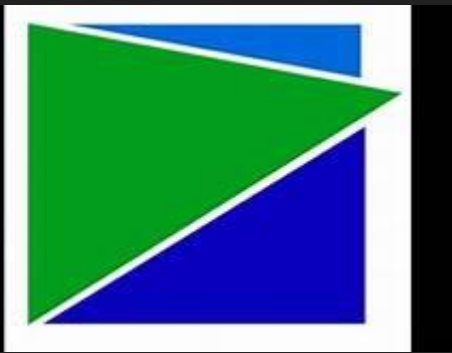


Racial Equity Work Group Presentation

Cook County

Committee of the Whole

November 16, 2021



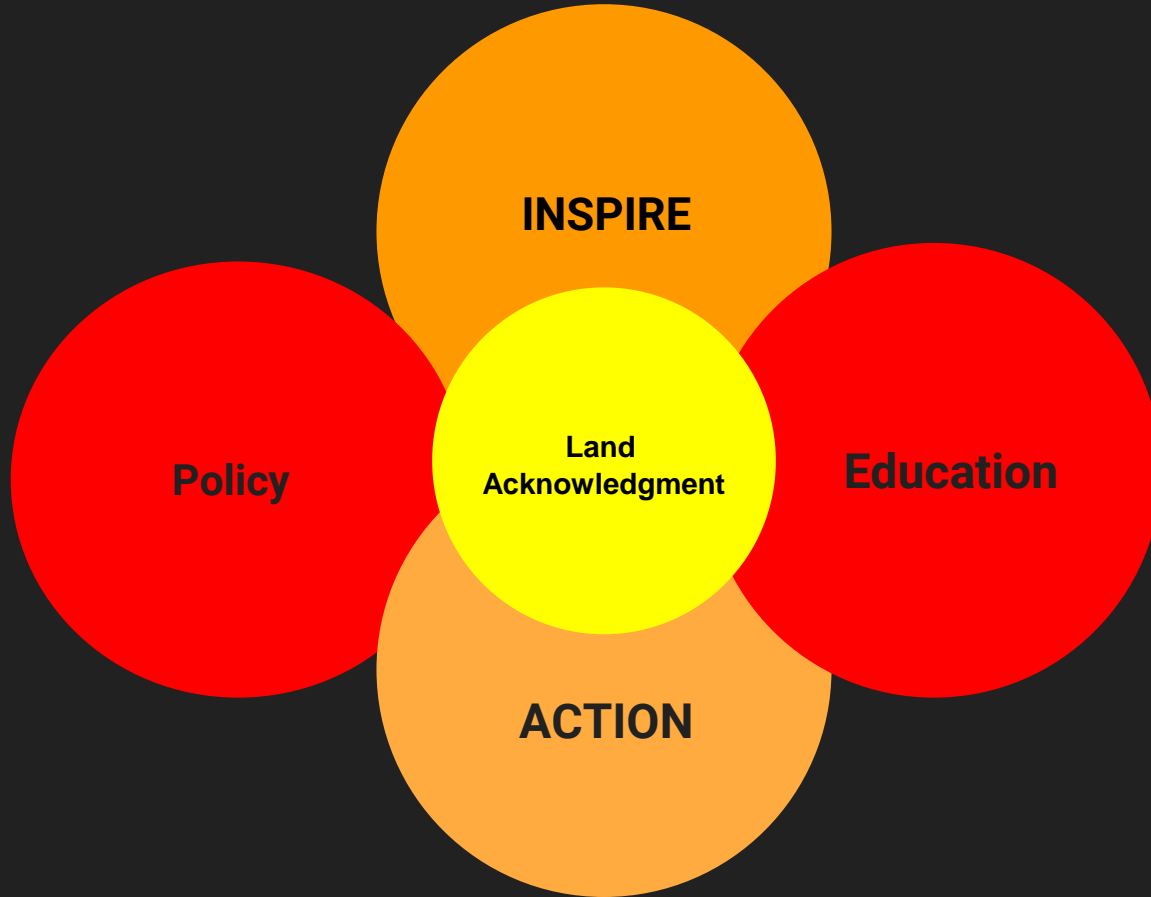
Background

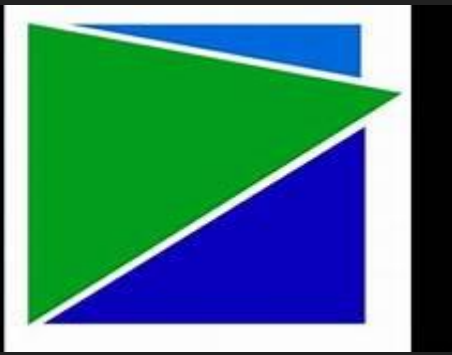
Last spring, a number of individuals who were part of the Community Leadership group wanted to **focus on racial equity**.

