepared to strengthen their communities for future generations.

Junior Appalachian Musicians (JAM) is an after school music education program model for children to learn the traditional old time and bluegrass music of the Appalachians. JAM programs have impacted the lives of thousands of children in North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and Tennessee since 2000.

Currently, there are **more than 50 JAM programs** in the four-state area of North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia.



JAM often partners with other agencies and organizations to develop new programs and ensure healthy levels of sustainability. In Virginia, JAM partners with the Crooked Road's *Traditional Music Education Program*, and in North Carolina, JAM works with the North Carolina Arts Council. JAM offers a wide variety of resources to its affiliates, including training for teachers and program administrators, instructional/administrative resources and support, instruments on loan, donations of instrument accessories, student performance and learning opportunities, and much more. This type of in-kind support is provided for free.

About the Program Model

JAM is an after-school program for children in grades 4 – 8 (and beyond) that introduces music through small group instruction on instruments common to the Appalachian region, such as fiddle, banjo and guitar. In JAM, instrument instruction is often augmented by dance and vocal instruction as well as string band classes and group enrichment lessons, which introduce children to additional Appalachian culture and history. The JAM program model provides children with opportunities to not only learn traditional music, but to also perform in small and large groups. Field trips, visiting artists and an introduction to the rich history of music unique to each local community further supplement program offerings. Each JAM program is encouraged to foster musical traditions by teaching local styles of traditional mountain music and dance to children. JAM believes that all children should have access to traditional old time and bluegrass music and recommends basing tuition on a sliding scale, as well as offering scholarships to children in need. Class sizes typically have a student teacher ratio of 8:1 or less.

Local Program Responsibilities

Each program is autonomous. The program must raise its own funds and develop its own plan for implementation. These tasks are typically shared and coordinated by a local advisory board, fiscal agent, and/or program staff.

Advisory Board Personnel Suggestions:

- Local school systems coordinate student recruitment, provide student transportation needs, serve as possible site/fiscal agent as needed
- Traditional Appalachian music artists serve as instructors, provide insight into local music community
- Parent(s) of potential students, interested community members aid in communication with parents and community, identify possible volunteers
- Business leaders and tourism agents provide help with marketing and fundraising
- Other non profit youth/community serving organizations serve as possible site or fiscal agent as needed

The advisory board is typically charged with identifying potential fiscal agent and program site; identifying the target community; developing program budget, logistics, objectives, and policies; securing funding for the program; identifying staff; evaluating the program each semester or year of operation; meeting quarterly or at least bi-annually after program implementation.

Benefits of Music Education

Many public schools, especially those in impoverished rural areas, have faced decreased funding for music education in recent years despite scientific evidence that music education plays a crucial role in brain development. For over a decade, communities have filled this void in over thirty counties throughout Central Appalachia with JAM. The traditional music education offered by JAM also benefits the communities at large by integrating parents and grandparents with program activities and performances. Children learn about their local and regional history, which helps to develop a sense of place. Many children may not become professional musicians, but participation in a JAM program encourages a life-long respect for the arts. JAM programs also offer a safe place after school, and provide music education to many children who would never otherwise have the opportunity. By providing positive, accessible and inclusive learning environments, JAM programs are giving kids a place to learn traditional music, connect with others, develop self-confidence, and thrive in their own communities.

"JAM is really not about developing the next superstar. JAM is about building community. We want these kids to feel proud of who they are, feel proud of their heritage, we want them to have a place to belong all their life."

- *Helen White, Founder of JAM*

"We have families who come in and watch their kids participate in the JAM program who otherwise aren't always very comfortable being in the schools. School may not have been a great experience for some folks and the JAM program really expands the amount of families we're able to get to come in and be comfortable."

- *Jeff Cox, retired superintendent, Alleghany County Schools, NC*

"JAM gives kids opportunities to learn about acceptable interactions with their peers and with adults. It also gives them a chance to perform, see new places and get away from their every day setting." -*WiseJAMS, VA instructor*

"JAM helps the talented but otherwise invisible student find an identity and a place in the world." – *Caldwell JAM, NC instructor*

"I've been in JAM since I was 8 years old. I'm 15 now and have gone from student to teacher assistant. I think I've definitely become a lot more mature, and I've met a lot of cool people that I trust. If it hadn't been for JAM, I probably would not have ever learned to play the guitar." – *Dylan Roberts*

"Our lives would be completely different without JAM. My children have a whole future in Appalachian music ahead of them in career and enjoyment due to the JAM program. It is the single largest local influence on their lives. "

-- *Rebecca Burnett, Mother of 4 JAM kids*

Facts

Schools that have music programs have an attendance rate of 93.3% compared to 84.9% in schools without music programs. - The National Association for Music Education

Research at McGill University in Montreal, Canada showed that grade-school kids who took music lessons scored higher on tests of general and spatial cognitive development, the abilities that form the basis for performance in math and engineering. – Northeast Iowa School of Music

Young children who take music lessons show different brain development and improved memory over the course of a year, compared to children who do not receive musical training -- National Association for Music Education. "The Benefits of the Study of Music."

Music education sharpens student attentiveness, equips students to be creative, and supports better study habits and self-esteem. -- Arts Education Partnership