


NATIVE FORWARD
SCHOLARS FUND

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024

A close-up portrait of Krystalynn Nasisaq J. Scott, a woman with long, wavy brown hair, wearing black-rimmed glasses and a colorful, patterned top. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is blurred, showing vertical lines of light and shadow.

cover scholar:

**Krystalynn
Nasisaq J. Scott**

► **YAKUTAT TLINGIT TRIBE, NATIVE VILLAGE
OF PORT GRAHAM, AKIACHAK
TRIBAL COMMUNITY**

Professional

Doctor of Law (JD)

Lewis & Clark Law School

**Heaven
Sepulveda**

► **SALT RIVER PIMA-
MARICOPA INDIAN
COMMUNITY**

Professional

Doctoral Candidate,
Leadership & Innovation

Arizona State University

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MISSION

We provide financial support for American Indians and Alaska Natives seeking higher education and support them in obtaining undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees. We partner with Tribes, the federal government, foundations, corporations, and individuals to ensure the growth and sustainability of scholarships.

VISION

Building on a 50-year legacy, Native Forward will continue to be the premier national resource in funding and empowering the next generation of Native leaders across all sectors, by meeting the unmet need of every Native student.

A portrait of Dezman Loving, a young man with dark, curly hair and a goatee, wearing a black suit, a patterned shirt, and a black tie. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees.

INTRODUCTION

The following impact report covers program activities for the period of July 1, 2023, through July 1, 2024. Our goal is to maintain effective communication with current fellows and to provide relevant and efficient services as part of the overall administration of scholarships for the benefit of the Native Americans.

**Dezman
Loving**

► **CHICKASAW NATION**

Undergraduate
Bachelor's, Computer
Sciences/Information
Systems

**Oklahoma City
University**

XEST SXLXALT (Good Day!)

Since 1969, Native Forward Scholars Fund has provided financial assistance and support to American Indians and Alaska Natives pursuing higher education. To date, Native Forward Scholars Fund has supported over 22,000 students across more than 1,700 higher education institutions in all 50 states, representing over 500 Tribes.

Considering the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision that abolished affirmative action in higher education, the ruling imposes significant limitations on educational access for individuals from marginalized racial backgrounds. Historically, affirmative action policies have been instrumental in improving access and representation for marginalized groups. The removal of these policies presents increased obstacles for qualified Native American students in gaining admission to competitive colleges and universities, as well as accessing vital support systems essential for their academic success.

Native Forward was established to cultivate Native students into leaders by providing them with essential tools and culturally relevant resources for success in higher education and for future generations. Our focus continues to be on fostering positive change within Native communities through our resolute dedication to providing educational opportunities for all Native students. Despite being the largest direct provider of scholarships to Native American students, we are currently able to fund only 22 percent of our annual applicants. Our mission will not be fulfilled until we can extend opportunities, empowerment, and financial support to every Native student seeking higher education.

As the higher education landscape becomes increasingly challenging, it is imperative that we collectively support the development of strong Tribal leaders and advocates. We appreciate your support in this journey and your role in empowering Native students.

Lemlmnts (Thank You!)



