

# Termination and Relocation – American Indian Perspectives

## Fast Facts

Curriculum Area: Social Studies  
Grade Level: High School  
Suggested Duration: Three-four class periods

## Stage 1 Desired Results

### Established Goals

- 2) The economics content standards for ninth through twelfth grade are that each student will:  
(e) evaluate the impact of human settlement activities on the environmental, political, and cultural characteristics of specific places and regions.
- (4) The history content standards for ninth through twelfth grade are that each student will:  
(a) analyze how unique circumstances of time, place, and historical contexts shape individuals' lives;  
(e) explain events in relation to both their intended and unintended consequences, including governmental policies impacting American Indians;  
(j) analyze perspectives of American Indians in US history.

### Understandings

- Basic understanding of the federal Indian policies of termination and relocation.
- Awareness of how federal laws and policies impact individual American Indian people/families.
- The US Government has been influencing tribes through various federal policies and the policies of termination and relocation were attempts at "mainstreaming" American Indian people. (EU 5, 7)

### Essential Questions

- What were the intended goals of the policies of termination and relocation?
- What were some of the economic issues associated with these policies?
- To what extent did the policy of relocation help to unite urban American Indians around common causes?
- How might the transition from rural reservations to big cities change an individual's perspective of life in the United States?
- What reasons might an American Indian person have for leaving their home and moving to a big city?

### Students will be able to...

- actively engage with primary and secondary sources to develop a better understanding of the unique issues regarding the history of federal Indian policy and how interactions with the federal government have evolved over time.



Indian Education for All Unit

Montana Office of Public Instruction

### Students will know...

- about the policies of termination and relocation and understand how the policies impacted American Indian tribes and individuals.

## Stage 2 Assessment Evidence

### Performance Tasks

1. Students will analyze and interpret multiple sources of evidence regarding the Federal Indian policies of termination and relocation.
2. Students will write a paper utilizing the essential questions to demonstrate their understanding of how these policies impacted American Indians.

## Stage 3 Learning Plan

### Learning Activities

#### Day 1

Start the class by telling students the federal government has just issued a new law and is asking your family to leave your home town due to economic factors and move to a large urban city in another state to find work. How would you feel? Where would you go? Why would the government pass such a law?

Tell students that in the 1950s there were federal Indian policies enacted called termination and relocation that were intended to do away with American Indian reservations and move Indians into big cities so they could find work and be assimilated into "mainstream" society. Share the goals, standards, and essential questions with the students.

Next display the *Come to Denver* recruitment poster. Provide them the following questions and ask them to write down their reaction.

- What images do you see in the poster?
- What message or messages does the poster seem to convey?
- Who is the audience the poster seeks to convince of that message?
- Are there any particular words or pictures on the poster that seem to stand out to you?

Facilitate a brief (5-7 minute) discussion regarding the students' thoughts on the poster. If students do not identify them, point out the use of the term "Happy Homes," the themes of good jobs, family values, and quality of life.

Next, as whole class listen this NPR program [Urban American Indians Rewrite Relocation's Legacy](#). Ask students to take notes on the program and summarize key points made in the show. Facilitate another class discussion and share the following information.

The relocation program was part of a broader effort to terminate tribal nations. In 1953, Congress passed House Concurrent Resolution 108, which implemented a new direction in federal policy toward Indians: Termination of tribal status. Display the following quote from Senator Arthur Watkins (R-

Utah), the major proponent for Resolution 108, as he expressed the philosophy of the termination policy:

Philosophically speaking, the Indian wardship problem brings up basically the questionable merit of treating the Indian of today as an Indian, rather than a fellow American citizen . . . 'As rapidly as possible' we should end the status of Indians as wards of the government and grant them all the rights and prerogatives pertaining to American citizenship. Source: F.P. Prucha, *Documents of United States Indian Policy* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), 239

End the class with a close analytical read of [House Concurrent Resolution 108, 1953](#) and the [Indian Relocation Act of 1956](#). Have students summarize each document (included in the lesson resources). Share the [Key Concepts](#) from Essential Understanding 5 to close out the discussion.

## Day 2

Recap key ideas and concepts from previous class and show following brief video clip [AMERICAN EXPERIENCE The Relocation of Native Americans](#). The short video (2 minutes) provides a basic overview of the relocation program. Next, show students [Montana Mosaic: 20th Century People and Events "Chapter 6 Federal Indian Policy"](#) (18 minutes) which examines the changes in federal government policy toward American Indians in the second half of the twentieth century. Focusing on the story of one particular family, the video looks at the relocation program of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the effects the relocation program had on American Indian identity.

Facilitate a class discussion regarding their reactions to the films.

Have students partner talk/table talk about some of the American Indian perspectives in these short films. Ask: How did termination/ relocation make the lives of American Indian people more difficult? What may have been some factors in the US government wanting American Indians to move off their reservation land?

## Day 3 - Assessment

Suggested Assignments: Teacher may offer various types of assessments to gauge student understanding of this complex topic; i.e., virtual poster presentation, participation in an online discussion forum, multimedia presentation formats such as a video or podcast. This lesson provides one example of a possible assignment.

Write a brief paper using the suggested structure and submit to your appropriate teacher. You are a reporter for the local/regional newspaper, and you have been assigned to write a story about federal Indian policies of the relocation and termination period. Your editor has asked that you assume the readers have little background knowledge about the issue. Be sure to include key themes and facts all Montanans should know about the policies of termination and relocation and reference relevant Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians. Utilize the essential questions to help frame the story. The editor would like the article to be at least 500 words. Allow time in class for research and direct students to the resources section to help them get started with their research.

