

## In Recognition of Indigenous People's Day



[The formal celebration of Indigenous People's Day] "allows the opportunity to bring more awareness to the unique, rich history of this land that is inextricably tied to the first peoples of this country and predates the voyage of Christopher Columbus. It also acknowledges American Indians and Alaska Natives as thriving, contemporary sovereign nations who hold their rightful place among the American family of governments."

Kevin Allis, CEO  
National Congress of American Indians

Today, on the second Monday of October, we recognize Indigenous People's Day, a day that recalls the 60 million Native peoples, "successful self-sufficient communities that sustained life for thousands of years," who inhabited the Americas before Columbus's arrival – and the nearly 55 million of them who perished in his wake. We also pay homage to the Native Americans who currently live in the US and its territories.

We are grateful to the delegation of Native nations that, in 1977, proposed renaming Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day at the International Conference on Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations in the Americas at the United Nations offices in Geneva. And we are humbled that it took 15 years after that for the first city – Berkeley, California – to acknowledge the deaths of so many by renaming Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day in 1992. But we now take solace and joy in the first-ever presidential proclamation of the day, issued by President Biden, on October 8, 2021.

The BUILD Initiative joins the 17 states and the District of Columbia, as well as many cities, that now honor the day.