Angelique Albert

› **CONFEDERATED
SALISH &
KOOTENAI
TRIBE**

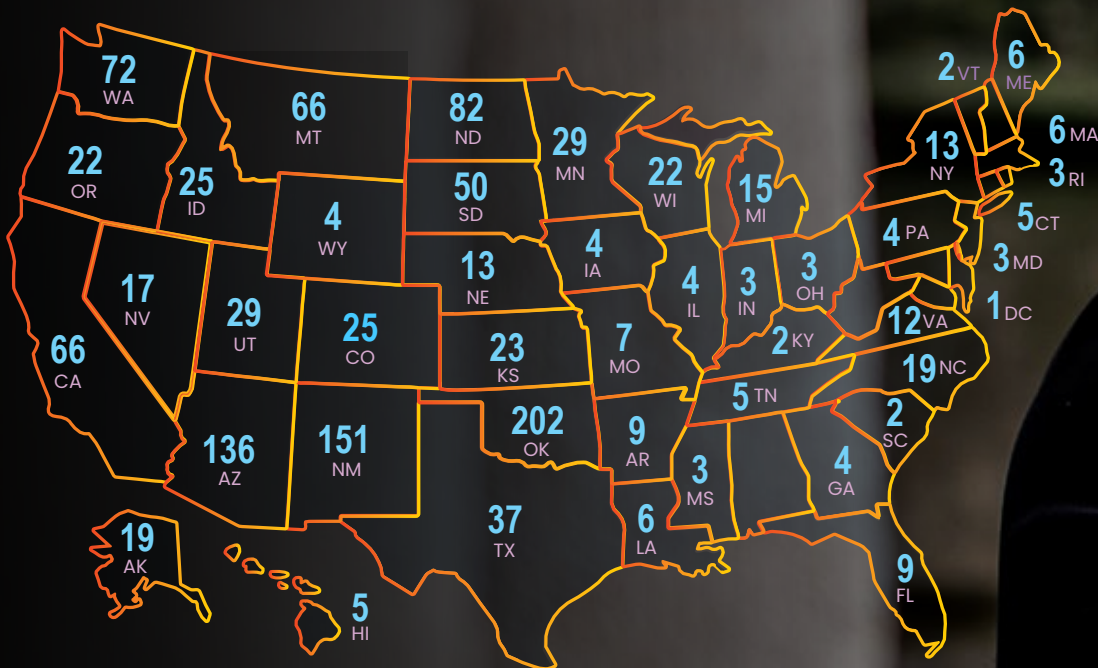
Native Forward
Scholars Fund,
Chief Executive
Officer

COMMUNITY IMPACT

During 2023-2024

46 States Impacted

includes Washington, D.C.



TOP HOME STATES

BY NUMBER OF AWARDEES

- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. Oklahoma | 5. Washington | 8. South Dakota |
| 2. New Mexico | 6. California | 9. Texas |
| 3. Arizona | 7. Montana | 10. Minnesota |
| 4. North Dakota | | |

A close-up portrait of a young woman with long, dark, wavy hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a black top, a thin gold necklace, and large, ornate earrings. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with stone architecture.

AT A GLANCE

1,238
Native Scholars
EMPOWERED WITH
SCHOLARSHIPS

\$13,185,212
Total Funding
AWARDED

Kianna
Pete

» NAVAJO NATION

Graduate

Master of Arts, Politics
& Education

Columbia University
Teachers College

\$56,713
HIGHEST
SINGLE AWARD
TO A SCHOLAR

\$26,233
AVERAGE
UNMET
NEED

\$9,438
AVERAGE
AWARD
AMOUNT



Kamella Bird-Romero

» OHKAY OWINGEH

Graduate

Master of Fine Arts,
Art/Creative Writing

**Institute of American
Indian Arts**

SUPPORT

What sets Native Forward apart when it comes to college success are our time-tested, culturally attuned student support services. For decades, we have worked to improve and excel at the support services we offer to all Native students. We provide:

- Adjacent high impact, culturally responsive support through multi-faceted and targeted programming.
- Financial aid counseling, assistance with Native Forward applications and Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), standard financial literacy information, award revisions, Cost of Attendance adjustments, and resolved award disbursements.
- Support through the most difficult parts of the academic journey using a one-to-one, three-touchpoint student outreach system which includes email, flyers, social media, direct calls, and surveys.
- Institutional outreach and advocacy to assist students in connecting to campus resources such as tutoring, mentoring, financial aid, peer groups, etc.
- Transcript review to assure students success, with targeted “back on track” initiative to assist students with on campus resources including mentoring and connections to other Native students around the country.
- Incentive programs celebrate student accomplishments through acknowledgement, including the awarding of stoles, achievement medals, and Student of the Month.

