

2027: COHORT 8
LUCE INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE FELLOWSHIP
Application Deadline: Monday, April 6, 2026, no later than 5 pm MT

GENERAL INFORMATION

In 2019, First Nations Development Institute ([First Nations](#)), in partnership with [The Henry Luce Foundation](#) (LUCE), launched the **Luce Indigenous Knowledge Fellowship** to honor and support a select cohort of fellows as they work to further Native knowledge creation, dissemination, and perpetuation in Native communities.

The goal of the fellowship is to support exceptional leaders, knowledge holders, and knowledge makers who are doing noteworthy work to advance Indigenous knowledge and knowledge systems in diverse fields. The fellowship supports individuals who are working to make broad, transformative impact and change in their diverse knowledge fields and within Indigenous communities. By supporting the exceptional creativity and progressive and critical thinking of knowledge holders and knowledge makers, the fellowship will grow a cadre of Indigenous knowledge leaders who are actively working to perpetuate Indigenous knowledge and knowledge systems for the benefit of Native communities and their respective knowledge fields.

First Nations will award 10 fellowships of **\$75,000** each to outstanding Native knowledge holders and knowledge makers engaged in meaningful work that benefits Native people and communities in reservation or urban settings. For this fellowship, we define community broadly and it may include, for example, the applicant's Native community, knowledge field, or community.

The fellowship is a two-year, self-directed program designed to support the process of growth, development, knowledge, and networks of Indigenous knowledge leaders and thinkers. This unique fellowship seeks to support individuals from diverse knowledge fields, including but not limited to, agriculture, food systems, youth leadership development, natural resource

management, climate change, economic development, STEM, journalism, language and cultural revitalization, traditional and contemporary arts, and more.

In addition to financial support, fellows will convene three times a year to connect and pool their collective knowledge and experience to create a community of practice that crosses fields, geographies, and tribal cultures. These three *required* convenings will give fellows the opportunity to engage in conversations intended to strengthen their leadership skills, reflect on their impact, share their learning and experiences, and promote enduring professional relationships. The cohort will empower fellows to overcome any geographic and cultural isolation they may experience by being a Native knowledge holder or knowledge maker, possibly as the only one in their field.

Fellows will be required to submit **two formal reports, one** at the end of each year.

AWARD AND TIMELINE

The start date of the fellowship is January 1, 2027, and the end date is December 31, 2028.

This fellowship will provide \$75,000 awards each to 10 individuals. This fellowship is flexible in that it allows selected knowledge holders and knowledge makers to determine their own goals and decide how their funds are best used to make a positive impact for the creation, dissemination, and perpetuation of knowledge in their respective fields. The award is provided in two installments, with one payment in Year 1 and one payment in Year 2 to support fellows in their work and efforts.

Important Note: The \$75,000 fellowship is considered taxable income. Fellowship recipients will be responsible for all related taxes resulting from this award.

Applicants do not have to design or complete a project to be eligible or selected. The goal of this fellowship is to provide flexible funding to selected fellows as they seek to achieve their goals and further or advance knowledge creation and dissemination in their respective field(s).

However, if applicants have a specific project, they are welcome to include that in their application

The fellowship may be used for a wide range of costs, including living expenses, conference registration, equipment/technology, travel, and childcare. **The fellowship cannot be redirected to another person or organization.**

REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDELINES

Native knowledge holders and knowledge makers are individuals engaged in the creation, dissemination, and perpetuation of knowledge that advances their respective field or expertise area. This includes those engaged in either Western knowledge fields and/or traditional Native fields of knowledge development and dissemination, including, for example:

- Cultural Leaders and Activists
- Linguists and Language Preservationists
- Artists, Craftspeople, and Designers
- Writers, Storytellers and Media-Makers
- Curators, Conservators, and Educators
- Food System Workers and Food Justice Advocates
- Small Business Owners and Entrepreneurs
- Healthcare Professionals and Practitioners
- Environmentalists and Conservationists
- Academics, Researchers, and Scientists

As part of the application process, fellows will be expected to define and articulate their primary knowledge field or area.

ELIGIBILITY

The fellowship is open to Native knowledge holders and knowledge makers who have a record of applying their knowledge field and work to engage with and support Native people and communities in reservation or urban settings.

To be eligible for the Luce Indigenous Knowledge Fellowship, applicants must:

- Be at least 18 years old
- Be U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the United States
- Be tribally affiliated with a Native American, Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian community
- Be actively engaged in the creation, dissemination, and perpetuation of knowledge in their field
- Have a body of work that demonstrates experience or expertise within the knowledge field or area they are pursuing
- Be able to clearly demonstrate how their work can impact and benefit a Native community or communities in the U.S. or U.S. Territories
- Apply or be nominated as an individual, not on behalf of an organization or group

Individuals may apply directly OR an individual may be nominated as a Native knowledge holder or knowledge maker for this fellowship.

