

## Racial Justice Ministry

### Race in Focus – December 2021

This month's "Race in Focus" is about the **Urban Indian Relocation Program**. The video is **Urban Rez (2013, 57:46)**, a presentation of Rocky Mountain PBS that explores the "lasting legacy and modern-day effects" of a US federal program that encouraged American Indians to leave their homelands and relocate to urban areas throughout the US. The little-known program, established in federal policy, began in 1953 as a way to assimilate American Indians into US mainstream culture. Started as a voluntary program, American Indians could move to metropolitan areas with assurances of housing and employment support from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Along with encouragement to relocate, the program eliminated much of the government support for Indian tribes and ended the protected status of Indian-owned lands.

**Video link:** [RMPBS Specials | Urban Rez | RMPBS](#)

#### Questions to consider while watching the video

- What is something new you learned from this video? How does it fit in with what you already knew about Indigenous People in the US?
- In what ways is this program similar to, and different from other, earlier relocation programs, such as the relocation of Eastern tribes to reservations in the southwest (the Trail of Tears) and the Indian Boarding Schools?
- Have there been positive aspects to this program? If so, what? Have there been negative aspects to this program? If so, what?
- Do you see any urban Indians in your city? How can you tell? Is there an "Indian Center" in your city?

#### Additional resources about this topic

- Max Nesterak (2019). Uprooted: The 1950s plan to erase Indian country. MPR News Presents. <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2019/11/04/uprooted-the-1950s-plan-to-erase-indian-country>
- Azusa Ono (2004). The relocation and employment assistance programs, 1948-1970: Federal Indian policy and the early development of the Denver Indian community. *Indigenous Nations Studies Journal*, Vol. 5, No. 1, Spring, 2004. pp. 27-50. <https://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/bitstream/handle/1808/5808/ins.v05.n1.27-50.pdf?sequence=1>
- Voices of Urban Relocation (20:15), 2016. <https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?fr=mcafee&ei=UTF-8&p=urban+indian+relocation+program+videos&type=E211US0G0#id=1&vid=b000b312cb7484e9e3c86535fe9f2768&action=click>
- Introducing responses to Urban Natives Tribal Technical Assistance: A population in crisis. [urban indian relocation program videos - Yahoo Video Search Results](#)

- History of Idaho Indians, Native Indian Tribes (nd),  
<https://www.warpaths2peacepipes.com/history-of-native-americans/history-of-idaho-indians.htm>
- The peoples of Idaho: Native settlers. Digital Atlas of Idaho (nd).  
<https://digitalatlas.cose.isu.edu/geog/native/natvfr.htm>