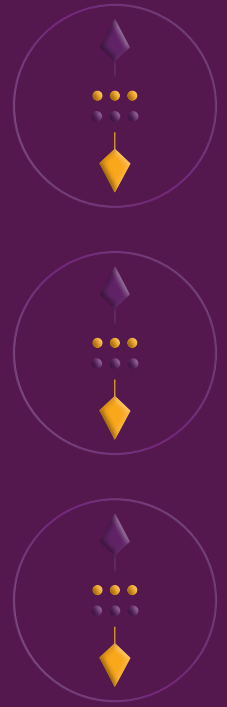


2026 PROGRAM PRIORITIES





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STUDENT SUCCESS: PK-12

AISES Student Success PK-12 initiatives create a comprehensive support system to engage Indigenous youth in STEM education through culturally relevant, hands-on learning experiences. These programs weave STEM education with Indigenous knowledge, sustainability concepts, career exploration, and community-based problem-solving while providing professional development for educators in culturally centered STEM teaching approaches. Through a combination of in-school curriculum, educator training, student challenges, science and engineering fair pathways, and online resources, AISES offers Indigenous students multiple pathways to explore STEM fields and prepare for higher education and future careers. The initiatives emphasize practical, project-based learning while incorporating traditional values and community connections, creating an educational framework that supports both academic achievement and cultural identity.

AISES Clubs

AISES Clubs are Indigenous-centered STEM communities for K-12 students that connect classroom learning with cultural knowledge, environmental stewardship, and real-world problem-solving. Through a 30-week Indigenous STEAM curriculum, students build curiosity, cultural identity, and leadership with hands-on projects supported by teachers and mentors, exploring how traditional knowledge and modern innovation work together to sustain healthy communities. The Club model also serves as a foundation for focused STEM learning pathways, with spinoffs in areas such as college and career readiness, computer science, agriculture, marine science, mathematics, and cybersecurity. Each spinoff maintains the same trusted, culturally grounded, educator-supported framework,



allowing AISES to scale a proven format while responding to student interests, partner priorities, and community needs.

Fostering Indigenous Innovation in Robotics Education (FIIRE)

FIIRE empowers educators and students to explore coding and robotics through the lens of renewable energy and sustainability. Using innovative tools like micro:bit and Climate Action Kits, FIIRE integrates hands-on activities and culturally relevant lessons to spark creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. This program supports teachers with resources, training, and stipends to bring robotics and computer science concepts to life in their classrooms, fostering a new generation of Indigenous innovators.





FIIRE Hackathon

The FIIRE Hackathon is a hands-on, team-based event that empowers Indigenous middle and high school students to design creative, sustainability-focused engineering solutions using renewable energy and robotics concepts. Over the course of the event, participants engage in rapid prototyping challenges that blend coding, micro:bit-based robotics, and environmental problem-solving—all grounded in Indigenous values of innovation, stewardship, and community. The Hackathon fosters collaboration between students, educators, and mentors, encouraging culturally relevant STEM learning that celebrates both traditional knowledge and modern technology.

Indigenous Innovation Challenge

The Indigenous Innovation Challenge integrates educator professional development with student-led, challenge-based learning to address real-world needs in Indigenous communities. The program establishes pathways for educators to center Indigenous knowledge within computer science and creativity lessons using Apple technologies, then guides students in grades 3–12 through community-driven solution challenges using Swift applications. Site-level competitions culminate with finalists presenting their work at the AISES National Advancing Indigenous Science and Engineering Fair or the AISES National Conference.

Indigenous Knowledge to Grow Successful STEM Teachers

This AISES program provides Indigenous and non-Indigenous STEM educators at primarily Indigenous-serving schools across the U.S. with a culture-based professional development course centering STEM teaching on Indigenous Knowledge. The program focuses on best practices for teaching STEM centering Indigenous Knowledge, while also incorporating Indigenous pedagogical knowledge, and is administered in partnership with Fort Lewis College – College of Education. The program maintains three goals: 1) Increase STEM teacher retention at Indigenous-serving schools, 2) Expand the impact STEM teachers have on the educational equity of Indigenous students, and 3) Improve Indigenous student success through an academic model aimed at increasing proficiency in STEM by centering Indigenous Knowledge and values, emphasizing interconnection, inquiry-based learning, and place-based pedagogy.

Learning Center

The AISES Learning Center is a comprehensive online resource directory designed to advance STEM education opportunities for Indigenous PK-12 students, educators, and families. The platform features culturally relevant curriculum, lesson plans, and educational resources that strengthen STEM competencies and support Indigenous learners from an early age. By equipping students, educators, and families with accessible, high-quality tools, the AISES Learning Center aims to expand long-term pathways to success for Indigenous students.

