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COMMUNICATION & CULTURAL AWARENESS IN MONTANA



IT IS THE LONG
HISTORY OF HUMANKIND
(AND ANIMAL KIND TOO)
THAT THOSE WHO LEARNED
TO COLLABORATE AND
IMPROVISE MOST EFFECTIVELY
HAVE PREVAILED.

—Charles Darwin

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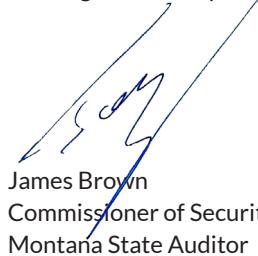
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Having been raised in Montana, I deeply appreciate the history of Montana's twelve tribal nations and the role each tribe has played in shaping the Treasure State. I also recognize the unique culture of each tribal nation and the value systems that are incorporated into tribal governance. That is why I believe strongly in the importance of building relationships.


James Brown
Commissioner of Securities & Insurance
Montana State Auditor

OVERVIEW

Cultural competence is the ability to effectively interact with people from cultures different from one's own, especially through a knowledge and appreciation of cultural differences. —Dictionary.com

Montana has eight reservations and twelve sovereign tribes—distinct from one another in their history, culture, and language. Tribal sovereignty is the inherent right of tribal nations to self-govern their people and territory and to self-determine their futures—meaning tribal citizens follow the laws and government of their tribal nation. The U.S. Constitution recognizes tribal nations as sovereign governments and as having a formal nation-to-nation relationship with the United States. Tribal citizens are citizens of their tribal nation, the United States, and the state in which they reside.

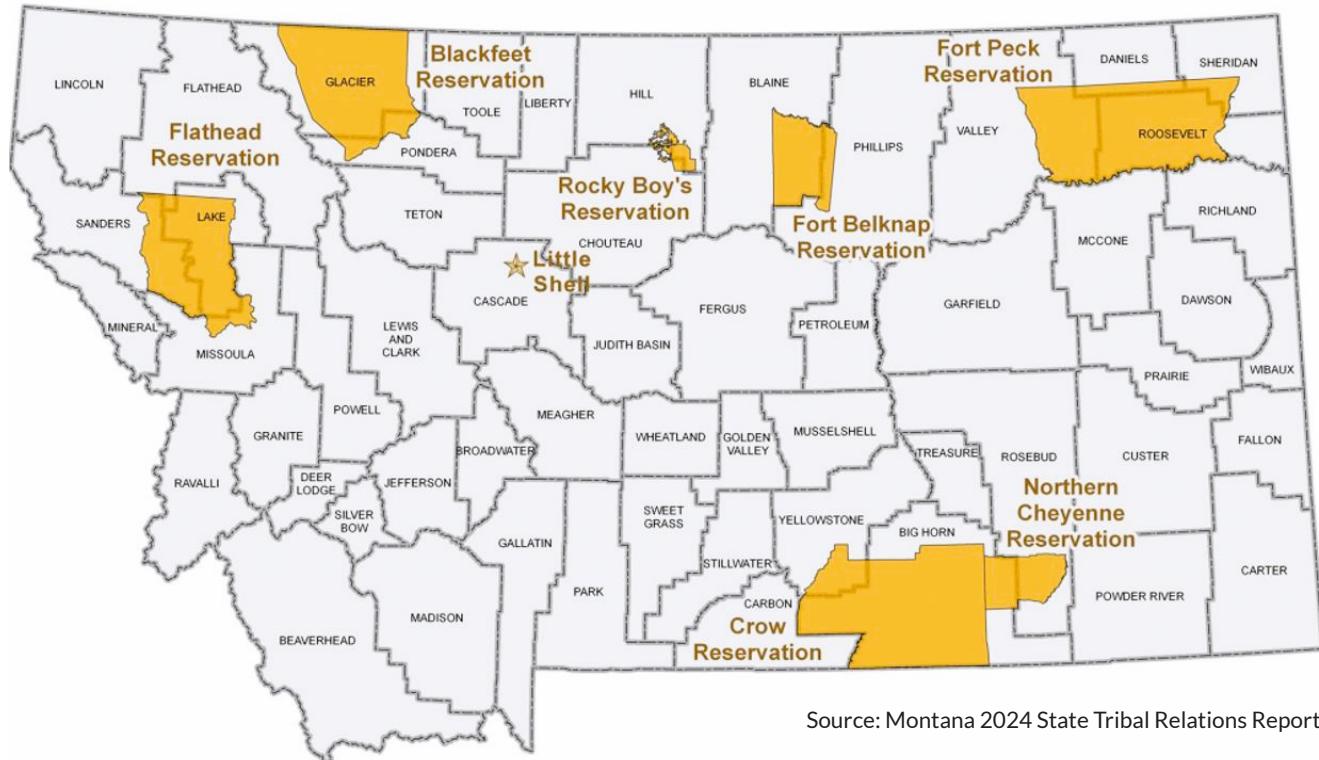
In 1951, the Montana legislature established the Office of Indian Affairs to help facilitate tribal-state communication, in recognition of their unique political status and as full citizens of Montana. The Montana Office of the State Auditor, Commissioner of Securities and Insurance (CSI), in support of the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs' mission, is committed to collaboration with Montana's tribes and Native American communities—often referred to as Indian Country—and strengthening relationships.

