



How to Celebrate Indigenous Peoples Day

Every year, more and more cities, towns and school districts are replacing Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples Day! (They should never be a joint holiday.)

Many people are asking how to celebrate. Additionally, people in towns where it is not politically feasible to pass an Indigenous Peoples Day resolution at this time can still plan celebrations even if no resolution has been passed yet – why wait for elected officials to catch up with doing the right thing?

Remember that passing IPD resolutions and land acknowledgements are first steps, not the end! Please think about ways that people in your town or school can learn more about and celebrate Indigenous peoples year-round rather than on a single day. You can also find ways to support Indigenous struggles to defend land, uphold sovereignty, tear down symbols of white supremacy, and much more.

If you don't know, find out whose Native land you are on. You can try nativeland.ca, but they are not always correct in this region. Once you know, contact that tribal nation to see if they want to be involved with or attend the IPD celebration and to find out if they have suggestions about what they would like to see. Have in mind that they are busy and may not have time to be engaged, but you should at least ask.

SCHOOLS

Many school districts are changing to a celebration of Indigenous Peoples Day even if the town or city government have not done so. Here are some thoughts about celebrating in the schools:

- Start with getting the School Committee to agree to celebrate IPD instead of Columbus Day.
 - You might want to start by having a conversation with the Diversity Equity & Inclusion director (if there is one) for the school system.
 - Have students, parents and teachers speak in favor
 - Make sure calendars are changed and IPD is fully adopted in school
- Some towns have sent a letter to all school families about the change (e.g., "You may notice that the school calendar now says IPD instead of Columbus

Day...here is why...many teachers are excited about this opportunity to make some much-needed changes to the curriculum to be more inclusive of Indigenous history and current issues.”)

- Examine the curriculum
 - Not teaching Columbus discovered America
 - State Frameworks – content is lacking
 - Include Indigenous-written titles
 - Indigenous content embedded in K-12 (not just certain years)
 - Reference to Indigenous peoples in science (e.g., medicinal plants) and other subjects, not just social studies or history
- School libraries definitely need to update what they have when it comes to Indigenous themes.
- Highly recommended! Dr. Debbie Reese - writing about Native issues in children's literature <https://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/>
- Note: There is not a ready-made MA Indigenous curriculum at this time. We are working hard to pass a Native curriculum bill at the MA State House – please help these efforts! <http://MAIndigenousAgenda.org>

CELEBRATING IN CITIES AND TOWNS

Things to think about first:

- Consult with and include Indigenous people from the very beginning!
- Town history: Take a look at what plaques, websites, etc. say about your town and its history. This likely will need to be corrected/updated!
- Budget – is there a sponsoring organization with funds? Can you get a grant? Can you do fundraising?
 - One town has put up a GoFundMe to raise \$
 - Grants – find out about town/city Cultural Council or other entities
 - Business sponsorships
 - Faith-based organizations
 - Banks (community grant for celebration)
 - PTA/Os
- You can do something more limited with very little money if you do not have capacity, and you can still make it meaningful.
- SHARING IS CARING: Consider rotating town celebrations from year to year. When towns are close to each other, we think it's a great idea to rotate celebrations back and forth or share a joint celebration and work across communities.
- Think about who is the intended audience for any events:
 - Families
 - Children
 - Whole town
 - Adults and teens but not younger kids

Local Libraries are a great place to start.

- Ask the library if they will put up a sign on the second Monday in October to say they are closed for IPD.

· Ask your school and town library to order more recommended Native-written titles for all ages. Make displays in various sections including children's. Ask them to reexamine titles that are problematic (there will be problematic titles).

- Library displays of books by Native authors
- Videos can be included
- Rent out library space to show a movie, and see if the library wants to sponsor movie showing

Think about goals of the celebration

- Celebrate the day, educate people, go away knowing about town and its indigenous history, learn/experience, how to support Indigenous issues and people.

