

EAFWR Land Acknowledgement

EAFWR's Current Land Acknowledgement:

Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region works directly with several neighbourhoods within our Region. In the spirit of inclusive neighbourhoods and a community of belonging, it is important for us to acknowledge the original community builders of this land.

We would like to acknowledge the significant contributions and accomplishments of Indigenous Peoples. We acknowledge the enduring presence and deep traditional knowledge and philosophies of the Indigenous People with whom we share this land today. We respectfully acknowledge that the land on which we gather today is the traditional territory of the Anishnaabe (Ah-nish-nah-bay), Haudenosaunee (Ho-deh-no-show-nee) and Neutral peoples. We are currently on the Haldimand Tract, land promised to the Six Nations, which includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.

Why acknowledge territory?

Territory acknowledgement is a way that people insert an awareness of Indigenous presence and land rights in everyday life. This is often done at the beginning of ceremonies, lectures, or any public event. It can be a subtle way to recognize the history of colonialism and a need for change in settler colonial societies.

However, these acknowledgements can easily be a token gesture rather than a meaningful practice. All settlers, including recent arrivals, have a responsibility to consider what it means to acknowledge the history and legacy of colonialism.

What are some of the privileges settlers enjoy today because of colonialism? How can individuals develop relationships with peoples whose territory they are living on in the contemporary Canadian geopolitical landscape? What are you, or your organization, doing beyond acknowledging the territory where you live, work, or hold your events? What might you be doing that perpetuates settler colonial futurity rather than considering alternative ways forward for Canada? Do you have an understanding of the on-going violence and the trauma that is part of the structure of colonialism?

How to acknowledge territory?

Often, territory acknowledgements are concise, along the lines of: "I want to acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory of [nation names]." Some people may also mention the name of a local treaty. Some may learn the language and speak a few words in it.

If you are not sure how to pronounce a nation's name, there are a number of ways to learn, including:

- Respectfully asking someone from that nation or from a local organization such as a Friendship Center or Indigenous Student Center;
- Check the nation's website, they may have a phonetic pronunciation on their "About" page, an audio-recording of their name, or videos that include people saying the nation's name; or

- Call the nation after hours and listen to their answering machine recording.

While a brief acknowledgement may work for some groups, others wish to add more intention and detail to acknowledgements. To thoughtfully prepare an in-depth acknowledgement requires time and care. You may find it helpful to reflect on and research questions such as:

- Why is this acknowledgement happening?
- How does this acknowledgement relate to the event or work you are doing?
- What is the history of this territory? What are the impacts of colonialism here?
- What is your relationship to this territory? How did you come to be here?
- What intentions do you have to disrupt and dismantle colonialism beyond this territory acknowledgement?

Next steps for AOSC

Territory acknowledgements are one small part of disrupting and dismantling colonial structures.

1. EAFWR will continue to use our Land Acknowledgment at events and gatherings and potentially staff meetings. The Board of Directors is also starting any meetings with a land acknowledgement.
2. EAFWR will add our Land Acknowledgement to our website and post as a sign in our main entrance at the office
3. For those staff members who are “guests” on the land we are located on we can acknowledge this in our email signature lines e.g. “works as a guest on the Haldimand Tract, land promised to the Six Nations, which includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.”
4. EAFWR will connect with local Indigenous groups or organizations to build relationships and support their work, and invite guest speakers to staff meetings or a virtual lunch and learn
5. Learn more about Truth and Reconciliation and the Calls to Action

Resources

[Our home on native land](#)

[National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation](#)

[Beyond territorial acknowledgments – âpihtawikosisân](#)

[Calls to Action](#)