A portrait of Derrick Stevens, a man with dark hair, wearing a dark blue suit, white shirt, and a patterned tie. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is a brick wall.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

201

TRIBES REPRESENTED

TOP 10 TRIBES

BY NUMBER OF AWARDEES

Navajo Nation
Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
Turtle Mountain Band of
Chippewa Indians of North Dakota
Muscogee (Creek) Nation
Oglala Sioux Tribe of the
Pine Ridge Reservation
Chickasaw Nation
Three Affiliated Tribes of the
Fort Berthold Reservation
Confederated Salish and Kootenai
Tribes of the Flathead Reservation
Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of
Chippewa Indians

**Derrick
Stevens**

› **COMANCHE & CHEYENNE
TRIBES**

Professional
Doctorate of Physical
Therapy, Physical Therapy
University of Oklahoma
Health Science Center

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Angelique Albert, CEO of Native Forward Scholars Fund, said:

"The Student of the Year Award commemorates the achievements of student leaders that are actively working to build a better world for all of us, and Stephen and Breckin are inspiring scholars who we at Native Forward are honored to recognize this year. I commend their dedication to cultural preservation and the public good throughout their higher education journeys, and am eager to continue supporting Native Forward scholars at the Summit and beyond."

Since 2018, the award has recognized personal mission and academic excellence. This year's awardees seek to undo generations of systemic injustice perpetrated toward Native communities through their respective professional pursuits.

The annual Empowering Scholars Summit is a free, three-day immersion opportunity for Native Forward awardees to grow their academic and professional expertise. The Summit seeks to be a space where Native students can elevate their professional skills, expand their social capital and networks, enhance their personal brand, and develop an executive presence.

**Issac
Burden**

› **CHEROKEE NATION
OF OKLAHOMA**

**Undergraduate
Bachelors,
Engineering**

Dartmouth College

SCHOLARSHIPS

With over five decades of experience, Native Forward's core competency is the administration of scholarship programs. We offer a comprehensive range of more than 40 scholarship programs to undergraduate, graduate, and professional scholars pursuing degrees in any field. Native Forward provides:

- Access to scholarships/fellowship funding through effective scholarship administration. Marketing and outreach to national Native audiences. Efficient application, review, and awarding process, including distribution and tracking.
- Student relief funding to assist Native students facing financial hardships and challenges by providing them with a one-time relief award.
- Examination funding to assist with the costs associated with taking professional examinations, including the Bar and CPA examinations and graduate entrance exams.
- Internship funding to offset costs directly associated with participation in approved internships. This award covers travel, eligible living expenses, and daily commuting costs.
- Professional development funding to empower Natives who work in STEM fields and radio communications. Individuals may apply if seeking funding for continuing education, conferences, training, and certifications, through the entire academic journey.



**Kaylee
Mach**

» **CADDO NATION**

Professional
Doctor of Osteopathic
Medicine

**Oklahoma State
University**



Kaitlyn Bird


► KEWA PUEBLO

Undergraduate
Bachelor's, Psychology
University of Montana

PROGRAMMING

College access is one of Native Forward's core skills and primary areas of focus. We collaborate with individual Tribal members of the 574 federally recognized Tribes to provide access to funds, resources, and information for higher education. Our holistic and culturally relevant programming includes:

- One-to-one outreach to students, including financial aid assistance, application support, and advocating for our students through improving policies, reducing obstacles, and increasing on-campus support available to Native students.
- Webinars and Workshops. From navigating imposter syndrome to mastering the art of building your resume, join Native Forward for webinars and workshops built from Native scholar feedback and designed to provide relevant information and support scholars throughout their academic journey.
- Student Center, an online collection of best practices, strategies, and advice specifically tailored for Native student successes that supplement our one-to-one services and provide additional guidance through the entire academic journey.

A portrait of a young man with dark hair, a mustache, and a goatee, wearing glasses and a dark blue button-down shirt. He is smiling and looking slightly to the right. A red beaded necklace is visible around his neck. The background is a brick wall.

“With the money that I might make in my future career, I would like to reinvest it in a scholarship that would help young and aspiring Native children pursuing a career in aviation.

*– Ralph Keen,
Cherokee Nation of
Oklahoma*

**Ralph
Keen**

› **CHEROKEE NATION
OF OKLAHOMA**

**Undergraduate
Bachelors,
Aerospace Sciences
University of Oklahoma**

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

Johnson Scholarship Foundation


In partnership with the Johnson Scholarship Foundation, Native Forward Scholars Fund supports American Indian and Alaska Native students through two key initiatives aimed at enhancing their opportunities in finance and accounting: Funding the Future of Finance in Indian Country & CPA Examinations.

