



Indigenous Land Acknowledgments: Purpose and Importance

What is a Land Acknowledgment?

An Indigenous land acknowledgment is a formal statement that recognizes and respects the traditional territories of Indigenous peoples. It is typically made at the beginning of meetings, events, or public gatherings to honor the ongoing relationship that Indigenous communities have with their ancestral lands.

In addition to the formal statements referenced above, land acknowledgments are also an opportunity to share more information through personal reflection, including:

- Where you were born
- Some of your family's history (e.g. when and how your family arrived on this land);
- Where you currently live; and/or
- Your relationship to the land (e.g. your personal experience enjoying the natural environment or your concerns about environmental degradation)

Acknowledging where you come from enables you to reflect on your position and privilege, and situate yourself and your work within the context of colonization and its ongoing impact on First Nations, Inuit, Métis and urban Indigenous peoples. For this reason, the Land Acknowledgement is ideally delivered by non-Indigenous individuals.

When Do We Use Land Acknowledgments?

Land acknowledgements should be made before some in-person and virtual events as follows:

- All-staff town halls, virtual updates/town halls
- External stakeholder events and councils
- Conference presentations and webinars
- Board meetings

In the event of a traditional opening given by an Elder or Knowledge Keeper, the land acknowledgement is given after the traditional opening.

If the meeting is taking place virtually and there are participants from different communities, you as the host of the meeting can acknowledge the land that you are on and then ask participants to take a moment to quietly reflect on the land that they are currently on.

Why Do We Use Land Acknowledgments?

1. **Recognition of Indigenous Peoples' Rights and History:** Land acknowledgments serve as a public recognition of the rights of Indigenous peoples and their long history on the land. It is a way to honor their contributions, history, and cultural practices that predate colonial settlement.



2. **Acknowledging the Legacy of Colonialism:** It is an acknowledgment of the ongoing impact of colonization, including displacement, dispossession, and cultural suppression that Indigenous communities have endured. Land acknowledgments help to confront and name the historical realities that continue to affect Indigenous peoples today.
3. **Promoting Awareness and Education:** These statements raise awareness among non-Indigenous people about the original stewards of the land. It educates the wider community about the historical and contemporary issues facing Indigenous peoples, fostering a deeper understanding of their struggles and contributions.
4. **Building Respectful Relationships:** Land acknowledgments signal a commitment to building relationships based on respect and understanding. It encourages dialogue, partnership, and collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.
5. **Supporting Reconciliation Efforts:** In countries like Canada and Australia, land acknowledgments are part of broader reconciliation efforts aimed at healing relationships between Indigenous and settler communities. By recognizing the traditional owners of the land, societies move toward acknowledging past wrongs and supporting the restoration of Indigenous rights and autonomy.
6. **Ethical Practice:** For organizations and institutions, offering land acknowledgments is a step toward demonstrating ethical responsibility. It reflects a commitment to inclusivity, social justice, and supporting Indigenous sovereignty.

Conclusion

Using Indigenous land acknowledgments is more than a ceremonial or symbolic gesture; it is a way to create a more inclusive, respectful, and socially responsible society. By recognizing the lands on which we live and work, we foster reconciliation, deepen our collective understanding, and acknowledge the rights of Indigenous peoples.

The Thrive Group Land Acknowledgement

We gratefully acknowledge the land on which we provide care and services to the clients and residents of Thrive Group organizations spanning across 5 regions that are located on the ancestral lands belonging to, primary, past, present, and future generations of indigenous nations. This includes, The Mississauga's of the Credit, the Six Nations of the Grand, the Haudenosaunee, the Erie, the Neutral, and the Huron-Wendat peoples. We acknowledge and recognize Treaty # 3, the Between the Lakes Treaty, where we are grateful to be meeting today.



We identify that the lifestyle which we enjoy today is the direct result of the stewardship and sacrifices of the original inhabitants of these lands that we are on. Thru sharing of the lands, we commit to further education and growing our understanding for a continuum of knowledge, reflection on our past and our present biases and strengthening allyship with our indigenous communities.

Thrive Group is committed to standing in solidarity with indigenous people, to work towards change for generations to come, and to building a stronger community that respects both land and water. We affirm our commitment to heartfelt reconciliation.

Thank you, Merci, Miigwetch