In 2024, James Brown was elected to serve as Montana's 18th State Auditor. Immediately upon being sworn into office, Commissioner Brown joined the National Association of Insurance Commissioner's (NAIC) American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) Liaison Committee. In keeping with Commissioner Brown's pledge to make the Auditor's office a committed partner to the Tribal Nations, the American Indian Committee is focused on exploring topics with the aim of finding best practices and fostering an ongoing dialogue within Native American communities on insurance issues—one being cultural awareness and communication.

Believing strongly in the importance of building relationships, encouraging collaboration, and exploring partnership opportunities, the purpose of this paper is to promote cultural awareness to better understand the differences and similarities between dominant society and Indian Country. This resource is intended to support and foster effective interaction and communication, as meaningful relationships are forged, through greater appreciation for another's beliefs, values, and customs. It offers a general briefing to enhance cultural competence when working in Indian Country. It is acknowledged and understood that Native American communities across regions, states, and beyond borders are all unique, with characteristics that distinguish them from one another, as well as other Americans.

Heritage, origin, and traditions offer many a sense of pride and connectedness. The same is true for those in Indian Country, who too have great respect for their culture, language, spirituality, and "sense of place" (being connected to the land and to a specific area or region). Native American communities focus on the entire group, rather than the individual self. In Montana, reservations may also be home to more than one tribe who speak two different languages.

While beliefs, values, customs, and culture vary from tribe to tribe, there are similarities and general themes in value systems that appear to be shared. Values are a constant; they do not change. Culture, on the other hand, is the way values are implemented, which can evolve and change over time. An appreciation of similarities, as well as differences, can promote cultural competence, create awareness, and foster respect.



Source: Montana 2024 State Tribal Relations Report

Montana's 12 Tribal Nations	Reservation	Headquarters
Blackfeet	Blackfeet	Browning
Chippewa-Cree	Rocky Boy's	Box Elder
Crow	Crow	Crow Agency
Assiniboine (or Nakota) and Gros Ventre	Fort Belknap	Harlem
Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians	—	Great Falls
Northern Cheyenne	Northern Cheyenne	Lame Deer
Confederated Salish and Kootenai (a combination of Salish, Kootenai, Pend d' Oreille)	Flathead	Pablo
Assiniboine and Sioux	Fort Peck	Poplar

CORE VALUES

Simply put, cultural values are preferences people have for how they navigate life. These values indicate how people prefer to interact, communicate, plan, and complete tasks. Indian Country values are interwoven throughout their culture, lifestyle, religion, and daily activities. These value systems are unique to their individual groups, and as diverse as their lifestyles. However, there are some core, traditional values that tend to be somewhat universal—having similarities across various tribes and communities—and can be a useful focal point from which awareness can foster understanding and conversation. Examples of these values include:

COOPERATION, COLLECTIVISM, AND HARMONY

- ▶ Historically, Native American societies needed a high level of cooperation to survive (e.g., obtaining sufficient food).
- ▶ Place value on the importance of the group rather than on the individual—sharing is vital.
- ▶ Considerable emphasis on living in harmony with nature and with others. To ensure harmony, groups generally reach decisions by consensus rather than majority rule.

