

Reclaiming Native Truth

A PROJECT TO DISPEL AMERICA'S MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS

CHANGING THE NARRATIVE ABOUT NATIVE AMERICANS

A GUIDE FOR ALLIES



Changes and Minds

and fulfilling when it is grounded in truth, respect and dignity. Justice advocates, writers and artists, attorneys and judges, business leaders, funders, educators and many others.

There is power in people writing and telling their own stories. Stereotypes that can grow into commonly accepted narratives that things are.”

It is best to replace false narratives — and specifically the toxic narrative with the truth. It boils down two years of extensive research and testing country — into actionable information you can use to make your work

Stories that given just a few facts — shaped around the key issues, history and visibility — people become more open to engaging with Native issues, cultures, tribes and peoples. There is a broad, diverse audience that is ready for this story to engage as allies.

Join a new narrative through your work, you join a movement of truth and connection. You begin to ease the divisiveness in our country as a stronger ally for Native American peoples and issues, you form new connections with the country's youngest and fastest-growing populations, one with voting, as well as incredible wisdom and creativity.

The broadly accepted story forces ideas, norms, issues and values in society. It is created and passed along between family and friends, by the news media, entertainment and pop culture, education and public art, and by so much more. It often reinforces stereotypes and the status

Dominant narrative is the lens through which history is told from the perspective of the dominant culture.

Narrative change is an intentional effort to replace an existing narrative with something new. It is a powerful contributor to social change. Narrative change can lead to shifts in attitudes,



Table of

Reclaiming Native Truth

The False and Harmful Current Narrative About Native American People
Harnessing the Power of Narrative for Social Change
Our Shared Opportunity, by Suzan Shown Harjo
(*Cheyenne and Hodulgee Muscogee*)

Building a New Narrative That Works

The Four Themes That Make the Narrative Strong
Narrative Framework
The Heart of the Story
People Across the United States Are Ready for This New Narrative
Issue-Specific Narratives
Success Story: Standing Rock

What Can You Do to Change the Narrative?

Consider and Act Upon These Questions
Be a Part of This Movement of Movements
Commit to Advancing the New Narrative Across Your Communication
Shape Your Work to Advance the New Narrative

Resources

Lifting Up Truths
Information Sources
A Note About Language

The Collaborators Behind This Guide

Appendix: Long Version of the Narrative



Native Truth

Native Americans live, thrive and lead all across the United States. As students and teachers, artists and scientists, doctors and lawyers, and in every walk of life, American people work, vote, volunteer, pay taxes, and shape the collective future of all our children, and communities across the country.

Being Native American may mean being deeply involved in protecting, teaching, and advancing the knowledge and traditions of one's tribe(s). Or it may mean being connected to tribal communities while maintaining unique Native American identities and ways within the larger society. There is no "one way" to be Native American, and tribal citizens have a unique culture, history and tradition, and many people identify more as a citizen of a specific tribe(s) than collectively as Native American. Even with such a strong identity, contributions and presence, however, contemporary Native Americans are largely invisible to the rest of the country. Native Americans are rarely heard in the news, in popular culture or in history books, and what little is reflected in those venues about Native issues and cultures is riddled with misinformation and confusion.

A group of diverse Native and non-Native stakeholders from across the country conducted unprecedented research and developed a strategy to change this situation as part of an initiative called *Reclaiming Native Truth*. This initiative is designed to eradicate harmful and toxic narratives, stereotypes, structural and institutional dehumanization, and the invisibility of Native Americans. It aims to increase access to opportunities and rights and to ensure that Native Americans live in a society where they are celebrated as a vital part of the fabric of the United States as both leaders and key contributors.

g Native Truth is the largest public opinion research initiative ever conducted in the United States through focus groups, surveys and other methods and analyzing nearly five million social media posts, and the project is supported by investments from a wide range of diverse organizations, from respected Native allies to major funders.

At the same time, we have data about the toxic combination of the invisibility of Native Americans in contemporary society and the pervasive negative stereotypes. We know that this combination leads to ongoing discrimination and lack of support for vital issues, as well as how it influences not only the general public but also policy-makers in the judicial system, K-12 education, pop culture, arts, entertainment, the media and philanthropy.

We have data about pathways for change. We know what aspects of the true, evidence-based story resonate most strongly, and we have proven that hearing this story significantly increases people's support of Native Americans and Native issues. We've identified new allies — a large, diverse audience that is aligned with Native values and ready to learn an accurate history, hear Native voices and make Native contributions possible.

False and Harmful Current Narrative About Native American Peoples

Most people in this country know — or think they know — about Native Americans through myths, stereotypes and half-truths. Information they have received since birth — from movies, television, the media and school lessons has created a false narrative (or a widely accepted story) about historic and contemporary Native Americans and tribes.

In our young age, most people in the United States have been immersed in the current narrative about Native peoples. It is a largely false and deficit-based narrative, one that focuses on challenges and weaknesses — real, assumed or exaggerated — rather than being based on strengths and opportunities. These narratives are almost always rooted in the way non-Native people, often with the intention to oppress Native nations, peoples and cultures.

When these narratives use outright negative stereotypes. Other times they create a false sense of positivity at first but that actually reinforces myths by romanticizing Native Americans and ignoring the real history of Native Americans and the harm that has been done.

