About First Nations Development Institute & the Native Arts Initiative (NAI)
For over 43 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 year-end 2023, we have successfully managed 3,385 grants totaling $79.9 million to Native American projects and organizations in 45 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. Territory American Samoa. For more information, visit www.firstnations.org.

First Nations established the Native Arts Initiative (NAI) in 2014 to provide direct grantmaking, networking opportunities, and training and technical assistance (TTA) to Native-led arts and cultural hubs who are working to preserve and advance traditional Native arts through programming focused on supporting artists and intergenerational sharing of artistic skills and knowledge.

Under the NAI, First Nations provides awarded grantees with organizational and programmatic resources, including direct grants and technical assistance and training. Since 2014, First Nations has awarded more than $3.5 million in grant funds to a variety of eligible Native-controlled nonprofit organizations and tribal government programs under the NAI.

Grant Overview
First Nations is pleased to announce this 2024-2026 NAI request for proposals (RFP). Native-controlled nonprofits and tribal government programs located in one of the following regions are eligible to apply for a NAI Grant as part of this current funding cycle:

1. Upper Midwest (North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, and Wisconsin);
2. Southwest (New Mexico, Arizona, and Southern California*). For a list of eligible tribal communities in Southern California, please click here.
a. The geographic region for this RFP is set by the service area of First Nations’ primary donor. If your Tribe, Native-controlled nonprofit, or community organization is based in Northern California and if you are interested in sharing about your programming with First Nations, please email Johnny McCraigie to set up a meeting.


During this funding cycle, First Nations will distribute approximately 15, two-year Native Arts Initiative grants of up to $100,000 each.
Selected Native-controlled nonprofit organizations and tribal government programs must have existing program initiatives in place that support Native artists and the field of traditional Native arts through efforts to preserve traditional Native arts and artistic practices and advance intergenerational sharing of artistic skills and knowledge.
To learn more about First Nations’ Native Arts Initiative, please visit the First Nations’ website here.

**Grant Period**
The grant period for this funding opportunity will commence July 1, 2024, and end June 30, 2026, (totaling 24 months).

**Grant Award Ceiling**
Total requests for project budgets within this funding opportunity should not exceed $100,000.

**Grant Submission Deadline**
Applications are due Wednesday, March 27, 2024, no later than 5 pm Mountain Time. Unfortunately, First Nations cannot make any exceptions to the application deadline. Partial applications, incomplete applications due to user error, or faxed/emailed/mailed applications will not be considered unless they have received prior approval from First Nations.

**Application Review & Timeline**
First Nations will make final selections and notify all applicants regarding the status of their proposal on or before June 10, 2024. Notifications will be emailed to the project contact listed in the application. If you do not receive an email notification by this date, please contact grantmaking@firstnations.org.
ELIGIBILITY

Type of Eligible Entities
Tribal government programs, Tribal § 7871 entities, Native-controlled nonprofit organizations, and Native-controlled community organizations located in one of the regions listed in the Geographic Eligibility section are eligible to apply. Applicants located in an urban area are eligible to apply if they are located in one of the geographic regions listed below and are able to demonstrate a close tie to one or more tribal communities located in one of the eligible geographic regions. Native community organizations located in one of the eligible geographic regions may submit applications through an eligible sponsoring organization or tribe if the sponsor can provide written authorization confirming its willingness to act as the fiscal sponsor.

First Nations defines “Native-controlled” as an organization in which a majority of the Board of Directors and leadership team are Native American, Alaska Native or Native Hawaiian. Examples of eligible applicants include, but are not limited to:

- Federal- and state-recognized tribal governments (e.g., tribal arts programs, tribal cultural and heritage departments and centers, tribal museums, tribal economic development departments);
- Native-controlled 501(c)(3) nonprofits;
- Native-controlled community organizations with fiscal sponsorship; and/or
- Tribal § 7871 entities.

Please note: Grants will not be made to individual Native American artists or for-profit organizations. Please refer to the Grantmaking FAQ section for further insight regarding applicant eligibility.