We understand that some Native people might be hesitant to identify themselves as knowledge holders or knowledge makers. For many, this kind of terminology may seem contrary to community beliefs on ownership of knowledge and recognizing thought leaders. Thus, individuals can nominate their family, friends, neighbors, or colleagues for this fellowship opportunity. To do this, a nominator must work collaboratively with the knowledge holder or knowledge maker they wish to nominate to complete all application materials. Before applying on behalf of another individual, the nominator must contact the nominee in advance to fully discuss the parameters and guidelines of the fellowship.

Important Note for Nominators: The nominee will need to sign a [Consent Form](#) indicating that they have agreed to work with the nominator to complete the application, and that they have read and agreed to the fellowship terms.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Our criteria for selecting each fellow are based on a combination of applicants' knowledge, experience, potential, and vision.

KNOWLEDGE: Applicants must be actively engaged in the creation, dissemination and perpetuation of Native and/or Western knowledge. They must have a cultural grounding and connectedness to community.

EXPERIENCE: Applicants must be engaged in relevant work that seeks to grow and advance knowledge. They must demonstrate a record of success of working and collaborating with Native people and communities and preserving and perpetuating Native knowledge systems.

POTENTIAL: Applicants must demonstrate continuing promise in their field of knowledge. They must embody exceptional creativity and progressive and critical thinking to significantly move forward their field in ways that have led or will lead to broad, transformative impacts for Native peoples.

VISION: Applicants must clearly articulate how the fellowship will support or accelerate their work. They must develop a unique plan of action that details their vision for creating, disseminating, and perpetuating Native knowledge in either reservation or urban community settings.

The selection of fellows will be made by First Nations' Fellowship Selection Committee. The Fellowship Selection Committee includes First Nations staff, external partners, and an

Advisory Committee of Native intellectual leaders representing a diversity of geographies, tribes, and fields. Selection will be based on each applicant's application.

APPLICATION AND REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS

All candidates must submit a completed Stage 1 fellowship application by **Monday, April 6, 2026, no later than 5 pm MT.**

Stage 1 applicants will be notified in late May/early June regarding the status of their application. Approximately 75 applicants will be invited to submit a Stage 2 application.

FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION FORM: The [online fellowship application](#) will ask applicants to provide their contact information, demographic information, and additional information regarding the applicants' knowledge field, experience, and vision for the fellowship period. The online application also requires that applicants upload several attachments throughout the online submission process. As part of the fellowship selection process, First Nations may conduct criminal background checks on candidates under consideration. The Stage 1 application includes a question allowing applicants to disclose any information they wish to share regarding their background.

First Nations has transitioned the online Grantmaking system to Fluxx. To complete the Fellowship application, applicants must register as an individual via the online portal located at: [First Nations | Sign in](#). The registration is located on the bottom right of the page. Select "Register as an Individual," complete the contact information section and click "Submit." An email will be sent to the applicant once registration is approved with a link to establish a password.

Applicants should use personal email addresses, and not organizational email addresses if the applicant is affiliated with an organization that has applied for and/or received a grant from First Nations to ensure that individual and organizational records are kept separate in the Grantmaking system.

Once in the online portal, click on the “Apply for Funding” from the left panel. The Luce Indigenous Knowledge Fellowship application button will appear in green on the top of the page. Click on the button to access the application.

All applicants will receive confirmation of submission after completing the Fellowship Application Form via email from First Nations Grantmaking (@fluxx.io) **to the primary email address provided in the application.**

NOTE: Please check the Junk or Spam folder if an email is not received within 24 hours.

First Nations recognizes that some of our most rural and remote applicants may have limited access to high-speed internet and be unable to submit the application in First Nations’ online system. Applicants who are unable to use the online system must request approval from First Nations **at least two weeks in advance of the application deadline** by submitting an email request to grantmaking@firstnations.org. Please include the applicant’s name, contact information, and the name of this fellowship opportunity in the email message. If applicants do not have access to email, they may call our office at (303) 774-7836 and ask to speak with a member of Grantmaking and we will discuss submission options.

Stage 1 Application

ESSAYS: In the application, applicants will be asked to submit two short essays. These statements are designed to yield more insight into applicants’ knowledge, experience, potential and vision. In addition to aiding with the selection process, these essays are intended to help applicants define their vision and goals for the fellowship period.

- **Statement of Community Impact:** In 500 words or fewer, applicants should describe their personal and/or professional work as it relates to their knowledge field and Native communities. Applicants should describe the body of work they have created around their knowledge field and address how they have been actively engaged in the creation,

dissemination, and/or perpetuation of their knowledge area and how their work supports Native peoples and communities.

- **Vision for Fellowship Period:** In 500 words or fewer, applicants should describe the personal and/or professional goals they hope to achieve during the fellowship. Applicants should address any plans for creating, disseminating, and/or perpetuating knowledge within their community or to Native peoples at large. Please include clear and specific goals for how the fellowship will support the applicants' work to advance their leadership or further contributions to their community and/or knowledge field.

