# STYLE GUIDE

## NATIVE GOVERNANCE CENTER

# WHY A STYLE GUIDE?

## FROM *ELEMENTS OF INDIGENOUS STYLE*

- "The goal of Indigenous style is to show respect for Indigenous ways of being in the world in the publishing process and on the page."

- "The process of decolonizing language surrounding Indigenous peoples is not finished; terms, names, and styles continue to evolve."

- "Indigenous style overrules other styles in cases of disagreement."

- "Indigenous style uses capitals where conventional style does not. It is a deliberate decision that redresses mainstream society's history of regarding Indigenous peoples as having no legitimate national identities; governmental, social, spiritual, or religious institutions; or collective rights."

THIS STYLE GUIDE IS SPECIFIC TO OUR ORGANIZATION AND EVER-EVOLVING.

# STYLE GUIDE NAVIGATION

# REFERENCES TO RACIAL, ETHNIC, CULTURAL (AND POLITICAL) GROUPS

- DO capitalize the names of racial, ethnic, cultural (and for Native folks, political) identifiers:
  - Capitalize *Black*.
  - Capitalize *Indigenous*, *Native*, and *American Indian*.
  - Capitalize other racial and ethnic identifiers, such as *Asian* and *Latinx*.

- DO capitalize *Indigenous* or *Native* when part of the phrase *non-Native* or *non-Indigenous*.

- DO NOT capitalize the word *white*.

- Use *Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC)* rather than *People of Color (POC)* if referring to a group that includes Black and/or Indigenous folks.

- Refer to individuals by their individual racial/ethnic/cultural/political identifier, rather than using *BIPOC*, whenever possible. Example, "Natalia is a Latinx small business owner," rather than, "Natalia is a BIPOC small business owner."

Learn more: <u>MPR Editor's Note: Why we now capitalize Black but continue to lowercase white</u>

# THE PEOPLE AND NATIONS WE SERVE

- Native nations:

  - Refer to the nations we serve as *Native nations*. Use *Tribal nations* or *Tribes* in special circumstances, if necessary.
  - The term *nation* may also be used alone, once it's clear that we're talking about a Native nation. Example, "Deanna Standing Cloud (Red Lake Nation) is passionate about bringing people together. She strives to create ways for members of her nation to connect."
  - DO NOT capitalize *nation,* unless it's part of a specific nation's name.
  - When deciding what name to use to refer to a Native nation, use the name they list on their website or check with someone from the nation directly.

- Other terminology related to Native nations and lands:

  - Capitalize the words Tribe and Tribal, regardless of whether they appear as part of a proper noun. Example: "The United States is home to 574 federally-recognized Tribes."
  - Relatedly, capitalize Tribal in the term Tribal council. When the term appears as part of a proper noun, capitalize both words (example: Red Lake Tribal Council).
  - Capitalize the term Indian Country.
  - DO NOT capitalize reservation, unless it's part of a specific reservation name or referring back to the name of a specific reservation.
  - A note on the term reservation: A reservation is not the same thing as a Native nation. A reservation refers to a Native nation's current land base as defined by the federal government. A Native nation is a sovereign political entity.

- Native people:

  - If you're writing or talking about a Native individual, use that person's specific preferred Tribal affiliation over a more general term like Native or Indigenous. Ask them if you're unsure.
  - When referring to a group of Native people, use *Native people*, *Native*, or *Indigenous*. Use American Indian or Indian when requested by a particular interview subject or when quoting another work.

# OUR GEOGRAPHIC SERVICE AREA

- We refer to the three states in our region as South Dakota, North Dakota, and Mni Sota Makoce.

- States can also be abbreviated as MN, ND, and SD when needed to meet character limits (Twitter, grant applications, and more).

- When referring to Native nations in our region, say "the 23 Native nations that share geography with Mni Sota Makoce, North Dakota, and South Dakota." The "shares geography language" can also be used when talking about other groups of Native nations.

# USING OUR NATIVE LANGUAGES AND PLACE NAMES

- Do not italicize words that appear in a Native language. We ultimately want to normalize using our languages; italicization can result in an othering effect.

- When explaining the meaning of words in Native languages, put the Native language word first, followed by the English meaning in parentheses. Example: ogema (chief). Do not put the Native language word in parentheses.

# OTHER MISCELLANEOUS TERMINOLOGY

*Elements of Indigenous Style* recommends capitalizing the following terms:

- Creator
- First Nations
- Métis
- Elder
- Sundance
- Sweat Lodge
- Traditional Knowledge

# INAPPROPRIATE TERMINOLOGY

A note from *Elements of Indigenous Style*: "Although some terminology surrounding Indigenous peoples continues to evolve, some terminology is clearly always not right."

The following is by no means an exhaustive list of problematic terminology. It serves as an example of the type of language we should avoid as an organization.

- Do not use the former name of the Washington football team. (It's a racial slur.)
- Do not refer to Native people as the United States' Native peoples or Native people of the United States. We don't want to imply that Native people are in any way owned by the United States.