

Native American Rights Fund

Indigenous Peoples' Rights

<https://www.narf.org/graduation/>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

Many of the 574 federally-recognized tribes recognize leadership achievements by bestowing the person who earned the honor an eagle feather or plume. While tribal religions and spiritual practices vary from each other, in general, a Native person who wears a plume or eagle feather at a public event has done something amazing to show that they have the maturity to pray and care for themselves and others.

Similar to other religious objects, such as a cross or a rosary, Native people have used the eagle feather or plumes to pray. Many tribal religions regard the eagle as the bird that carries human prayers to the creator. Only a person with the maturity to handle a feather or plume with reverence may use one. Praying with eagle feathers and plumes, and bestowing them as a leadership honor are religious practices that Native peoples have observed for thousands of years.

NARF has a [long history of assisting students](#) who are prohibited from wearing eagle feathers at graduation ceremonies due to narrow graduation dress codes. We continue to advocate for these graduates so they can celebrate their great successes without sacrificing their tribal identity. Students and advocates looking to change narrow graduation dress codes can find resources [on our website](#) .

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