

FIRST NATIONS

DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

NATIVE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS INVESTMENTS (NAFSI) SCHOLARSHIP

Application Deadline: Thursday, July 11, 2025 | 5 pm Mountain Time

GENERAL INFORMATION

About First Nations Development Institute & Native Agriculture and Food Systems Investments (NAFSI) Scholarship

For over 44 years, First Nations Development Institute ([First Nations](https://www.firstnations.org)), 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 2024, we have successfully managed 3,640 grants totaling \$94.3 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.

The **Native Agriculture and Food Systems Investments** (NAFSI) program is a cornerstone of First Nations' efforts to advance food sovereignty and security, strengthen tribal food economies, and support the relationship between community, place, and food. Established in 2001, NAFSI supports Native food systems through grantmaking, convenings, and advocacy, uplifting the enduring commitment of Native communities to their food relatives and the earth. We provide cycles of funding opportunities focused on Native Food Security, Native Food Sovereignty, Native Food Economies, and Native Food Networks. Learn more about our program here, <https://www.firstnations.org/our-programs/nourishing-native-foods-health/>

NAFSI Scholarship Overview

At First Nations, we believe reclaiming control over local food systems is a critical step toward ensuring the long-lasting health and economic well-being of Native people and communities. Native-controlled food systems have the potential to increase food production, improve health and nutrition, and eliminate food insecurity in rural and reservation-based communities, while also promoting entrepreneurship and economic development.

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The **Native Agriculture and Food Systems Investments (NAFSI) Scholarship program** supports Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian college students to enter agriculture and food systems fields so that they can better assist their communities with their food systems efforts.

Scholarship Awards

First Nations will award **20 to 25 scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 to \$1,500** for the 2025-2026 academic school year to Native college or university students majoring in agriculture and agriculture-related fields, including but not limited to agribusiness management, agri-science technologies, agronomy, animal husbandry, aquaponics, environmental studies, fisheries and wildlife, food production and safety, food-related policy and legislation, food science and technology, horticulture, irrigation science, and sustainable agriculture or food systems programs.

Scholarship Submission Deadline

Applications are due **Thursday, July 11, 2025, 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.

ELIGIBILITY

Scholarship Eligibility

Applicants must be a full-time, or part-time undergraduate or graduate student, majoring in an agricultural-related field or demonstrate how their degree program relates to Native food systems. Additionally, applicants must:

- Be tribally affiliated and be able to provide documentation.
- Have at least a 2.75 GPA.
- Demonstrate a commitment to helping their community reclaim local food-system control.

APPLICATION & REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS

Applicants will be asked to submit the following information and materials for considerations as a scholarship recipient:

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1. **A personal statement, including:**

- A summary of your accomplishments, extra-curricular activities, and personal interests as they relate to Native food systems (in 500 words or fewer).
- A statement on how you plan to use your degree to support Native food systems.
- A summary of how you plan to use the award funds.

2. **Proof of tribal affiliation** (e.g., enrollment card, CIB, letter from tribe, OHA registry)

3. **College enrollment verification form** (these can be requested from your administration office)

4. **Unofficial transcript** (entering freshmen can submit high school transcripts)

5. **One (1) photograph** depicting you and your work in food systems that can be shared on social media (in JPEG format) (*optional*)

6. **Resume** (*optional*)

All applicants must complete the First Nations online grant application, including submission of necessary attachments, no later than **Thursday, July 11, 2025, by 5 pm Mountain Time**.

First Nations has transitioned the online Grantmaking system to Fluxx. To complete the Native Food Security Grant application, applicants must register as an organization via the online portal located at: [First Nations | Sign in](#). The registration is located at the bottom right of the page. Select “Register as an Organization,” answer the eligibility quiz, and complete the organization and contact information section and click “Submit.” An email will be sent to the contact provided once registration is approved with a link to establish a password. Registrations are reviewed within 4 business hours (Monday through Thursday, 8 am to 5 pm Mountain Time). On weekends (Friday to Sunday) they are reviewed and approved only once per day so response times may vary.

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

Once in the online portal, click on the “Apply for Funding” text in the menu on the left. Listed on the Apply for Funding page will be a section for The NAFSI Scholarship application with a green “Apply Now” button. Click on the button to access the application.

All applicants will receive confirmation of submission after completing the NAFSI Scholarship application form via email from First Nations Grantmaking

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(https://firstnations.fluxx.io/user_sessions/new) to the **submitters email address**. Please check junk or spam folders should this email not arrive.

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 application 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.

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 Mountain Time on Thursday, July 11, 2025**, 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.**

Scholarship Award Timeline

- Application Open – Monday, May 5, 2025
- Application Close - Thursday, July 11, 2025, 5 pm Mountain Time
- Applicant Notifications – August 2025
- Scholars Awarded – September 2025

APPLICABLE TAX INFORMATION

Applicants should be aware that, if they are awarded, funds will be includable in their taxable income unless the use of the scholarship funds meets the criteria outlined by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) which excludes scholarship income if:

- You're a candidate for a degree at an educational institution that maintains a regular faculty and curriculum and normally has a regularly enrolled body of students in attendance at the place where it carries on its educational activities; and

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- The amounts you receive are used to pay for tuition and fees required for enrollment or attendance at the educational institution, or for fees, books, supplies, and equipment required for courses at the educational institution

More information can be found regarding applicable taxes from the [Internal Revenue Service](#) (IRS) and by accessing the IRS [Interactive Tax Assistance Tool](#). Questions regarding taxable income should be directed to a tax professional. Applicants selected to receive scholarship funds will be required to provide a W-9 form and will receive a 1099 document for the tax year awarded which should be included in their year-end tax return.

HELP

Request for Accommodations

If additional accommodations for disabilities are provided to the applicant through the university, college, or tribal college to assist in the completion of the scholarship application, please notify First Nations in advance. The Native Agriculture and Food Systems Scholarship team will work with applicants to reduce any barriers that may prevent submitting the application in a timely manner.

First Nations does not require documentation from applicants or their universities, colleges, or tribal colleges to allow for accommodations. We do recommend that applicants contact the Native Agriculture and Food Systems Investments Scholarship team prior to starting the application so that we are prepared to provide further assistance throughout the open application timeline.

Contact First Nations Development Institute

Should you have any additional questions about the RFP or this specific funding opportunity, please contact Cetan Christensen at cchristensen@firstnations.org via email or by phone at (720) 669-4523. If you have questions about or need support with the grant application system, please contact the Grantmaking department at grantmaking@firstnations.org or by phone at (303) 774-7836.

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