

FIRST NATIONS

DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Native Farm to School

Application Deadline April 30, 2024, no later than 5 pm Mountain Time

General Information

About First Nations Development Institute

For over 44 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 by investing in and creating 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 end of year 2023 First Nations has successfully managed 3,385 grants totaling more than \$80 million to 45 tribal and community institutions across Indian Country. For more information, visit www.firstnations.org.

Native Farm to School is a youth-centered food sovereignty project under First Nations Development Institute's Nourishing Native Foods and Health Program. A new USDA Food and Nutrition grant of \$500,000 will support the project, "Native Food Sovereignty for Native Youth," and Native Farm to School programs across Indian Country. The project will incorporate traditional foods and practices, language, land stewardship, and Indigenous knowledge into their education programs. Participants will engage virtually through educational webinars, and in-person at a national food sovereignty network convening. Technical assistance will be provided to complete a First Nations' Native Farm to School Program Planner for improved focus on developing food sovereignty focused planning and collaboration. An evaluation report and a research report on Tribal, community, state, and federal policies will aid in the efforts for substantial and fundamental systemic change. First Nations recognizes that Farm to School programs in Native communities increase access to healthy foods and education for Native youth. Providing nutritious and healthy foods in school meals, along with nutrition education, can help start Native children on a path toward good health for life.

Farm to School Overview

With the generous support of the USDA Food and Nutrition Service, First Nations established the Native Farm to School project to provide technical assistance and training to Native communities that are looking to create or expand farm to school programs, enhance education curriculum and/or engage new supply chain partners. This funding will support program coordinators, school staff, teachers, community and organizers, and knowledge keepers of all ages to ensure young tribal leaders can experience traditional foodways inside culturally inclusive school food systems.

To advance this aim, First Nations is requesting proposals from eligible entities interested in serving as Consulting Project Partners or CPPs for the 2024 Native Farm to School Project. From the application pool First Nations anticipates selecting 12 Consulting Project Partners to receive technical assistance and training that will expand farm to school programming, enhance education curriculum, and engage new supply chain partners.

Project Period

The project period for this opportunity will commence June 13, 2024, to May 15, 2025 (11 months)

Project Award Ceilings

Total requests for project budgets within the Native Farm to School project should be \$25,000.

Applicant Eligibility

To be eligible for the Native Farm to School project, Consulting Project Partners or CPPs must be a Native controlled entity **and** one of the eligible entities listed below.

- Federal- and State-Recognized Tribal Governments (Tribal Government Programs, such as Food Distribution, Food Services, Agriculture, Heritage Departments, Economic Development Entities, etc.)
- Native-controlled 501(c)(3) nonprofits
- Native-controlled community organizations with fiscal sponsorship
- Native 7871 Organizations

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All consultant project partners must be in the United States.

Please refer to the Grantmaking [FAQ](#) section for further insight regarding applicant eligibility.

Application Deadlines

Applications are due **April 30, 2024, no later than 5 pm Mountain Time.**

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.

Allowable Activities

Examples of allowable expenses under this opportunity include but are not limited to:

- Personnel
- Contractors
- Equipment
- Supplies
- Meeting expenses (other than meals)
- Travel
- Trainings
- Promotional Items

Additional budget considerations:

Expenditures for both equipment (i.e., items of personal property having a useful life of more than one year and a cost of \$5,000 or less such as coolers, processing equipment, and hoop houses) and supplies (e.g., knives, cutting boards, gardening or farming implements, and food processors) are allowable expenses. Salad bars are also an allowable expense.

No more than 10 percent of the project budget may be used for food purchases and the use must also be clearly delineated in the proposed budget. In general grant funds may NOT be used to purchase meals or snacks for training or meeting attendees.

The ultimate goal of funded projects should be to make local food products available on menus long-term; therefore, purchasing local products should not be a primary use of grant funds. Food purchases should be limited to educational purposes only, such as farm to school sample tables, taste tests, or promotional use. Food costs related to conducting a test offering of a new local or regional product are also deemed an appropriate use of funds.