MODESTY AND HUMILITY

- ▶ Efforts at self-promotion can be viewed as inappropriate.
- ▶ Modesty means native people may appear cautious with words and actions.
- ▶ Being humble means one listens to others and does not talk for the sake of talking or to make oneself appear more important.
- ▶ Words are used sparingly. Because words are believed to have power, a lot of thought is given to the content and delivery of speech. Avoiding eye contact is another aspect of humility; direct eye contact may be considered a challenge.

RESPECT FOR INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM AND AUTONOMY

- ▶ For a close-knit society to work, each member has to act honorably—accepting others will do the same—and for the good of the whole. Personal advice is not often given, because to do so might suggest the person receiving the advice did not already know the correct course of action.

RESPECT FOR TRADITION

- ▶ Valuing tradition is necessary for a culture's survival.
- ▶ Perceive respect for tradition as more important than innovation and change.
- ▶ Native American cultures prioritize spoken traditions and endeavor to keep them unchanged, whereas written tradition allows change while still preserving past versions. For many, maintaining oral traditions is very important; some forbid writing down traditional stories.

RESPECT FOR ELDERS

- ▶ A great deal of respect for elders as those who survived adversity and gained wisdom from it.
- ▶ Elders help maintain traditions.

Source: Excerpt adapted from store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/tip_61_ain_full_document_020419_0.pdf, DPHHS, SAMHSA, Exhibit 1.1-4, Traditional AIAN Values and Beliefs.

WORK SHOULD BE DONE TO MEET NEEDS, NOT TO ACCUMULATE WEALTH

- ▶ Traditionally do not stockpile resources or wealth, as strong communal bonds fostered resource sharing. People who take more than they need can be viewed with suspicion.
- ▶ Generosity and hospitality are valued and respected. Some cultures traditionally give gifts or distribute surplus wealth.

SPIRITUAL ORIENTATION IN ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE

- ▶ Spiritual traditions do not separate the spiritual and material—the two are inexorably linked.
- ▶ Spiritual pervades daily life and is not compartmentalized. The natural world can itself be perceived as spiritual or mystical—what is observed in daily life can teach a spiritual lesson.

COOPERATION WITH NATURE

- ▶ All of nature is alive and worthy of respect.
- ▶ The Earth and all that is on it are considered sacred and worthy of protection.

THE PRESENT IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE FUTURE

- ▶ Emphasis on living day to day and is measured by natural occurrences (e.g., seasonal changes, sunrise/sunset, moon phases).
- ▶ Important to listen and pay attention to the world around leads to focusing on the present.
- ▶ Too much focus on the future can keep people from paying attention to the present. Some native languages do not even have a future tense.
- ▶ Having patience is to value patience—believing things will be done in their own time. This means it is not as important to get things done on time to let things go their natural course.

Chief Earl Old Person [1929-2021] was the longest-serving elected tribal leader in the country.

Photo credit:
Tommy Martino, UM





CULTURAL CUSTOMS

IMPORTANCE FOR RESPECTING TRADITIONS

The cultural customs, like values, among Native American groups are diverse and unique. Any assumptions and perceptions can negatively impact conversation and relationships when there is a lack of awareness for the cultural norms and differences of others. The outward Tribal cultural customs reflect a much more ingrained and implicit culture that is not easily seen or verbalized. Deeply held values, patterns of communication, and interaction are often the differences that affect a relationship. Cultural customs can be viewed as a particular group or individual's preferred way of meeting their basic human needs and conducting daily activities passed on through generations.

Customs are influenced by values, as well as a host of factors, including but not limited to, ethnicity, origin, language, religious/spiritual beliefs, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, ancestry, history, gender identity, and geography. Cultural customs can often be observed through material culture, such as food, dress, dance, ceremony, drumming, song, stories, symbols, and other visible manifestations.

