


Indian Education for All -- Connecting Communities, Cultures, and Classrooms

K-12 IEFA Community/Cultural Exchange Grants for 2023-2024

Information and FAQs



The Office of Public Instruction's Indian Education for All Unit is excited to offer school grant opportunities in the 2023-24 school year that encourage community culture exchanges. These grants are intended to facilitate relationship building between communities and schools and help all Montana students better understand their tribal friends and neighbors. It is hoped the exchanges encourage respectful understandings of cultural differences and provide enriching opportunities to implement Indian Education for All in both tribal and non-tribal communities. The information and outlined steps below are intended to assist you in beginning the planning process. Please continue to check the [OPI Indian Education for All webpage](#) as we will be adding resources and additional guidance throughout the summer. If you have any questions, please reach out to Jennifer Stadum at jstadum@mt.gov or Zach Hawkins at Zachariah.hawkins@mt.gov.

Step One

Please complete the [Cultural Exchange Interest Survey](#).

Step Two

Check out the resources in the [23-24 IEFA Community/Cultural Exchange Grants Info for Teachers and Administrators Folder](#)

Step Three

Once you have completed your background research, connected with a potential partner classroom, and have established a purpose with some ideas of activities to include in your proposal, complete the [K-12 Indian Education For All Community/Culture Exchange Grant Pre-Application Checklist Survey - Intention to Apply](#) to indicate you are ready to be contacted by an IEFA specialist to begin completing the grant application process.

Cultural Exchange Testimonial from Teacher Valerie Not Afraid

In 2015 Livingston and Pryor participated in an exchange they called, [Building Bridges, Building Friendships](#). Please take a moment to [watch a video](#) they created about their experience.

"I am thankful for being able to be a part of this program between Livingston Elementary and Pryor Elementary for the past two years. I enjoyed each visit to Livingston Elementary. The staff, the students, their parents, and the building itself were very nice. We were welcomed by all whom we met. The students and I felt special and were treated with great respect. From the Museum visits to the dinner, it was all awesome! Our visits to Fort Parker were pleasant, adventurous, and life-long learning events. For someone who has never learned about Fort Parker, as our first Agency, it has been a wonderful learning experience! I plan on teaching these lessons to all my students this coming fall. It is to better prepare them for the next visit to Fort Parker, as well as for learning about their history. This program is set up between two schools who are building bridges and building friendships. I am working on teaching the Crow Language words for Building Bridges and Building Friendships for my fellow colleagues at Livingston Elementary. I truly believe that it is a memorable event for our students, as well as for myself. Aho, I plan on bigger and better teaching material this coming school year!"

FAQs

What is a community/cultural exchange?

A community/cultural exchange facilitates and creates opportunities for students and participants to establish new connections and relationships, rooted in exchanging cultural knowledge while building community. The goal is to create opportunities for communities and schools in Montana to develop meaningful relationships with their tribally affiliated neighbors, and to experience the richness of Indigeneity. These exchanges are intended to include at least one school that primarily serves tribal youth on or near a Montana Indian Reservation. There are various collaborative partnerships that can be involved in these educational experiences to facilitate cultural learning opportunities.

What is a community/cultural exchange grant?

An OPI IEFA K-12 Cultural Exchange Grant happens in partnership with an OPI Indian Education for All staff member and the participating schools. A plan and budget are created by the participating teachers/schools and proposed to the IEFA staff member, who then assists with plan and budget approval as well as obtaining access to the E-Grant application. Once approved, the money is granted for the approved events and activities to take place within the school year.

How much money are we talking about?

Typically, cultural exchange grants are between \$2,000-\$4,000. The budget will vary depending on need and availability. Grants will be awarded on a first come, first served basis and plans that are viable, sustainable, and demonstrate meaningful learning experiences will be given priority.

How do I build a relationship with the school, group, teacher, or elders with whom I want my students to interact?

- Talk to your school librarian.
- Conduct research using emails, phone calls, or personal visits; attend powwows, community events, and games; Indian Education for All Best Practices Conferences; neighboring schools' (tribal or community) websites.
- Contact tribal college administration and tribal college librarians, culture committee members, tribal education directors, elementary and secondary school principals, content area teachers and colleagues from other schools.
- Use the OPI Indian Education for All published resources and DVDs available in your school library to learn names of elders and leaders of the tribes or community with whom you want your students to interact. Helpful starting points:
 - [Montana Indians: Their History and Location](#)
 - [Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians](#)
 - [Tribe Names](#)
 - [Office of Indian Affairs](#)
 - [Directory of Indian Education Programs in Montana](#)
 - *These pages contain contact information that could be helpful in guiding your research.*
 - Page 10 -- Tribal Education Specialists and Department Directors
 - Page 14 -- Public School Districts on or Near Reservations
 - Page 21 -- Tribal Colleges
 - Page 24 -- Tribal Governments

Would this community/cultural exchange project be reciprocal? Would each school go to the other school?

Yes, it is expected each learning community hosts one another on separate occasions, as determined through the grant proposal. However, there are a variety of in person and virtual options (i.e., Zoom) available. Virtual options are great for smaller schools that have limited accessibility to other communities. It is possible for an overnight stay to be budgeted into the grant application; however, approval will be based upon need, staff, funding availability, and school/community wishes.

What is the timeline for applying for grant money from OPI?

- Ideally, your planning conversations and relationship building begins in May/June.
- [K-12 Indian Education for All Community/Culture Exchange Grant Pre-Application Checklist Survey - Intention to Apply](#) **must be received by October 1, 2023. If you have already started planning -- Congratulations! You may submit your Intention to Apply today!**

To determine the success of the project, what kind of products could be expected for the end of the exchange?

Some sort of student evaluation component is expected to be included in your grant application. This can include a variety of options such as visual and media art projects and presentations, personal writing assignments, presentations to the community.

Who would organize the community/cultural exchange?

The teachers or administrators interested in the planning and participating in this exchange are responsible for the organization of all grant activities. With the help of available OPI resources, the individual or committee organizing the exchange would also be responsible for organizing the cultural resources.

Would off-reservation schools be provided with a list of basic etiquette (gifts) for the tribal nation, and for behavior expectations for reservation schools?

Absolutely -- both OPI Indian Education for All staff and/or tribal cultural committees can provide guidance on appropriate social and behavioral expectations when respectfully connecting with unfamiliar cultural protocols.

What should determine the learning target for the students during the community/cultural exchange?

- [Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians](#) Identify specific Essential Understandings targeted.
- Montana content standards -- specifically [Montana Content Standards for Social Studies K-12: Civics and Government](#)
- [Montana Whole Child Skill Development Competencies](#)

How can we best prepare the students for a community/cultural exchange?

- Ask what the students would like to learn about other communities.
- Ask what students would like to share about their communities (*guided question suggestions: What is the culture of your community? What are some long family histories in your community? What is the history of your community? What is the history of settlement in your community? What tribal nations are/were in your area? Whose Indigenous homelands do you currently live on?*)