The purchase of promotional items is allowed if they are directly related to the grant proposal's objective. Any cost associated with such promotions must be reasonable in comparison to the grant funding. A total expenditure of promotional items should not exceed 5 percent of the total project budget.

If adequate funding is available, Farm to School Grant funds may be used to hire substitute food service staff while school food service staff attend workshops and training. For accounting purposes, a record of who attended the session, how long it lasted, and the purpose of the session is required.

Unallowable Activities

Examples of unallowable activities under this funding opportunity include:

- Lobbying
- Entertainment
- AmeriCorps
- Gift Cards
- Medical Equipment
- Vehicles
- Equipment purchase cannot exceed \$5,000 (per item)
- Capital construction projects (construction of a greenhouse may be an allowable use of Farm to School Grant funds, as long as the grant funds are not placed in the nonprofit school food service account at any time)

Selection Criteria

First Nations seeks projects that:

- Are deeply interested in building a [Native Farm to School program plan](#) that supports any or all of the following areas: Traditional Foods, Traditional Foodways, Traditional Knowledge, Land Stewardship, Language, and/or Community.
- Serve and understand the programmatic food sovereignty needs of Native American, Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian students and/or families.
- Strengthen the Native food system in an educational environment or build organizational capacity based on a newly developed Native Farm to School program plan.
- Provide a clear plan of action with specific, measurable, and realistic goals and objectives.
- Present a logical program-implementation timeline and budget.
- Ability to track, measure, and share the impact of the project.

Reporting Requirements

Evaluation & Reporting:

Each Native Farm to School CPP will be required to participate in First Nations evaluation, provide budget updates and submit a final report. These reports will enable First Nations to: (1) gain a further understanding of Native Farm to School projects in Indian Country; (2) tell community partners' stories, including accomplishments, challenges, impact, and programming practices; and (3) measure the impact of funding support on community partners.

By November 28, 2024, each CPP will be required to participate in a consultant interview with the First Nations evaluator.

By June 15, 2025, each CPP will also submit a short final narrative report that includes photos of their project along with a budget expenditure report and a completed [Native Farm to School Program Plan](#).

Online Application Process & Required Attachments

All applicants must complete the First Nations online grant application, including submission of necessary attachments, **no later than April 30, 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 at least 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 to begin a new application [here](#).

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

- **Attachment A: Budget.** An estimated budget for the proposed project with a detailed cost breakdown that is reasonable and directly related to proposed grant activities. ([Download Budget Template](#))
- **Attachment B: Tax-Status Documentation.** A copy of the organization's 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.
- **Attachment C: Leadership & Staff List.** Native-controlled nonprofits should submit a list of their Board of Directors, with tribal affiliation (if applicable), and Key Staff. Community organizations with fiscal sponsors should submit a list of their own leadership team (not the fiscal sponsor's), with tribal affiliation (if applicable), and Key Staff. Tribal programs and governments should submit a list of their Tribal Council in lieu of a Board of Directors.

Application Information Webinar

First Nations will post a Native Farm to School RFP Information video to discuss the grant program after April 9, 2024, that will be shared on the First Nations website [here](#).

Grant Writing 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-writing resources.

Questions

Should you have any additional questions about the RFP or this specific funding opportunity, please contact Richard Elm-Hill at relmhill@firstnations.org.

Additional Information

About First Nations Development Institute


For over 44 years and through a three-pronged strategy of educating grassroots practitioners, advocating for systemic change, and capitalizing Indian communities, First Nations has been working to restore control and stewardship of tribal assets to Native communities — be they land, human, cultural, economic, or natural resources. First Nations serves American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian communities throughout the United States. For more information, visit www.firstnations.org.


For more additional information and resources please visit our Native Farm to School [page](#). Here is the link to the [Native Farm to School Program Planner](#).

USDA Farm to School Information

On an annual basis, USDA awards competitive Farm to School grants that support planning, developing, and implementing farm to school programs. USDA's Farm to School grants are an important way to help state, regional, and local organizations as they initiate, expand, and institutionalize farm to school efforts. For more information please go to the [Patrick Leahy Farm to School Program Fact Sheets Page](#).



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