



**Congressional
Research Service**

Informing the legislative debate since 1914

Native American Heritage Month: Fact Sheet

Updated November 18, 2021

Congressional Research Service

<https://crsreports.congress.gov>

R44258

Introduction

Native American Heritage Month (also known as National American Indian Heritage Month) celebrates the contributions and achievements of Native Americans.

November was first designated as National American Indian Heritage Month on August 3, 1990, by P.L. 101-343, To authorize and request the President to proclaim the month of November 1990, and thereafter as “Native American Indian Heritage Month.” Since then, Presidents have issued annual proclamations promoting this observance.

On June 26, 2009, P.L. 111-33, Native American Heritage Day Act of 2009, designated the Friday after Thanksgiving as Native American Heritage Day.

This guide assists congressional offices with work related to Native American Heritage Month celebrations. It provides links to sample congressional speeches and recognitions, presidential proclamations, statistical data, cultural resources, and selected federal agencies and programs that focus on Native American issues. This guide also includes links to selected educational and advocacy organizations.

Sample Congressional Speeches and Recognitions

Members of Congress often make floor statements, issue press releases, and enter Extensions of Remarks into the *Congressional Record* to recognize federal holidays. The following are some recent examples that may be of assistance in preparing such statements:

- Representative Carolyn B. Maloney, “Statement on Native American Heritage Month,” press release on Representative Maloney’s website (November 2, 2020)
- Representative Markwayne Mullin, “Celebrating Our Heritage,” column on Representative Mullin’s website (November 20, 2019)
- Representative Deb Haaland, “Native American Heritage Month,” remarks in the House, *Congressional Record* (September 19, 2019)
- Representative Don Bacon, “Native American Heritage Month: Honoring the Life of Judi Gaiashkibos,” remarks in the House, *Congressional Record* (September 27, 2018)
- Representative Tom O’Halloran, “National Native American Heritage Month,” remarks in the House, *Congressional Record* (November 30, 2017)
- Representative Betty McCollum, “National Native American Heritage Month,” Extension of Remarks, *Congressional Record* (November 19, 2015)
- Senator John Thune “Celebrating Native American Heritage Month,” Op-Ed on Senator Thune’s website (November 14, 2014)
- Representative Tammy Duckworth, “Honoring Native Heritage Month and Sacrifices Made by Native American Veterans,” Extension of Remarks, *Congressional Record* (November 12, 2014)
- Representative Tom Cole, “Celebrating Native American Heritage,” column on Representative Cole’s website (November 3, 2014)
- Senator Tim Johnson, “Native American Heritage Month,” remarks in the Senate, *Congressional Record* (November 21, 2013)
- Senator Patrick Leahy, “Native American Heritage Month,” remarks in the Senate, *Congressional Record* (November 13, 2013)

Presidential Proclamations

One of the uses of a presidential proclamation is to honor a group or call attention to certain issues or events. Proclamations commemorating Native American Heritage Month include the following:

- Presidential Proclamation—Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (2021)
- Presidential Proclamations—Donald J. Trump (2017-2020)
- Presidential Proclamations—Barack H. Obama (2009–2016)
- Presidential Proclamations—George W. Bush (2001–2008)

Earlier presidential proclamations are available through the Government Publishing Office website at govinfo.gov.

Statistics

Federal statistics on the American Indian population are available at

- Facts for Features: American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month: November 2021, Census Bureau
Statistics on population, reservations, tribes, families, housing, languages, education, veterans, income, and health insurance
- 2010 Census Brief, American Indian and Alaska Native Population, Census Bureau
- American Indian and Alaska Native Data Links, Census Bureau
Includes population snap shot and detailed reports
- Health of American Indian or Alaska Native Population, Center for Disease Control and Prevention

Native American Heritage Month Cultural Resources

Numerous government resources provide information on the history and culture of the holiday. Some of these include the following:

- Native American Heritage Month, collaborative site of multiple federal agencies
- A History of National Native American Heritage Month, Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Native American Heritage Month, National Park Service
- National Register of Historic Places: National American Indian Heritage Month, National Park Service
- National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution

Selected Federal Agencies and Programs

- Federally Recognized Indian Tribes and Resources for Native Americans, USA.gov
Includes sections on cultural, housing, and legal resources
- Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior

- Administration for Native Americans, an Office of the Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services
- Indian Health Service, Department of Health and Human Services
- Office of Indian Education, U.S. Department of Education

Educational, Cultural, and Advocacy Organizations

Numerous nongovernmental organizations provide information on and promote advocacy for Native Americans. Some of these include the following:

- Association on American Indian Affairs
- First Nations Development Institute
- National Congress of American Indians
- National Urban Indian Family Coalition

Author Information

Audrey Celeste Crane-Hirsch
Reference Librarian

Disclaimer

This document was prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress. Information in a CRS Report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS's institutional role. CRS Reports, as a work of the United States Government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS Report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS Report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain the permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.