Faulty history lessons, media reports and rumors leave people with the false assumption that individual Native Americans are not U.S. citizens, receive money from the government and don't pay taxes, are rich from casinos and/or go to college for free (all untrue). "Positive" stereotypes blend many unique tribes into one "Native American" persona that is portrayed to be committed to family and culture, spiritual and mystical, resilient through historical challenges, fiercely protective of the land, and patriotic to the United States. Non-Native Americans often hold positive and negative stereotypes together: Native peoples living in poverty and rich from casinos; resilient *and* addicted to drugs and alcohol; the noble warrior and the savage warrior.

These assumptions and contradictions are alive and well thanks to sports teams and consumer products that continue to use derogatory Native American-themed mascots, which some people defend as "honoring" Native Americans (they don't). Schools teach a biased and revisionist history, while news media report only on disparities and do not give Native reporters to tell stories of strength. The list goes on and on.

Well-meaning allies — and sometimes even organizations serving Native Americans — often unintentionally spread this false narrative by focusing on deficits rather than solutions in an attempt to build support for funding, policies and programs.¹

"For years, the lives and experiences of Indigenous peoples have often been misrepresented or described from a negative perspective. This may be well-intentioned because the narrative draws attention to the many challenges and incredible needs faced by Native peoples, but this narrative reinforces stereotypes and implies hopelessness. Native peoples are deeply hopeful and have an abundance of cultural knowledge that is positive. A better narrative is one that reclaims the truth of our positive values and relationships."

**— Cheryl Crazy Bull (Sicangu Lakota), President and CEO,
American Indian College Fund**

The effects are profound. The negative, persistent narrative can harm the self-esteem and aspirations of Native Americans — especially children. It also reinforces negative stereotypes among non-Native people, shaping how they think and act. As individuals, our internalized biases, stereotypes, misunderstandings, ignorance and blind spots are products of it. Our country has used the false narrative to justify oppressive practices, laws, and historic and systemic racism.

Messing the Power of Narrative for Social Change

Research in *Reclaiming Native Truth* gives us a clear understanding of the existing values, the values behind it, who created and controls it, and its consequences. (For more information on the existing narrative, please see the *Reclaiming Native Truth Research Report* at reclaimingnativetruth.com.) This research lays out a path to shift the narratives in everything from how stories are told and how people are portrayed to how children are taught and how decision-makers are informed.

Effort is growing out of the work that *Reclaiming Native Truth* began, one that uses a “movement of movements” approach to advance a new narrative that promotes systemic change. This movement of movements recognizes, respects and links the narrative-change work and efforts of many Native and non-Native allies around a new narrative.

of this national effort, this guide provides non-Native people with and tools to shift the narrative about Native Americans, Indian Country and nations. It is designed to help allies build their understanding of change, advance social justice and increase collaboration with Native peoples in all aspects of society.

Insights and tips in this guide will help us all work together to build a chorus of voices for change, inclusion, and accurate and positive representation in education, culture, the arts, media, philanthropy and policy-making. As the new narrative across many different voices and channels, it will begin to seem that “this story is here.”

Ultimately, the dominant stories and expectations will shift, ushering in a new era of respect and empowerment for Native peoples, as well as a richer and stronger future for all people in the United States.



Shared Opportunity

Replacing False Narratives with the Truth

Change is necessary today! Without it, we remain erased, invisible, out of sight, mind and heart. In it, we gain visibility, contemporary understanding, better voice and respect.

Over 5 million strong today, a reality that needs to be reflected in the national narrative. The current narrative, which has erased Native Nations and Citizens from the dominant American narrative, perpetuates a legal framework that allows our sacred places to be desecrated and will not allow us to protect them. We even pray there. It sends a signal to grave robbers, miners and drillers that their actions are justified. The message they do is not horrifying, destructive and scarring, but that it's somehow normal and okay.

We are citizens of hundreds of sovereign Native Nations. This must become the narrative, replacing the erasure of Native Peoples which lets the U.S. Supreme Court stop our Nations from carrying out their inherent sovereign duties to protect families from violence by anyone, even non-Natives. The current narrative results in freedom for the majority of those who rape, murder and torture tribal citizens. It is the reason our women and children face the highest rates of violence in the U.S. today.

We carry cultural wisdom and professional expertise into every sector of society, both in our tribes and in American communities. We are artists, history makers and storytellers, adept at sharing our past and our current reality. This must become the narrative, replacing the erasure that obscures our true identities and sanctions their replacement with false personae. The deceptive portrayals of our Nations as unfair and unjust — or as generating poor parenting, unworthy grand-parenting and unnurtured children — lead many to think our babies would be better off in non-Native settings. This has played out in tragic legal wrangling, exposing an intense anti-Native sentiment that some segments of society did not attempt to conceal, as well as a shocking ignorance and anti-Native bias among some jurists.

Our young people are strong, proud and resilient. We — and thousands of others — stood with them as they took the lead at Standing Rock. They are reclaiming their cultures and histories on social media, on the stage and in film, and other places of creative expression and leadership. Their voices must spread beyond Indian Country. This must become the narrative, replacing the insidious erasure, which tells our children that they are less than human, and are cartoons, mascots or slurs on a uniform or helmet.

Every harm perpetuated has been made possible through the most of which has been in governments, education, advertising and sports world. Done by individuals, resisters, other way, often blaming and daring to respond to the

We all are trying to do work with a multiplicity of emergent voices. We come together to create the foundational corridors of false identities, and work on the problems we are experiencing in our circles. We cannot do everything we can do — change the

systemic, lasting, transformation. If we work to restore the truth, we will succeed about laws and policies in our Native world. That will be a dominant American narrative and objectifies us. The narrative of our history, our strength, our attainments, the resilience of our values, our narrative about ourselves, our diversity, our sovereignty, our resilience, our narrative will be hard work to put it together.



