

## A GUIDE TO **Indigenous land acknowledgements**

**Acknowledging the land is a practice that First Nations, Inuit and Métis people have been doing for generations; it was practiced long before the arrival of European settlers. It is done to acknowledge and show respect for the people that have lived on the land for generations and continue to do so.**

*This resource is meant as a guide for housing co-ops. In recognition of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 2015 report and the resulting 94 Calls to Action, housing co-ops can make a commitment to take part in the process of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.*

*Giving a land acknowledgment is a way to begin this process.*

Any resources referred to in this document are listed at the end.

### **What is a land acknowledgement?**

A land acknowledgement is a formal statement that recognizes the traditional land of the Indigenous Peoples who historically resided on the lands and still do presently.

### **Giving a land acknowledgement**

A land acknowledgement is given at the beginning of an event, meeting, or workshop by the host or chairperson. You can also give a land acknowledgement as part of a presentation or speech that you have been invited to give by taking a moment before you begin. A land acknowledgement is different from an Indigenous welcome that is traditionally given by the Nation whose land the meeting or event is on.

### **Why do we recognize the land?**

Recognizing the land is an expression of respect and gratitude. Traditionally, Indigenous Peoples have had a strong connection to the land. Traditional knowledge, language, cultural practices and oral traditions all have a connection to the land. This relationship and responsibility to the land, sea, and creatures living on the land is integral to Indigenous culture.

### **Developing a land acknowledgement**

Take the time to learn about the history of the nation or nations whose land your event, meeting or co-op is on. Getting to know about the history will make the acknowledgement more meaningful to you and those that you are speaking to. If you aren't sure where to start, [Native-Land's](#) online map lets you search for your region by postal code. Keep in mind that Native-Land frequently refines this map based on user input. It's important to get your land acknowledgment right, so it's a good idea to check with your local Friendship Centre, Band Office or Indigenous Student Centre.

Some schools and universities have already compiled land acknowledgements for many cities and locations in Canada. One example is the *Guide to Acknowledging First Peoples & Traditional Territory* created by the Canadian Association of University Teachers.



## Things to keep in mind when developing and giving a land acknowledgement

- The way the land acknowledgement is delivered matters! It should not be rushed. The person delivering it should be given time, as well as respectful attention from the audience.
- It is not a checklist item on the agenda but rather an opportunity to reflect on the past and show respect for the Nation on whose land the event is being held.
- Consider this a chance to learn about Indigenous history in your area. What treaties were involved? Is the land unceded? Unceded means that the land is not subject to a treaty that was signed. Many parts of Canada are not covered by treaties between Indigenous Nations and the Crown on behalf of Canada.
- If you are unsure about how to pronounce the name of the Nation, ask a Friendship Centre or Student Centre for help with pronunciation.
- Practice pronouncing the Nation's name out loud beforehand.
- Keep trying to do better! Your learning should not end with this resource. Keep reading and learning more about ways that you and your housing co-op can contribute meaningfully to reconciliation.

---

## Resources

- National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation – <https://nctr.ca>
- Native Land – <https://native-land.ca>
- KAIROS Canada – <https://www.kairosblanketexercise.org>
- Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) – <https://bit.ly/2I17At2>

## Going beyond a land acknowledgement

**Remember that a land acknowledgement is just the beginning** and should be considered one part of the process towards meaningful reconciliation. Here are some ways you can keep the conversation going at your co-op:

- **Visit the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation's website** for information about the Commission's 94 Calls to Action. Have a discussion with your board or at a members meeting about ways that the co-op can take part.
- **Host a workshop for the co-op and wider co-op community** about Canada's history of colonization and residential schools and how they continue to impact Indigenous Peoples today. For example, host a KAIROS Blanket Exercise.
- **Invite an Elder or members of a local Friendship Centre** to your next co-op event and work towards developing relationships with Indigenous communities in your area. Or approach a local Indigenous organization and plan an event together.
- **Have a permanent land acknowledgement** in the form of a poster or plaque that is centrally located so visitors to your co-op can learn about reconciliation.

   @chfcanada

[www.chfcanada.coop](http://www.chfcanada.coop)

