

Isabella Snowbird

Sovereignty and Citizenship

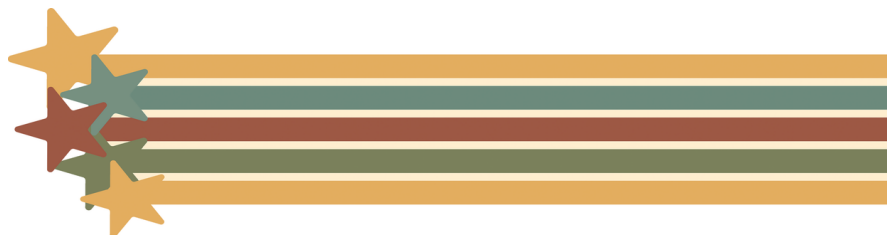


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Tribal Nations are sovereign governments. As the Native American Rights Fund (NARF) explains, “Tribal sovereignty has always existed...This has been true since before the United States was created and is still true today. Tribal Nations have their own lands, governments, and citizens.” At the same time, Native Americans are U.S. citizens. The Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 granted full U.S. citizenship to all Native Americans, “born within the territorial limits of the U.S.” However, as NARF notes, Native Americans face continuous challenges to both their sovereignty and their citizenship in 2026.

You are in the traditional and ongoing homeland of the Nuuchiu (Ute People); additionally, 51 tribes have enduring cultural connections here. There are three Ute Reservations, two in southwestern Colorado and one in Utah – all the result of federal policies of dispossession, forced removal, and violence. According to the Colorado Commission on Indian Affairs, there are 75,000 people who identify solely as American Indian/Alaska Native living in Colorado, with 100,000 more “who identify as American Indian/Alaska Native in combination with one or more races.”

Many – from Tribes across Turtle Island (America) – live in major Colorado cities like Denver and Colorado Springs. As the Gichigamiin Indigenous Nations Museum notes, “Starting in 1952, the government intended to assimilate Native Americans residing on rural reservation lands into the white, American mainstream society.” Under the guise of the Urban Indian Relocation Program, “Native people were moved to cities where they struggled to adjust to life in a metropolis and faced unemployment, low-end jobs, discrimination, homesickness, and the loss of traditional cultural support.”



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**Isabella Snowbird speaks at
Colorado State Capitol, ca. 2025**
Courtesy of Isabella Snowbird

Isabella Snowbird, Ojibwe and Comanche, grew up in the K-Land neighborhood. She learned early that, “being Native in an urban community meant finding ways to stay connected to culture.” She credits the School District 11 Title VI Indian Education Program and the Native American Youth Leadership Alliance (NAYLA) for teaching her, “that our cultures are living, that our voices matter, and that Native youth can be leaders.” An untiring advocate, she has testified at the Colorado Capitol about legislation affecting Native communities; worked to strengthen protections for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives; and expanded access to traditional healing for Native victims of crime. Her work is “rooted in the belief that Native people deserve to be treated with dignity and that our traditions belong in our future, not only in our past.”

The “Red Hand Print” is NOT a “**LOGO**”

It is a sacred symbol.
It carries the weight
of the missing.
The murdered.
The stolen.
The violence is not history.
It is happening now.
Survivors walk among us.
Silenced. Ignored.
Still healing.
Don't brand it.
Don't profit from it.
Don't erase its meaning.
Honor it.
Respect the sacred.
Listen to the survivors.



**Isabella Snowbird marches in Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Relatives Awareness Rally, ca. 2025**
Courtesy of Isabella Snowbird



Colorado Springs
PIONEERS MUSEUM