New Narratives That Works

Grounded in the research from *Reclaiming Native Story*, we worked with Native storytellers, artists and advocates across the country to create a new narrative.

We tested this narrative in a nationally representative survey and found that support among people who identify as Native American is higher than that of people who answered similar questions a year ago.

This section includes:

- ◆ The framework: how the narrative is built around four themes that must be present in every communication in order to shift the overall narrative
- ◆ Language for the new narrative, which may be used directly or may be adapted by people and organizations to address specific issues
- ◆ Testing results proving that the narrative works

Four Themes That Make Narrative Strong

Research done by *Reclaiming Native Truth* revealed four key themes that need to be in a new narrative because, used together, they move hearts and minds:

1. **Connection to the land, and respect for culture and tradition are valued and highly respected by non-Native Americans.** Linking to these values creates a sense of shared history and builds understanding. Illustrating how these values are present today prevents a slip into historic, romanticized ideas of Native cultures.

2. **Most non-Native people do not fully understand the true histories of Native Americans and nations, and feel frustrated when they realize they were taught in school was false or incomplete.** Weaving in facts — not just about Native Americans' histories but also about the conversation started — about Native Americans' histories helps people more receptive to hearing more and more willing to act on many issues of importance to Native Americans.

3. **Native American history is directly linked to contemporary life.** This shows two things: 1) that Native Americans' cultures and contributions are vital parts of modern life, and 2) that injustices of the past are still relevant today. Because many non-Native Americans don't know (or don't realize they don't know) about Native Americans, highlighting Native peoples' involvement in every aspect of contemporary life helps people to move past the systemic erasure and stereotypes and to see what is possible today.

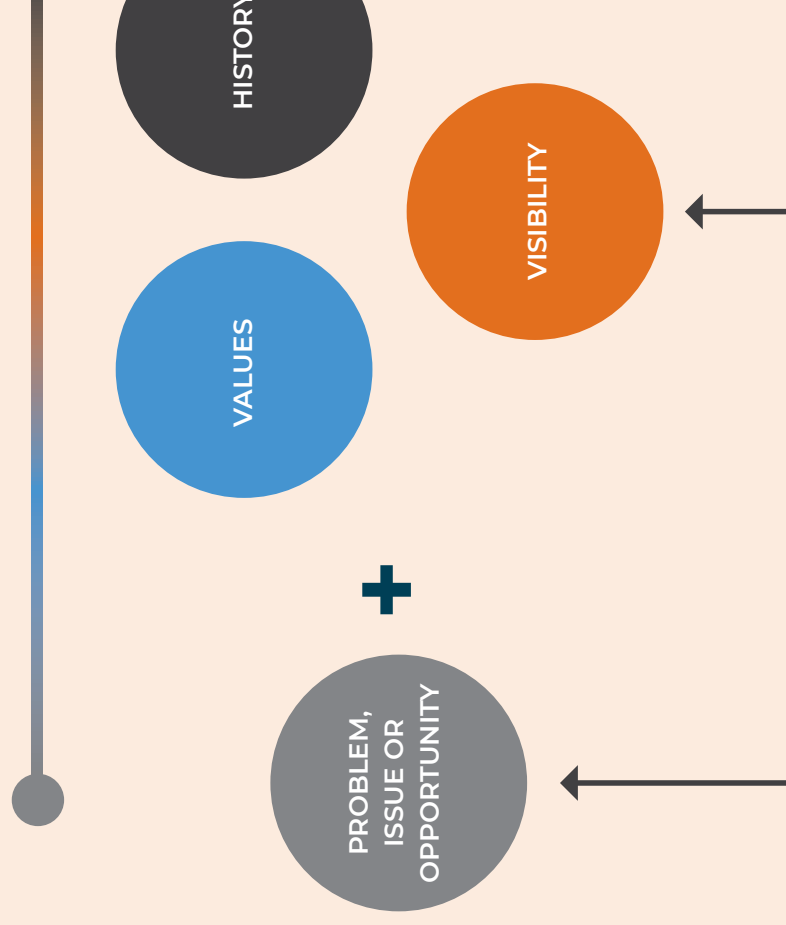
4. **The call to action or request for people to act is clear, and inviting.** It will vary depending on the audience and the issue, but it should be clear, specific, and inviting. See the issue-specific narratives on page 16–19 for some examples.

Narrative Framework

The narrative framework illustrated below is the “recipe” for all communication in this book to advance the new narrative. It is highly flexible, enabling Native peoples and allies to incorporate and customize specific messages, facts and stories into the overall recipe.

You can communicate about your issues, histories, stories and opportunities in your own way — while at the same time echoing, modeling and reinforcing a common, overarching narrative. The key is to use all four themes. On occasion you will be in situations where you need to set additional context by including a problem statement to lead into your narrative.

START



You can optionally use an introductory problem or opportunity statement to tee up the conversation.

The order of the first three themes is flexible depending on which approach is best for the specific audience (though often starting with values is most effective).

People Across the United States Are Ready for This New Narrative

We tested the new narrative in a nationally representative online survey of 2,000 U.S. adults across the country. Half of the people in the survey read the narrative; the other half did not. Both groups answered the same questions about their level of interest in Native American issues, their perception of the amount of discrimination Native Americans face today and their support for key Native issues.

This new narrative — built on values, history, visibility and a call to action — increased people's support of the overall narrative and of several issues that are important to Native Americans. Consider these findings from the survey:

81% agreed

81 percent of people agreed with the narrative statement, and only 5 percent disagreed (the remaining 14 percent were neutral).

