

Demystifying NAGPRA Consultation

Ten tips to help you have a successful consultation

- 1. Keep repatriation at the center of your consultations.** Remember, repatriation is the goal of NAGPRA. Keep your focus on facilitating the return of ancestors and belongings.
- 2. Tribal Nations are your partner in this process.** Recognize that they are the experts on their cultural heritage and have a right to exercise their authority throughout the process.
- 3. Plan consultation collaboratively with your Tribal Nation partners.** Ask for input when setting your consultation format, agenda, priorities, and timeline. Discuss expectations and needs from consultation with Tribal Nation partners prior to in-person or virtual meeting sessions.
- 4. Listen and hear.** Be prepared to pivot or shift your plans if your Tribal Nation partners indicate that changes need to be made in the consultation, decision-making, and repatriation process.
- 5. Be open, honest, and transparent.** Acknowledge that having one's ancestors or belongings separated from the community is often traumatic and difficult for your Tribal Nation partners. Approach consultation with this in mind and recognize the role of your institution in perpetuating this trauma.
- 6. Be genuine and kind.** Get to know your Tribal Nation partners and think about the consultation process as an opportunity to build relationships.
- 7. Check in with Tribal Nation partners throughout the consultation process.** Make sure everything is still moving forward how they think it should be. See #4 if they bring up an issue.
- 8. Establish your next steps at the end of each meeting.** Keep your repatriation progress on track by clearly articulating key takeaways and next steps.
- 9. Take good minutes and keep notes.** Share these with Tribal Nation partners after your consultation to ensure clear communication and keep everyone on the same page.
- 10. Say Thank You.** Always thank your Tribal Nation partners for their time, attention, and expertise.

Join the NAGPRA Community of Practice



- Connect, collaborate, and build capacity
- Bi-monthly video calls on the 2nd and 4th Friday of the month at 11 am Mountain time, alternating between open or small group discussions and scheduled presentations
- Facebook and LinkedIn
- Listserv (Google Group) to ask questions and share announcements
- Google shared drive with templates and other documents
- Directory of Practitioners

More at nagpracommunityofpractice.com or contact anne.amati@du.edu

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How and When to Start the Consultation Process

Knowing how and when to begin the NAGPRA consultation is an important step forward to a positive and successful repatriation process. Identifying items and establishing cultural affiliation is done through collaborative, meaningful, consultations with authorized Tribal Nation representative. Here are some key points to help get started when you become aware of potential items.

HOW

- At the start, never assume what is and isn't NAGPRA eligible without consultation. Often times, there may be cultural knowledge that you are not aware of.
- Use the below resources when it comes to approaching potential Tribal Nations, including templates, and always ask if there are additional Tribal Nations or representatives that should be included along the way.
- Do your research. Familiarize yourself with potential Tribal Nation customs and their government. This demonstrates your institution's desire to hold space for respectful conversation and consultations.
- Consultation is not transactional, it is building relationships for the common goal of repatriation.

WHEN

- Think of initial discovery as a preliminary process in collaboration with potential Tribal Nations. Consultation should occur shortly after discovery.
- Early communication with Tribes is key! If potential NAGPRA eligible items are discovered, reach out as early as possible even if you may not have all the details.
- Understand that consultation may not be a "one and done" - this is an ongoing process. Building and maintaining relationships can potentially build trust which creates a positive experience for all.

Consultation Resources

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nagpra/consultation-resources.htm>

Templates

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nagpra/templates.htm>

Anne Amati

NAGPRA Coordinator/Registrar

University of Denver Museum of Anthropology

anne.amati@du.edu

Desiree Martinez

President

Cogstone Resource Management

dmartinez@cogstone.com

Kelly Hyberger

Native American Collections Specialist

The Filson Historical Society

khyberger@filsonhistorical.org

Eva Trujillo

Repatriation Coordinator

University of California, San Diego

e7trujillo@ucsd.edu