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Sundance Institute Receives \$4 Million Endowment Gift from Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria

Largest Endowment Gift in Nonprofit's History Will Further Opportunities for Indigenous Talent From California Tribes

LOS ANGELES, Calif. (June 13, 2023) – Today the nonprofit Sundance Institute announced the largest endowment gift in its history, a \$4 million dollar endowment to the Institute's Indigenous Program from the **Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria (FIGR)**. The opportunities created through the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria | Sundance Institute Endowment will provide support for Indigenous artists from California-based tribes, both federally and non-federally recognized. The gift will allow Sundance Institute to expand the offerings already available to artists through the Indigenous Program, an integral component of the Institute's work that officially began in 1994 and has been woven into the organization's values since its inception in 1981, when Native American filmmakers were invited by founder Robert Redford to participate in the originating meetings of Sundance Institute and its first filmmaking lab.

The endowment gift was facilitated by FIGR Tribal Chairman Greg Sarris, who himself was a participant in Sundance Institute's 1992 Screenwriters Lab. In the immediate future, the endowment will create a new fellowship for emerging and midcareer Indigenous artists with a project in development or production, providing critical financial and creative support. The Graton fellows will each receive a grant of \$25,000, yearlong creative mentorship from Indigenous Program staff, access to creative and professional development opportunities, and support to attend the Sundance Film Festival. The gift will also support the creation of scholarships with [Sundance Collab](#), Sundance Institute's digital learning space for artists from around the world. Applications are open from now until August 28, 2023 for the first round of fellowships and scholarships to be distributed in 2024.

"As a nonprofit, the Institute is so grateful to Greg Sarris and the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria on this incredibly generous gift that will ensure we are able to continue meaningfully supporting the development of the careers of Indigenous storytellers from tribes throughout the state of California," said **Joana Vicente, Sundance Institute CEO**. "It means a lot to us that so many Native talents will be provided a space to learn, connect, and create thanks to this substantial support, and we're especially appreciative of Greg for giving back to the Sundance family he has belonged to for decades."

"So much of cinema's history and the establishment of the American film industry has

been created within California, but very rarely has it ever included the people on whose very land sustained it. That's why it's so heartening to think of all the artists that will benefit from this generous gift," said **Adam Piron, Director of Sundance Institute's Indigenous Program**. "The ripple effect of the opportunities created through this endowment will be significant. Our program is dedicated to empowering a broad range of Indigenous voices, and we're so excited to be able to expand our mission, specifically to California Indigenous tribes, with the addition of the fellowship and Collab scholarships."

"When I was a part of the Screenwriter's Lab at Sundance in 1992, I witnessed firsthand the incredible support that the Institute provides to all artists, but Indigenous talent specifically," said **Greg Sarris, Tribal Chairman of the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria**. "We are excited to see the creative breakthroughs from future fellows and scholarship recipients. Supporting and nurturing these artists will open up pathways to success for the entire California Indigenous creative community and enable us to tell our stories."

Sundance Institute has a rich history in supporting Indigenous storytellers who have made successful careers working in the film and television industry. Over the years, we have championed Sydney Freeland, Sterlin Harjo, Sky Hopinka, Blackhorse Lowe, Fox Maxy, Caroline Monnet, Shaandiin Tome, Erica Tremblay, Taika Waititi, and more. The Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria | Sundance Institute Endowment will help Sundance further grow this community.

Interested applicants must be affiliated with a tribe within the state of California and can learn more [here](#).

About the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria

Graton Rancheria is a federally recognized Indian tribe comprising Coast Miwok and Southern Pomo Indians. Legislation restoring federal recognition to the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria was signed into law in December 2000. Tribal lands are located in Rohnert Park, Sonoma County, Calif. For more information, visit www.gratonrancheria.com.

Sundance Institute

As a champion and curator of independent stories, the Sundance Institute provides and preserves the space for artists across storytelling media to create and thrive. Founded in 1981 by Robert Redford, the Institute's signature labs, granting, and mentorship programs, dedicated to developing new work, take place throughout the year in the U.S. and internationally. [Sundance Collab](#), a digital community platform, brings a global cohort of working artists together to learn from each other and Sundance advisors and connect in a creative space, developing and sharing works in progress. The Sundance Film Festival and other public programs connect audiences and artists to ignite new ideas, discover original voices, and build a community dedicated to independent storytelling. Sundance Institute has supported and showcased such projects as *Summer of Soul (...or, When the Revolution Could Not Be Televised)*, *CODA*, *Flee*,

Passing, Clemency, Never Rarely Sometimes Always, Zola, On the Record, Boys State, The Farewell, Honeyland, One Child Nation, The Souvenir, The Infiltrators, Sorry to Bother You, Won't You Be My Neighbor?, Hereditary, Call Me By Your Name, Get Out, The Big Sick, Mudbound, Fruitvale Station, City So Real, Top of the Lake, Between the World & Me, Wild Goose Dreams, and Fun Home. Join [Sundance Institute](#) on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#).

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