The Funding the Future of Finance in Indian Country (FFFIC) Scholarship provides financial assistance to eligible undergraduate students pursuing full-time business, accounting, or finance degrees at accredited institutions. This need-based scholarship awards up to \$10,000 per academic year and aims to diversify these fields by supporting Native students.

Through funding from the Johnson Scholarship Foundation, Native Forward Scholars Fund offers financial assistance for the costs associated with the CPA

examination. This program encourages students and professionals seeking CPA licensure to apply for support covering application, registration, and exam fees. Eligible candidates can receive assistance for one section of the CPA exam at a time, with funding also potentially available for preparatory courses, depending on availability.

Together, these initiatives empower Native students by alleviating financial burdens and fostering greater representation in the finance and accounting sectors.



“ I credit my grandparents for inspiring my professional aspirations, as people who were knowledgeable about plant identification and ceremonial uses while also working as coal miners.

*– Arika Peacock
Navajo Nation*

**Arika
Peacock**

› NAVAJO NATION

**Undergraduate
Bachelor's, Environmental
Science**

University of Arizona

A portrait of a young man with dark hair, looking slightly off-camera with a gentle smile. He is wearing a maroon collared shirt over a red t-shirt, and a colorful beaded necklace with yellow, purple, and white beads. The background is a warm-toned brick wall.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

41%
First-Generation
STUDENTS

Myltin
Bighorn

› FORT PECK ASSINIBOINE
AND SIOUX TRIBE

Undergraduate
Bachelor's Degree
Physical Education
University of Kansas

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

338

INSTITUTIONS ATTENDED

TOP 10 INSTITUTIONS

BY NUMBER OF AWARDEES

University of North Dakota
University of New Mexico
Northwest Indian College
Arizona State University
Oklahoma State University
University of Arizona
University of Oklahoma
Grand Canyon University
Northern Arizona University
University of Washington

TOP 10 AREAS OF STUDY

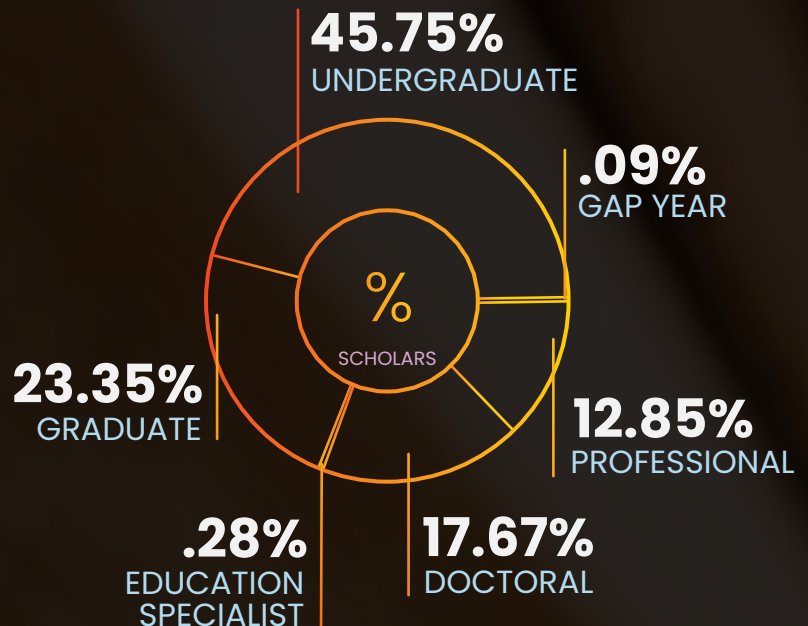
BY NUMBER OF AWARDEES

Education
Business
Public Health
Medicine
Engineering
Law
Psychology
Social Work
Native American Studies
Nursing

3.61

AVERAGE ACCUMULATIVE

**Grade Point
Average**





ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Laurel graduated from the University of New Mexico with a BA in Psychology (1985) and a Master in Counseling and Family Studies (1989). Laurel was a first-generation college student, so she relied on organizations such as the Native Forward Scholars Fund to support her dream of working with Native Youth.