Some ideas about things to do! (*but you may think of more)

- Indigenous Art demonstration
- Indigenous Vendors, featured speakers
- Indigenous Speakers - food sovereignty, Native cooking, missing & murdered Indigenous women, local history, lots of other issues and topics
- Students work on local history project to be presented at IPD weekend
- Indigenous Cultural performers (poetry, music, other arts)
- Community garden with Native plants
- Center Indigenous peoples and philosophies
- Show movies [list in formation] with a discussion
- Read Indigenous books to kids; suggestions at the end of this document.
- Make at least some of your activities child-friendly
- IPD celebration banner hanging across a main street (e.g., Massachusetts Avenue in Cambridge in front of City Hall)
- Do not make it a town clean-up day such as Earth Day; that is not centering Indigenous people
- If you have an activity where people go around to learn about important sites in Indigenous history in your town, don't use the term "scavenger hunt."
- Local bookstores – feature a Native author to talk about and publicize their book

Some other thoughts:

The IPD holiday is on the Monday of a long weekend. You can do events on days other than that Monday, or for instance have events during the whole week.

Organizations in MA that have been working to lead and advise Indigenous Peoples Day campaigns -- and do other important work, too:

<http://IndigenousPeoplesDayMA.org>

North American Indian Center of Boston (NAICOB) naicob.org
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/499220880506/>

United American Indians of New England (Uaine) uaine.org
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Uaine> (daily news and updates)

Italian Americans for Indigenous Peoples Day <https://italiansforipd.org/>

Cultural Survival culturalsurvival.org

Remember that passing IPD resolutions and land acknowledgements should be considered first steps, not the end result!

One thing you can do right away is to support the MA Indigenous Legislative Agenda (MAIndigenousAgenda.org), 5 bills currently before the MA Legislature. To endorse the 5 bills of the MA Indigenous Legislative Agenda, go here:
<http://mainindigenousagenda.org/endorse/>

And please write TODAY to tell legislators that you support the statewide Indigenous Peoples Day bill. Here's how:

ACTION ALERT: There's a MA Joint Committee on State Administration & Regulatory Oversight hearing coming up on September 28 at 10:30 AM for an important bill from the MA Indigenous Legislative Agenda: H.3191/S.2027 An Act establishing an Indigenous Peoples Day. While some cities and towns across the state have been passing Indigenous Peoples Day resolutions and celebrating the holiday, we really need this statewide bill to pass in order to make it happen everywhere!

Go to the Action Network link <https://bit.ly/IPDMA2021> and you will find the text of the bill, an automated letter that you can send to legislators, and also information about how to send your own letter if you do not want to use the automated Action Network letter. Please plan to modify the Action Network letter to tell the legislators why this bill is so important to you -- personalization helps a lot! Sending this will only take a few minutes of your time.

Thank you for your support! Please go to our website <http://MAIndigenousAgenda.org> for information about all 5 of our legislative priorities this session, including eliminating Native American mascots, honoring Indigenous People's Day, celebrating and teaching Native American culture & history,

protecting Native American heritage, and supporting the education and futures of Native youth.

IndigenousPeoplesDayMA.org

MA Native American Tribes

[The Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head \(Aquinnah\)](#)

[Chappaquiddick Wampanoag Tribe](#)

[Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe](#)

[Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe](#)

[Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag](#)

[Nipmuc Nation](#)

[Nipmuck Council of Chaubunagungamaug](#)

[Pocasset Wampanoag Tribe of MA and RI](#)

[Stockbridge-Munsee Community – Massachusetts Office](#)

A few book lists (Note that we strongly encourage books by Indigenous authors)

<https://socialjusticebooks.org/booklists/american-indians/>

<https://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/p/best-books.html>

<https://www.amightygirl.com/blog?p=10365>

Preschool and elementary

We are Water Protectors by Carole Lindstrom

Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story by Kevin Noble Maillard

We Are Grateful: Otsaliheliga by Traci Sorell

Look, Grandma! Ni, Elisi! by Art Coulson

Stolen Words

Middle Grades

Hearts Unbroken by Cynthia Leitich Smith

In the Footsteps of Crazy Horse by Joseph M. Marshall III

An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States for Young People —by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz; adapted by Debbie Reese and Jean Mendoza

Indian No More by Charlene Willing Mcmanis and Traci Sorell

High School

There, There by Tommy Orange

An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States (adult version)