2/3 will share

Two-thirds said they are willing to share this statement with others.

Works with all

The narrative works with people in all parts of the country — all genders, all age groups, and both Republican and Democratic voters.

55% believe

At the beginning of the survey, 34 percent of respondents said they believed that Native Americans deserve a great deal or a lot of discrimination. After we introduced the narrative, that number jumped to 55 percent.

Heart of the Story

The graph below summarizes the main narrative that will take hold through this survey. You may choose to use the exact language in this narrative; however, it is more likely you will use it as a guide or an inspiration to shape your own communication. As we develop the intention of this new narrative together, it will become the new dominant idea in the United States held in their hearts and minds, shaping their attitudes, beliefs, and decisions about Native American peoples and issues.

Where the four themes appear in this narrative, we marked:

Values in blue

History in charcoal

Resilience in orange

Call to action in red

The history of Native Americans is one of great strength and revitalization. It is a story built around values that have shaped Native cultures and U.S. society: respect for family and elders; shared responsibility to care for the land and an obligation to do right by the next generation. This is a story of resilience through great pain and injustice, from broken families and loss of land and language in the past to the mandatory sports mascots and biased history taught in schools today. Across more than 600 sovereign Native nations² and in every profession and segment of society, Native Americans carry the cultural knowledge and wisdom that sustains Native nations and helps build a stronger future for all. Let us find our commonalities, celebrate our differences and creatively work together for our shared future and the futures of the next generations.

e-Specific Narratives

American advocates used the four-themed model to create the following messages specific issues. When these issues are communicated in this way, not only are they active on their own, but they also contribute to the overall shift in narrative.

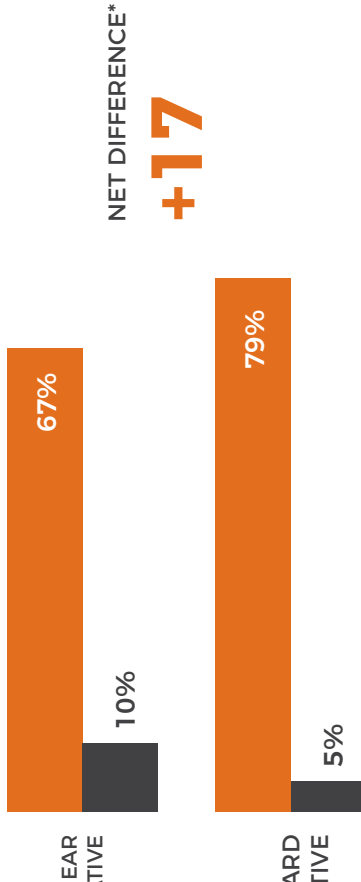
Example One: The Importance of Upholding the Indian Child Welfare Act

Children deserve to be raised by loving families in supportive communities, surrounded by the culture and heritage they know best. Native cultures, family is defined very broadly. Everyone plays an active role in raising a child and is ready to help in times of crisis.

When the U.S. child welfare system was created, it was biased against Native children in this way – as a community. As a result, the U.S. government removed Native children from their families – not because of abuse or neglect, but because of this communal way of being. The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) was passed in 1978 to prevent Native American children from being unjustly taken away and adopted outside their culture.

ICWA is not consistently respected. We need to uphold and improve the law to make sure we are doing what is best for Native children.

This narrative works, as shown in the graph below.



Example Two: The Need to Uphold Treaties and Sovereignty

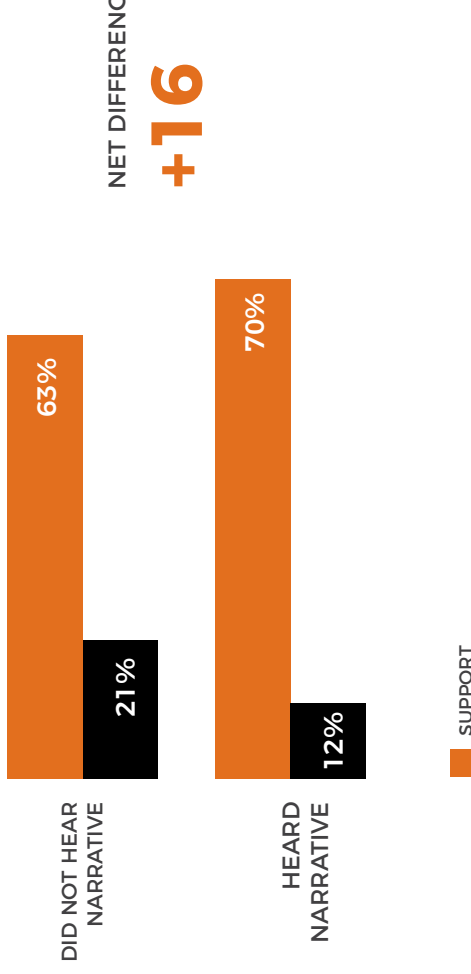
Honor and integrity are important values we all look for in other people. They're important values for countries, too. When a country makes an agreement or signs a treaty, you expect them to live up to it.

And yet, our own country has broken more than 500 treaties with Native nations that were here long before the United States was founded.

Today, there are more than 600 sovereign Native nations within the borders of the United States. Their residents are citizens of both their own Native nations and the United States, and they pay federal taxes like all Americans. Yet, federal and state governments, corporations and individuals continue to violate these treaties and challenge the sovereignty of these independent nations to set their own laws and do what is right for their own citizens.

It is only fair to honor the treaties with Native nations and to respect their sovereignty.