National Advancing Indigenous Science and Engineering Fair (NAISEF)

The National Advancing Indigenous Science and Engineering Fair is the AISES premier pre-college science and engineering experience for Indigenous students. More than a traditional science fair, the two-day event centers students through research presentations, judging, hands-on STEM activities, cultural celebration, educator engagement, networking, and opportunities for students and families to experience the broader AISES community.



Students participate in junior and senior divisions, present original research, engage with STEM professionals, and take part in activities designed to build confidence, belonging, and future pathways in STEM. AISES awards student projects and provides support for top participants to advance to broader science and engineering fair opportunities, including the International Science and Engineering Fair. NAISEF creates a space where Indigenous students are recognized not only for the quality of their research, but also for their creativity, leadership, cultural grounding, and ability to address questions that matter to their communities.



National Conference STEM Day

STEM Day is a fun, hands-on day of interactive activities for middle and high school students and educators. Hosted by AISES partners during the pre-conference day of the AISES National Conference, the event also features a marketplace where PK-12 students can explore AISES opportunities and build foundational professional skills, including resume writing, college application guidance, and more.



SOAR: STEM Opportunities Advancing Readiness for the Public Schools of Robeson County

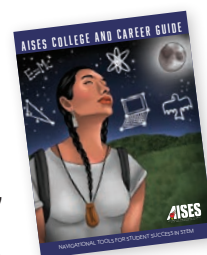
Funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Native Youth and Community Projects opportunity, SOAR is a three-year initiative developed in partnership with the Public Schools of Robeson County (PSRC) to improve STEM education for 2,500 students across two tracks. Track One supports PreK–Grade 4 students through hands-on STEM Clubs that integrate early literacy and numeracy with traditionally centered lessons. Track Two provides grades 5–12 students with opportunities

for original STEM research and participation in the National Advancing Indigenous Science and Engineering Fair (NAISEF). Across both tracks, 40 educators will receive professional development, and families will participate in annual Family STEM Nights. AISES leads curriculum development, educator training, and program oversight, while PSRC manages site coordination and family engagement and tribal partners advise on culturally grounded curriculum. The program serves Lumbee, Coharie, Haliwa-Saponi, and other students supported by PSRC's Office of Indian Education. Expected outcomes include improved STEM skills among early learners, increased student participation in STEM research and fairs and expanded career exposure.

STEM College and Career Readiness Programs

The AISES College and Career Readiness (CCR) Guidebook is designed to address the unique needs, values, and workforce priorities of Native students and tribal communities.

The guidebook and companion programming prepare Native students for STEM higher education and careers through resources including career assessments, a college application guide, scholarships, resume and interview preparation, and financial literacy tools. Classroom and independent implementation tools are also available, supporting both students and educators in navigating STEM pathways and addressing the underrepresentation of Native people in STEM fields.





STUDENT SUCCESS: POSTSECONDARY

AISES Postsecondary Student Success initiatives provide comprehensive support to Indigenous students pursuing higher education in STEM fields through an integrated network of chapters, scholarships, professional development, and leadership opportunities. These programs combine financial assistance with holistic support services including mentorship, career exploration, emergency aid, and regular check-ins with AISES Staff. Through college chapters across the United States and Canada, students engage in educational, service, and social activities that facilitate personal and professional growth. The initiatives include hands-on experiences through internships, research presentations, and the largest Native-focused STEM college and career fair. Students can develop leadership skills through representative positions, while receiving training in digital literacy, application of cultural knowledge, and professional networking. This multi-faceted approach ensures Indigenous students receive both the academic and cultural support needed to successfully complete their STEM degrees and transition into careers, while building a strong community of Indigenous STEM professionals for the future.

College and Career Fairs

AISES hosts college and career fairs at its National Conference, AISES Canada National Gathering, and NAISEF. The National Conference College and Career Fair is the largest event of its kind in Indian Country. Hundreds of corporations, government agencies, academic institutions, tribal industries, and nonprofits participate to share information about the many opportunities available for students and professionals.

Internships

The AISES Summer Internship program provides students with a 10-week applied summer work experience at a business or government agency and an opportunity to explore career options and to develop professional level skills. Interns gain resume-building skills and develop professional networks. In some cases, students create their own professional internship program within their discipline of study and within the parameters of the host agency.

Poster and Oral Research Presentations & Competitions

The AISES National Conference features oral and poster presentation sessions where middle and high school, undergraduate, and graduate students and professionals showcase their STEM research. Participants share findings with a broad audience and receive valuable feedback on their work, with awards recognizing exceptional presentations.

Scholarships

AISES helps students move forward in their educational journeys by providing a broad range of scholarship opportunities. Scholarships help students acquire skills and training that will help them meet the unique STEM needs of our communities. Our scholarship process is enhanced by our partnership with Indigenous Education Inc. (Cobell Scholarship Fund). This partnership provides a one-stop shop for students to complete information that aligns their goals with scholarships from other potential organizations, streamlining scholarship access. Some of our larger scholarship program partners include Amateur Radio Digital Communications (ARDC), FanDuel, Google, Indigenous Peoples Education Fund, Oracle, Polaris, San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, and Stellantis.



