



FIRST NATIONS
DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

**acorn
fund**

NATIVE ARTS, LANGUAGE, AND KNOWLEDGE

2026 Acorn Fund Webinar

Thursday, April 2, 2026
3 - 4 PM MDT



WEBINAR AGENDA

01

Overview of
Acorn Fund

02

Application
Materials

03

Walk-through of
Fluxx, Online
Application Portal

04

Questions & Answers



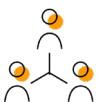
ABOUT FIRST NATIONS



Founded in 1980, First Nations began our national grantmaking program in 1993. Through mid-year 2025, we have successfully managed grants totaling \$111 million to Native American projects and organizations.



Our mission is to uplift and sustain the lifeways and economies of Native communities through advocacy, financial support, and knowledge sharing.



We envision a world in which Tribal Sovereignty is upheld, and Native ingenuity and knowledge are honored and respected.



OUR CORE PROGRAMS

We provide grants, technical assistance, and research and policy advocacy across five program areas



NATIVE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS INVESTMENTS (NAFSI)

Advancing Native food sovereignty and security, strengthening Tribal food economies, and supporting the living relationship between community, place, and foods.



STEWARDING NATIVE LANDS (SNL)

Financial resources, training, technical assistance, and research and advocacy to help Tribes and Native communities regain and restore their lands.



CALIFORNIA TRIBAL FUND (CTF)

Support for California-based, California-Native-led nonprofits and tribal programs for controlling and protecting their land, water, food systems, and culture.



NATIVE ARTS, LANGUAGE, AND KNOWLEDGE (NALK)

Strengthening and sustaining Native communities and knowledge-holders through intergenerational connections and the transference of arts, languages, and knowledge.



RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY FOR NATIVE ECONOMIC JUSTICE (RANEJ)

Research, tools, resources, and opportunities for Native communities, policy makers, and funders to invest in and advance Native economic justice.





MISSION

The mission of the Native Arts, Language and Knowledge Program is to invest in the sustainability of Native communities and **knowledge holders**, who perpetuate **Native lifeways** through intergenerational connections and the transference of arts, languages, and knowledge.



NATIVE ARTS, LANGUAGE, AND KNOWLEDGE STAFF



CATHERINE BRYAN
(Navajo)
Vice President



ABI WHITEING
(Blackfeet)
Director



RANA LAPINE
(Mohawk)
Associate Director



SABRINA WALKER
(Tlingit)
Lead Program Officer



JENNIFER HIMMELREICH
(Navajo)
Senior Program Officer



MOLLY BAKER
Program Associate



ACORN FUND OVERVIEW

The Acorn Fund seeks to:

- Support traditional Native American artistic and cultural knowledge
- Increase access to research and cultural resources
- Strengthen intergenerational knowledge transmission
- Elevate Native voices and deepen public understanding of Native arts
- Invest in Native cultural leadership



SPECIAL THANKS



This opportunity is made possible through the generous support of the **Terra Foundation for American Art**. The Terra Foundation for American Art, established in 1978 and having offices in Chicago and Paris, supports organizations and individuals locally and globally with the aim of fostering intercultural dialogues and encouraging transformative practices that expand narratives of American art, through the foundation's grant program, collection, and initiatives.



FUNDING DETAILS



\$1,500 -
\$5,000 per
award



Grant period
lengths can be 6-
months or 12-
months.

**6-month grants
are especially
encouraged to
apply!**



Minimum of
20 awards



IMPORTANT NOTE:
**The award is
considered taxable
income.**

Recipients will be
responsible for all
related taxes
resulting from this
award.



APPLICATION TIMELINE

DATE	ACTIVITY
March 24	Acorn Fund Application Open
April 29, 2026	Applications are due at 5:00 p.m. MDT
April 29 – May 11	Internal Eligibility Checks
May 12 – June 10	Application Reviews
Mid – Late June	Application Status Updates
July 1, 2026	Grant Period Begins



ELIGIBILITY

Native knowledge holders working in the field of Native arts, including, but not limited to:

- Artists and culture bearers
- Scholars and independent researchers
- Curators and museum professionals
- Arts administrators
- Community cultural leaders

Tribally-affiliated with a Native American, Alaska Native or Native Hawaiian community

U.S. citizen or permanent resident



WHAT MAKES A STRONG APPLICATION?

Community-Rooted

Clear Purpose

Realistic Timeline

Cultural Relevance



EXAMPLE ACTIVITIES

Funds may support activities such as:

- Archival or collections research
- Travel to cultural sites, institutions, or conferences
- Apprenticeship or mentorship opportunities
- Learning or skill-building
- Cultural revitalization work
- Curatorial or exhibition research
- Community sharing activities (talks, workshops, gatherings)
- Documentation of cultural knowledge

Projects do not need to result in a formal exhibition or publication.