Geographic Eligibility
Due to the geographic service area of our primary donors who support the Native Arts Initiative, this grant opportunity includes geographic restrictions at this time. Eligible applicants are those Native-controlled organizations or tribal government programs that are located in and serve tribal communities in one of the following regions:

1. Upper Midwest (North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, and Wisconsin);
2. Southwest (New Mexico, Arizona, and Southern California*). For a list of eligible tribal communities in Southern California, please click here.
   a. * The geographic region for this RFP is set by the service area of First Nations’ primary donor. If your Tribe, Native-controlled nonprofit, or community organization is based in Northern California and if you are...
interested in sharing about your programming with First Nations, please email Johnny McCraigie to set up a meeting.


Program Eligibility
Eligible applicants must currently have existing program initiatives in place that support Native artists, increase access to and awareness of traditional Native art and artists, and increase the intergenerational transfer of knowledge of traditional Native art forms and artistic practices.

While brand new programs and projects will not be funded, proposed expansions of current programming will be considered for funding.

If you have questions about eligibility for this funding opportunity, please consider registering for and participating in the upcoming Application Q&A Webinar that will be offered by First Nations (see the Help section below for more information). In addition, our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document provides further insight regarding general applicant eligibility.

SELECTION CRITERIA & ALLOWABLE ACTIVITIES
First Nations seeks projects that meet the spirit of this initiative and demonstrate:

• A clear focus that aligns with the project design and the organization or program’s stated mission;
• Proper alignment with stated funding priorities and eligibility guidelines;
• A clear plan of action with specific, measurable and realistic goals and objectives;
• A logical and sequential development of the project implementation timeline;
• Direct engagement of target audiences within the planning, implementation and evaluation process.
• An accurate, reasonable and consistent project budget;
• Commitment to periodic assessment, documentation and dissemination of progress and final results; and
• Sufficient organizational capacity to successfully implement and evaluate the proposed project.

Allowable activities under this funding opportunity include those which strengthen Native arts programming, intergenerational transfer of Native art forms and artistic practices, and/or organizational infrastructure. Please join our NAI Application Webinar to learn more about allowable activities and ask any questions you may have (see the Help section below).
Examples of Activities Supporting Arts Programming

- Master/apprentice artist opportunities
- Archiving and collections/preservation efforts
- Arts exhibits
- Artist-focused gatherings
- Communal artist spaces for Native artists
- Artist-in-residence opportunities
- Artist-led workshops and arts classes
- Artists co-operatives

Examples of Activities Supporting Organizational Infrastructure

- Governance training for organization’s Board of Directors
- Organizational strategic planning
- Strengthening IT systems
- Strengthening financial management
- Grant writing and fundraising plans
- Succession planning
- Organizational and/or programmatic marketing and communications plan
- Strengthening project management systems
- Leadership and staff professional development

GRANT REQUIREMENTS & EXPECTATIONS

Asset-Building and Networking Opportunities

First Nations’ NAI team will host up to four virtual NAI grantee cohort meetings and up to two in-person Native Arts grantee gatherings during the two-year grant period. The goal of these meetings will be to provide a space for peer learning and sharing among grantees and First Nations as well as incorporate relevant training and technical assistance based on feedback and requests from grantees. The virtual and in-person meetings will be spread across the two-year grant period.

Training & Technical Assistance

Applicants who are selected to receive a grant under the Native Arts Initiative will have an opportunity to receive training and technical assistance (TTA) from First Nations during the grant period. At the
beginning of the grant period, First Nations’ NAI team will work with grantees to identify TTA needs and priorities. The TTA is meant to support grantees’ efforts to strengthen their general organizational and programmatic infrastructure or it can support arts-specific programmatic infrastructure. A wide variety of TTA is possible, including sending staff to priority trainings, inviting a consultant to assist with a strategic or business plan, conducting board governance trainings, or conducting financial management trainings. Receiving and participating in TTA is not a grant requirement.

**Reporting & Evaluation**

*Reporting on Proposed Grant Objectives:* First Nations’ NAI team will schedule a one-on-one virtual check-in meeting midway through the grant period and one at the end of the grant period with each NAI grantee to discuss progress on proposed objectives, needed changes in programming, successes, challenges, and new opportunities related to the NAI grant. First Nations may also conduct surveys and focus groups involving NAI grantees.

