

Celebrating Indigenous Peoples

August 9 is International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples -- a great time to recognize and celebrate the cultures, histories, traditions, and contributions of Indigenous peoples. Some consider "indigenous" to be the most inclusive term to use when referring to peoples whose ancestry is pre-colonial. **For more information, see [Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations](#).**



In some countries, such as Canada, terminology including "First Nations," "First Peoples," or "Aboriginal" are used.

Illinois includes ancestral lands of the following nations:

Peoria, Kaskaskia, Cahokia, Tamaroa, Moingwena, Michigamea, Coiracoentanon, Chinkoa, and Espeminikia.

Historically, individuals who are indigenous to what we now know as the United States were not treated equitably. Instead, they were met with unspeakable violence, forced out of their homes, driven off ancestral lands, robbed of resources, and denied opportunities as the United States was established. Many Native children were taken from their families and sent to boarding schools designed to impose colonialist culture, language, and values. The impact on Indigenous peoples and communities was profound and persists to this day. Despite the challenges, many individuals and groups continue to advocate for equity for Indigenous peoples.

Equity Heroes



Kim Teehee is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation and is the director of Government Relations for Cherokee Nation. In 2019, she was named the Cherokee Nation's first delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives. Ms. Teehee advocates for issues such as tribal consultation, tribal self-determination, and holding perpetrators of domestic violence against Native American women accountable.



The Earth Guardians Indigenous Youth Committee is a team of six youth pioneers who advocate for environmental justice, cultural resilience, sovereignty, and healing.



Anthony Tamez-Pochel is co-president of the **Chi-Nations Youth Council**, an advocacy group supporting Native youth through art, activism, and education.



Groups and Resources



White Swan Dream Makers "...are students, athletes, friends and volunteers who care about our families and community and as the leaders of today and tomorrow, we strive to preserve our traditions and make sure that anything that makes us less than who we are is not for us."



National Indigenous Women's Resource Center is dedicated to ending violence against Native women and children and bring awareness to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, who are commonly overlooked or forgotten.



American Indian Association of Illinois "...strives to transform American Indian education into an experience founded in native culture, language, and history fused with knowledge, excellence, and tribal values which will enhance tribal nations and urban native communities where American Indian families work, live, worship, attend school, care for their elders, and raise their children."

Indigenous rights are those which relate to Indigenous people, their way of life, their land and their resources. They are connected in **nature and the birthrights of Indigenous people."**

- Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi, Former Vice President of Fi i

What can you do?

- Find out which ancestral lands your home, school, or workplace rests upon and acknowledge its history.
- Visit cultural centers and museums to learn about Native cultures.
- Avoid misappropriation of Native imagery and customs.
- Educate yourself on terminology.

If you have a suggestion for an Equity Hero theme, please email equity@isbe.net.

Photos

Kim Teehee: Cherokee Nation | Anthony Tamex- Pochel: Evolving Man Project | White Swan Dream Makers: White Swan Dream Makers
National Indigenous Women's Resource Center: National Indigenous Women's Resource Center | American Indian Association of Illinois: American Indian Association of Illinois