This narrative works, as shown in the graph below.



Example Three: The Need to Ban Native-Themed Mascots

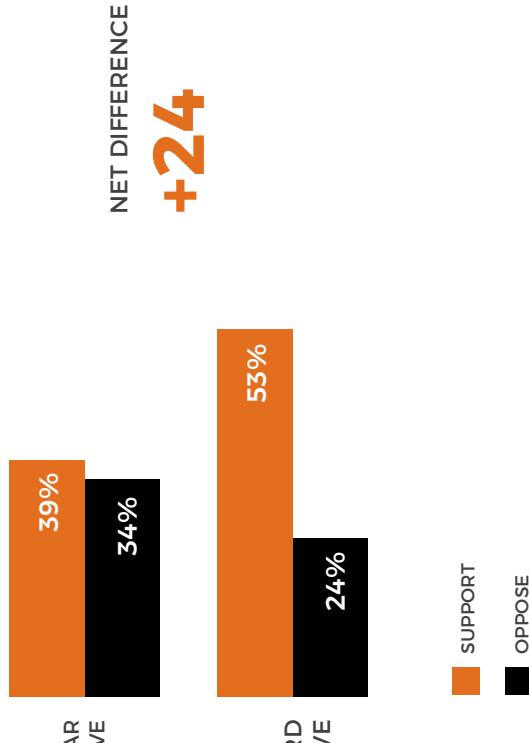
Native culture and heritage are important parts of who we are and how we define ourselves.

Everyone deserves to see their heritage insulted or ridiculed. Yet, for hundreds of years, Native Americans have been mocked and dehumanized by slurs and images in team mascots at every level, from elementary schools to professional sports.

Some people mistakenly believe that these mascots are harmless or respectful, the mascots actually represent a continued dehumanization of Native peoples and do real psychological harm to Native children.

We need to eliminate the use of Native American names, symbols and imagery as team mascots.

This narrative works, as shown in the graph below.



Example Four: The Need for Native American Voices and Accurate Representation in Entertainment and Pop Culture

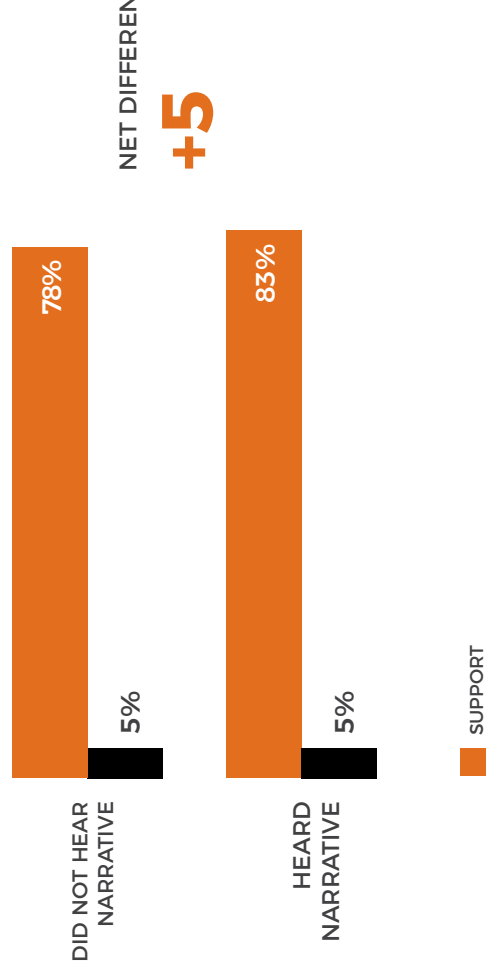
Throughout history and continuing today, representations of Native Americans in entertainment – from books to television shows to movies – have been based on negative stereotypes. Even portrayals that seem positive at first can be harmful if they romanticize Native culture and imply that Native American peoples are the same. This often occurs because Native characters are played by non-Native people and because Native writers, producers, directors, actors, musicians and others are excluded from the industry.

The truth is that Native storytellers and artists have always been here, and they are increasingly creating and driving innovation in popular culture and the arts.

The stories and voices of Native American peoples connect with values that are core to American culture and that are needed today more than ever.

Hollywood needs to invest in and promote new Native stories in film and television, hire more Native artists, and replace false depictions with Native peoples' stories.

This narrative works, as shown in the graph below. There is less of a change here than the other issue-themed narratives because support starts very high, at 78 percent.



Success Story: Standing Rock

Tens of thousands of individuals, hundreds of tribal nations and many allies stood with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in its opposition to a pipeline that threatened to despoil the tribe's drinking water, historic treaty lands and sacred sites. From August 2016 through February 2017, millions of Americans and a global audience witnessed a powerful movement unfold. At a time when most Americans continued to believe that Native American nations no longer exist in the United States, this movement forced a new conversation around values, identity and our collective connection to the Earth and the lands we inhabit.