For many Native American people, they have learned to "walk in two worlds"—one to keep their heritage, traditions, and cultural practices intact within their daily lives and one that observes the cultural practices of a dominant society. When building and maintaining relationships in Indian Country, it is important to respect the culture and traditions they hold dear. When inquiring about cultural customs, Native Americans generally welcome questions, but it is important to know they may not always be answered—at least directly. There may be more willingness to share information once trust has been established. Observation and listening to stories often reveal answers to questions.

We will be known forever by the tracks we leave.
—Dakota Indian Proverb

CULTURAL TRAITS TO CONSIDER

WHEN INTERACTING WITH NATIVE AMERICAN
COMMUNITIES AND MEMBERS

GREETINGS

The handshake is an acceptable greeting, ranging from light to a full and firm grasp. Be aware and respectful of personal space.

EYE CONTACT

For many, sustained direct eye contact is a form of disrespect.

COMPLIMENTS

Find a way to truthfully offer a compliment. A simple, thoughtful compliment is acceptable.

COMMUNICATION

Very comfortable with silence; silence does not indicate a lack of understanding or disinterest. Speak slowly, simply, clearly, and softly.

SHARING

Sharing of material items is held in high esteem. There is no expectation of reciprocation by others.

SHARING FOOD

Sharing is a way of welcoming visitors. Food is often offered at community meetings and other gatherings to build relationships. Refusal to accept food or a gift is unacceptable and may be viewed as an insult.

SOCIAL ETHICS

To be humble is valued. To overdo anything is to invite criticism. Do not put yourself above anyone.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Extended family relationships are very important; treat the entire family with respect.

PRAYER

Common practice is to open and close meetings with a prayer or short ceremony. Elders are often asked to offer such opening and closing words.

Within Tribal communities, social hierarchies often influence cultural customs. Examples of these hierarchies can be seen in interactions, roles, and how individuals may be regarded.

Walk in balance and beauty. —Native American Elder to walk in beauty—a state of harmony; to live in balance. There must be a balance —a oneness with all parts.

ROLE OF GENDER

- ▶ Issues around gender roles can vary significantly between tribes.
- ▶ Males and females typically have very distinct social rules for behavior in everyday interactions and in ceremonies.
- ▶ Common behaviors to be aware of, as they relate to gender, are eye contact, style of dress, physical touch, personal space, decision making, and the influence of male and/or female elders.
- ▶ Careful observation and seeking guidance from a community member on appropriate gender-specific behavior can help to follow local customs and demonstrate cultural respect.

ROLE OF VETERANS

- ▶ Historically, there were high rates of Native Americans' enlistment in military service. Often, both the community and the veteran display pride for military service.
- ▶ Given special respect like that of elders for having accepted the role of protector and experienced personal sacrifice.
- ▶ Service of the veteran is recognized publicly in formal and informal settings.
- ▶ Because of their special role in the community, veterans and their families are shown respect by public acknowledgment and inclusion in public events. For example, veterans are honored at ceremonies and pow wows with special songs and dances.



Photo Credit: Kathryne Ann Photography

ROLE OF ELDERS

- ▶ Elders play a significant role in tribal communities. The experience and wisdom gained throughout their lifetime, along with their historical knowledge of the community, are highly regarded in decision-making processes.
- ▶ Elders are considered the anchors to tradition, native ways of life, and worldview.
- ▶ Elders are respected and listened to when decisions are being made. Decisions will be put off if consensus or agreement cannot be reached. Dissension by one will dictate the need to proceed with caution, taking time to reflect to allow everyone to come to "one mind," "one accord," and/or "one decision."
- ▶ It is disrespectful to openly argue or disagree with an elder.
- ▶ When in a social setting where food is served, elders may be served first.
- ▶ Women and men alike may be recognized as elders.

ROLE OF LEADERS

- ▶ Those chosen to lead are elected based on their ability to communicate the elders' teachings to the entire community. They act merely as spokes persons rather than decision makers.
- ▶ Leaders are the voice of the community and a layer of protection from outside influences. It is up to the leader to express the views and choices of the elders and people of the community they represent.
- ▶ The leader is responsible for paying attention to the needs of the community members and ensuring systems address those needs.

