

## ASOR Land Acknowledgement

### Sample text and FAQs for Chicago

The 2023 ASOR Annual Meeting is taking place on the unceded, ancestral homelands of the Council of Three Fires: the Anishinaabeg (*Ojibwe*), Odawak (*Odawa*), and Bodéwadmik (*Potawatomi*) Nations. More than a dozen other Nations have called this region of Northeastern Illinois home. Long before European contact, the land known now as Chicago was a place of great significance for transportation, agriculture, trade, and commerce for Indigenous communities throughout the Great Lakes.

Despite the forced removal, displacement, and oppression of the original inhabitants of this land, Chicago is still home to one of the largest Native communities in the United States. Members of Chicago's thriving Indigenous community continue to contribute to the life of this city and to celebrate their heritage, practice traditions, and care for the land and waterways.

During your time in Chicago, please take a moment to learn about the history, resiliency, and continuing vibrancy of the Native peoples of this area.

*For reading at the Plenary:* You can find further information in the Annual Meeting program or on ASOR's website.

*For the email blast and ASOR website.*

- Visit a museum or exhibition:
  - [Native Truths exhibition](#) at the Field Museum (20 minute walk from the Hilton Chicago, free admission to ASOR attendees with name badge)
  - [Seeing Race Before Race](#) and [D'arcy McNickle Center for American Indian and Indigenous Studies](#) at The Newberry (30 minutes by public transportation, free admission),
  - [Mitchell Museum of the American Indian](#) in Evanston Illinois (30 minutes by car).
- Learn about the present and past Indigenous people of Chicago with resources provided by the American Library Association:  
<https://www.ala.org/aboutala/offices/diversity/chicago-indigenous>
- As your circumstances allow, consider a financial donation to support Native peoples, such as [Chicago American Indian Community Collaborative](#) and its [member organizations](#).

*Text is based closely upon the [Mitchell Museum of the American Indian](#) acknowledgement, and the [Art Institute of Chicago](#), which was developed in collaboration with the American Indian Center of Chicago.*

*Land Acknowledgement FAQs [for posting on website only]*

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

A land acknowledgment is a formal statement that recognizes and respects Indigenous peoples as traditional stewards of settled lands and the enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous peoples and their traditional territories. Indigenous in this context specifically refers to the Native peoples of North America and their past, present, and future descendants, also known as Native Americans, First Nations, or First Peoples.

### **Why is ASOR using a land acknowledgement for its annual meeting when this doesn't have anything to do with ASOR's mission?**

Land acknowledgments are foundational early work for institutions to inaugurate and sustain their DEI journeys. As a predominantly American organization - as indicated by the retention of "American" in the organization's name in 2021 - a land acknowledgement is appropriate and necessary.

### **Aren't land acknowledgements hollow and performative?**

Land acknowledgments are a first step toward building awareness, visibility, and relationships with Native peoples that can lead to more meaningful engagement. Many Indigenous-led organizations still endorse the use of land acknowledgments, provided they make actionable statements, promote Indigenous perspectives, avoid historicizing Indigenous people, and celebrate achievements and not just recognize trauma.

### **What else is ASOR doing to advance equity and inclusion?**

ASOR has an active Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) committee that works with ASOR staff, committees, and the Board of Trustees to advance goals around DEI. We are committed to making our annual meeting, publications, membership, awards and honors, fellowships and grants, and projects and initiatives – including cultural heritage initiatives and affiliated archaeological projects – spaces of equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Examples of our work include:

- Scholarships for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color to attend the annual meeting and participate in archaeological field schools.
- Building and sustaining partnerships with Black- and Indigenous-led organizations such as the Hansberry Society and Archaeology in the Community
- Guidance on inclusive practices for session moderation at the Annual Meeting
- Expanded and intentional dialogue to build mentorship opportunities and networks of support within the profession
- A series of awareness videos for ASOR-affiliated archaeological projects (*in development*)

The DEI Committee welcomes feedback and further suggestions submitted to [programs@asor.org](mailto:programs@asor.org).

### **How do I learn more about land acknowledgements?**

“A Guide to Indigenous Land Acknowledgement,” Native Governance Center, October 22, 2019. <https://nativegov.org/news/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/>

“Honor Native Land: A Guide and Call to Acknowledgment,” U.S. Department of Arts and Culture, 2017. <https://usdac.us/nativeland>

“Land Acknowledgement: You’re on California Indian Land, Now What? Acknowledging Relationships to Space & Place Toolkit.” California State University San Marcos, June 28, 2019. <https://www.csusm.edu/cicsc/land.pdf>

Lambert, Michael C., Elisa J. Sobo, and Valerie L. Lambert. 2021. “Rethinking Land Acknowledgments.” *Anthropology News*, December 20, 2021. <https://www.anthropology-news.org/articles/rethinking-land-acknowledgments/>

Sobo, Elisa, Michael C. Lambert, and Valerie L. Lambert. “Land Acknowledgments Are Not Enough.” SAPIENS. October 20, 2021. <https://www.sapiens.org/culture/land-acknowledgments-soverignty/>.