

Rights and Responsibilities of Tribal Nations and Membership Responsibilities to Preserving the Integrity of Indigenous Identity

The Powhatan Confederacy and its Descendants are an independent organization and do not speak for the state or federally-recognized tribes that our members descend from. Our organization is committed to fostering strong relationships between the governments currently representing our tribal communities in government-to-government relationships. Below is a list of rights for tribal nations and the commitments of our members.

Rights and Responsibilities of Tribal Nations

Rights of Tribal Nations. Some of our tribal communities may be going through constitutional changes to drop blood quantum (BQ), update their base rolls, and reopen tribal rolls. For those communities making those changes, tribal leadership can request to see which documentation we use to determine descendency. We use a blend of historical documentation, government records, genealogies of public and tribal figures, and DNA to confirm historical communities.

We protect this data under an Indigenous data sovereignty protocol. We will not turn over the complete genealogies of any living member or those less than 100 years old. Should tribal communities want to enroll documented descendants, genealogies will only be transferred upon an agreement between the tribe and the individual applying for citizenship.

Responsibilities of Tribal Nations. The Powhatan Confederacy and its descendants respect the tribal nations and their right to exist. We hope that our organization is provided with the same respect as Indigenous people who have maintained or attempted to maintain kinship ties with the community despite the colonial forces that tore our communities apart in the 1800s and later with Walter Plecker. All members of the tier “Powhatan Confederacy Descendant Members” and been verified through rigorous paper trails to common Indian ancestors of members currently enrolled in the state and federally recognized tribes affiliated with the historical Powhatan Confederacy. Should a tribe be contacted about the status of descendants on this tier, tribal leadership has the right to say these members are not currently enrolled. Lineal descent, however, has been verified as a historical fact even if it is not sufficient for citizenship based on existing tribal constitutions.

Commitments to Preserving the Integrity of Indigenous Identity

Our members and leaders of the Powhatan Confederacy and its Descendants have a responsibility to identify themselves correctly and protect the integrity of our communities, both tribal nations and “stateless” Indigenous people. To do so, before members are accepted, they must make the following pledge:

1. I promise not to misrepresent myself as a formal representative of any state or federal recognized body unless expressly permitted by those government entities.
2. Unless enrolled in a state, federal, or non-recognized tribe, I promise to identify as a documented descendant rather than an enrolled citizen.

3. I understand that membership in the Powhatan Confederacy does not confer the rights of the state and federally recognized tribes.
4. I promise not to misrepresent myself as a formal representative of the Powhatan Confederacy unless expressly permitted by the governing council.
5. I promise not to release any documentation that corrodes a private citizen's right to privacy.
6. I promise to practice dissent against wrongdoings by this organization and tribal nations in a legal manner.
7. I acknowledge that should the organization engage in activities that harm the community, I will be protected under the Whistleblower Act.
8. I promise to inform the Powhatan Confederacy should my citizenship status change in tribal communities.
9. I promise to provide documentation wholly and honestly to the best of my ability.
10. I promise that should my documentation fail to meet the standards of preserving the legitimacy of documented descendants, I will not attempt to tarnish the community's reputation.
11. I promise that whatever membership tier I fall into, I will treat others equally and respectfully. I acknowledge that we are a family.
12. Should disputes arise between family, we will resolve them through our community dispute resolution system that protects the privacy of all parties involved.
13. I promise to respect all rights inherited by members through the US Constitution.