



**SHIFT – Transformative Change and Indigenous Arts**  
**Application Deadline:** Thurs, May 15, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. Pacific time.

The Native Arts + Cultures Foundation’s (NACF) SHIFT – Transformative Change and Indigenous Arts program empowers artists, curators, and community collaborators to address social change issues through a Native lens. The program supports innovative community-driven projects created in partnership with an organization that uplift Native communities, promote self-determination, and drive transformative change, paving the way for a resilient and thriving Indigenous future.

SHIFT focuses on efforts grounded in community cultural assets, resilience, and strengths, drawing increased attention to Native communities, perspectives, and challenges while shifting narratives of invisibility, misunderstanding, and misappropriation. The program encourages bold, expansive projects that promote cultural sovereignty, foster intergenerational knowledge-sharing, advance healing and well-being, advocate for environmental justice, and challenge systemic power structures.

Now in its fourth iteration, SHIFT provides multi-year support, including \$100,000 two-year awards, professional development, project evaluation, documentation, and marketing support. This comprehensive framework enables artists, collectives, and curators to develop impactful projects that engage broader audiences, while deepening their practice, fostering collaboration, and inspiring transformative dialogue on national and global issues.

*We encourage Native artists, art collectives, and curators with experience in community-focused work—especially those building upon community strengths and partnering with organizations for project development and presentation—to apply.*

**Award Amount:** \$100,000 with at least 50% for the lead artist’s or curator’s compensation  
**Number of Awards:** 5 total. 4 designated for an artist-led project and 1 for a curator-led project

<b>Program Milestones</b>	<b>Date</b>
Application Opens	Jan 28, 2025
Application Closes	May 15, 2025
Applicants Notified	Sept 2025
Award Recipients Publicly Announced	Oct 2025
Award Period	Oct 1, 2025-Sept 30, 2027

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### **PROGRAM SERVICES**

- **FINANCIAL RESOURCES:** A two-year award totaling \$100,000, with \$50,000 earmarked for the lead artist's or curator's compensation and the remaining funds for project production.
- **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** Awardees will participate in workshops and training sessions to enhance skills in areas such as financial management, legacy planning, project development, and community engagement.
- **EVALUATION:** NACF will help define project deliverables, track progress, and complete internal and external grant reports. Project leadership will participate in regular check-ins and provide project documentation, a mid-year report, and a final report detailing the project's development and outcomes.
- **COMMUNICATIONS and MARKETING SUPPORT:** NACF will amplify the project's visibility through social media and e-communications. Additionally, we will help document the project through photography and videography when possible and appropriate.
- **ADVOCACY:** NACF will assist awardees in presenting their work at relevant conferences and public events, to provide a platform for conversation around the impacts of their projects and Native voices to effect change around vital issues.

### **PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY**

- **LEAD ARTIST OR CURATOR APPLICANT:**
  - Must be at least 18 years of age.
  - Must be a US-based resident.
  - Must be an enrolled member or citizen of a US federally-recognized or state-recognized American Indian tribe or Alaska Native corporation, or of Native Hawaiian ancestry. Applicants will be asked to provide documentation of their Native citizenship or ancestry in the application.
  - Must be a Native artist (individual or part of a collective) or curator working in dance/choreography, fiction/poetry writing, film/video, multi-disciplinary arts, music, performance art, theater and screenplay writing, traditional arts, or 2D + 3D visual arts.
  - Cannot be a student or enrolled in a university or higher education institution during the award period ( Oct 1, 2025-Sept 30, 2027).
- **PARTNER ORGANIZATION/CO-APPLICANT:**