During World War I, over 12,000 male AIAN volunteered for military service—an estimated 25% of the total AIAN male population at the time.

During World War II, more than 44,000 AIAN men and women served in the military—about 13% of the AIAN population at the time.

COMMUNICATION

With increased awareness and insight into Native American values and cultural customs, below are some considerations when beginning the process of reaching out, interacting, and establishing—as well as building and maintaining—meaningful conversation and relationships. “Meeting someone where they are” means bridging the gap between your own expectations and where the other person is coming from. It means intentionally listening to understand their values, needs, and desires. Acceptance, compassion, and respect set the stage for strong communication. As with any meeting or conversation, it is important to be mindful of cellphones—it is always good to put devices away. Being distracted by or overly attentive to a cellphone can send the message you are not valuing your in-person time with those you have sought to interact with.

One important consideration is to remember to “read the room.” Some tribes still follow very traditional roles and values, while others may be more relaxed—as such, not all tribes or leaders will adhere to all or any of the stated cultural norms. Even within very traditional tribes, some non-traditional or younger generations

may also not strictly abide. If visiting a more traditional tribe, individuals in a group may not speak—not because they do not have something important to say but because they do not have the right to speak in public and may look to others to voice their thoughts/experiences for them. Another generalization is a mistrust of government, so it is important to not initially take offense if that is sensed—it is a common defense-mechanism.

In the early relationship building process, learn something about the tribe. An effort to learn an appropriate greeting to the tribe, or a few words is usually appreciated by the person or family. When inquiring about culture and traditions, be mindful and respectful as there may be sensitivities to certain aspects—observing non-verbal cues can help guide discussion.

*Friendship between two persons
depends upon the patience of one.
— Native American Proverb*

SHOWING RESPECT & ESTABLISHING RAPPORT

INTRODUCTIONS

When making introductions, Native Americans often share information that connects them to land, their tribe, their ancestors, or family. In building rapport and enhancing trust in the relationship, it is important to know who you are—share something about you, where you consider your homeland and a brief description of your ancestors.

ADDRESS FORMALLY

In the initial meeting, use formal address or title (later you can ask if there is a preferred way of addressing). In the presence of family or friends, acknowledge the older person first.

RESPECTFUL OF ELDERS

It is often customary to show respect by allowing elders to speak first—careful to not interrupt and to allow time for opinions and thoughts to be expressed. In group settings, elders’ permission will be requested before members speak publicly or they will first defer to an elder to offer an answer. Elders may share stories offering meaningful insight into their traditions, practices, and experiences.

COMPLIMENTS

A truthful, simple compliment during the introduction phase is appreciated.

A GOOD LISTENER

Intelligence is often measured by one’s ability to listen, hear, and understand rather than one’s ability to ask “smart” questions.

PROMOTE UNDERSTANDING

Avoid use of metaphors, jargon, and double negatives.

PHOTOS

Show respect and it is often best practice to first ask permission before taking photos. Understand not everything is okay to capture on your phone or camera. Photos should not be taken during prayers, flag songs or during some ceremonies. Pow wows often provide or post a list of etiquette tips and other ceremonies may post “no photography.”



COMMUNICATION STYLE: NON-VERBAL

Preferred body language, posture, and concept of personal space depend on community norms and the nature of the personal relationship. Observe others and allow them to create the space and initiate or ask for any physical contact. Native American people communicate a great deal through non-verbal gestures, which can be subtle yet notable with careful observation. Having increased awareness can help one avoid misinterpretation of non-verbal behavior, as well as avoid being misunderstood.

RESPECT PHYSICAL DISTANCE

Be sensitive to not invade personal space.

TOUCH

Generally not acceptable, except for a handshake.

HANDSHAKES

Handshakes are an acceptable greeting—which can range from light to a full and firm hand grasp. A gentle handshake is often seen as a sign of respect, not weakness. A firm handshake denotes power.

LINGUISTICS—TONE OF VOICE, VOLUME, AND SPEED OF SPEECH PATTERN

Be mindful of and note the communication style to help with your delivery and clarity. Important to listen more than talk. As for tone and volume, it is often soft—speaking loudly can be perceived as rudeness or anger.