ATTACHMENTS:

- **Resumé/Curriculum Vitae/Biographical Sketch:** All applicants must submit a detailed, up-to-date résumé, curriculum vitae or biographical sketch that summarizes their background in their knowledge field(s) and experience working with Native people and communities in reservation or urban settings. This attachment must be uploaded as a .pdf file.
- **Consent Form (REQUIRED FOR NOMINATIONS):** Nominators submitting applications on behalf of another individual must upload a signed consent form. This form indicates that the nominee consents to working with the nominator to complete the fellowship application. It also indicates that the nominee has reviewed and agrees to the terms of the fellowship. Download First Nations' Consent Form [here](#).

Stage 2 Application

If invited to submit a Stage 2 application, the following additional information will be requested in the Stage 2 application form.

ESSAYS: In the application, applicants will be asked to edit, update, and expand on their previous essays, up to 1,000 words, and provide additional information regarding use of funds for the fellowship period.

ATTACHMENTS:

- **Two (2) Letters of Reference:** Applicants must submit two letters of reference with their application. Letters of reference should speak to 1) the importance of the applicant's work, 2) the applicant's experience working with and supporting Native communities, including their own tribal community, and 3) the applicant's personal character. This attachment must be uploaded as a .pdf or Word file.
- **One (1) High-Quality Photo**
- **Additional Supporting Materials (OPTIONAL):** Applicants can attach up to three supporting documents or materials. These attachments must be uploaded as .pdf files.

Interviews

Interviews will be held for the 20 semifinalists who advance from the Stage 2 application round.

Interviews will take place during the week of October 19 to 22, 2026. Applicants advancing to the semifinalist interview round will be scheduled for one specific interview date and time during that week and are not required to be available for the full duration. **Semi-finalist interviews will be conducted in person, and a virtual interview option will not be available.**

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

The application process is a two-stage competitive process.

All applicants must submit a Stage 1 application form through the [Online Application System](#). These will be reviewed, and approximately 75 applicants will be invited to submit a full Stage 2 application.

The Stage 1 deadline to apply for the Luce Indigenous Knowledge Fellowship is **Monday, April 6, 2026**. Completed applications must be submitted **no later than 5 pm MT**.

Important Note: Please allow enough time to submit a complete application before the deadline, as the online system will shut down automatically at **5 pm MT on Monday, April 6, 2026**, and no data may be entered thereafter. Partial, faxed, emailed or mailed applications that are not received on time due to user error will not be considered. **Any requests for exemptions to the online system must be received no later than two weeks before the deadline.**

Begin the Fellowship Application [here](#). This information is also available on First Nations' website, under the [Grantmaking](#) tab.

FAQ AND INFORMATIONAL SESSIONS

First Nations has compiled a list of **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)** regarding this fellowship opportunity which can be accessed [here](#).

In addition, First Nations will host an optional, informational Question & Answer (Q&A) webinar for interested applicants prior to the Stage 1 application deadline. This Q&A webinar will provide interested applicants with an overview of the fellowship program, eligibility criteria, and allowable activities and requirements. Attendees are also encouraged to ask questions about the Luce Indigenous Knowledge Fellowship application and this funding opportunity.

Participation in this webinar is NOT mandatory, but applicants are strongly encouraged to register for and attend.

APPLICATION Q&A SESSION WILL BE HELD ON:

- **Thursday, March 19, 2026, 2 to 3 pm MT.**
- **Register for the webinar at this link:**
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_zk7Gn1yRrWED_fxhPnUaA

ABOUT FIRST NATIONS DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Founded in 1980, First Nations works to uplift and sustain the lifeways and economies of Native communities through advocacy, financial support, and knowledge sharing. Through **year-end 2025**, we have successfully managed **4,405** grants totaling **\$110.6** million to Native American projects and organizations in 46 states, the District of Columbia, U.S. Territory American Samoa, and Guam. We envision a world in which Tribal Sovereignty is upheld, and Native ingenuity and knowledge are honored and respected. For more information, visit www.firstnations.org.

ABOUT THE HENRY LUCE FOUNDATION

Financial support for the Luce Indigenous Knowledge Fellowship comes from [The Henry Luce Foundation](#). The Henry Luce Foundation seeks to deepen knowledge and understanding in pursuit of a more democratic and just world.

The Foundation invests in organizations, networks, and individuals who create, care for, and share knowledge for the benefit of their communities and the wider world.

The Henry Luce Foundation, a private independent foundation, is a nonprofit corporation operating under the laws of the State of New York.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

For additional questions about the fellowship, please contact the Native Arts, Language, and Knowledge Team by email at NALK@firstnations.org or by phone at (303) 774-7836 and ask for the Native Arts, Language, and Knowledge team.

For assistance with registration, the online portal or application, please contact First Nations' Grantmaking by email at grantmaking@firstnations.org or by phone at (303) 774-7836 and ask for Grantmaking.