Stewarding Native Lands
Native Farmer and Rancher Apprenticeship Network
APPLICATION Deadline: January 14, 2022, 5 pm MT

General Information

About First Nations Development Institute

For over 41 years, First Nations Development Institute (First Nations), a Native-led 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, has worked to strengthen American Indian economies to support healthy Native communities. First Nations invests in and creates innovative institutions and models that strengthen asset control and support economic development for American Indian people and their communities. First Nations began its national grantmaking program in 1993. Through mid-year 2021, First Nations has successfully managed 2,276 grants totaling more than $46 million to tribal and community institutions across Indian Country. For more information, visit www.firstnations.org.

Native American communities have sustainably managed their lands for thousands of years, cultivating, adapting, and transferring traditional ecological knowledge over many generations. This expansive reservoir of knowledge and deep connection to land keep Native communities strong and encourage the land to be productive. Such relationships benefit the natural world that we depend on, and acknowledge the importance of being in harmony with and having a true connection with places. First Nations recognizes Native communities’ ability to steward their land to ensure their sustainable, economic, spiritual and cultural well-being. In response, First Nations created its Stewarding Native Lands program to provide financial and technical assistance to support Native ecological stewardship and improve Native control of and access to ancestral lands and resources.

Apprenticeship Overview

The goal of the First Nations Native Farmer and Rancher Apprenticeship Network is to provide training and Technical Assistance (TA) as well as networking opportunities to a cohort of 30 select Native American Beginning Farmer and Ranchers (BFRs) to expand their business capacity and strengthen land management strategies. Eligible applicants should be located in one of the following six states: Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Arizona, and New Mexico.

Applicants should be willing to commit to a 30-month apprenticeship, which will involve traveling to regional in-person trainings, participating in virtual webinars and fieldwork, and networking with other producers. The purpose of this apprenticeship is to support Native BFRs to build their
business capacity and agricultural management of their operations to increase local production of and community access to food, conservation plan development, business plan development, marketing/branding, Native agricultural traditions, and natural resources management.

Apprenticeship support is made possible through funding from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, United States Department of Agriculture.

**Apprenticeship Period**

The apprenticeship period for this funding opportunity is February 1, 2022, to July 31, 2024.

**Apprenticeship Incentive**

Selected Native American beginning farmers and ranchers will receive an incentive not exceeding the amount of $7,500 over the course of 30 months. In addition, each apprentice will receive individualized technical assistance to deepen their work.

**Application Submission Deadlines**

The application-selection process is a one stage competitive process. All applicants must complete the First Nations online application.

- Completed applications are due Friday, January 14, 2022, no later than 5 pm MT.

First Nations recognizes that some of our most rural and remote applicants may have limited access to high-speed internet. Any exceptions to use of the online system must be requested at least two weeks in advance of the application deadline by submitting an email request to grantmaking@firstnations.org. Please include your full name, contact information and the name of the apprenticeship opportunity for which you are applying. If you do not have access to email, you can call our office at (303) 774-7836 and ask to speak with a member of the Stewarding Native Lands and Nourishing Native Foods and Health program.

Access First Nations’ Online Application portal here.

Unfortunately, First Nations cannot make any emergency exceptions to application deadlines. Partial applications, incomplete applications due to user error, or faxed/emailed/mailed applications will not be considered unless they have received prior approval.

Please allow yourself enough time to submit a complete application before the deadline, as the system will shut down automatically at 5 pm Mountain Daylight Time on January 14, 2022, and no data may be entered thereafter. We do not accept partial, faxed, emailed or mailed applications. Applications that are not received on time due to user error will not be considered.
Eligibility

Native American beginning farmers and ranchers eligible to apply include U.S.-based, BFRs that are involved in agriculture, conservation and ecological stewardship activities directly related to eliminating Native food insecurity, building the health of communities and community members, and as a mechanism for entrepreneurship and economic development in the Great Plains (North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota and Wisconsin) and the Southwest (Arizona and New Mexico).

Types of eligible applicants include, but are not limited to:
• Applicants must be tribally-affiliated with a Native American community in the Great Plains and Southwest.
• Applicants must be at least 18 years old.
• Applicants must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents.
• Beginning Farmer and Rancher with 10-years of less of experience.
• Proof of access to land includes: Private, Grazing Permits, and Leases.

Selection

Selected apprentices under this opportunity must commit to a 30-month Native American Beginning Farmer and Rancher Apprenticeship Network, in the Great Plains (ND, SD, MN, WI) and the Southwest (AZ, NM).

Additional Questions

First Nations will host an optional Question & Answer (Q&A) Session for interested applicants prior to the application deadline. This Q&A session will provide an opportunity for applicants to ask questions about the application, selection criteria, guidelines, or other related questions. Participation is NOT mandatory; however, applicants are strongly encouraged to participate in the call.

The Application Q&A Session was held on
• Tuesday, December 7, 2021, at 12 pm MT
  Download the presentation materials and webinar recording here.

Should you have any additional questions about the call for applications or this specific opportunity, please contact Leiloni Begaye by email at lbegaye@firstnations.org and Richard Elm-Hill by email at relmhill@firstnations.org or by phone at 303-774-7836.