EYE CONTACT

A sustained gaze may reflect aggressiveness or a form of disrespect. Eye contact should not be direct, or only briefly direct. Looking down can demonstrate respect or deference to elders.



POSTURES & EXPRESSIONS

Facial expressions, gestures, and engagement are all part of a conversation—often more powerful than mere words. For instance, common expressive interactions can include a head nod to indicate active listening, an eyebrow raise to indicate agreement, an eyebrow furrow to indicate disagreement with what is being said, or sigh to communicate boredom.

HUMILITY

Calmness and humility are valued over speed and self-assertion or directiveness.

EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION

Expressiveness is generally more controlled—except with humor. Humor, as appropriate, is welcomed and appreciated.

BODY MOVEMENTS

In conversation, movement is often limited and minimal. Pointing with the finger is considered impolite.

PATIENCE

If there is a sense of being rushed or brushed off, trust will not be built. Elders easily pick up on those who are uninterested, unfocused, and preoccupied.

COMMUNICATION STYLE: SILENCE & PAUSES

Conversation was never begun at once, nor in a hurried manner. No one was quick with a question, no matter how important, and no one was pressed for an answer. A pause giving time for thought was the truly courteous way of beginning and conducting a conversation. Silence was meaningful with the Lakota, and his granting a space of silence to the speechmaker and his own moment of silence before talking was done in the practice of true politeness and regard for the rule that, 'thought comes before speech.'

—Luther Standing Bear, Oglala Sioux Chief

Native American languages are often spoken in a slower, more rhythmic pace than English. This reflects the deep thoughtfulness and introspection given to the process of communication and can also be a significant part of inner translations from one language to another. Compared to other languages, these languages have some of the longest pause times. American Indians are also very comfortable with silence—have patience and respect for the communication process. Silence does not indicate a lack of understanding or disinterest.

- Be comfortable with silence or long pauses. Allow ample time to express thoughts without interruption. Silence is valued and long periods of silence between speakers is common.
- Notably with elders, there may be a specific cadence used that may require you to slow down—matching the conversational pace is critical to the flow of information and to building trust and rapport.
- Interruption of the person who is speaking is considered extremely rude, especially if that person is an elder.
- Honesty and trust. Another form of pause comes from deep rooted values of honesty and trust. Traditional communication is to be honest, which can be a challenge when being asked questions. Asking personal questions especially without an established relationship can be uncomfortable and may be met with silence.



SILENCE HAS SO MUCH MEANING.

—Native American Proverb



COMMUNICATION STYLE: HUMOR

LAUGHTER IS GOOD MEDICINE

Humor is used in a variety of instances. Humor or teasing can show affection, indicate rapport-building, or be used to cope.

FOR LEVITY OR DEFLECTION

Humor may be used to convey truths or difficult messages, with smiles and jokes used to cover pain. It is important to listen closely to humor, as it may be seen as invasive to ask for too much direct clarification about sensitive topics.

FEEDBACK OR MISTAKES

Humor can be used as an indirect way of offering corrective advice, correcting inappropriate behavior, or as a form of guidance. You will be more easily accepted and forgiven for mistakes if you can learn to laugh at yourself and listen to lessons being brought to you through humor.



Photo Credit: Montana State University—47th Annual American Indian Council Pow Wow

COMMUNICATION STYLE: STORYTELLING

Storytelling is a powerful tool—an essential part of Native American culture—to talk about challenging situations and how they were handled. It is used to convey important messages, both traditional teachings and personal stories.

Stories are used to communicate information or complex ideas. Answering questions with a story is used in mentoring and in personal communications. Storytelling is used in contrast to the frame of mind of “getting to the point.” Elders often offer their teaching or advice in ways that are indirect with the telling of stories.

COMMUNICATION STYLE: SPEAKING HONESTLY

In many Native American cultures, the listener enters the conversation believing that the other person is speaking honestly. Over time the person’s actions will then support or deny the original communication and the listener will know how to gauge the value of the speaker’s words in the future. If the speaker is found to have given incorrect information or false promises, there is an expectation it will be made right. The implications for this are great—trust is broken.

Listening to a liar is like drinking warm water.

