

What is a Land Acknowledgement?



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Indigenous peoples have inhabited Missouri since time immemorial. Today, there are over 80,000 Native Americans living in the state. ¹ Learn more about our Native history!

WHY WE DO LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Land acknowledgements honor a place's Indigenous people - past and present - and recognize the history that brought us to where we are today. They are typically offered at the beginning of public events or meetings and presented by local Indigenous people, but more commonly by event or meeting organizers.

TIPS FOR CREATING A LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

When creating a land acknowledgment, it is important to keep in mind why you are doing it. What do you hope the audience will learn? How do you hope the audience will reflect?

It is also important to research the tribes in your area. Whose ancestral land are you conducting this event or meeting on? Who was forcibly removed, and when? Who still lives in this area? At events in St Louis, we acknowledge the Osage Nation, Missouriia, and Illini Confederacy. In the samples below, we say "Native people," but you should fill in the tribes of your region.

Finally, framing your acknowledgement in present tense reminds the audience that Native people are still here. Indigenous people didn't just live here in the past - there are over 80,000 American Indians living in Missouri today. Land acknowledgments are meant to recognize how we have inadvertently benefited from the history of colonization, removal, and genocide of Indigenous people.

Land acknowledgements are a starting point. They should not be the only way you recognize or support Indigenous communities and histories.

SAMPLE LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- We begin by acknowledging that we gather today on the ancestral lands of [Native peoples] who were removed unjustly, and that we in this community are the beneficiaries of that removal. We honor them as we live, work, and study here at [organizations name].
- We begin by acknowledging that we are on the traditional homelands of [Native people]. We pay respect to elders both past and present, and we thank them for their hospitality.
- We would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the occupied territory of [Native peoples].
- We would like to acknowledge that [organization name] is located on the traditional and ancestral territory of [Native peoples]. We thank them for their hospitality and stewardship of this land.

Learn More

"Honor Native Land: A Guide and Call to Acknowledgement" by the U.S. Department of Arts and Culture. <https://usdac.us/nativeland>

"A guide to Indigenous land acknowledgment" by the Native Governance Center. <https://nativegov.org/resources>

¹ American Community Survey [ACS], 2017

