

Guidance for Giving Your Own Land Acknowledgment

2023 Midwest Medical Library Association Annual Meeting
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Committee

Presenters are welcome to include a land acknowledgment in their presentation or supplementary materials, as they prefer. Land acknowledgments are not required.

What is a Land Acknowledgment?

It is a statement meant to respectfully recognize the original Indigenous people who inhabited a specific area before colonization or displacement. The American Institute for Conservation gives the following guidance:

“The acknowledgment typically names the Indigenous tribe(s) of the area and, as possible, is presented according to the tribe’s preferences or protocols. At minimum, the speaker gives this statement with the intent to bring public awareness to the communities and histories that are overlooked in that space. However, over time, the acknowledgment should grow as a public commitment to action because of that recognition. Many Indigenous peoples support land acknowledgments but stress that an acknowledgment is only the beginning. We encourage [you] to think about how they can help Indigenous communities in their area through their actions, donations (monetary or time), allyship, speaking out, etc.”

Example:

“Today I am speaking to you from name of city, which is part of the unceded land of the name of Indigenous people. I would like to acknowledge the name of Indigenous people community and pay my respects to their past, present, and future elders.”

Things to Consider

- Don’t let land acknowledgments become just a checkmark on a to-do list or just lip service or a token gesture. The Native Governance Center suggests that a **land acknowledgment alone is not enough**. It’s merely a starting point. Ask yourself: how do I plan to take action to support Indigenous communities? You could support Indigenous organizations by donating your time and/or money and encouraging others to do so. You could also support Indigenous-led grassroots change movements and campaigns and encourage others to do so as well. Possible organizations could include:
 - The American Indian College Fund: <https://collegefund.org/>
 - The American Indian Library Association: <https://ailanet.org/>
 - An organization representing the Indigenous group whose land you are on
- Consider scale. It can be difficult to cover a wide geographic area in a land acknowledgment. Land acknowledgments should be specific and tailored to where the speaker is physically located.

- Check to see if your organization or education institution already has a land acknowledgment statement you can use rather than creating a new one. More and more colleges and universities are adopting statements.
- Collaboratively writing land acknowledgments with indigenous peoples is a good practice, but not a necessity.
- Make sure that you confirm the proper spelling and pronunciation of Indigenous groups. One example of how to confirm pronunciation is to search the Indigenous group's webpage for phonetic guidance.

Resource List

Native Land Digital (Maps): <https://native-land.ca/>

Territories by Land (Maps): <https://www.whose.land/en/>

A Guide to Indigenous Land Acknowledgment:

<https://nativegov.org/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/>

Territory Acknowledgment: <https://native-land.ca/resources/territory-acknowledgement/>

American Institute of Conservation Guidance:

<https://learning.culturalheritage.org/2021-land-acknowledgement-guide>

Examples of Land Acknowledgments

Drexel University: <https://drexel.edu/oed/diversity/land-acknowledgment/>

University of Illinois: https://chancellor.illinois.edu/land_acknowledgement.html

Kansas State University: <https://www.k-state.edu/diversity/about/landacknowledge.html>