To complement the AISES Scholarship program, AISES is a member of the National Native Scholarship Providers (NNSP), a collaborative group that also includes the American Indian College Fund, Indigenous Education Inc., and Native Forward. The NNSP has developed a shared database to guide a collective research agenda, alongside an institutional assessment tool designed to measure support for Indigenous postsecondary students. AISES contributes to both efforts, providing feedback, networking, and partnership throughout the development and piloting of the assessment.



CAREER SUPPORT

AISES Career Support initiatives strengthen the professional lives of Indigenous STEM professionals through strategic guidance, meaningful career connections, and recognition of excellence. These programs draw on sector expertise and cultural perspective to keep AISES responsive to the communities it serves, link members with employers across academia, government, and industry, and honor the partners and individuals whose contributions advance the field. Together, they sustain a strong, interconnected community of Indigenous STEM professionals and support achievement at every stage of a career.

Advisory Councils

AISES currently has a total of eight advisory councils: Academic Advisory Council, Academic Institution Advisory Council, Canadian Indigenous Advisory Council, Corporate Advisory Council, Council of Elders, Professional Chapter Council, and Tribal Nations Advisory Council. Each Council plays an important role in advising AISES in its work about each sector. The Council of Elders advises the AISES board of directors and organization on traditional and cultural matters.

Career Hub

The AISES Career Hub is the premier way to connect with organizations who are hiring Native STEM professionals. Visitors can search opportunities in academia, government, nonprofit, and other STEM industries. Employers can post their job openings to attract qualified Native STEM professionals through multiple channels and access to a resume database to find the right candidate for the job.

Partner Service Awards

Each year, AISES honors a select group of partners who have demonstrated outstanding collaboration and who help tell the AISES story. The AISES Partner Service Award winners are selected by the AISES staff in the following categories: Advocacy, Corporation, Educator, Foundation, Government Agency, Nonprofit, Research and Tribe.

Professional of the Year Awards

Each year, AISES recognizes outstanding individual achievement through the Professional Awards Program. Winners are selected by a committee of distinguished leaders from organizations that partner with AISES. That group has the difficult task of considering the many excellent nominations that come in from across our membership. The winners of the Professional of the Year Awards are selected based on overall leadership and technical achievement, and the remaining awards are made based on achievements in specific categories.





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

AISES Community Engagement initiatives connect Indigenous students, professionals, and communities through chapters, gatherings, mentorship, and place-based programming that span the full STEM journey. Across college, professional, and tribal chapters, national and regional events, and targeted programs in STEM, these initiatives build lasting relationships and leadership while keeping STEM participation rooted in Indigenous values and tribal community priorities.

AISES in Canada National Gathering

The AISES in Canada National Gathering advances two core goals: building Indigenous Canadian leadership in STEM and expanding equitable, representative opportunities across all STEM fields. The three-day event brings together university students and professionals for keynote speakers, sessions, research presentations, and traditional Indigenous cultural programming. Drawing on AISES's decades-long commitment to Indigenous leadership and community in STEM, the gathering continues to grow each year in both attendance and partner engagement.

AISES National Conference

Held annually since 1978, the AISES National Conference is the leading gathering for Indigenous peoples in STEM, bringing together more than 3,000 high school students, college and graduate students, educators, workforce professionals, and corporate, government, nonprofit, and tribal partners. The conference hosts the largest college and career fair in Indian Country, featuring hiring events, onsite interviews, resume and interview coaching, and career planning resources. Students exploring higher education can access financial planning guidance, college and graduate school application support, and information on STEM majors and career pathways. Through professional development sessions, research presentations, workshops, and traditional Indigenous

cultural programming, attendees from across the U.S. and Canada build lasting connections and find the resources to advance their academic and professional goals.

AUNTIE Tech Collective

AUNTIE is a multi-generational, culturally centered tech collective that equips Indigenous womxn and girls with the skills, support, and community needed to thrive in technology fields. The initiative addresses the systemic underrepresentation of Indigenous womxn in tech who currently earn less than 0.1% of computing degrees in the U.S. through three interconnected programs. The AUNTIE Tech Club is for middle and high school girls to engage in hands-on coding, robotics, and digital literacy. The Future AUNTIES program is for postsecondary students to receive mentorship and career readiness, and the AUNTIES network is for professionals to focus on leadership and peer mentorship. Built on a cyclical model where girls grow into mentors and students become leaders, AUNTIE creates a sustainable support system that keeps Indigenous womxn rooted in community while advancing in tech careers, grounded in the principle that Indigenous knowledge systems are foundational to technology and that belonging is essential to persistence and success in the field.