— Tribe Unknown



It does not require many words to speak the truth.

— Chief Joseph



Photo Credit: Kathryne Ann Photography

INTERESTING NUMBERS ABOUT MONTANA TRIBES



12

Montana is home to seven reservations and eight federally recognized tribal governments that represent 12 tribes.

8TH

Little Shell Chippewa Tribe is the 8th federally recognized government in Montana and the state's recognized landless tribe.

4TH

LARGEST INDIGENOUS POPULATION IN THE U.S.

Based on the 2020 Census, the Native American population in Montana accounts for 6.5% of the residents, ranking the fourth largest Indigenous population in the United States.

OVERVIEW OF MONTANA'S TRIBAL NATIONS

Based on the 2020 Census, the Native American population in Montana accounts for 6.5% of the residents, ranking the fourth largest Indigenous population in the United States.

Assiniboine and Gros
Ventre Tribes
Fort Belknap
(A'aninin Nakoda)
Reservation



FAST FACTS

Tribal Capital: Fort Belknap Agency, Harlem, MT

- ▶ This resource-rich reservation is home to over 7,000 Gros Ventre and Assiniboine enrolled members (Fort Belknap Community Council).
- ▶ Fort Belknap Indian Reservation is Montana's fourth-largest reservation, with 697,617 acres extending approximately 28 miles east and west and 35 miles north and south.
- ▶ The reservation is home to two Tribes, the Assiniboine and the Gros Ventre. The Assiniboine refer to themselves as "Nakoda"—meaning the generous ones. The Gros Ventre call themselves "A'aninin"—meaning the White Clay People.
- ▶ The primary industry is agriculture, consisting of cattle ranches, raising alfalfa hay for feed, and larger dry land farms.
- ▶ Annual celebrations include the Lodgepole Pow Wow in June, Milk River Indian Days in July, and the Hays Pow Wow in August.

Assiniboine and Sioux
Tribes
Fort Peck (Nakoda Dakota)
Reservation



FAST FACTS

Tribal Capital: Poplar, MT

- ▶ This resource-rich reservation is home to approximately 64% of the nearly 11,000 enrolled Assiniboine and Sioux members.
- ▶ The reservation is Montana's second-largest reservation with 2.1 million acres.
- ▶ Fort Peck Reservation is home to two tribes, the Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes—each composed of numerous bands.
- ▶ The Assiniboine refer to themselves as "Nakoda" and the Sioux call themselves "Dakota."
- ▶ The tribal government supplies much of the employment for the members, with over 400 members employed.
- ▶ Annual celebrations for the Tribes include Red Bottom Celebration in June, Badlands Celebration in June, Fort Kipp Celebration in July, Wadopana Celebration in August, and Poplar Indian Days in September.

**Blackfeet Nation
Blackfeet (Niitsitapi)
Reservation**

FAST FACTS

Tribal Capital: Browning, MT



- ▶ This scenic reservation is home to over 17,000 Blackfeet enrolled members, one of the ten largest tribes in the U.S.
- ▶ The Blackfeet Nation provides stewardship to 1.5 million acres, bordering Glacier National Park to the west and Canada to the north—Montana's third largest reservation.
- ▶ The reservation is home to the Blackfeet (Pikuni or Southern Piegan), who, together with their three counterparts in Canada, make up the Blackfoot Confederacy (Northern Piegan, Kainai Nation, and Siksika Nation).
- ▶ There are three branches of the Blackfeet peoples: the Northern Blackfeet (Siksika), the Blood, and the Piegan or Pikuni.
- ▶ The Tribe calls themselves “Niitsitapi” (nee-itsee-TAH-peh)—meaning “the real people.”
- ▶ The reservation’s economy is primarily agriculture-based. The principal crops are wheat, barley, and hay.
- ▶ The Blackfeet Nation’s annual celebrations include North American Indian Days and the Heart Butte Society Celebration.