## Resources

[Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians](#)

[History and Foundation of American Indian Education](#) (see pages 40-44)

[Montana Mosaic: 20<sup>th</sup> Century People and Events “Chapter 6 Federal Indian Policy”](#)

[Montana Tribal Histories: Educators Resource Guide](#) and [Companion DVD](#)

[American Indian Urban Relocation](#) (Educator resource from the National Archives)

[Federal Indian Law for Alaska Tribes](#) (background resources for termination, includes brief videos)

[Termination and Relocation Programs](#) (Oklahoma History Center)

[American Indian Urban Relocation in San Jose](#) (video)

[American Indian Displacement and Relocation](#) (resource from Georgia State University Library)

[Harry S. Truman: Beginning of Indian Termination Era](#) (article from Indian Country Today)

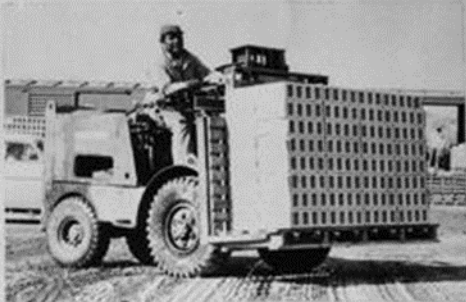
Note: Louise Erdrich (Turtle Mountain Chippewa) recently won the Pulitzer Prize for her recent book *The Night Watchman*. The historical context is set during the era of termination and relocation and the story provides tribal specific insight regarding these programs.

# COME TO DENVER.

## THE CHANCE OF YOUR LIFETIME !


### Good Jobs

- Retail Trade
- Manufacturing
- Government—Federal, State, Local
- Wholesale Trade
- Construction of Buildings, Etc.




### Happy Homes

- Beautiful Houses
- Many Churches
- Exciting Community Life
- Over Half of Homes Owned by Residents
- Convenient Stores—Shopping Centers




### Training

- Vocational Training
  - Auto Mech., Beauty Shop, Drafting,
  - Nursing, Office Work, Watchmaking
- Adult Education
  - Evening High School, Arts and Crafts
  - Job Improvement, Home-making



### Beautiful Colorado

- "Tallest" State, 48 Mt. Peaks Over 14,000 Ft.
- 350 Days Sunshine, Mild Winters
- Zoos, Museums, Mountain Parks, Drives
- Picnic Areas, Lakes, Amusement Parks
- Big Game Hunting, Trout Fishing, Camping



Courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD, photo no. 75-N-REL-1G

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CONCURRENT RESOLUTIONS—AUG. 1, 1953 [67 STAT.

August 1, 1953  
[H. Con. Res. 108]

INDIANS

Whereas it is the policy of Congress, as rapidly as possible, to make the Indians within the territorial limits of the United States subject to the same laws and entitled to the same privileges and responsibilities as are applicable to other citizens of the United States, to end their status as wards of the United States, and to grant them all of the rights and prerogatives pertaining to American citizenship; and

Whereas the Indians within the territorial limits of the United States should assume their full responsibilities as American citizens: Now, therefore, be it

Freedom from  
Federal supervision.

Report to Congress.

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring),* That it is declared to be the sense of Congress that, at the earliest possible time, all of the Indian tribes and the individual members thereof located within the States of California, Florida, New York, and Texas, and all of the following named Indian tribes and individual members thereof, should be freed from Federal supervision and control and from all disabilities and limitations specially applicable to Indians: The Flathead Tribe of Montana, the Klamath Tribe of Oregon, the Menominee Tribe of Wisconsin, the Potowatamie Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska, and those members of the Chippewa Tribe who are on the Turtle Mountain Reservation, North Dakota. It is further declared to be the sense of Congress that, upon the release of such tribes and individual members thereof from such disabilities and limitations, all offices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the States of California, Florida, New York, and Texas and all other offices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs whose primary purpose was to serve any Indian tribe or individual Indian freed from Federal supervision should be abolished. It is further declared to be the sense of Congress that the Secretary of the Interior should examine all existing legislation dealing with such Indians, and treaties between the Government of the United States and each such tribe, and report to Congress at the earliest practicable date, but not later than January 1, 1954, his recommendations for such legislation as, in his judgment, may be necessary to accomplish the purposes of this resolution.

Passed August 1, 1953.

	Public Law 959	CHAPTER 930
August 3, 1956 [S. 3416]	AN ACT	
	Relative to employment for certain adult Indians on or near Indian reservations.	
Indians. Vocational training.	<p><i>Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,</i> That in order to help adult Indians who reside on or near Indian reservations to obtain reasonable and satisfactory employment, the Secretary of the Interior is authorized to undertake a program of vocational training that provides for vocational counseling or guidance, institutional training in any recognized vocation or trade, apprenticeship, and on the job training, for periods that do not exceed twenty-four months, transportation to the place of training, and subsistence during the course of training. The program shall be available primarily to Indians who are not less than eighteen and not more than thirty-five years of age and who reside on or near an Indian reservation, and the program shall be conducted under such rules and regulations as the Secretary may prescribe. For the purposes of this program the Secretary is authorized to enter into contracts or agreements with any Federal, State, or local governmental agency, or with any private school which has a recognized reputation in the field of vocational education and has successfully obtained employment for its graduates in their respective fields of training, or with any corporation or association which has an existing apprenticeship or on-the-job training program which is recognized by industry and labor as leading to skilled employment.</p>	
Appropriation.	<p>SEC. 2. There is authorized to be appropriated for the purposes of this Act the sum of \$3,500,000 for each fiscal year, and not to exceed \$500,000 of such sum shall be available for administrative purposes.</p> <p>Approved August 3, 1956.</p>	