



TOPIC OF THE MONTH: Land Acknowledgments

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WHAT IS LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT and WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Explanation from [Northwestern University](#) via the [Native Governance Center](#)

A Land Acknowledgement is a formal statement that recognizes and respects Indigenous Peoples as traditional stewards of this land and the enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories.

To recognize the land is an expression of gratitude and appreciation to those whose territory you reside on, and a way of honouring the Indigenous people who have been living and working on the land from time immemorial. It is important to understand the long standing 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.** It is also worth noting that acknowledging the land is Indigenous protocol.

GUIDE TO CREATING A LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

Guide created by the [Native Governance Center](#)

START WITH SELF REFLECTION –

Why am I doing this land acknowledgment? (If you're hoping to inspire others to take action to support Indigenous communities, you're on the right track. If you're delivering a land acknowledgment out of guilt or because *everyone else* is doing it, more self-reflection is in order.)

- What is my end goal? (What do you hope listeners will do after hearing the acknowledgment?)
- When will I have the largest impact? (Think about your timing and audience, specifically.)

DO YOUR HOMEWORK – Put in the necessary time to research these subjects

- The Indigenous people to whom the land belongs.
- The history of the land and any related treaties.
- Names of living Indigenous people from these communities. If you're presenting on behalf of your work in a certain field, highlight Indigenous people who currently work in that field.
- Indigenous place names and language.
- Correct pronunciation for the names of the Tribes, places, and individuals that you're including.

USE APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE – Don't sugarcoat the past. It is appropriate to use terms like *genocide*, *ethnic cleansing*, *stolen land*, and *forced removal* to reflect the actions of colonizers.

USE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE TENSES – Indigenous people are still here, and they're thriving. Don't treat them as a relic of the past.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS SHOULDN'T BE GRIM - They should function as living celebrations of Indigenous communities. Ask yourself, "How am I leaving Indigenous people in a stronger, more empowered place because of this land acknowledgement?" Focus on the positivity of who Indigenous people are today.

SEE/LISTEN MORE:

#HonorNativeLand video explaining the movement towards Land Acknowledgements in the United States - <https://youtu.be/ETOhNzBsiKA>

We're All on Native Land: A Conversation about Land Acknowledgements by the Field Museum in Chicago: <https://youtu.be/eZQldd3L0qw>

Decolonization Is For Everyone – TEDxSimon Frasier University talk by Nikki Sanchez - <https://youtu.be/QP9x1NnCWNY>

Native Governance Center – lots of great resources for creating a land acknowledgment - <https://nativegov.org/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/>

Whose Land? - tool for finding communities and treaties across Turtle Island (North America) and the world - <https://www.whose.land/en/>

Native-Land - tool for finding communities and treaties across Turtle Island (North America) and the world <https://native-land.ca/>

THEATRE IN ACTION:

Many theatres, cultural spaces, and universities across Turtle Island are implementing land acknowledgements as part of a larger mission to recognize and respect the local Indigenous communities.

[Here are some examples of existing land acknowledgements:](#)

At the [Grand Theatre](#), we have a different staff member write an introduction to the land acknowledgement for each of our different show programs. This way, we have an opportunity to reflect on our own relationship to our local Indigenous communities and the communities in the places where our families are from. Here are two examples:

[Lacie](#) and [Eileen](#)

[The Paramount Theatre in Chicago](#)

[Seattle Rep](#)

[Northwestern University in Chicago](#)

[Guthrie Theatre](#)

IT'S YOUR TURN:

Do you know the names and history of the Indigenous communities in your area? This is an important place to start! Check out the resources shared above to start your research. If your theatre does not already have a land acknowledgement in place, consider offering your newfound knowledge to your artistic staff and community outreach staff.
