

Library of Congress Evaluation of Headings for Indigenous Peoples

The Library of Congress recognizes that many of its subject headings for Indigenous peoples living within the United States and bordering countries are either incorrect or offensive. The Library is committed to rectifying these errors and is determined to do it correctly and with respect for Indigenous peoples, their customs, culture, and languages. Currently, the Library receives proposals to create and update Library of Congress Subject Headings related to Indigenous peoples and tribal names and considers them on a case-by-case basis. Moving forward, the Library is committed to engaging with Indigenous communities to co-create more holistic solutions to resolve this complex problem.

As a first step, the Library will hire a dedicated staff member with a background in Indigenous peoples, customs, languages, and culture. The staff member will form and lead an Indigenous Headings Consultants Group that will advise the Library's cataloging and acquisitions divisions on possible new approaches to cataloging processes. Advice from this team also will guide the Library in creating new Indigenous headings and changing existing headings.

While hiring the dedicated staff member and creating the Indigenous Headings Consultants Group, the Library will continue to accept new and changed Library of Congress Subject Heading proposals related to Indigenous peoples and tribal names, as long as the proposals clearly document consultation with the tribal communities affected.

The Library of Congress is grateful for input from a variety of sources to inform our approach, including the National Indigenous Knowledge and Language Alliance and conversations with attendees at the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries and Museums.