



# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT GUIDE

Land acknowledgements are one way to increase the visibility of Native peoples and fight the erasure of Native peoples. For many Americans, the history taught about the formation of the United States is a false one. The creation story of America to often erases the rich and long history Indigenous peoples have with Turtle Island and purposefully excludes the genocide, forced removal, and murder experienced by Native peoples during the US colonization. According to research, 27 states make no mention of Native peoples in their K-12 curriculum, of those that do, 87% make no mention of Native peoples post-1900. As a result of this erasure, many Americans do not believe Native peoples exist today.

Land acknowledgements are also an opportunity to recognize Native peoples in the present day. Native peoples continue to protect our land and water, maintain cultural traditions and practices, and contribute in immeasurable ways to society today. As part of an effort by Native peoples and allies, land acknowledgements continue to gain popularity to ensure the true history of the land occupied is told, honored, and Native perspectives are centered. This guide is provided to support Native and non-Native allies as they seek to be truth-tellers but is in no way exhaustive. The process of creating a land acknowledgement is a personal and unique one- there is no direct script. Follow the outline below to begin your process.

## What is a land acknowledgement?

A land acknowledgement is an *intentional, well-researched, and formal* statement that;

- Acknowledges the Indigenous peoples who have traditionally stewarded the land you occupy;
- Acknowledges the history of the how that land was taken;
- Acknowledges the present Indigenous stewards of the land; and
- Acknowledges and celebrates the contributions of contemporary Indigenous peoples.

## How do you craft a land acknowledgement?

First, understand the *intention* of your land acknowledgement. Second, research the history of the land you occupy. Lastly, ensure that the land acknowledgement is *done in a formal and respectful way*.

Land acknowledgements look different for Native and non-Native peoples. Whenever possible, organizations or groups should work directly with tribes for a formal land acknowledgement and ask for a formal welcome onto their lands.

The *intention* of land acknowledgements should be sincere and part of a personal and organizational commitment to being an ally to Indigenous communities. Land acknowledgements that are done to check a box or to be politically correct are performative and insincere. We must continue to find opportunities to tell the true history of this land and celebrate the resilience and contribution of Native peoples today.

Land acknowledgements should be *well-researched*. There are several resources that can be used to identify the Indigenous peoples who stewarded the land you are on. Many of these maps identify traditional homelands before forcible removal. In addition to identifying traditional homelands, be sure to also research and acknowledge the Native peoples who currently occupy those lands.

When providing a land acknowledgement, it should be thoughtful and respectfully. It should be a *formal acknowledgement* and treated as an important responsibility of your work. If a tribal government is providing a formal welcome to their land, it would be appropriate to begin your event with this welcome to ensure to be respectful of the Native peoples providing the welcome.

## How to Ensure your Land Acknowledgement is Impactful

- Ensure your research is accurate.
- Do your research well ahead of time when you give the actual land acknowledgement. It takes time and multiple sources to ensure you have a full understanding of the land and its history.
- Identify the specific tribe and Indigenous people to whom the land belongs and learn the traditional name of the land you are on.
- Learn the correct pronunciation of the name of the tribes, location, and any individuals who you mention as part of the acknowledgement.
- Learn the history of the land and the actions and treaties that removed Native people from their traditional homelands.
- Learn the name of the Indigenous people who currently steward the land you are on.
- Learn about the contributions and leadership of the tribes impacted. It's especially important to ensure you include contemporary Indigenous peoples in the acknowledgement.
- Be honest when discussing the way in which Indigenous peoples were treated. Using accurate terms like genocide, stolen land, or forced assimilation and removal are helpful when educating others. Understanding the impact of these policies and actions helps provide context and understanding about Native peoples today.
- Be sure to compensate any Native person who you ask to assist with your land acknowledgement. If you ask a Native person to provide you with knowledge, history, or assistance, they should be compensated for providing that labor. If a representative from a tribal government,

or a Native person, is providing a formal welcome and land acknowledgement, they should be compensated fairly.

## Land Acknowledgements Should Be the First Step but Not the Last Step

Land acknowledgements should be a first step in the process of allyship to Native communities and Indigenous peoples. There are many ways in which you can ensure your work can work with Native peoples. Ideas include:

- Prioritize the hiring of Native peoples within your company and on your project.
- Commit to creating opportunities to grow the talent of Native peoples within your industry.
- Dedicate space, time, and resources to learning from Native peoples and organizations.
- Donate time or resources to Indigenous organizations working within your field.
- Support and encourage others to support Indigenous-led grassroots change movements and campaigns- especially to movements that are tied to the land you occupy.

## Indigenous Land Maps

- [Native Land](#)
- [Whose Land](#)
- [Invasion of America Map](#)

## Additional Learning Resources

- [Honor Native Land: A Guide and Call to Acknowledgement by the U.S. Department of Arts and Culture](#)
- [Indigenous Land Acknowledgement by the Native Governance Center](#)
- [Territory Acknowledgement by Native Land](#)



 Federally Recognized Tribe In Oregon
  Indigenous Community (Nez Perce, Umatilla, Warm Springs, and Yakama have a long history of interaction)
  Federally Recognized Tribe In Nevada, but crosses Oregon border

Created in collaboration with Shoreline Consulting and Oregon Department of Education

These arrows only represent the Tribal Headquarters location and not all of the tribes' aboriginal/ceded lands.