Land Acknowledgement 2021

Before we do our land acknowledgement, I want to provide a bit of context and also recognize that land acknowledgements are really complex. It is so important to recognize that this country was founded on genocide and the removal of its first peoples so by doing land acknowledgements we are starting to recognize a more truthful history of this country. We are providing healing to the land by speaking to it and saying the names of its caretakers, our Indigenous peoples. A land acknowledgment should always include recognition of the actual land itself and its relationship to Native peoples. It should recognize that we are talking about a specific moment in time while also providing acknowledgement that Native peoples are still living and thriving. Land acknowledgments will always be flawed, but we must understand they are living documents that can change and grow as more information and knowledge is shared together. In places like Chicago, where there are no Federally recognized Tribes, we also have to be cautious in who is acknowledged due to Tribal Nations sovereign status. Finally, the land acknowledgement should be a call to action for others to address their relationship with Native peoples and organizations that work on behalf of Native peoples.

On behalf of myself and our attendees, I acknowledge and give respect to the land that Chicago now claims. I am thankful to be sitting in a place that has major waterways that created trading routes and urban lifestyles. Most importantly I give honor and gratitude to the first peoples of this area who lived in relationship, cared for and welcomed others to this area. I recognize the Potawatomi, Ojibway and Odawa Nations as the signers of the Treaty of Chicago. I also recognize that other Tribes including the Ho-Chunk, Miami, Menominee, Illinois Confederacy and Peoria peoples maintained relationships with this area too. Despite government policies that enforced genocide of American Indians, Chicago today is home to the 6th largest urban Indian population and consists of members from well over 100 different Tribal Nations. We continue to live, love, work, play on and share these lands as our families and relations taught us to.

Resources:
https://native-land.ca/
https://nativegov.org/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/