



Recommendations for Developing a Land Acknowledgement

- Understand the complex history of the tribes in Oklahoma today. Many tribes were removed from their ancestral lands across North America to Indian Territory. Other tribes have called this land home or have had a relationship with this land since time immemorial.

Tribes indigenous to this place:

- Caddo
- Wichita

Tribes known to historically migrate or hunt on these lands:

- Apache
- Comanche
- Kiowa
- Osage
- Quapaw
- Tonkawa

- Do not refer to the tribes in Oklahoma as “Oklahoma’s tribes.” Our tribes are sovereign nations that predate statehood.
- Cultivate an abundance mindset. While we have faced atrocity and trauma, our ancestors demonstrated great resiliency and strength, and our communities today are thriving.
- Recognize that we live in the present tense. Do not mention us only in a historical context. We are still here!
- Recognize the sovereignty of our nations by using the official or political names of our tribes. If you wish to include another name or spelling, place it in parenthesis after the tribe’s political name. If you are unsure about the proper name to use, reach out to the tribe’s cultural office.
- Do not represent the tribes in Oklahoma as a monolith. Each tribe has its unique origin story, language and lifeways. As among other cultures, there is no singular First American experience, perspective or tradition.
- Learn about the tribes around you. Many tribes have a cultural center, resource area or museum that shares their stories from their perspective.
- Land Acknowledgements are just words unless accompanied by action. Consider how your group, business or organization can support First American communities and individuals through volunteering, awareness or material support.
- When reaching out for advisement to a community group, elder or other individual, offer to compensate them for their time, wisdom and expertise.

38 Federally Recognized Tribes in Oklahoma Today

1. Absentee-Shawnee Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma
2. Alabama Quassarte Tribal Town
3. Apache Tribe of Oklahoma
4. Caddo Nation
5. Cherokee Nation
6. Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes
7. Chickasaw Nation
8. Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
9. Citizen Potawatomi Nation
10. Comanche Nation
11. Delaware Nation
12. Delaware Tribe of Indians
13. Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma
14. Fort Sill-Chiricahua-Warm Springs-Apache Tribe
15. Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma
16. Kaw Nation
17. Kialegee Tribal Town
18. Kickapoo Tribe of Oklahoma
19. Kiowa Tribe
20. Miami Tribe of Oklahoma
21. Modoc Tribe of Oklahoma
22. The Muscogee (Creek) Nation
23. Osage Nation
24. Otoe-Missouria Tribe
25. Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma
26. Pawnee Nation
27. Peoria Nation
28. Ponca Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma
29. Quapaw Nation
30. Sac and Fox Nation of Oklahoma
31. Seminole Nation of Oklahoma
32. Seneca-Cayuga Nation
33. Shawnee Tribe
34. Thlopthlocco Tribal Town
35. Tonkawa Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma
36. United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma
37. Wichita and Affiliated Tribes
38. Wyandotte Nation
39. Yuchi (Euchee) Tribe

*39 Tribes with Yuchi Tribe included. The Yuchi Tribe, which currently is a community recognized within the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, has applied for federal recognition, but is not currently federally recognized. Oklahoma does not recognize tribes at a state level.

What's in a name?

Indian – “Indian” was first used in 1492 by Christopher Columbus, who misreported that he had arrived on the shores of India. This erroneous term is one of the oldest used to describe the Indigenous peoples of the hemisphere.

American Indian – When Martin Waldseemüller published a map of the globe in 1507, he named the Western Hemisphere “America,” after the Italian Explorer Amerigo Vespucci. “America” was added to the other misnomer, “Indian,” to create “American Indian.” This inaccurate term remains in use and is widely tolerated. It is the legal term for Indigenous Americans under United States laws.

Native American – The term “Native American” emerged in the 1960s. The term was aligned with a contemporaneous effort to establish a naming convention for all minorities in the United States. Others include African American, Asian American, and so on. However, this term is open to misuse. Some people consider themselves “native American” because they were born in the United States.

First American – We were the first on this land, though the last to gain US citizenship. This is an emerging term that differentiates our Indigenous people from descendants of settler communities.

First Nations – The term “First Nations” is used in Canada. It is uniquely associated with the Indigenous non-Inuit communities of our northern neighbors.

Indigenous – “Indigenous” applies to all the cultures and peoples who were the original inhabitants and caretakers of a given place. This term is used globally to refer to non-Western cultures.

Amerindian – This term is used most often in French- and Spanish- speaking countries to refer to Indigenous communities across the Americas. It is also used in academic fields, including cultural and linguistic anthropology.

Aboriginal – “Aboriginal” is used in Australia to refer to its Indigenous communities. The term, a hangover co-opted from mid-19th century anthropological research, refers to people who inhabited a land prior to colonialism. It is culturally rejected in the United States as part of the racist history of ethnology.