Photo Credit: Rick & Susie Graetz—North American Indian Days Pow Wow on the Blackfeet Reservation

Chippewa Cree Tribe

Rocky Boy's (Annishinabe Ne-i-yah-wahk) Reservation



FAST FACTS

Tribal Capital: Rocky Boy Agency, Box Elder, MT

- ▶ This agricultural and forested Rocky Boy's Reservation (also referred to as Rocky Boy Reservation) is home to 55% of the over 6,000 Chippewa Cree enrolled members and contains about 122,259 acres of land.
- ▶ The Chippewa Cree Tribe was among the first tribes to enter the self-governance program in its early years.
- ▶ The name "Rocky Boy's" was derived from the name of a leader of a band of Chippewa Indians. The leader's name meant "Stone Child," but because it was not correctly translated from Chippewa into English, "Rocky Boy" evolved.
- ▶ The Tribe calls themselves "Ne Hiyawak"—meaning "those who speak the same language."
- ▶ The reservation's economy is primarily supported by agriculture and livestock.
- ▶ The Tribe annually celebrates its Rocky Boy's Pow Wow in August.

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Flathead Reservation



FAST FACTS

Tribal Capital: Pablo, MT

- ▶ The Reservation is home to approximately 63% of the nearly 8,000 enrolled members.
- ▶ The Flathead Reservation size is ranked the fourth largest in land base, encompassing approximately 1.3 million acres, one of the ten largest reservations in the U.S.
- ▶ The Flathead Indian Reservation is home to three tribes—the Bitterroot Salish, Upper Pend d'Oreille, and Kootenai.
- ▶ The name the Salish people used to refer to themselves as "Sqelixw," with the Kootenai calling themselves "Ktunaxa."
- ▶ In July, the Tribes celebrate their annual Arlee Pow Wow and the Standing Arrow Pow Wow.

**Crow Nation
Crow (Apsáalooke)
Reservation**

FAST FACTS

Tribal Capital: Crow Agency, MT



- ▶ The reservation is home to about 75% of the approximately 14,000 Crow enrolled members.
- ▶ The Crow Indian Reservation is the largest in Montana, encompassing approximately 2.2 million acres.
- ▶ The Tribe was initially called “Apsáalooke”—meaning “children of the large-beaked bird,” which was subsequently misinterpreted as “Crow.”
- ▶ 85% of the Tribe speaks Crow as their first language.
- ▶ The reservation's economy is derived from the rich resources of the Tribe's land, which is used directly to support livestock and other operations.
- ▶ The Tribe's annual celebrations include Crow Native Days in June and Crow Fair and Rodeo in July.

**LITTLE SHELL TRIBE OF
CHIPPEWA INDIANS**

FAST FACTS



- ▶ The Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Ojibwe people is the most recent federally recognized Montana tribe. It was granted federal recognition on December 20, 2019.
- ▶ The Little Shell enrollment total is nearly 7,000 members.
- ▶ The Tribe is headquartered in Great Falls, Montana, owns over 700 acres of land in and around Great Falls, and manages the Hell Creek Recreation Area on Fort Peck Reservoir.
- ▶ The Tribe hosts its Annual Little Shell Veterans' and Elders' Pow Wow in August.



Photo Credit: Kathryne Ann Photography

Northern Cheyenne

Tribe

Northern Cheyenne (Tsetsehesestehase Sotaahé) Reservation

FAST FACTS

Tribal Capital: Lame Deer, MT



- ▶ This mineral-rich reservation is home to approximately one-half of the nearly 12,000 enrolled Northern Cheyenne members.
- ▶ The Northern Cheyenne reservation consists of 445,000 acres with 99% tribal ownership.
- ▶ The Tribe calls themselves "Tsis tsis'tas" (Tse-TSES-tas) – meaning "the beautiful people."
- ▶ The Cheyenne Nation comprises ten bands, spread all over the Great Plains, from southern Colorado to the Black Hills in South Dakota.
- ▶ The economy is primarily supported by the federal government, tribal government, farming/ranching, and non-native/native owned businesses. The Tribe is the largest employer on the reservation.
- ▶ The Tribe's annual celebrations include the Memorial Day Powwow, White River Days Celebration, Lame Deer 4th of July Pow Wow, and the Ashland Labor Day Pow Wow.



SOURCES

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OTHER STATE TRIBAL NATION RESOURCES

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NOTES & CONTACTS



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RESPECT FOR OTHER
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