Her career included writing by crafting a curriculum for community advocacy involving Native teen leadership and later for children newly diagnosed with mental health challenges. Now, she writes creatively and ensures that Native children are represented in children's books as main characters reflecting their beautiful modern life and culture.

Laurel will be forever grateful to the Native Forward Scholars Fund for supporting a graduate degree that grew into Laurel becoming an author. She released a new picture book this year called *Too Much, My Great Big Native Family* (Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2024). Three more picture books will be released in 2025/26.

Laurel Goodluck

› **MANDAN, HIDATSA, &
TSIMSHIAN NATIONS**

Graduate

Master of Arts Counseling
and Family Studies

University of New Mexico

OUR PARTNERS THANK YOU

**Christopher
Whirlwind**

› **CROW CREEK SIOUX TRIBE
OF THE CROW CREEK
RESERVATION**

Graduate

Master of Arts
Natural Resource Studies/
Management

University of Minnesota Duluth

Amateur Radio Digital
Communications
(ARDC)

American Indian
Science and
Engineering Society

American Indigenous
Business Leaders

American Indian
College Fund

AMERIND Risk

APIA Scholars

Bank of America

Bill & Melinda Gates
Foundation

Bureau of
Indian Education

CBRE

CLA Foundation

Cypress Creek

Edelman

Google

Hispanic
Scholarship Fund

Indigenous
Education Inc

Johnson Scholarship
Foundation

Murdock
Charitable Trust

NDN Collective

NextEra Energy

NIKE

NIKE N7

PNM

Poarch Band
of Creek Indians

Salish Kootenai
College

San Manuel Band
of Mission Indians

Salesforce

Shakopee Mdewakanton
Sioux Community

Sky Eagle Collection

Society of Professional
Engineering Employees
in Aerospace

UNCF

Urban Native Era

Wells Fargo

Wend Collective



Peter Thais

► **SAINT REGIS
MOHAWK TRIBE**
Undergraduate
Bachelors, Engineering
Cornell University

BOARD

Holly Cook Macarro
Red Lake Band of Ojibwe
Chair

Lillian Sparks Robinson
Rosebud Sioux Tribe
Vice-Chair

Cecilia Gutierrez
Treasurer

Amber Garrison
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
Secretary

Kimberly Teehee
Cherokee Nation Chippewa
Member at Large

Ernest Stevens Jr.
Oneida Nation of Wisconsin
Member at Large

Franklin "Hud" Oberly, Jr.
Comanche, Osage & Caddo
Member at Large

Linda Benally
Diné Nation
Member at Large

Victoria E. Adams
Oglala Lakota Nation
Member at Large

EMERITUS BOARD

Steven Stallings
Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians

Walter Lamar
Blackfeet & Wichita

Stacy Leeds
Cherokee



“Thank you for
being a part
of our journey
in breaking
barriers and
empowering
Native scholars!”

- Angelique Albert
Native Forward
Scholars Fund Chief
Executive Officer

Taymee Brandon

› **TURTLE MOUNTAIN
BAND OF CHIPPEWA
INDIANS OF NORTH
DAKOTA**

Professional
Doctorate of Philosophy,
Engineering
Purdue University

A portrait of a young woman with long, dark brown hair, wearing a dark blue top and large, light-colored tassel earrings. She is looking slightly off-camera with a gentle smile.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING NATIVE FORWARD SCHOLARS FUND

Native Forward is in its fifth decade of providing scholarships for undergraduate, graduate, and professional education for Native students. **Currently, we are able to fund only 18% of all applicants, leaving 82% of students unfunded.** Our goal is to meet the unmet financial needs of every Native student and help every Native undergraduate, graduate and professional student achieve their educational goals.

78%

Students LEFT UNFUNDED

Our work is not done. Your generous contributions allow us to continue advocating for Native students from college to career. Every dollar raised goes to support our scholars on their journey through higher education to better their lives and give back to Tribal communities.

