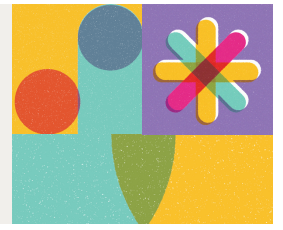




Good Practices for Land Acknowledgement



Getting Started

These practices have been compiled by **CoLab**, a hub for community-engaged research in Monterey, California, based on a multitude of sources (see last section). These are what various educational institutions, Indigenous, and non-Indigenous people consider "good" practices, and should be taken as guidance/advice. Note: These practices are mainly relevant for non-Indigenous institutions developing land acknowledgements in North America and may not be applicable in other broader global contexts.

Why Land Acknowledgement?

- It's important to understand the land you reside on and its historical and present relationships to Indigenous communities.
- Land is an integral part of human and Indigenous identities.
- It is about demonstrating solidarity with Indigenous people against the injustices they experience.

Key Framing Principles

Long before the process of drafting a land acknowledgement, there are key frames and understandings to be mindful of.

- **Step 1: Do Your Homework**
 - **Self-Reflection.** Think about your positionality, your reasons for conducting it, and your end goals/impact.
 - **Research.** Identify the Indigenous people(s) whose land you reside on & related history.
 - **Language.** Research and understand what appropriate and accurate names and language to use in reference to your local Indigenous communities.
- **Step 2: A Deeply Relational Process**
 - **Consult & Collaborate.** Reach out and build authentic and empathetic relationships with Indigenous people, if they would like to. Specific relationships & context is what can make an acknowledgement meaningful.
 - **Reciprocity.** Learn from and with the community & ask "What can I do for you?"
 - **It's a process.** Recognize that writing the statement is not enough on its own and it should be part of a greater effort to support Indigenous people and hold institutions accountable for their involvement in historical and present-day injustices.
- **Step 3: It's Not About the "Past"**
 - **Decolonize.** Recognize that colonialism is ongoing as well as historical and continues to impact Indigenous people.

- **Analyze.** Be critical about your positionality and role in the structures that perpetuate injustices and/or disempower others.
- **Narrate.** Be intentional to shift away from the harmful language towards humanizing language. Also, use appropriate language when talking about colonialism, genocide, ethnic cleansing, stolen land etc.

The Statement

Now what?

When it is time to articulate the land acknowledgement, take your time and remember all the important work and framing that has gone into this process. There is no exact script or template to follow as each acknowledgement should be uniquely meaningful.

If possible, you and your institution should work with the appropriate Indigenous population(s) to co-create and draft the statement. The following are some components and elements to consider including:

- **Situating in a Context**
 - You'll want to provide specific context on who you are (the institution) and whose land you are on (the specific Indigenous communities and the original name(s) of the territory).
- **Recognizing Occupation / Unceded land**
 - Explicitly recognize that/if the land remains unceded. Use this as an opportunity to document and shine a light on the legal and humanitarian injustices that have occurred (massacres, disregarded treaties etc.)
- **Showing reverence and respect**
 - You'll want to honor the people, the land, and their connection.
 - Some acknowledgements also highlight the role Indigenous communities have long played as stewards of the land, but, more-so, it is important to recognize 1) that they are not just stewards but rightful owners and 2) that you also share a responsibility to the land.
 - Express gratitude and reciprocity
- **Communicating Transparency**
 - You can be clear about the process you have taken to acknowledge the land and what comes next.

Some Considerations on Format

Often times, a statement is not enough to encompass what needs to be acknowledged. It is typical for institutions to chose to create multi-page websites and/or longer paragraphs that express their land acknowledgement. These can also be paired with or take on creative and artistic forms, depending on the approval and desires of Indigenous stakeholders.

Do's & Don'ts

	DO	DON'T
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Collaborate with Indigenous leaders from this land● Highlight and celebrate resilience● Compensate Native partners for emotional labor!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Speak for Indigenous people● Rush the process● Make a statement just to follow a trend
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Use past, present and future tenses● Use accurate spelling & pronunciation of tribes/places/people	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Sugarcoat the past/present● Use offensive and colonial language
Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Use at the start of events and gatherings (where appropriate)<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Consult with the community and establish clear guidelines for use.● Deliver it with respect, care, and intention● Use it to create greater awareness and attention to injustice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Let it become just a "protocol"● Put the burden of responsibility for delivering "welcome" statements on Indigenous people

Ultimately, we encourage you to engage in conversations that explore the function of land acknowledgments as awareness-raising, truth-telling, and/or call to action.

If you are interested in exploring what actions you might be able to take beyond the land acknowledgement statement, see the following section.

Beyond Land Acknowledgement

To ensure your land acknowledgement is not just a performative act, we encourage you to move from words to actions. The acknowledgement is a starting point in a process "of reckoning, of resistance and for activation" (Landacknowledgement.org).

First, determine what you can do. Ask yourself:

- How might your position & power allow you to advocate for Native people?
- What sources of support does your institution offer? Are you meeting the needs of Indigenous people in your community?
- How does your community and/or institution provide space for the representation and acceptance of Indigenous peoples and culture/values?

With this in mind, develop a plan for implementation of efforts beyond land acknowledgement that show solidarity for local Indigenous communities

We recommend exploring opportunities to incorporate the following activities into your plan: (disclaimer - we simply seek to present possibilities that various institutions have brought into the discussion)

- Engagement
 - Continue to hold space for relationship-building, mutual learning, dialogue
 - Find ways to collaborate with the community (events, service learning etc.)
 - Out of respect for their time and labor, always discuss compensation.
- Formal opportunities
 - Create and/or improve upon services for Indigenous students/faculty/staff (scholarships, funds, recruitment, cultural services, health & wellness...)
 - Commit to Free Tuition for Native students
 - Commit to a (recurring) donation to an Indigenous organization
- Restorative justice
 - Understand that ongoing & historical colonialism is traumatic and requires profound efforts to restore trust and justice. Support these efforts.
- Advocacy and Support
 - Highlight Indigenous activism and initiatives
 - Donate your time and/or money
 - Support Native-owned businesses
 - If you are welcome, engage in Indigenous-led grassroots change/movements
 - Ask groups how you can be of support
- Give back.
 - Pay an Honor tax / voluntary land tax
 - Go beyond land acknowledgement as a metaphor. Consider how you can help with land back, knowledge back, and belongings back.

To learn more about the many options and how to conduct them well, visit the Native Governance Center's guide <https://nativegov.org/news/beyond-land-acknowledgment-guide/> and see the [Resources for Land Acknowledgement](#) for a list of the sources that informed this document.