This feedback from grantees will enable First Nations to: (1) further understand programs and projects serving the field of Native arts and artists as well as efforts to advance intergenerational transfer of knowledge of Native art forms and artistic practices; (2) communicate grantees’ work, stories, and promising models, including accomplishments, challenges, impact, and programming practices; and (3) gauge the value of NAI funding support on grantee programs. *Tentative:* First Nations will work with grantees to gather data specific to the artists they serve during the grant period. This additional data collection will be supported by supplemental funding for grantees.

*Budget Reporting:* Grantees will be required to submit a written budget report midway through the grant period and at the end of the grant period detailing approved grant expenditures.

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**APPLICATION & REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS**

All applicants must complete the First Nations online grant application, including submission of necessary attachments, no later than **Wednesday, March 27, 2024, at 5 pm Mountain Time.** 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 made two weeks in advance of the application deadline by submitting an email request to **grantmaking@firstnations.org.** Please include your name, organization, contact information, and the name of the RFP 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 Grantmaking Department.

Download instructions for First Nations’ Online Application System here. Access First Nations’ Online Application system here.

The following five attachments must be uploaded during the online submission process:

1. **Budget.** *(Download Sample Budget Form)* An estimated budget for the proposed project with a detailed cost breakdown that is reasonable and directly related to proposed grant activities. This form must be uploaded as an Excel or PDF file. *Linked form is optional to use; applicant may use their own as long as it addresses all necessary requirements.*

2. **Timeline.** *(Download Sample Timeline Form)* A detailed project timeline that documents important project activities for each identified objective. Include staff who will be responsible for the implementation of the project activities and when they will be completed. The form provided is in Excel format and it must be uploaded as an Excel file or PDF file. *The linked form is optional to use, applicant may use their own as long as it addresses all necessary requirements.*

3. **Description of Board of Directors.** Native-controlled nonprofits should submit a list of their Board of Directors, with tribal affiliation of each director where applicable. Community organizations with fiscal sponsors should submit a list of their leadership team, with tribal affiliation of each team member where applicable. Tribal programs and governments should submit a list of their Tribal Council in lieu of a Board of Directors. This document should be uploaded as a PDF file.

4. **Description of Key Leadership Staff.** Native-controlled nonprofits and community organizations with fiscal sponsors should submit a list of key staff who will be responsible for overseeing and implementing the proposed project. Tribal programs and governments should submit a list of key staff responsible for overseeing and implementing the proposed project. This document should be uploaded as a PDF file.

5. **Tax-Status Documentation.** A copy of the organization or fiscal sponsor’s IRS Determination Letter if the applicant is a 501(c)(3) organization or a community organization using a fiscal sponsor. Tribal programs and governments may submit proof that they are a federal- or state-recognized tribe. This document should be uploaded as a PDF file.
Application Q&A Webinar
First Nations will host one optional, informational Question & Answer (Q&A) webinar for interested applicants prior to the application deadline. The Q&A webinar will provide interested applicants with information about the goals of the Native Arts Initiative, eligibility criteria, allowable grant activities, and NAI grant requirements. Attendees are encouraged to ask questions they may have about the NAI and this funding opportunity. Participation in the webinar is NOT mandatory, but applicants are strongly encouraged to register and attend. The informational Q&A webinar will be recorded and posted to First Nations website for those unable to attend. The recording can be accessed at: www.firstnations.org/knowledge-center/webinars.

Application Q&A Session will be held on:
Wednesday, March 5, 2024, at 2 pm Mountain Time.
Register at:
https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZckceCurjotHde7NRabCWe66vna9PuCzB5K

Grant Seekers Resources
First Nations has compiled a number of free resources related to the grant writing process. Whether you are a small organization new to grants or an organization with extensive experience, these resources will help with development of your application to First Nations. Please click here to access First Nations' free grant seeker resources.

Contact First Nations Development Institute
If you have questions about the RFP or this specific funding opportunity, please contact Johnny McCraigie (she/her) by email at jmccraigie@firstnations.org or by phone at (303) 867-8056.
If you have questions about or need support with the grant application system please contact the Grantmaking department at grantmaking@firstnations.org. Please allow up to 4 business days for a response. Please note that communication about your application after submission will be sent by mail@grantapplication.com and/or grantmaking@firstnations.org.

Application Deadline: Wednesday, March 27, 2024, 5 pm Mountain Time.