- U.S.-based non-profit organizations, for-profit businesses, or tribal agencies may apply with the lead applicant as a partner organization. These do not need to be arts-related (e.g., social service organizations, for-profit galleries, or academic institutions).
  - The partner organization cannot be the fiscal sponsor alone—it must be actively engaged in the project.
  - **ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION:**
    - Lead artist or curator must select an eligible organization to partner with on their project, or the organization must select an eligible artist or curator to partner with on their project.
    - Lead artist or curator cannot be a board member, paid consultant, employee, owner, or founder of their chosen partner organization.
    - Lead artist or curator cannot partner with an organization of which their immediate family member is a founder, owner, paid consultant, or employee.
    - Previous NACF awardees who received support before 2023 are eligible and encouraged to apply. However, former SHIFT awardees are not eligible to receive the SHIFT award again.
  - **PROJECT REQUIREMENTS:**
    - Projects must address social change issues through a Native lens.
    - For curator-led projects, eligible projects may include group exhibitions, solo artist retrospectives, or community-engaged installations and performances that feature Indigenous artists and explore social change themes.
    - Proposals must be for new projects. NACF does not accept proposals for annual, ongoing, or already established projects.
    - Projects must include clear strategies to engage the community and publicly present the work.
    - Projects must be completed and publicly presented within two years of the award or before September 30, 2027.
    - *Please note that NACF recognizes that project plans may evolve and will work with awardees to accommodate necessary adjustments.*
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## **PROCESS**

- The lead artist or curator and their partner organization will apply together using the online application form in Submittable before the deadline on **Thurs, May 15, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. Pacific time.**
  - NACF staff will review each submitted application for eligibility, adequacy of work samples and supporting materials, and completeness.
  - A review panel of art peers and professionals will evaluate applications and recommend up to five projects for funding with approval by NACF's Board of Directors. Of these, four will be artist-led, and one will be curator-led.
  - NACF will notify all applicants via email and Submittable in September 2025.
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## **APPLICATION OVERVIEW**

Please allow plenty of time to complete your submission. The application deadline is **Thurs, May 15, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. Pacific time.**

The SHIFT Application Form includes five sections:

1. **Eligibility:** Applicants will answer a list of questions to determine their eligibility for the SHIFT program before proceeding to the remainder of the application questions.
2. **Contact Information:** Applicants will provide their best contact information for the lead artist or curator and the lead partner organization.
3. **Demographic Survey Questions (for Lead Artist or Curator to complete):** Optional, confidential questions to help NACF better advocate for Native artists.
4. **Project Narrative:** Applicants will provide a detailed description of the proposed project, including its goals, themes, project lead roles, and planned community engagement. Applicants will also submit a budget, a two-year timeline, and letters of support from the co-lead applicants.
5. **Work Samples and Supporting Materials:** Lead artist or curator will upload samples of their creative work, resume, bio, headshot, documentation of their Native citizenship or ancestry, and financial documents from their partner organization.

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## **REVIEW CRITERIA**

Applications will be reviewed based on the following:

*Project Explorations:* The project should address a social change issue through a Native lens. Applicants will describe the issue(s) to be addressed, its significance to the community or communities, and the anticipated impact of the project in addressing these issues.

*Community Benefit:* Community benefit is reflected in the opportunities the project creates to engage and positively impact diverse communities. Projects should include a clear and thoughtful plan for actively engaging the community, presenting the work in public spaces, identifying intended audiences, and outlining the anticipated impacts on both the community and the broader public.

### *Collaboration and Partnership*

Collaboration is demonstrated by a clear understanding of how the artist(s) or curator and the lead partner organization will collaborate throughout the project's development, production, and presentation. Strong collaboration is reflected in well-defined roles and responsibilities, with both collaborators actively contributing to the project in meaningful ways.

### *Demonstrated Experience*

Primary consideration will be given to artists, curators, and organizations with experience in community engagement, developing intersectional partnerships, and social change-focused work. Artists demonstrate their experience through their technical capacities, originality, innovation, inspiration, and the distinctive niche of their work and organizations. For curators,

this includes a strong record of developing and presenting thoughtful exhibitions on Native art, engaging diverse audiences, and fostering dialogue through innovative curatorial practice. These qualifications are assessed through work samples, education, apprenticeships, training, and previous success in the field.

#### *Financial Capacity*

Financial capacity is demonstrated through the viability of the project budget, including a clear understanding of the costs necessary to complete the project. The financial health and sustainability of the lead partner organization will also be considered, and partner organizations are required to provide financial statements, such as a balance sheet, profit and loss statement (P&L), and/or an income statement. If the project budget exceeds the maximum award amount, applicants must also show additional support for the project, such as other grants, in-kind contributions, or earned income.

