

Land Acknowledgement

A Guide

Division of Finance and Administration

YORK U

What is a Land Acknowledgement?

Land Acknowledgement has been a tradition that has persisted for hundreds of years. It is a formal statement that recognizes the unique and enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories. It was a customary protocol for one First Nation to acknowledge the host First Nation and their traditional territory at the onset of meetings or gatherings.

By making a statement and recognizing the territories and lands, we show respect to the Indigenous people who called the land home before the arrival of settlers. This essential act can be viewed as a step towards reconciliation. It is meant to raise questions about what happened in the past and what changes can be made moving forward to further the reconciliation process.

A Land Acknowledgement must be delivered at the beginning of an event or meeting to recognize the Indigenous inhabitants of the land and their continued presence on the lands that are being acknowledged.

Why do we acknowledge these lands?

We acknowledge these lands as a sign of respect, an act of reconciliation and a demonstration of our gratitude to the original inhabitants of this land. As guests on the territory, we are privileged to be able to work, study and live on these lands. By affirming the Land Acknowledgement, we demonstrate our commitment to building on our relationships with and responsibilities to Indigenous communities.

When do we affirm the Land Acknowledgement?

Acknowledging territory can be performed at any important function such as meetings, presentations, conferences, workshops, awards night, graduations, celebrations, and various public assemblies. It is usually the first item on the agenda and should be done during the welcome portion of an agenda.

The Land Acknowledgement is given by the host, you would usually not ask a guest to acknowledge territory as it is not his/her event.

The Land Acknowledgement should be given regardless of whether Indigenous people are present.

What is York's Land Acknowledgement?

(Remote version)

As this meeting is virtual and we are not all gathered in the same space, I recognize that this Land Acknowledgment might not be for the territory that you are currently on. We ask that if this is the case, you take the responsibility to acknowledge the traditional territory you are on and the current treaty holders. As a member of the York University community, I recognize that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships with the territories upon which York University campuses are located that precede the establishment of York University. York University acknowledges its presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as Tkaronto (teh-ka-ronto) has been care taken by the Anishinabek (nish-naw-bek) Nation, the Haudenosaunee (ho-dee-no-sho-nee) Confederacy, and the Huron-Wendat. It is now home to many First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This territory is subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region.

(In person version)

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Things to remember when affirming the Land Acknowledgement

- › The Land Acknowledgement should not be rushed.
- › It should always be the first item on the agenda
- › It is appropriate for the host, the person introducing the meeting and doing the first welcome to deliver the Land Acknowledgement
- › It is not appropriate to ask an Indigenous person to deliver the Land Acknowledgement
- › Practice saying the Land Acknowledgement out loud
- › Remove distractions; give everyone present a moment to settle and be present to listen to your words

Pronunciations

Anishinabek:	nish-naw-bek
Haudenosaunee:	ho-dee-no-sho-nee
Wendat:	when-dat
Inuit:	ee-nu-eet
Metis:	may-tee
Tkaronto:	teh-ka-ronto

Additional information and resources:

Toronto: Tkaronto-Mohawk word meaning “where there are trees in the water.”

Anishinabek Nation: An Indigenous group that traditionally lived in the Northwest Woodlands and Subarctic regions and include:

- Ojibway
- Odawa
- Potawatomi
- Delaware
- Chippewa
- Mississaugas
- Algonquin

The Anishinabek speak Anishinaabemowin or various Anishinabe languages that belong to the Algonquin linguistic group.

Haudenosaunee Confederacy: The Haudenosaunee are commonly known as the "People of the Longhouse". They are also referred to as the Iroquios Confederacy, comprised of "Six Nations":

- Mohawk
- Onondaga
- Oneida
- Cayuga
- Seneca
- Tuscarora

Huron-Wendat: The Huron-Wendat was a confederacy of five Iroquoian-speaking Nations located in the central portion of southern Ontario until about 1650. Today there is one Huron-Wendat community, Wendake, located within the northern city limits of Quebec City.

Métis: The Métis people originated largely in Western Canada in the 1700s and trace their descent to First Nations peoples and European settlers. French and Scottish fur traders married Indigenous women, such as the Cree and Anishinabe, and formed a distinct culture and nationhood.

The Métis language is called Michif which is a mixed language that uses French nouns with Cree verbs and Cree grammar.

Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN): An Anishinabek community and current treaty holders to this territory that includes Toronto.

In 2010, an agreement was reached between MNCFN and the federal government known as the Toronto Purchase Specific Claim. The MNCFN is currently located adjacent to the Six Nations of the Grand River near Brantford, Ontario.

Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant: This is an agreement originally made between the Anishinabe and Haudenosaunee peoples to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region which includes parts of Ontario, Quebec, New York, and Michigan. The phrase refers to the stewardship of shared territories and hunting grounds ("the dish") and the collective responsibility to ensure there was always enough game and fish to eat for all.

Dish (or Bowl is used interchangeably) has three teachings:

- Do not take more than your share
- Ensure there is enough for everyone
- Do not dirty the dish

Resources

The City of Toronto's [Indigenous Affairs](#) Office

Native Land: Find [territory acknowledgement](#) by entering your location

[Canadian Association of University Teachers](#) (CAUT)