After lengthy discussion there was agreement to focus our effort on three areas: **land acknowledgement, policy review and development, and education** .

Development of a land acknowledgement statement was our first priority.

RACIAL EQUITY





What is a land acknowledgment?

A land acknowledgment is an effort to recognize the Indigenous past, present, and future of a particular location and to understand our own place within that relationship.

Being either **written, verbal, or both**, they are becoming more and more common and are often delivered at meetings, conferences, community gatherings,...

It is important to understand the history that has brought us to reside on this land and to seek understanding of our place within that history. **The statement needs to be more than words.** We wanted our land acknowledgment to **inspire organizations here in our community to take action** to support Indigenous people.



Our own learning was crucial prior to the development of such an important statement.

Native Governance

Tadd Johnson and a panel of presenters

Reading and Exploration

Review of other land acknowledgments

Discussion and feedback

NATIVE GOVERNANCE





TADD JOHNSON

U of M's Senior Director of American Indian Tribal Nations Relations



Director of Tribal Sovereignty Institute

Director of Graduate Studies in the American Indian Studies Department



Serves on the boards for both the Udall Foundation and the Native Governance Center

Enrolled member of the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa



Suggestions

Don't "sugarcoat" the past. It's ok to use terms like genocide, ethnic cleansing, stolen land, and forced removal to reflect actions taken by colonizers.

Use past, present and future tenses; **don't treat Indigenous people as a relic of the past.** Indigenous people are still here, and they are thriving.

Land acknowledgments shouldn't be grim. **Ask if Indigenous people are left stronger and more empowered because of the land acknowledgment.**



EXAMPLES

Native Governance

University of Minnesota

Cook County Higher Ed

Canada

(and many other organizations)

Racial Equity Work Group: **LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

Starting somewhere, even if mistakes are made is better than not doing anything at all!

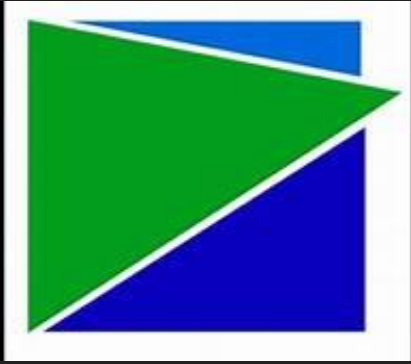
WORK GROUP

Several **individuals** in the RACIAL EQUITY group initially developed their own land acknowledgment to share with the larger group.

No one statement contained all which was necessary, we created a **small work group** which took bits and pieces of multiple statements, engaged in some wordsmithing, and finally created a draft document.

The RACIAL EQUITY group provided some final input on that draft, along with **individuals from Grand Portage** who were not part of the working group.



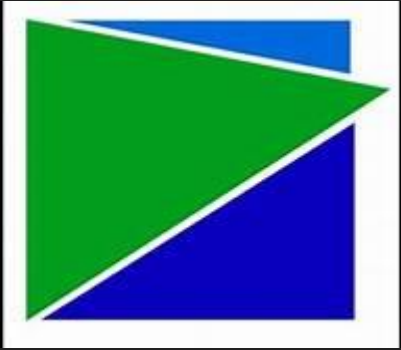


We needed to think about...

Which Indigenous groups are tied to Cook County?

What is the history of the area including the 1854 Treaty?

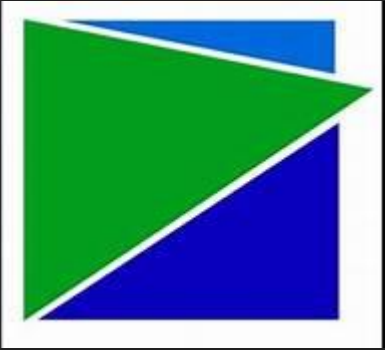
Where and how to use the statement?



LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT STATEMENT

We acknowledge that Cook County, Minnesota, is located on the traditional lands of Indigenous people, including the Dakota, Cree, and Ojibwe people, most recently the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, who have cared for and called this place home for time immemorial. This land holds great significance, and it was taken through exploitation. Indigenous people have not only survived here but maintained a rich culture, which continues to thrive.

We embrace our opportunity to build relationships based on trust, consistency, and accountability and offer allyship in a lifelong process of learning. We support and advocate for the sovereignty of Indigenous nations that are forever connected to this land.



Cook County and ISD 166 Leadership

Each of these organizations hopes to **adapt our land acknowledgement to fit the mission or purpose of our specific organizations.**

Adaptation might include a paragraph before and/or after the acknowledgment, more specifically connecting it to that organization.

We hope to work early in 2022 to **adapt the model land acknowledgment, potentially approve a statement, and share** our models.