ALLOWABLE EXPENSES

Grant funds may be used for:

- Travel (airfare, mileage, gas)
- Lodging
- Per diem
- Childcare or family accommodations as related to the project proposed
- Professional fees or honoraria
- Community outreach activities
- Other reasonable project-related expenses

Applicants will be asked to provide a brief budget summary outlining how they plan to use the grant funds. Total estimated costs must be between \$1,500 and \$5,000.



APPLICATION

The application begins with sharing more about yourself:

- Name, Preferred name, Tribal affiliation(s), your role, address, phone numbers, etc...

Then the grant request:

- TOTAL amount requested:
 - Enter an amount between \$1,500 - \$5,000
- Select your Grant End Date:
 - 6 months (07/01/26 - 12/31/26)
 - 12 months (07/01/26 - 06/30/27)



APPLICATION

The application includes a combination of short checklists and narrative responses.

Project Activity Information:

Please select the primary activities involved in your project. *(check all that apply)*

- Research (archives, collections, oral histories, material culture)
- Travel to access knowledge, collections, or cultural sites
- Apprenticeship or mentorship
- Learning or skill-building in a traditional art form
- Artistic or cultural revitalization work
- Curatorial or exhibition research
- Community sharing (talks, workshops, gatherings)
- Other: <insert open field, 50 words max>

Who do you anticipate will benefit most from this project? *(check all that apply)*

- Myself as an artist/culture bearer
- Youth
- Elders
- My Tribal community
- Regional Native arts community
- National Native arts field
- Other: <insert open field, 50 words max>



APPLICATION

The application includes a combination of short checklists and narrative responses.

Narrative Question 1 – PROJECT DESCRIPTION & GOALS

Please describe your project and your goals for the grant period for the 6- or 12-month grant period. (500 words)

You may include:

- The activities you will undertake
- Any travel involved
- The skills, knowledge, or capacity you hope to build

Optional but encouraged: a brief timeline



APPLICATION

The application includes a combination of short checklists and narrative responses.

Narrative Question 2 - SIGNIFICANCE & COMMUNITY RELEVANCE

Why is this project important to you and your community at this time?
(500 words)

You may include:

- Why this opportunity matters in your artistic or cultural journey
- How it connects to Native arts or community priorities
- Who will benefit and why (individuals, specific communities, future generations, the broader field)



APPLICATION

The application includes a combination of short checklists and narrative responses.

Narrative Question 3 - OUTCOMES, GROWTH & KNOWLEDGE SHARING

What do you hope will grow or strengthen because of this support?
(500 words)

Please describe:

- The outcomes you hope to achieve
- How you plan to share, transmit, or apply what you learn
- Who you hope to reach and how
- How this project contributes to Indigenous-led knowledge sharing



ACTIVITY/PROJECT BUDGET

Please describe how the funds will be used for your project.
(200 words)

Guidelines:

- *Simple estimates are ok*
- *Check the math*
- *Must total \$1,500 - \$5,000 and match what you entered in the Grant Request earlier in the application.*
- *Activities and expenses should take place within your chosen project period.*
- *Budgets will be part of what is reviewed. If there is an item in your budget that does not make sense, tell us why.*



OPTIONAL ATTACHMENTS

Applicants may upload supplemental materials if they feel these materials help provide additional context for their project. Attachments are completely optional and are not required for applications to be considered.

Examples of optional attachments include:

- Resume or CV
- Brief artist bio
- Letters of support or mentorship confirmation
- Documentation of past work (images, exhibition lists, performance history)
- Project timeline (if not included in the narrative)
- Other relevant supporting materials

If you choose to upload attachments:

- All documents must be saved and **uploaded as PDF files.**
- Attachments should be concise and directly relevant to your proposed project.

Applications will be evaluated based primarily on the required questions.



ONLINE APPLICATION SYSTEM

All applicants must complete and submit application, including all optional attachments by
Wednesday, April 29, 2026
at 5:00 p.m. Mountain Daylight Time.

- Download the RFP for the Acorn Fund here: [Acorn Fund 2026 | First Nations Development Institute](#).
- Access Fluxx, our online application system here: [First Nations | Sign in](#).



ONLINE APPLICATION SYSTEM

Exceptions to use of the online application system must be made in advance of the deadline by submitting an email request to:

grantmaking@firstnations.org

Include:

- Your name
- Contact information
- Indicate you are applying for the Acorn Fund.

If you do not have access to email, call our office at:

(303) 774-7836

Ask to speak with a member of the Grantmaking Department.



