



Please join HATC in honoring the rich culture, traditions, and contributions of Native Americans, American Indians, and Alaska Natives during the month of November. One of this year's themes is "*Affirming Native Voices: Visibility-Leadership-Service*". This year's theme emphasizes the importance of Native American leaders, past and present, and the contributions of Indigenous tribes and leaders who protected this nation through military service.

State Observances

The first time an American Indian Day was formally designated was at the state level in 1916 in New York. New York observed the day on the second Saturday of the month. In 1919, Illinois state legislature enacted a bill commemorating American Indian Day. In 1935, Massachusetts issued a proclamation, following a 1935 law, naming the day that would become American Indian Day in any given year. Since 1919, states have enacted legislation and proclamations in observance of the many contributions and rich heritage of Indigenous peoples.

1992 – The Year of the American Indian

The 500th anniversary of the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the western hemisphere in 1492 was the occasion for national and local celebrations. For Native people, it was an occasion that reminded the nation of its historic atrocities enacted upon the Indigenous peoples of the land over the last 500 years. Congress responded to these concerns by enacting Senate Joint Resolution 217 (Pub. L. 102-188), which designated 1992 as the "Year of the American Indian." It was signed by President George H.W. Bush on December 4, 1991. The American Indian response to the anniversary was marked by

public protests. Yet, it also was seen by many in that community as a unique, year-long opportunity to hold public education events, commemorations of ancestral sacrifices and contributions to America, and celebrations for the survival of Native peoples over the last five centuries.

Federal Observances

In 1976, the United States bicentennial year, Congress passed a resolution authorizing President Ford to proclaim a week in October as "Native American Awareness Week." On October 8, 1976, Ford issued a presidential proclamation in this endeavor. In 1990, Congress passed, and President George H. W. Bush signed into law a joint resolution designating the month of November as the first National American Indian Heritage Month (also known as Native American Indian Month). Since then, Congress and the President have observed a day, a week, or a month in honor of the American Indian and Alaska Native people.

See Notable Native American Pioneers!

[Native American Social Work Pioneers](#)

[Native American Pioneers in Medicine](#)

[How Susan La Flesche Picotte Became the 1st Native American Medical Doctor](#)

Relevant Educational Materials!

[United Indians of All Tribes Foundation – Daybreak Star Cultural Center](#)

[Unsettled Territory: How Activists Built a Safe Haven for Native Culture in Seattle](#)

[President Biden Apologizes to Native Americans for Federal Indian Boarding Schools – Equal Justice Initiative](#)

[Missing and Murdered Indigenous People Crisis – U.S. Dept. of the Interior Indian Affairs](#)

[Sexual Violence Among Native Women in Seattle, WA – Urban Indian Health Institute](#)