RACIAL EQUITY

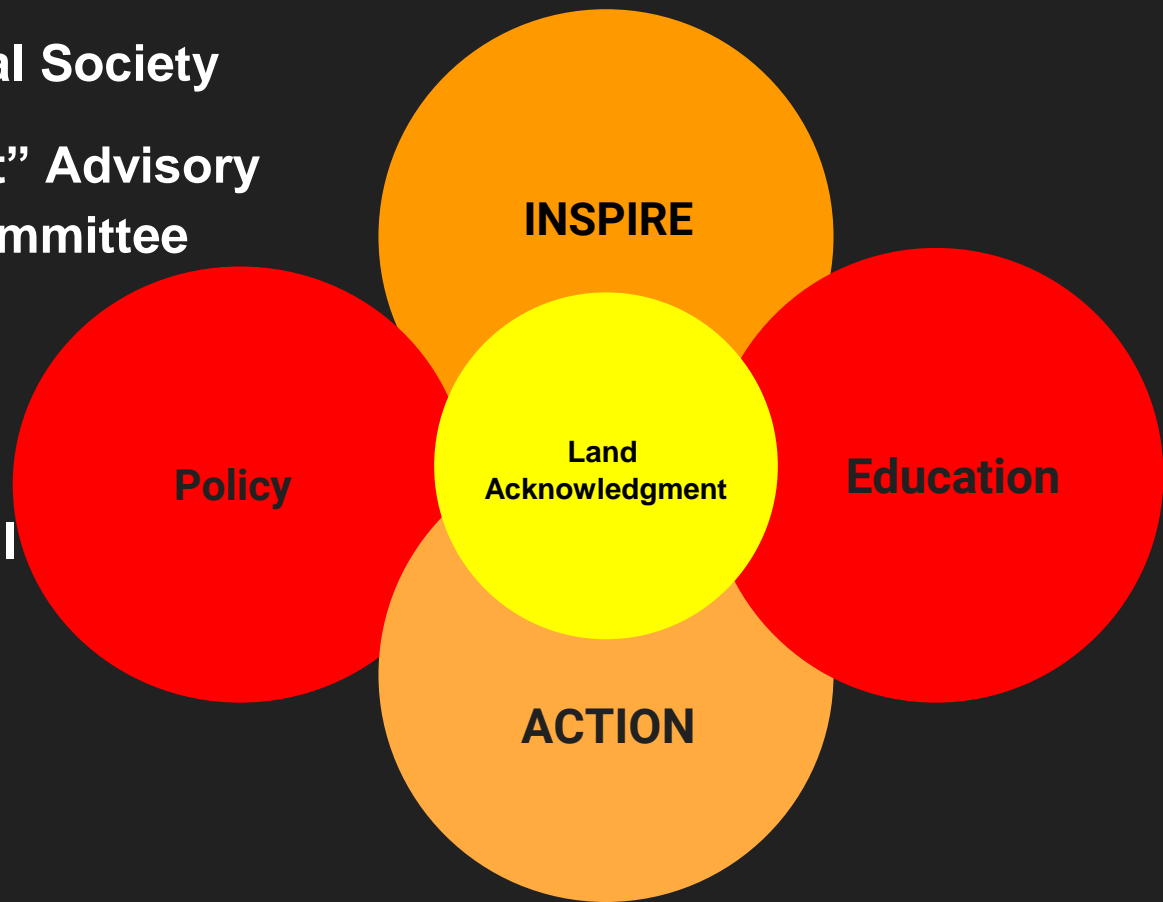
CC Historical Society

**“Passion Pit” Advisory
Committee**

CCLEP

County

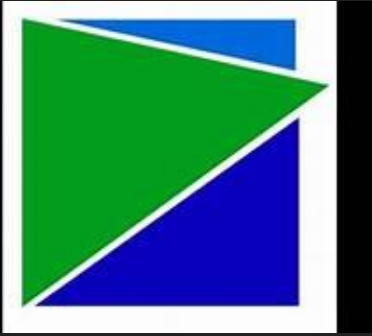
City Council





Purpose

We have the responsibility together as a body to oversee the operation and administration of Cook County, represent county interests at the state and federal level, and participate in long-range planning and management of the county budget and finances.

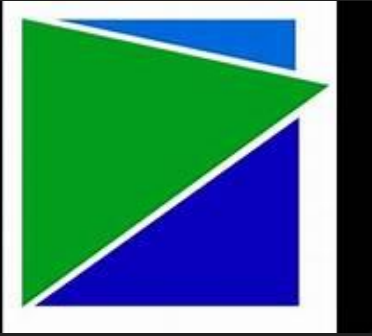


Establish an advisory group

Consider development of a statement and its implications

Draft a statement and determine how it would be best utilized

Recommendation to the Board



Thank you for taking time for this presentation and then reflecting on the content to determine our next steps.