

# Generations of STEM: Aaron Yazzie

## Mechanical Engineer

Aaron is Diné (Navajo) and a mechanical engineer at NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL). Aaron credits growing up in Arizona as a Navajo child, hearing stories of how the land, stars and sky originated as inspiration to enter space exploration.

Both of his parents are first generation college students, and they encouraged him to go to university. He studied at Stanford University, earning a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering, and works at JPL on planetary sample acquisition and handling. His internships at both NASA Goddard Space Flight Center and NASA Glenn Research Center, as well as an interview opportunity at JPL all came through his involvement in the American Indian Science and Engineering Society in college.

Aaron has been involved in many projects at JPL including the InSight and Mars2020 missions. Much of his work involves gathering and handling samples from Mars. He continues to work to recruit students from Indigenous communities to NASA. Aaron wants all students to feel STEM is an inclusive place to be and thrive.



Image Source: [Wikipedia / Own Work](#) Information Sources: [NASA](#), [Winds of Change](#), [Native News Online](#)