

Appalshop Videographers

Willa Johnson joined Appalshop in 2017 as the Lead Educator of Appalshop's Appalachian Media Institute, which she now directs. Willa first began her journey with AMI in 2007 as a youth-media intern, and has served as an Appalachian Transition Fellow. She is a co-founder of the Stay Together Appalachian Youth Project (STAY) and recently worked for the Kentucky Valley Educational Cooperative (KVEC) Community Engagement team, where she created FIREshare, a program designed in collaboration with The Holler to train teachers and students to use multimedia tools to tell their own stories about their schools and communities. A daughter of a retired middle-school teacher and coal-truck driver, Willa Johnson was raised in Letcher County and is a foster-care advocate and adoptive parent to a toddler named Jay.



Willa has shown her work around the world with the Human Rights Watch International Film Festival, had a film shown at the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), and was named a 2019 GRIST Fixer for her work to highlight and showcase the voices and stories of Appalachia.

Eric Vanhoose joined Appalshop in 2018 as the Educator for Appalshop's Appalachian Media Institute. After successfully creating the second Collegiate Esports Program in the nation, VanHoose went on to become the Founding Chairman of the National Association of Collegiate Esports. As part of his work at AMI, Eric launched a 3D-printing pilot program teaching six apprentices over the course of seven weeks how to design and print 3D media. Eric received Ithaca College's S'Park Mentor award in the fall of 2019 in recognition for his work with AMI. As a born-and-raised Appalachian, Eric is happy to be working in media and technology with young people in his home region.