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### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

#### **Can a Native artist or curator from outside the US apply?**

- Lead artist or curator applicants must be enrolled members or citizens of a US-based federally or state-recognized American Indian tribe or Alaska Native corporation or of Native Hawaiian ancestry. Applicants are required to provide documentation of their Native citizenship or ancestry.
- Lead artist or curator applicants must also demonstrate US residency.
- Applicants from US territories and Indigenous communities outside the US are not eligible to apply.
- *NACF understands that there are also unrecognized tribes, a myriad of uncounted and undocumented Native people, people of complex mixed-heritage identities, and a wide range of Indigenous peoples living in the U.S. from throughout the Americas. There is no Native American monolith. However, these eligibility requirements are essential to remaining steadfast to the objectives of this organization's founders and its intent to serve Native peoples from the US.*

#### **Can an organization apply from outside the US?**

No, only US-based organizations are eligible to apply.

#### **What is a “lead applicant”?**

The “lead applicant” is the individual Native artist or individual Native curator responsible for submitting the application and managing the project in collaboration with a partner organization. If an arts collective would like to apply, they must designate a lead applicant from their collective to submit the application, serve as the primary contact, and provide required materials, such as a resume and Native heritage documentation.

#### **How much financial support can I request from NACF?**

The SHIFT award is \$100,000. Projects with a higher total budget must demonstrate other sources of support.

**How much of the award funds will be provided to the lead artist or curator?**

The lead applicant (artist or curator) compensation must be a minimum of \$50,000 of the total \$100,000 award.

**If an artist collective is applying, who will receive the award?**

The \$50,000 lead artist allocation amount will remain the same but can be distributed as the collective decides amongst their collective members.

**Are student projects eligible?**

No, the lead artist or curator applicant must not be a student during the award period. **(November 1, 2025 through October 31, 2027).**

**Can the lead applicant own the partner organization?**

No, the lead applicant cannot collaborate with their own business or organization. This guideline is in place to encourage applicants to explore new partnerships and expand the reach and impact of their work beyond their current professional affiliations. It also ensures that projects remain distinct from the applicant's regular workplace activities.

**I am a curator and work at a museum or gallery. Can I partner with my employer on an exhibition?**

No, lead applicants, including curators, cannot collaborate with their employers on projects.

**Can public presentation take place outside of the US?**

Yes, but only if there is at least one public presentation/exhibition in the US. Preference will be given to projects with public presentation in the US.

**Can I submit more than one application?**

NACF will only accept only one submission per applicant (applies to both lead applicant and partner applicant)

**Can applicants seek feedback from NACF staff about their application? Can applicants provide preliminary drafts for NACF staff to review?**

Yes, applicants may seek feedback by emailing their documents to Laura (Cales) Matalka, Director of Grantmaking, at [grantsupport@nativeartsandcultures.org](mailto:grantsupport@nativeartsandcultures.org) *if received no less than one week before the deadline or before Thurs, May 8, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. Pacific time.*

**What if I accidentally submitted my application before it was completed?**

If you submitted your form in error, please email Amber Ball, Grantmaking Specialist, at [apply@nativeartsandcultures.org](mailto:apply@nativeartsandcultures.org). You may request to edit your submission up to 24 hours before the deadline or no later than Wed, May 14, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. Pacific time.

**Will I receive feedback about the review?**

Due to the large number of applications we expect to receive, we cannot provide individual feedback.

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For technical support with the online application form, click the "Technical Help" button on the application webpage or complete Submittable's support request form, here: <https://www.submittable.com/help/submitter/>. You may also contact Amber Ball at [apply@nativeartsandcultures.org](mailto:apply@nativeartsandcultures.org) or 971-417-4835 Ext. 435.

For inquiries about the SHIFT program eligibility or content, please visit [nativeartsandcultures.org/programs/shift](https://nativeartsandcultures.org/programs/shift) or contact Laura (Cales) Matalaka at [grantsupport@nativeartsandcultures.org](mailto:grantsupport@nativeartsandcultures.org) or 360-334-7285.

**CLICK HERE TO APPLY:**

<https://nativeartsandcultures.submittable.com/submit/80757574-2309-4636-a047-aab0029f601b/shift-transformative-change-and-indigenous-arts-2025-application>