APPLICATION REVIEW CRITERIA

Applications are reviewed with care and respect for Native ways of knowing, learning, and sharing. We look for projects that:

- ✓ Support cultural continuity and revitalization
- ✓ Are grounded in community and guided by relationships
- ✓ Have a clear sense of purpose and intention
- ✓ Feel realistic within the proposed timeline
- ✓ Reflect the spirit and goals of this program

Applicants do not need academic credentials, institutional affiliation, or polished grant-writing to be competitive.

We value lived experience, cultural knowledge, and community connection.



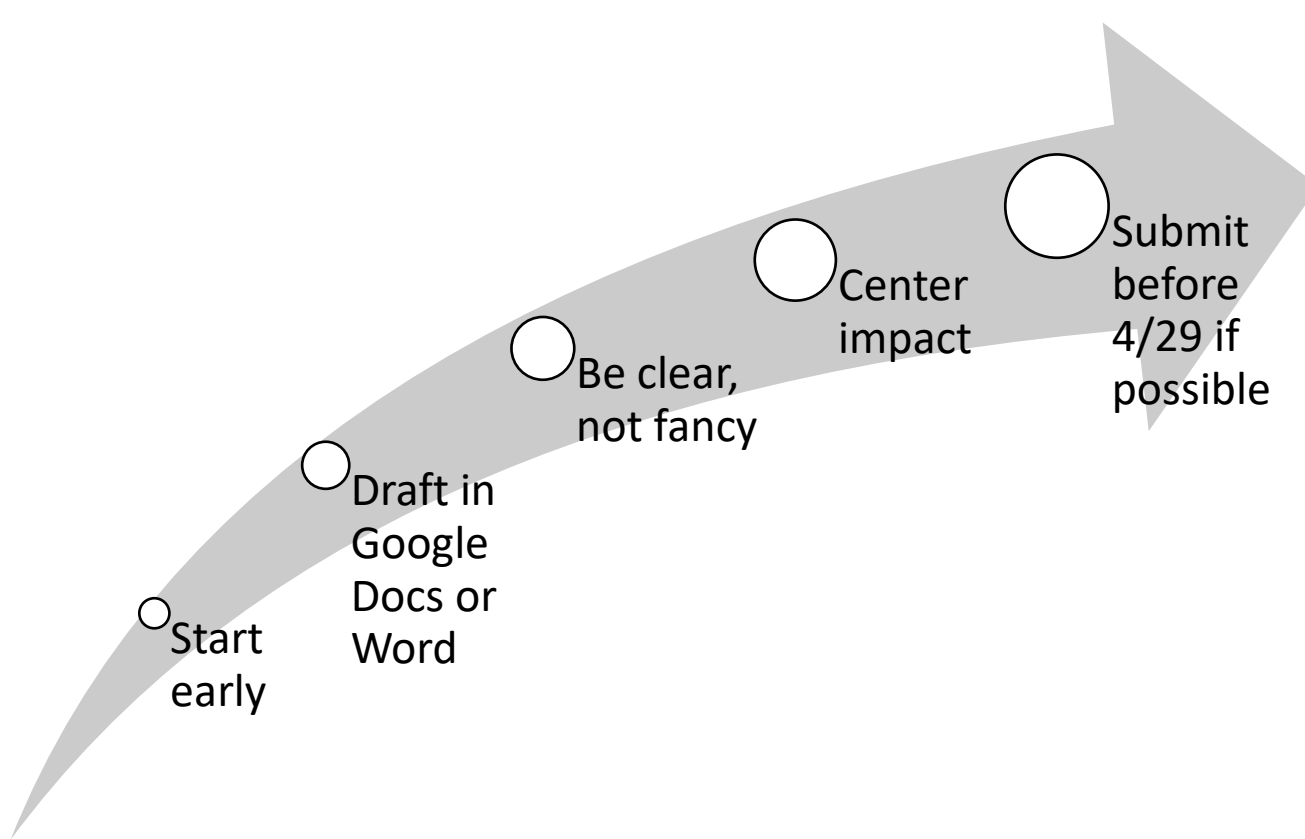
REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

At the end of your chosen 6- or 12-month grant period, you'll be asked for your reflections:

- written or verbal
- Story-based, we want to find the stories of impact this funding made
- May include request for photos and/or videos to possibly share



TOP TIPS FOR APPLICANTS



CONTACT INFORMATION

Program Questions:

NALK@firstnations.org

Phone: (303)-774-7836

*Ask for the NALK team

Application Technical Support:

grantmaking@firstnations.org

Phone: (303) 774-7836

*Ask for the Grantmaking team

For more information about the Acord Fund:
<https://www.firstnations.org/rfps/acorn-fund-2026>

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QUESTIONS?

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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