Native Youth Community Adaptation Leadership Congress Application Preview and Directions

Thank you for your interest in NYCALC 2026! The online application should be filled out individually by each student. Single community teams composed of a minimum of 3 to a maximum of 5 students **and one mentor** will be accepted. Below is a preview of the application questions.

WE STRONGLY ENCOURAGE TO REVIEW AND WRITE/PLAN YOUR ANSWERS PRIOR TO OPENING THE APPLICATION. YOU CAN COPY AND PASTE YOUR PRE-WRITTEN ANSWERS INTO THE APPLICATION.

Part 1 Must be completed individually.

Parts 2– 3 Must be completed individually by the student.

Part 4 Will be completed by the mentor with student input.
All sections will be scored.

Part 1
Applicant Information:
This is your basic personal information (Name, Nickname, Birthday, Community/Tribal Affiliation, Address, Phone, Mentor Name, School Name and Address, Grade, Email).
- Mentor or Student? [have the applicant pick one option and have the application branch depending on mentor or student? Mentors need to fill in Applicant Information and Project Information sections. Students do not need Project Information section]
- Name
- Nickname
- Birthday

- Gender [dropdown menu: male, female, or other]
- Optional: What are your pronouns?
- Email (one you can access year-round, after graduation)
- Tribe
- Mentor Name [only on student applications]
- Community Affiliation/group
- Town
- State
- Phone Number
- Have you traveled before? How do you cope or plan to cope with homesickness?

Part 2
Student Insight:

Please choose **THREE** of the following questions to answer to help us learn more about you. You may answer the questions in either written format (500-800 words), or other media of your choice, for example: artwork, video, or voice recording of a song or poem. For recordings, please upload the YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, etc. link in your application. For photographic images (.png or .tiff), PDFs, etc. upload directly in the application.

1. **Tell us a story about yourself:** Here are some suggestions to get you started:
   - Have you ever used your story to inspire change, why or why not?
   - What was one of the biggest challenges you had to face and how do you face that challenge?
   - How do you want to create change and give back to your community?

2. **Tell us about your community or culture:** Here are some suggestions to get you started:
   - What are some things that you want people to know about your community, tribe, or culture?
   - How has your culture or community shaped you?
   - What is one of the biggest misconceptions about your culture or community you want to change?

3. **Tell us your thoughts on leadership:** Here are some suggestions to get you started:
   - What do you think are important skills indigenous leaders should have to address current and future issues affecting your community?
   - Who is a leader that inspires you and why?
   - What skills do you want to develop as a leader to create change in your community?
   - What past or current leadership roles have you stepped into and why do you think it is important to grow as a leader?

4. **Tell us how environmental change affects you and ideas you have to become environmentally resilient:** Background: The increase impacts of environmental change from frequent drought, storms, wildfires, heat waves, rising sea levels, and melting glaciers has caused severe damage to habitats, ecosystems, and communities, especially Indigenous communities.
   - What environmental change issues directly affect you, your family, and community?
   - How is environmental change impacting the health and well-being of people in your community?
   - What are the ways youth can lead in building stronger Indigenous communities to address the effects of environmental change?
   - What are some Indigenous understandings, values, or practices you would like to see western or non-Indigenous societies adapt to address environmental change?

5. **What do you hope to gain from NYCALC?** Here are some suggestions to get you started:
   - How will the experience benefit you and/or your community?
   - How does NYCALC align with your goals?

Part 3

Short Answer Info:

Provide short answers to the following questions. These questions are designed to gain insight into how involved you are in your community and school life. Please fill out this short answer section as completely as possible in the space provided. Please write anything within your lifetime you find relevant.

1. **Extracurricular activities, school clubs or organizations you currently participate or have previously participated in (ex: spiritual groups, sports, activism, recreational activities, performances).** What are important to you (family, school, culture, sports,)?

2. **Volunteer experience (ex: food bank, donation drives, community clean-ups, etc.):**

3. **Accomplishments or awards you have received and what year/semester:**

4. **Other strengths, qualifications, and/or obstacles you have overcome you would like the application reviewers to consider.**

5. **Describe how you see yourself in your community. Do you have a strong tie to your culture or community; or are you seeking to grow that tie? What does being Indigenous mean to you?**

[check box] **I acknowledge that by applying to the Native Youth Community Leadership Adaptation Leadership Congress, that I will provide input to my mentor about developing a project.**

Part 4

Project Information: This should ONLY be completed by the mentor with student input.

Project outline:

> This portion should be a preliminary project idea that will be developed throughout the Congress. By participating in NYCALC, you can potentially earn a mini grant to help put your project idea into action upon return from the Congress.

Answers should be complete sentences. When brainstorming a conservation-based project consider your passions, skill sets, and your community's needs. Please outline your/your groups idea with the following format. You may use this same format to apply for the mini-grant opportunity following NYCALC.

1. **Project Goal and Summary**

2. **Who is your audience? Why are they important?**

3. **How would you implement this project, and what tools would you need to be successful?**

4. **Would you need additional support (ex: volunteers, other schools, professionals, neighboring communities)?**

5. **When would your project be completed? Is it a one-time project or ongoing over many years into the future?**