

A Short Guide to Creating Land Acknowledgments

The daily practices of Family Councils take place on traditional Indigenous territories and treaties across Ontario. Family Councils are encouraged to further both dialogue and actions taken in recognition of the land history where their long-term care communities reside. This guide provides a starting point for Family Councils and those working in long-term care to create and learn about Land Acknowledgments.

What are Land Acknowledgments?

Land acknowledgments are expressions of gratitude, appreciation, and recognition to those whose territory you work, live, or play on. A Land Acknowledgment is often made before meetings and events as well as shared in publications to honour Indigenous peoples as the original inhabitants and caretakers of the land we exist on.

Why should we make a Land Acknowledgment?

Acknowledging the land is a step towards truth and. It is important to do our part in honoring the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the land as well as understanding the long-standing history and negative impact of colonialism on Indigenous communities.

Writing a Land Acknowledgement

Family Councils can and should work together as a group to write a meaningful Land Acknowledgment. You can do so by following these steps:

1. Build relationships with the Indigenous community(ies) that your home is on to ask how they want their land to be acknowledged. Unless it is explicitly said not to, it's important to pay people for their labour, and the traditional protocol of that Nation might mean offering them a gift (i.e., tobacco or sage).¹
2. Discuss the creation of a Land Acknowledgment with your members to ensure all participants can contribute insights and feedback. The statement should be meaningful to those who read it – never performative.
3. Determine the purpose of your Land Acknowledgment and what you would like to convey in your message. Land acknowledgments are a step towards reconciliation, not the end! So, consider how these fit with other aspects of your work.
4. Conduct research to determine the traditional territories and treaties in your area by utilizing resources such as [Native-Land](#) and the [Ontario Government Map of Treaties & Reserves](#)
5. Write your acknowledgment to encompass the past, present, and future.
6. Include actionable goals to advance truth and reconciliation.
7. Review your statement, being mindful to use the correct spelling of territories, treaties, and First Nation communities. Ensure you can pronounce the names correctly.
8. Prioritize the quality of your message over quantity; delivering an authentic and impactful message of any length will go a long way!

Example of a Family Council Land Acknowledgment:

“We would like to welcome you all and start our Family Council meeting with a Land Acknowledgment. The Family Council of [\[Insert long-term care home name\]](#), located in [\[Insert name of city/town\]](#), is meeting on the traditional lands of [\[Insert names of territories and treaties according to location\]](#). We recognize First Nations peoples as the original inhabitants of the land that is now called Canada and we acknowledge that there are [46 treaties and other agreements](#) that cover the territory of Ontario.

We thank the first caretakers and seek to continuously recognize the deep history, land rights, and experiences of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people. Our Family Council commits to learning more about Indigenous history and finding ways to uphold calls to action to further truth and reconciliation.”

Note: Land acknowledgments are not delivered by Indigenous people.

Additional Resources

We encourage Family Councils to utilize various mediums to continue the path of learning about Indigenous history, culture, and contemporary issues as well as meaningful ways to advance truth and reconciliation.

[Assembly of First Nations](#)

[Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#)

[Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#)

[Understanding the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation](#)

[National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation](#)

[Cultivating Canada: Reconciliation Through the Lens of Cultural Diversity](#)