



Pursuing Equity in Philanthropy: Native Creators and Performing Artists

BRIGHTENING THE SPOTLIGHT: A NEW REPORT FROM FIRST PEOPLES FUND AND NORC AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

There is a pervasive underfunding of Native arts and cultural practices – including music, theater, dance and storytelling – in the performing arts sector. Only 20% of large foundations give to Native American, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native communities and causes.*

A new report, *Brightening the Spotlight*, shares key findings and lessons from extensive interviews with a diverse set of Native creators who engage in the performing arts. Based on their perspectives, the report provides a how-to guide for philanthropic funders and creative institutions who seek to more effectively support and partner with Native creators. The study was commissioned by First Peoples Fund and conducted in partnership with researchers from NORC at the University of Chicago, and funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- ▶ **Funding and production opportunities don't meet the needs of many Native creators.** Creators recommend greater flexibility and expanded cultural awareness among philanthropy and arts institutions to achieve equity in giving and better representation.
- ▶ **Interviewees described the current U.S. performing arts environment as being somewhat closed off to them.** About a fourth of interviewees asked for more opportunities to connect with funders to unlock increased support.
- ▶ **Native creators want to be valued, not just seen as valuable.** When funders and creative collaborators show a greater appreciation for the perspectives and talents of Native creators, genuine partnerships that avoid tokenism can flourish.
- ▶ **Over half of interviewees recommend that more Natives and culturally knowledgeable non-Natives be involved in funding decisions.** This will help ensure culturally responsive grants and application processes.
- ▶ **Native creators get stuck with words that don't fit.** Two-thirds of interviewees hesitate to self-identify as an artist and over half prefer terms such as "storyteller." This disconnect in language could hold back Native creators from applying to or receiving grants.
- ▶ **Native creators do more than perform.** Native creators play a wide range of roles in their communities, keeping traditions alive, promoting health and economic opportunities, and educating non-Native audiences.

*Native Americans in Philanthropy, *Investing in Native Communities*, 2019

Learn more and explore the report findings at:
<http://ow.ly/iARb5017iKG>

