

# **DISPELLING COMMON MYTHS ABOUT INDIAN COUNTRY**

**EVENT RECAP**



**NATIVE GOVERNANCE  
CENTER**

**“IF YOU ARE SOMEBODY WHO IS ABOUT TO GREEN LIGHT A NATIVE FILM OR A FILM THAT IS GOING TO HAVE NATIVE PEOPLE IN IT, DO YOU HAVE NATIVE PEOPLE IN THAT FILM, WORKING ON THAT FILM? A NATIVE WRITER TO ACCURATELY DEPICT THE TRIBES THAT ARE INVOLVED?”**

**–IAN TELLER (DINÉ)**

# HOW CAN I BE AWARE OF WHAT REPRESENTATIONS OF INDIAN COUNTRY ARE APPROPRIATE?

- **Just ask!** If you are debating whether or not something is appropriate, ask the communities or individuals it could affect.
- **Do your research!** If you come across an image or representation that makes you question it, take some time to investigate its origins.
- **Consider the context,** and examine the context in which the representation is being used. Is it being used to educate and celebrate Native nations and communities, or is it used for commercial gain, entertainment, or mockery?

## **AS AN ALLY, HOW CAN I HELP SHIFT THE NARRATIVE?**

- **Speak up:** Whether it's in conversation, on social media, or in the workplace, don't be afraid to call out inappropriate language, imagery, or actions. Addressing these issues in the moment can help educate others and prevent the spread of damaging narratives.
- **Advocate for Change:** Start petitions, write letters, or engage in conversations with decision-makers to encourage the removal of these harmful symbols and the use of these stereotypes in public spaces, media, and institutions.
- **Engage in Ongoing Learning:** Shifting the narrative around Native nations requires continuous learning. Keep listening to Native voices and remain open to learning. Understanding the challenges, triumphs, and nuances of Native experiences takes time, but it is key to being a strong ally or accomplice.

# HOW CAN CITIZENS OF NATIVE NATIONS JOIN THE EFFORT TO SHIFT THE NARRATIVE?

- **Create Spaces:** While positive representations of Native people have started to grow, there is always room for more. Consider how you can use your unique talents, interests, and knowledge to contribute to this movement.
- **Educate Others:** If you have the emotional capacity and desire, sharing your knowledge and lived experiences with others outside your community can have a lasting impact.
- **Celebrate Culture:** One of the most powerful ways to combat stereotypes and shift the narrative is to celebrate your culture proudly and unapologetically. Maybe you can learn more about your language, traditions, or history. Or maybe you have that knowledge and can share it with other community members looking to learn.

**"JUST BECAUSE YOU  
DON'T SEE A NATIVE IN  
THE SPACE YOU WANT  
TO JOIN DOESN'T MEAN  
YOU DON'T BELONG  
THERE."**

**-NINA O'LEARY (CHEROKEE)**

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