



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY

Inclusive Employer Guide

WHAT IS NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY?

June 21 is National Indigenous Peoples Day, an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the diverse cultures, and outstanding contributions of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples.

In cooperation with Indigenous communities, June 21, the summer solstice, was chosen for National Indigenous Peoples Day (previously known as National Aboriginal Day). For generations, many Indigenous peoples and communities have celebrated their culture on or near this day due to the significance of the summer solstice as the longest day of the year. National Indigenous Peoples Day has been officially celebrated since 1996, after much advocacy and support from Indigenous communities.

How is it observed?

National Indigenous Peoples Day is marked by ceremonies and celebrations that bring Indigenous people and communities together and highlight cultural performances and activities, displays of arts and crafts, and events that recognize the contributions by Indigenous people across Turtle Island. In 2021, on the 25th annual National Indigenous Peoples Day, most events are held virtually.

Although First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples share many similarities, each distinct Nation has their own language, cultural practices, and spiritual beliefs, and may celebrate the day in various ways.

U of T's staff and faculty are welcome to participate in National Indigenous Peoples Day celebrations and events and are encouraged to learn more through the training offered by the Office of Indigenous Initiatives. Participants will gain a greater understanding of the land they are on, learn about Indigenous communities through historical and contemporary lenses and build skills to be a better ally. Training for staff can be found through the [Learning and Leadership Centre](#) and students can access the same training through the [Career Learning Network](#).

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HOW CAN WE CREATE AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT?

- 1 Get educated.** Ensure staff who supervise or work alongside Indigenous colleagues are aware of National Indigenous Peoples Day and how they can be supportive.
- 2 Intentional planning.** Avoid booking meetings and scheduling events on National Indigenous Peoples Day if possible.
- 3 Be flexible.** Accommodate request for time off for cultural observances. If shift work is the norm, staff may want to swap shifts to observe National Indigenous Peoples Day or associated events. Look for solutions that suit all parties.
- 4 Don't make assumptions.** For personal reasons, not all Indigenous colleagues may take time off for National Indigenous Peoples Day, but they may still observe in various ways