College, Professional, and Tribal Chapters

AISES College Chapters across the United States and Canada support the educational, professional, and social development of their members. Chapters emphasize education as a foundation for personal and professional growth through mentorship programs, leadership training, conference participation, and community engagement. AISES welcomes partners to sponsor one or more chapters, with support opportunities including meeting space, hospitality, travel to regional and national events, speaker honorariums, and outreach materials.

Professional Chapters connect Indigenous STEM professionals within a region, advancing the AISES mission through collaboration, mentorship, and community engagement. Members frequently visit local schools to mentor students, speak to classes, and participate in school activities, and many chapters fundraise to support students and members in attending conferences.

Tribal Chapters are vital, community-based components of the AISES mission to increase Indigenous representation in STEM. Unlike College or Professional Chapters, Tribal Chapters welcome members at all levels, from PK-12 students to working

professionals and retirees, fostering intergenerational communities that integrate STEM education with cultural perspectives. Through local initiatives such as science fairs, STEM days, and volunteer work, Tribal Chapters ensure AISES programming remains responsive to tribal needs while creating a culturally grounded framework for Indigenous participation in STEM.

Cultivating Leadership Opportunities and Uplifting Digital Skills for Indigenous Students (CLOUDS)

Supported by the Adobe Foundation, CLOUDS is a year-long initiative to enhance digital literacy and leadership skills among Indigenous college students. The program provides Adobe technology training to 100 Indigenous students, complemented by quarterly webinars and a three-day in-person leadership summit where students present projects designed to strengthen college chapter engagement. Select participants will refine their projects and compete for awards at the AISES National Conference. Beyond its direct impact, CLOUDS aims to broaden its reach through the sharing of best practices and chapter engagement strategies across the Indigenous student community.





WEAVING INNOVATION



Full-Circle Mentorship

The AISES Full-Circle Mentorship program is an innovative, culturally-centered initiative that creates sustainable mentorship pathways connecting three key groups: established Indigenous STEM professionals, Indigenous college students pursuing STEM degrees, and Indigenous high school students interested in STEM careers. This comprehensive program addresses the critical shortage of visible Indigenous role models in STEM fields through a multi-level approach that combines traditional professional-to-student mentoring with peer-to-peer support. The program provides one-on-one and group mentoring opportunities, professional development webinars, networking events at AISES conferences, and culturally-relevant resources including a mentorship toolkit and training materials grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing. Through regular check-ins, virtual consultations, and structured activities, participants develop strong professional networks while maintaining cultural connections that are vital for academic persistence and career development. The program, funded in part by the Johnson Scholarship Foundation, aims to impact retention and graduation rates of Indigenous students in STEM fields, with goals to demonstrate measurable increases in STEM persistence, chapter sustainability, and professional network growth.

Rematriation: Indigenous Womxn in STEM Leadership

Supported by the Henry Luce Foundation, the Rematriation program works to increase the representation of Indigenous womxn in STEM leadership positions. Rooted in the recognition that many tribes hold matriarchal traditions where womxn historically wielded decision-making authority, the program goes beyond conventional workplace support to address the cultural, institutional, and environmental changes needed for Indigenous womxn to reclaim leadership roles in STEM. Through mentorship, community building, and meaningful discourse, Rematriation supports Indigenous womxn in the early stages of their careers while working to facilitate deep, lasting culture change across STEM workplaces.





Resources for Indigenous STEM Education (RISE) Program

RISE is an AISES program developed in collaboration with Aristocrat Gaming to engage and support Indigenous students, professionals, and tribal communities in gaming education and careers. The program introduces AISES members to STEM career pathways within the gaming industry and provides multiple avenues for connection and opportunity, including academic scholarships, mentorship, educational sessions at AISES events and online, and travel support to leading Tribal Gaming convenings.

Student Representatives

AISES Student Representatives advocate for student members by identifying common needs and recommending improvements to AISES member services. The program includes eight representatives: one National Student Representative and seven Regional Student Representatives. The National Student Representative serves as a liaison for the regional representatives and as a non-voting member of the AISES Board of Directors, while Regional Student Representatives support college chapters across AISES's seven geographic regions. Serving as a Student Representative is a meaningful leadership opportunity for students to build their networks while developing communication, advocacy, and professional skills.

We are All Scientists

As a tribal community engagement partner, AISES received a grant through the NIH All of Us Research Program to support outreach focused on health research and precision medicine within Indigenous communities. The program equips Indigenous-serving educators with a toolkit of resources to inspire students to pursue health research, while building partnerships with Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) to open pathways into the field. Together, these efforts aim to increase Indigenous participation in health research careers and empower community members with the skills to achieve meaningful employment and serve their communities.



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