



Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion (DEI) Cultural Sensitivity Toolkit for Native American Month

www.diversityequalityinclusion.org

Introduction

Native American Heritage Month, celebrated every November, is a dedicated time to recognize and honor the contributions, achievements, and experiences of Native Americans throughout history and in contemporary society. This toolkit provides organizations, communities, and individuals with resources and strategies to enhance diversity, equality, and inclusion (DEI) with a focus on Native American communities and cultural sensitivity.

Intended Use: This toolkit can be used by HR professionals, educators, community leaders, and diversity officers to foster an inclusive environment.

Target Audience: Employees, students, community members, and leaders.

Tone: Informative, supportive, and empowering.

Word Count: Approximately 2000 words.

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1. Understanding Native American Heritage Month

Historical Background

Native American Heritage Month was officially designated in 1990 to celebrate the diverse cultures, histories, and contributions of Native American communities. The month of November was chosen to recognize the rich traditions and the important historical and contemporary contributions of Native Americans.

Significance and Objectives

The primary objectives of Native American Heritage Month are to:

- Celebrate the achievements and contributions of Native Americans.
 - Raise awareness about the cultural diversity within Native American communities.
 - Promote actions that support the rights and opportunities of Native Americans.
 - Encourage dialogue about race, culture, and inclusion.
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2. Promoting Native American Equality and Inclusion

Key Concepts and Definitions

- **Native American:** Indigenous peoples of the United States, including Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians.
- **Equality:** Ensuring equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their cultural background.
- **Inclusion:** Creating environments where Native Americans feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued.

Benefits of Native American Inclusion

- **Enhanced Decision Making:** Diverse cultural perspectives lead to better problem-solving and innovation.
 - **Improved Financial Performance:** Companies that embrace cultural diversity often perform better financially.
 - **Greater Employee Satisfaction:** Inclusive workplaces boost morale and reduce turnover.
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3. Strategies for Inclusive Practices

Creating Inclusive Work Environments

- **Policy Development:** Implement policies that promote cultural diversity, such as non-discrimination policies and cultural competency training.
- **Leadership Commitment:** Ensure top management actively supports and promotes DEI initiatives.
- **Inclusive Language:** Use inclusive language and address unconscious biases in communication.

Education and Awareness Programs

- **Training Sessions:** Conduct workshops on cultural sensitivity, unconscious bias, and cultural competence specific to Native American cultures.
 - **Guest Speakers:** Invite Native American leaders and activists to share their experiences and insights.
 - **Awareness Campaigns:** Use internal communications to highlight Native American Heritage Month and related activities.
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4. Celebrating Native American Contributions

Highlighting Native American Achievements

- **Historical Figures:** Educate about influential Native Americans in history who have made significant contributions.
- **Contemporary Leaders:** Recognize Native Americans in your organization and community who are making an impact.
- **Storytelling:** Share stories of Native American achievements through newsletters, social media, and events.

Recognizing Intersectionality

- **Understanding Intersectionality:** Acknowledge how various aspects of identity (e.g., race, class, gender) intersect and impact the experiences of Native Americans.
 - **Inclusive Celebrations:** Ensure that events and recognitions are inclusive of diverse Native American backgrounds, including those from different tribes, genders, and socioeconomic backgrounds.
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5. Practical Tools and Resources

Workshops and Training Modules

- **Cultural Sensitivity Training:** Modules focusing on understanding Native American cultural dynamics and promoting equality.
- **Leadership Development:** Programs to empower Native Americans and other underrepresented groups to take on leadership roles.

Discussion Guides and Activities

- **Discussion Guides:** Create guides for group discussions on cultural diversity and inclusion topics.
 - **Interactive Activities:** Organize activities such as panel discussions, film screenings, and book clubs focusing on Native American history and issues.
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6. Measuring and Sustaining Progress

Metrics and Evaluation

- **Diversity Audits:** Regularly assess the diversity and inclusion climate within the organization.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Implement surveys and feedback tools to gather insights from employees and stakeholders.

Continuous Improvement Strategies

- **Action Plans:** Develop and update action plans based on assessment results and feedback.
 - **Ongoing Education:** Keep the conversation going beyond Native American Heritage Month with continuous learning opportunities.
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7. Additional Resources

Books, Articles, and Online Resources

- **Books:**
 - *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz
 - *There There* by Tommy Orange
- **Articles:**
 - [Harvard Business Review articles on cultural diversity and inclusion](#)
 - Reports from organizations like the Pew Research Center

- **Online Resources:**
 - [National Congress of American Indians](#)
 - [Native American Rights Fund](#)

Organizations and Support Networks

- **National Congress of American Indians (NCAI)**
 - **Native American Rights Fund (NARF)**
 - **American Indian College Fund**
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Conclusion

By leveraging this toolkit, organizations and individuals can make meaningful strides towards cultural sensitivity and inclusion for Native American communities. Celebrating Native American Heritage Month is an opportunity to reflect on the progress made and to commit to further action in promoting a more inclusive and equitable society.



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