The full analysis of this movement is complex; however, we have extracted a few key insights that align with and inform ongoing narrative change:

- The movement **interrupted the systemic erasure of Native Americans**. Content created by Native Americans populated the daily news diet with articulate, powerful statements that followed an overall shared narrative.
- The movement's core organizers **controlled the narrative** and refused to let opinion and mainstream media define their movement.
- The narrative **centered on the sovereignty** of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe — not all tribal nations — as well as the collective threat that climate change and loss of drinking water poses to us all.
- All **four themes** appeared. The narrative brought **historic injustices** to the present, was grounded in the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's traditional teachings and **cultural values**, it illustrated the **contemporary presence** and leadership of Native Americans and it **invited engagement and support** from across Indian Country, and from non-Native allies around the world.
- The narrative was **repeated over and over**. The core, values-based message — *Wiconi/Water Is Life* — reverberated across social media, citizen journalism and eventually, mainstream news channels.
- **Many voices** carried the narrative, and everyone had a role. There was unprecedented collaboration and a coalescing of nearly 400 tribes. In addition, many non-Native Americans joined the movement, and many remain engaged today.
- The power of Standing Rock wasn't just about narrative; it was also about community and **narrative change with grassroots action**. This made Standing Rock a powerful phenomenon that not only helped awaken understanding and shift perception of Native peoples but also elevated their voices and political power.



A water protector gets aid after getting pepper sprayed by law enforcement. Oceci Sakowin Camp 2016. Photograph by Josue Rivas



Do to Change the Narrative

This new narrative creates a strong chorus of different voices singing in harmony. When many people, organizations and movements start to tell their own new narrative in their unique work, the effect is a “surround sound.” People across the United States are hearing the same song across their networks of friends and information sources. Over time, the more voices that are accurate, forward-moving narrative becomes the more accurate are used to hearing.

You can use the overarching narrative and issue-specific narratives shown on pages 16–19 directly if they work in your communications. But it is more likely that you will use them as a map to guide the design of messages, ideas, scripts, stories, program lesson plans, cultural exhibits, funding priorities and other communication strategies. **The key is to ensure that every message and communication you create encodes all four themes — values, history, visibility and a strong call to action.** The way this is done, and the order in which the themes appear, can be adapted to create the most powerful statement for each specific occasion, audience and issue.





Commit to Advancing the New Narrative Across Your Communications

Play a supporting role

Respect that Native Americans must be the authors and primary storytellers of this new narrative.

This is a movement of self-determination, power, visibility and leadership by Native Americans — with strong non-Native allies standing beside them. In the discussion, exploration or advancement of Native American issues, play a supporting role to a Native person or group rather than putting your organization in the spotlight.

Go beyond

Consider how stories can advance the new narrative. Use the narrative and review of your media and other channels. Ensure that you avoid stereotypes, marginalize all tribes based on information about them. Native cultures are not invisible or ecologically. Search for images of Native peoples. Use photographers and

When I use my platform to give voice to others?

Am I inadvertently contributing to a false or negative narrative by not taking into account or including contemporary Native peoples in my work? Am I using one Native spokesperson as the representative of all Native Americans?

And how is it important to my work to advance new narratives about Native Americans as part of building respect across society?

What can I do to use this new narrative?

How can I ensure that what I am communicating or creating is advancing the new narrative rather than working against it?

When I swiftly and strongly correct false narratives when I see them?

Part of This Movement

movements

Use social media

Use social media, look for new story ideas that

resonate with your audience. Situate the old story in a new context or submit it to a different outlet. Findings all four ways to tell the story and make it more compelling. Suggest ways to partner with Native Americans and organizations to

Make research accurate

If your organization conducts or uses research to make decisions, consider whether and how to include data about Native Americans, who represent around 10 percent of the U.S. population.³

A number of Native nonprofit, research, health and policy organizations would be interested in partnering with you on the best and most appropriate ways to collect and analyze data.

It is necessary to disaggregate data so you can understand how your policies and programs impact Native Americans. If you need assistance in doing this, each region in the United States has a tribal epidemiology center that can assist you (tribalepicenters.org).

At the very least, note that you don't have data available for Native Americans if that is the case — doing this helps fight erasure and invisibility in data sets and analysis.

Use language carefully

Pay attention to the language you use in conversations among staff and teams. Help each other see where you are inadvertently falling into assumptions or deficit narrative, call on each other to use better practices, and think about how you can shift your language.

to Advance

e

Hire Native Americans

Seek out and hire Native Americans in your organization. Appoint Native Americans as board members and to coalitions, advisory groups and commissions. Contract with Native artists and other professionals. Encourage your colleagues and peers to do the same. Challenge the “we can’t find anyone” narrative with a commitment to reaching more deeply across and beyond your networks to bring Native American leadership and expertise, cultural values, knowledge and creative voices into your work.

Bring Native voices into media and entertainment

If you work in the entertainment field or news media or in pop culture, commit to hiring Native Americans as producers, directors, editors, artists, writers and so forth. Commit funding to Native projects. Erase outdated, stereotypical and inaccurate depictions in your work, and do not create Native stories or representations without Native Americans leading and/or guiding the work.

Interrupt and correct the false narrative

If you hear or see others perpetuating myths, stereotypes or other aspects of the false narrative — whether out of ignorance or blatant racism — share with them the correct information. Use the narrative-framed message a new conversation. (See “Up Truths” on page 34.)

Hollywood is full of ‘fake’ Native Americans. It’s never for the Native American day are not only the “up truths” to do.”

ur out of every 10 grant dollars organizations. I would like to where this is not so unusual to other foundations. All we relationships in Indian Country, organizations and fund them. We ng Native people thrive on their at the heart of racial healing enhances our work. This kind commitment to engaging with unities must go beyond any one entire field.”

President & CEO,
Sea Foundation

Fund Native organizations and issues at parity

If you are a grantmaker, ensure that you are supporting Native American issues and organizations at a level at least at parity with the U.S. population. This means that at least 2 percent of your grantmaking dollars would be allocated in this way. There are more than five million Native Americans and more than 600 sovereign Native nations in the United States, so there's a good chance your service area overlaps. No matter what issue you prioritize, from education to health to the environment, Native Americans continue to experience inequities and are leading the way to innovative solutions.

