

## NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

In 1990, President George H. W. Bush approved a joint resolution designating November as “National American Indian Heritage Month.”

Similar proclamations, under variants on the name (including “Native American Heritage Month”, "Indigenous Peoples' Month" and “National American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month”) have been issued each year since.

Therefore, in November, we specifically celebrate the rich and diverse cultures, traditions, and histories of native/indigenous peoples. It is also a time to highlight the important contributions of native people throughout American history. Indigenous Peoples' month is also an opportune occasion to educate the general public about tribes and to raise general awareness about the unique challenges Native American people have faced both historically and presently - including the ways in which tribal citizens have worked to address and conquer these challenges.

During National Native American Heritage Month, we also honor our Native American veterans and service members who have courageously served and continue to serve in our Armed Forces — including the brave Native American Code Talkers in World War I and World War II.

As we continue to nurture a culture of belonging for all Westside staff, students, and families, it is important that we:

- Understand appropriate terminology and how it can differ depending on the individual experience. While many US citizens refer to Native people as "Native American" or "Indigenous" these days, it is often best to use the individual tribal name (i.e. Lakota, Cherokee, etc.) when possible. When in doubt, always ask students or families what they prefer.
- Actively work to dismantle harmful stereotypes and steer away from warped perspectives about Native life.
- Recognize that Native American history is American history. It does not need to be taught separately—and should be taught along with the broader events/themes and questions posed in American history to show a multitude of viewpoints.

## **Resources and where to learn more:**

<https://nativeamericanheritagemonth.gov/>

### **PBS**

A special collection of films, short stories, and resources of Native culture from Public Television.

### **Native 360**

Native 360 is a resource for teachers and students created by the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian. It includes in-depth lesson plans, primary sources, video interviews, and interactive programs. All of these materials are created in cooperation with tribes to tell the real history of their ancestors.

### **Minnesota Historical Society**

The Minnesota Historical Society website is full of online resources about native/tribal peoples and includes book lists.

### **NEA**

The National Education Association offers a myriad of resources on learning about the tribes indigenous to North America during November and any month out of the year.

### **10 extraordinary Native American cultural sites**

The Wilderness Society presents, on this site, a number of the national monuments, parks and other sites connected to the rich history of First Nation tribes.