



UNIVERSITY OF  
TORONTO

# NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY IN THE WORKPLACE

Inclusive Employer Guide

**EQUITY · DIVERSITY · INCLUSION**

# WHAT IS NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY?

June 21 is National Indigenous Peoples Day, a day that recognizes and celebrates the diverse cultures, and outstanding contributions of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples.

In consultation 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 throughout the year. 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 and accommodations.** Update your scheduling tools to ensure you are aware of the observance. Members of our community may request time to reflect and observe this day. It is the responsibility of both the Manager and the individual seeking accommodation to work cooperatively and respectfully to explore and implement appropriate accommodation options. If shift work is the norm, staff may want to switch shifts to observe National Indigenous Peoples Day and attend workshops or events. Look for solutions that suit all parties.
- 3** **Don't make assumptions.** For personal reasons, not all colleagues may observe National Indigenous Peoples Day in the same way.
- 4** **Encourage learning.** Training for faculty members, librarians, and staff can be found through the [Learning and Leadership Centre](#). These sessions are an opportunity for community members to gain a greater understanding of the land they are on, learn about Indigenous communities through historical and contemporary lenses, and build skills to engage in the work of reconciliation..