

How do we appropriately use our Land Acknowledgement statement?

Land acknowledgement is not a new practice. In fact, it is a traditional custom for many Indigenous communities and nations. For non-Indigenous communities, land acknowledgment can be a **powerful way of honoring the Indigenous peoples of the land on which we live.**

“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.” ([Northwestern University](#))

“When we talk about land, land is part of who we are. It’s a mixture of our blood, our past, our current, and our future. We carry our ancestors in us, and they’re around us. As you all do.” Mary Lyons (Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe)

“Acknowledgment is a simple, powerful way of showing respect and a step toward correcting the stories and practices that erase Indigenous people’s history and culture and toward inviting and honoring the truth. Imagine this practice widely adopted: imagine cultural venues, classrooms, conference settings, places of worship, sports stadiums, and town halls, acknowledging traditional lands. Millions would be exposed—many for the first time—to the names of the traditional Indigenous inhabitants of the lands they are on, inspiring them to ongoing awareness and action.” (US Department of Arts & Culture)

Land acknowledgements are most often offered as a welcome to an audience, in opening remarks, in the introduction to a class, or in an event program. Our land acknowledgement statement can be read aloud or included in written form on your course, extension, or other materials. Please keep in mind that a **land acknowledgement is meant to be a reflective process through which mindfulness and intention are built and shared. It is not something that is simply recited.** For instructors, you may want to consider an assignment related to the land acknowledgement that encourages a deeper understanding of the statement and its meaning.

However, **land acknowledgment alone is not enough.** It is an important starting point, but individually and collectively we need to ask ourselves how do we or how do we plan to take action to support Indigenous communities through our teaching, research, and outreach endeavors? This will be a long process centered around reciprocity with Indigenous peoples: building relationships, trust, and accountability. Meaningful allyship is a commitment to learn, act in de-colonizing ways, and sustain relationships with American Indian peoples and nations.

There are many resources relative to how to use and step beyond land acknowledgements:

[Native Governance Center – A Guide to Indigenous Land Acknowledgement](#)

[US Department of Arts and Culture – Honor Native Land: A Guide and Call to Acknowledgement](#)

[CSUSM/American Indian Studies – Land Acknowledgement Toolkit](#)

[A Guide to Acknowledging First Peoples and Traditional Land](#)