Hire Native American program officers and staff, and recruit Native peoples to be on your board, grant review teams, advisory committee and other points of engagement. Collect and include data on Native Americans through your research and grantmaking. See “Make research accurate” on page 26 for details.

Play a support

Step out of the le supporting role of leading the co group, fixing the the solution, list Americans leadi

Understand

If you are an ele work in the gove judicial system, law and sovereig professor, ensur knowledge of an sovereignty.

“Understanding is mandatory fo lawyers who wo law in states wi highly beneficia encounter triba who work on N law admit they only unwise: it's


Wilson Pipester Pipestem Law

able

find out
the land
ning of
land
s and
region
ontext,
tions to
s on or
y to do
cal board,
on on
mation
urces.

Advocate for accurate Native history

Advocate for your state or local school board to adopt a policy to teach accurate Native American history and contemporary facts. If you are a state, district or local school administrator or a classroom educator, use leading-edge history curriculum resources to ensure that what your students are learning is accurate and that it advances the new narrative. Visit Native Knowledge 360° from the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian (nmai.si.edu/nk360/) to learn more and find resources. You can also contact local tribal governments to ask for resources or invite them to play a role in what students are learning.



“We are trying to get people to think differently, more broadly, more inclusively about American Indians beyond the eight or 10 stories that are so ubiquitous in textbooks.”

Edwin Schupman (*Muscogee*),
Manager, Smithsonian National Museum
of the American Indian

Seek a variety of Native voices

Recognize that one Native American voice does not speak for all Native Americans. Talk with Native American people and groups separately, one on one, instead of in a group forum where it’s more likely that one or some voices may dominate. You can say: “I don’t want to make the mistake of assuming that all Native American people or groups see things the same way. Can you please tell me what you/your organization thinks about this issue?” Keep working to build long-term relationships, even if you don’t receive an initial response or openness. Engagement requires building relationships and trust. Your continued persistence may show individuals and organizations that your questions and invitations are sincere and worth responding to.

Say no to m

Do not accept Na
mascots or nam
products. They a
respectful; they
harmful.

End any support

be providing to t
through your po
example, the Ro
Foundation (RW
American and ot
the eligibility gu
recognizes sport
good health. The
will not consider
submitted by an e
or practices — in
— *denigrates, ha
any racial or ethn
team with a nam
view, denigrates
not be eligible for
usatoday.com/st
kansas-city-chie
racist-mascots-f
column/5848580*

Join movements

See changethen



Autumn Only A Chief, Pawnee/Otoe
 Photograph by Thomas Ryan RedCorn

Information Sources

Check out these websites for more information, data, stories and other resources to help you learn more about Native American peoples, cultures and issues and to gain confidence as an ally.

- American Indian College Fund (collegefund.org)
- Center for Native American Youth (cnay.org): Information about policies, issues and youth perspectives
- Echo Hawk Consulting (echohawkconsulting.com)
- First Nations Development Institute (firstnations.org): Information about economic development in Indian Country
- Indian Country Media Network (indiancountrymedianetwork.com/today/): Native American news and issues
- National Congress of American Indians (ncai.org): Information about tribes, policy issues and more



“Tribal Nations and the United States” (ncai.org/about-tribes): An excellent starting point for people who want to learn more about tribal nations and Native history
 NCAI “Tribal Directory” (ncai.org/tribal-directory): Searchable by state

- National Museum of the American Indian’s Native Knowledge 360° (nmai.si.edu/nk360): Materials for educators and schools
- Trahan Reports (trahanreports.com): News on Native American issues
- Urban Indian Health Institute (uihi.org), which includes an Urban Indian Dictionary (<http://uihi.org/wp-content/>)

Native Americans
 some truths, and
 the misinformation.

nor Native
 research findings
 the majority of
 scots harmful
 mascots are
 ge students,
 and community
 g non-Native
 moniker
 vernment
 ody scalps of
 at this name is
 the “R-word,”
 , or simply refer

and citizens of the
 everyone else.

enefits to Native
ans.
ne from casinos.
 d States do not
 erate the majority
 percent of tribal

ere more than
 more than 600
 ate today. In many
 g the fastest-

A Note About Language

Knowing what words to use and not use can make all the difference in comfortably initiating and joining conversations and advancing an accurate, positive narrative.

For reference, we recommend the following:

- Native American Journalists Association, Reporter’s Indigenous Terminology Guide (naja.com/reporter-s-indigenous-terminology-guide/)
- Native American Rights Fund, FAQs (narf.org/frequently-asked-questions/)

Terminology varies in different places across the country and can be a matter of personal preference. Refer to your local tribal government’s website for specifics. As you get to know Native organizations and leaders, listen for what terminology they use and prefer. When in doubt, ask.

Following are a
 • There are ma
 cultures and
 intentionally.
 • Different org
 to the Indiger
 terms are *Na
 Alaska Native
 peoples.*
 • People are citi
 terms are *trib
 If you are tall
 citizens, use
 Native Americ
 tribal chairm
 “We spoke w
 Nation.” If yo
 nation, check
 terminology*

Leaders Guide

Creating lasting change will take commitment, creativity and collaboration from non-Native allies alike. We hope you will join us in changing the narrative and advocacy for Native Americans, as well as building a stronger and more just society for all.



