

Indigenous Land and Original People Acknowledgement Practices

What is an Indigenous Land Acknowledgement?

Modern land acknowledgements are drafted with the intent of counteracting the erasure of indigenous and native communities on occupied, stolen and colonized lands, many of whom still live on and steward these territories. These statements should honor past connections to the land, speak in clear and honest language about the forced removal, and genocide of native communities, as well as present day challenges of sovereignty and tribal land rights.

Why is it important?

As stated from Northwestern University's Native American and Indigenous Initiatives: "It is important to understand the longstanding history that has brought you to reside on the land, and to seek to understand your place within that history. Land acknowledgements do not exist in a past tense, or historical context: colonialism is a current ongoing process, and we need to build our mindfulness of our present participation." [Here](#) members of the Native American and Indigenous People's Steering Group at Northwestern express why this acknowledgement is important.

Key Components to drafting Land Acknowledgements

The Native Governance Center, a Native-led nonprofit organization serving native nations in Mni Sota Makoce, North Dakota and South Dakota, has outlined [key steps and components in drafting a Land Acknowledgement](#), including starting with self-reflection, committing to necessary research on the indigenous people to whom the land belongs, the history of the land and related treaties, using appropriate language in addressing the past, the present and the future.

It is important to be mindful and move "beyond the words" of a land acknowledgement statement; it is an empty, token gesture if not established in true allyship with marginalized native communities. As we commit to our anti-oppression values, we must continue to educate ourselves about native and indigenous communities, and actively work with and support indigenous leadership.

Additional Resources



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- [Native-Land.ca](#), a website run by the nonprofit organization Native Land Digital
- [Beyond Land Acknowledgements](#), Native Governance Center
- [Native American and Indigenous Initiatives](#), Northwestern University
- [Decolonization is not a metaphor](#) by Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, from Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society Vol. 1, No. 1, 2012, pp. 1-40
- [Original People Acknowledgement Practices](#), Blog, Luna Jimenez Institute for Social Transformation
- [Creating A Communal Space](#), RESULTS Anti-Oppression Resources

For more information and resources, please visit our [Anti-Oppression resources page](#).