

Two-Spirit Identity in First Nations Communities

Gender diversity and equality are important components of many First Nations cultures, though they are understood in different ways across nations and communities. The traditional roles of gender-diverse and Two-Spirit people have also been significantly impacted by colonization and other social, political, and cultural forces.

Because different First Nations communities have their own terms for people with Two-Spirit identity - with over 150 documented words¹ - NWAC has compiled a short list of some of the more commonly used terms below.

Language/Community	Word
Anishinaabemowin	Niiz manidoowag
Chichasaw	Hoobuk
Cheyenne	He'eman (women/man)
Chumash	agi',axi
Cree	Iskwêw ka napêwayat (a man dressed/living as a woman)

Language/Community	Word
Cree	Aayahkew (roughly translates to "neither man nor women")
Crow	Bote, Bade
Cree	Înahpîkasoht (a woman dressed/living as a man)
Dakota	Winkte (halfman-halfwoman)
Dakota/Lakota	Wintike (double woman)
Dinéh	Nàdleehé ²
Hidatsa	Biatti or Miatî (woman-compelled)
Lakota	Winkte, Wi'kta, Wingkte' (would be woman)
Miwok	Osha'pu (women)

Language/Community	Word
Mohawk	Onón:wat (translates into "I have the patter of two spirits inside my body")
Navajo	Nadle/Nadleeh (roughly translates to weaver transformed; that which changes; or he who transforms)
Ojibwe	Agookwe (hidden woman) ³
Ojibwe	Ogokwe (warrior man)
Ojibwe	Okitcitakwe (warrior woman)
Osage	Mixu'ha (instructed by the moon)
Tewa	Kwido (old woman/old man)
Zuni	Katsotse (girl-boy)



**Generation
4 Equality**

Endnotes

¹ - . (2021). Presentation: Caring for LGBTQ & Two Spirit People. Michigan Supreme Court: <https://www.courts.michigan.gov/search/?searchQuery=Caring%20for%20LGBTQ%20%26%20%20Two%20Spirit%20People>

² Researching for 2SLGBTQA+ Health. (2024). "Community - What community means to us." University of Toronto: <https://www.lgbtqhealth.ca/community/two-spirit.php>

³ Genovese, M., Rousell, D., & The Two Spirit Circle of Edmonton Society. (2011). "Safe and Caring Schools for Two Spirit Youth: A guide for teachers and students." The Society for Safe & Caring Schools & Communities. <https://legacy.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/For%20Members/ProfessionalDevelopment/Diversity-Equity-and-Human-Rights/Safe%20and%20Caring%20Schools%20for%20Two-spirited%20youth.pdf>