

# Indigenous Land and Territory Acknowledgements

Various



# Guidance

This is a guide on how to acknowledge Indigenous territories at public events and meetings. Acknowledging the land is the process of deliberately naming that this is Indigenous land and Indigenous people have rights to this land. It provides an opportunity for us to reflect on our relationship with the land and the continuous process of colonization that deeply impacts activist work. As Amnesty International calls upon the Canadian government to uphold its obligations under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, we must recognize that those rights were stripped and denied using centuries of laws and policies based on legal doctrines such as “terra nullius”, which declared this land empty despite the presence of Indigenous peoples. Acknowledging the land becomes a small act of resistance against this continued erasure of Indigenous people and their rights.

To keep with this being a thoughtful act we have decided to not include a “script” in this guide but instead a process of reflection to support activists in writing their own contextual land acknowledgements.

# Guidance

## Process for Land Acknowledgement

- Name which Indigenous territories you are currently on.
- For some of you this might be an easy step so we urge you to take some time and learn more. If you do not know whose territories you are organizing on, we have included some resources below that may be helpful, and we encourage further research.
  - <https://native-land.ca>
  - <https://guides.library.oregonstate.edu/land-acknowledgments/oregon#s-lg-box-22587155>
  - <https://www.yesmagazine.org/issue/decolonize/2018/04/16/this-app-can-tell-you-the-indigenous-history-of-the-land-you-live-on/>

# Guidance

## Process for Land Acknowledgement

- Explain why you are acknowledging the land.
- Take the time to reflect on why it is important for you or your group to acknowledge the land and what your relationship is with the territory you are on (are you Indigenous, are you settlers, have you come here as a refugee?). Explain why you find it important to acknowledge the land.

# Guidance

## Process for Land Acknowledgement

- Address the relevance of Indigenous rights to the subject matter of your event or meeting or to your activist work in general.
- Even if we are organizing on issues that are seemingly separate, the struggle for Indigenous rights is deeply connected to all human rights work. Take the time to reflect on these systemic connections. If you find it hard to capture the relationship between the issues you are working on in words, you can also speak to how you and your group will continue to support Indigenous rights in your ongoing activist work.

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## Process for Land Acknowledgement

- Put the answers for the above questions together as a statement.
  - It does not have to be in order if that helps the flow.
  - Example: “I would like to acknowledge the traditional, ancestral, unceded territory of the Musqueam, Tsleil-Waututh and Squamish First Nations on which we are learning, working and organizing today. I think it’s important to acknowledge the land because growing up as an immigrant here, I never heard the traditional names of the territories. Indigenous people were talked about in the past tense and all the struggles they faced were in the past tense as well. It is easier to deny Indigenous people their rights if we historicize their struggles and simply pretend they don’t exist. As an activist I would like to take this opportunity to commit myself to the struggle against the systems of oppression that have dispossessed Indigenous people of their lands and denied their rights to self-determination, work that is essential to human rights work across the world.”

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## Process for Land Acknowledgement

- NOTE
  - You and your group may know an elder or Indigenous person from the territory that your event is taking place on who would be happy to be invited to your event to conduct a Territory Welcome. Unless it is explicitly said not to, it's important to pay folks for their time and work, and traditional protocol of that Nation might mean offering them a gift i.e. tobacco or sage.
  - *Written by: Ayendri Ishani Perera, Regional Activism Coordinator for Western Canada and the Territories*



# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Every community owes its existence and vitality to generations from around the world who contributed their hopes, dreams, and energy to making the history that led to this moment. Some were brought here against their will, some were drawn to leave their distant homes in hope of a better life, and some have lived on this land for more generations than can be counted. Truth and reconciliation are critical to building mutual respect and connection across all barriers of heritage and difference.

# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT CONTINUED

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We begin this effort to acknowledge what has been buried by honoring the truth. The Native communities in this area number over 70,000 strong and are descended from over 380 tribes. We are gathering on the ancestral and occupied lands of the Multnomah, Wasco, Cowlitz, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Chinook, Tualatin Kalapuya, Molalla, and many more who may call this place home. We pay respects to their elders past, present, and future. Please take a moment to consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that bring us together here today.

# Land Acknowledgement:

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*Truth and acknowledgement are critical to building mutual respect and connection across difference. We begin this effort to acknowledge what has been buried by honoring the truth. We are gathering on the ancestral and unceded lands of the Chinook, Multnomah, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Cowlitz, Tualatin, Kalapuya, Molalla and many other tribes who made their homes along the Columbia River and in the Portland area. We pay respects to their elders past and present. We consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that bring us together here today.*

The CEI land acknowledgement text is adapted from recommendations found in the USDAC guidebook on honoring Native land and with resources shared by NAYA: <https://usdac.us/nativeland> & <https://www.up.edu/activities/files/leading-with-tradition.pdf>. Our land acknowledgement evolves as our own understandings of our work in solidarity to Indigenous struggle grows. We would love to hear thoughts or feedback from you.



# Clackamas Land Acknowledgement

- Every community owes its existence and vitality to generations from around the world who contributed their hopes, dreams, and energy to making the history that led to this moment. Some were brought here against their will, some were drawn to leave their distant homes in hope of a better life, and some have lived on this land for more generations than can be counted. Truth and reconciliation are critical to building mutual respect and connection across all barriers of heritage and difference.
- We begin this effort to acknowledge what has been buried by honoring the truth. The Native communities in this area number over 70,000 strong and are descended from over 380 tribes. We are gathering on the ancestral and occupied lands of the Kalapuyan people (who are the Yoncalla, the Santiam, and the Tualatin / Yamhill), the Upper Chinookan (who are the Multnomah, Wapato, and Clackamas), the Molallan people, and more who may call this place home. We pay respects to their elders past, present, and future. Please take a moment to consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that bring us together here today.

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# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Recognizing the land we occupy and from whom

Before we begin let us take a moment to acknowledge that we gather today on the traditional land and territories of our Indigenous brothers and sisters who settled and blessed this land for thousands of year before our arrival. We meet today from our respective homes and workplaces on unceded land.

Our use of the land is a direct result of genocide and colonialism that still impacts indigenous and native communities today. Recognizing and acknowledging past injustices is an important part of our work to become antiracists.

The almost 400 nations continue to contribute to every aspect of the Pacific Northwest while working together with their communities and the community at-large to share and continue their values and traditions. We offer gratitude while acknowledging the ancestors that came before us as we promise to fulfill our responsibility to critically look at colonial histories and their present-day implications while paying respect to the keepers of this land and the land itself.

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