**Ashley
Attla**

› **HUGHES VILLAGE**

Undergraduate
Bachelors, Emergency
Medical Services
University of New Mexico

STAFF

Angelique Albert, MBA
Confederated Salish &
Kootenai Tribes
Chief Executive Officer

Sara Barnett, M.Ed
Muscogee Nation
Associate Director of Student
Programming

**Michael Bates, M.Ed.,
Alumnus**
Cherokee
Scholarship Operations Manager

Judy Bently
Confederated Salish
& Kootenai Tribes
Marketing Manager

Dr. Sandra Boham
Confederated Salish
& Kootenai Tribes
Chief Operating Officer

Jessica Bullard
Lumbee
Development Officer

Angel Burnside, PHR
Confederated Salish
& Kootenai Tribes
Human Resources Manager

**Taylor
Clements-Hammond**
Accounting Specialist

Gabriel Diamante
Data Analyst

Parker Duff, M.A.
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
Development Associate

Adriann Francis
Pueblo of Laguna, Mojave
Grants Manager

Marveline Vallo Gabbard
Acoma Pueblo
Scholarship Operations Manager

Eliza Gonzales-Phillips
MBA
Controller

Erin Griego
Chief of Staff

Alshana Jake
Navajo Nation
Scholarship Operations
Assistant

**Sara LaBarge, M.S.Ed.,
CFRE, Alumna**
Menominee Nation
Director of Strategic
Partnership & Interim
Marketing Director

**Christa Moya, MCRP,
Alumna**
Navajo Nation
Director of Scholarship
Operations & Programming

Denise Olivarez
Tarahumara
Accounting Assistant

JT Schreier
Scholarship Operations
Assistant

Megan Sierra
Administrative Services
Manager

**Daryan Singer, MPS,
Alumna**
Navajo Nation
Student Programming
Manager

Michelle Taylor
Navajo Nation and
Lac Courte Oreilles
Executive Assistant to CEO

**Kakiley Workman,
Alumna**
Cherokee Nation
Scholarship Operations
Manager



**Kennedy
Cotton**

► **CHEROKEE NATION**

Graduate
Master of Business
Administration, Business
University of North Texas



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

As an aspiring psychiatrist, my experience working with uninsured populations, promoting the presence of underrepresented medical students in higher education, and traveling the world to provide life-changing care for those in need has prepared me to work with Native peoples to promote quality of life and address psychosocial needs.

**Breckin
Horton**

› **CHOCTAW NATION
OF OKLAHOMA**

Graduate

Doctor of Medicine,
Psychiatry

**Albert Einstein College
of Medicine**

A close-up portrait of Sarah Roubidoux Lawson, a woman with long blonde hair and tortoiseshell glasses, smiling warmly. She is wearing a purple top. The background is a soft, out-of-focus brown.

YOUR INVESTMENT MEANS SO MUCH

Native Forward Scholars Fund continued our mission of empowering Native students pursuing undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees across the U.S.

This fiscal year, we impacted 1,238 scholars from 46 states with a comprehensive range of support, including scholarships, academic support programs, and more, awarding our scholars over \$11 million in total funding. Building upon our legacy of awarding more than \$400 million to 22,000 Native students from over 500 Tribes in all 50 states since inception.

**Sarah
Roubidoux Lawson**

➤ **IOWA TRIBE OF KANSAS
AND NEBRASKA**



SCAN FOR:
TO VIEW REPORT
ONLINE

FINANCIALS

Sources of Native Forward Funds

Contributions and Grants:	\$7,009,157
Federal Grant:	\$9,785,690
Special Events:	\$95,195
Other Program Revenue:	\$19,630
Investment Income, Net of Investment Fees:	\$754,529
Realized and Unrealized, Gains on Investments:	\$2,311,820
Total Income:	\$19,976,021

Use of Native Forward Funds

Scholarships and Student Support Services:	\$16,398,017
Management:	\$1,003,240
Fundraising:	\$308,758
Total Expenses:	\$17,710,015
Net Assets, End of Year:	\$30,292,788

**All Figures are based on FY 2024 Financial Statements
Audited by Pulakos CPAs.*

*Our full report and IRS Form 990 are available at:
<https://www.nativeforward.org/annual-report-financials/>*



Adam
Jolly
» CHEROKEE NATION



NATIVE FORWARD

SCHOLARS FUND

NativeForward.org

**Native Forward
Scholars Fund**

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