...th, a collaborative
First Nations

... of movements, with many people advising, inspiring and supporting this work, part of the new narrative and this message guide. In particular, we express our gratitude for those who are instrumental in creating the narrative and this guide:

Dr. Sarah Kastelic (*Alutiiq*)
Executive Director,
National Indian Child Welfare Association

Dr. Adrienne Keene (*Cherokee*)
Scholar, writer, blogger, activist
Assistant Professor of American Studies
and Ethnic Studies, Brown University

Judith LeBlanc (*Caddo*)
Director, Native Organizers Alliance

Denisa Livingston (*Diné*)
Slow Food International Indigenous Councilor of the
Global North, Community Health Advocate
Diné Community Advocacy Alliance

Nichole Maher (*Tlingit*)
Vice President, National Urban
Indian Family Coalition
President, Northwest Health Foundation

Senator John McCoy (*Tulalip*)
Washington State Senator

Floripa Olguin (*Pueblo of Isleta*)
Brown University Youth Representative

Jacqueline Pata (*Tlingit*)
Executive Director,

Ken Ramirez (*San Manuel Band of Mission Indians*)
Tribal Secretary, Business Committee for
San Manuel Band of Mission Indians

Erik Stegman (*Assiniboine*)
Executive Director, Center for
Native American Youth

Nick Tilsen (*Oglala Lakota*)
Executive Director,
Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation

Mark Trahant (*Shoshone-Bannock*)
Editor, *Indian Country Today*

Brian Walker
Manager, Enterprise Diversity and Inclusion
The Walt Disney Company

Kevin Walker
President & CEO,
Northwest Area Foundation

Project Team

Echo Hawk Consulting

Crystal Echo Hawk (*Pawnee*)
President & CEO, Co-Project Leader

Shirley LaCourse Jamarillo
(*Oglala Lakota/Yakama/Umatilla/Oneida*)
Project Manager

Lauren Cordova (*Taos Pueblo/Shoshone-Bannock*)
Project Assistant

Jodi Gillette (*Hunkpapa/Oglala Lakota*)
Advisor

Wilson Pipestem (*Otoe-Missouria*)
Attorney and Government Relations, Pipestem Law

Janie Simms Hipp (*Chickasaw*)

Ryan RedCorn (*Ojibwe*)
Advisor, Red Hawk

Betsy Theobald (*Pawnee*)
Advisor, The Opp

Mary Kathryn Nadeau
Advisor, Pipestem

First Nations Development Institute

Michael E. Roberts
President & CEO

Dr. Sarah Dewees
Project Director &
Policy and Asset-Fl

Benjamin Marks
Senior Research C

Jackie Francke (*N*)
Vice President —

Dr. Raymond Fox
Vice President —
Communications

Randy Blauvelt
Senior Communic

Alice Botkin
Development Offi

Mary K. Bowann
Communications

Tom Reed
Finance Officer

Yadira Rivera
Grants and Progr

Patrita “Ime” Sal
Program Officer

Science

Integration,

the Muscogee)

Bobby Wilson (*Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota*)
The 1491s Comedy Club

Thought Partners

American Heart Association

Isabelle Gerard

Policy and Opinion Research Manager, Voices for Healthy Kids

Carter Headrick

Director of State and Local Obesity Policy, Voices for Healthy Kids

W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Vicky Stott (*Ho-Chunk*)

Program Officer for Racial Equity and Community Engagement

Alvin Warren (*Santa Clara Pueblo*)

Program Officer for New Mexico Programs

Authors, Strategists and Design

Metropolitan Group

Maria Elena Campisteguy

Jennifer Messenger Heilbronner

Corinne Nakamura-Rybak

Researchers

Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research

Anna Greenberg

David Walker

Jiore Craig

Aida Bibart

Dr. Stephanie Fryberg Research Team

Dr. Stephanie A. Fryberg (*Tulalip*)

Arienne Eason

Perception Institute

Alexis McGill Johnson

Rachel D. Godsil

Hina Tai

Dr. Linda Tropp

Pipestem Law



W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Long Version

ntive

es who want to apply the narrative to their work. There is
ive American peoples and organizations. The themes and
ent. If you're interested in comparing the two, you can find
at reclaimingnativetruth.com.

ed together in every communication. We break them out here
er, they form the long version of the new narrative. When
ure to incorporate all four themes. You may use or modify
rks, or you may develop your own way to express your issue

and traditional
can cultures:
ared
community; and
re generations.
ribes and
to build a
r all.

ur shared
istory, and we
g and evolving
mic strength
tribal nations
Americans'
es, literature,
stems, cultures
our country's
s a painful
ages driven
n stolen from
imilating, whole
neir homelands,
ken by Congress
s persist in
istories taught
s of Nestor

Visibility theme

As one of the youngest and fastest-growing
populations in the country, Native Americans bring
rich history and cultural wisdom into U.S. society.

Within families, across more than 600 sovereign
Native nations, and in our shared neighborhoods,
schools, and communities, Native Americans
are teachers, doctors, lawyers, artists, writers,
scientists, politicians and more. Native Americans
are rejuvenating language and culture, advancing
laws and justice, and contributing to every aspect
of society. In movements like Standing Rock, Native
Americans — especially young people — are leading
and building on thousands of years of accumulated
knowledge to address some of our country's most
important current issues.

Call-to-action theme

Native Americans' wisdom, values, historical
experiences and creative resilience are greatly needed
to sustain Native nations and to care for our lands
and waters, our urban and rural communities, our
country, and our planet.

Let's work together to find commonalities, celebrate
our differences and work together for our shared
future and the futures of the next generations.

For more information follow and join this movement, of movements, please reclaimingnativetruth.com



www.firstnations.org



www.echohawkconsulting.com