WHAT’S IN AND WHAT’S OUT
IN NATIVE REPRESENTATION

In the last few years, Native and Indigenous representation has shifted and changed in a positive way. Check out what’s in and what’s out in Native representation.
WHAT’S IN

• Contemporary representation that shows who Native people are today.
• Depicting specific tribes and cultures rather than “Pan-Indianism” (where content takes many cultural elements from unrelated tribes to create a representation that is not accurate).
• Showing the diversity of Native communities, including mixed Native identities.
• Showing Indigenous joy, our humor, and our humanity rather than only showing our pain and trauma.
• Having multi-dimensional characters who are driven by Indigenous values, such as: Respect for family, community, land, and care for future generations.
• Native peoples being an integral part of the storyline process from beginning to end as writers, directors, talent, consultants, etc.
• Working with Native creatives to pitch original content and storylines.

WHAT’S OUT

• The use of non-specific and ambiguous tribal identities as an attempt to ignore the expressed concerns of specific depictions of a tribe or to avoid working with Native experts and consultants.
• Use of made-up or unrelated languages to depict specific tribal languages.
• Relying on the magical, mystical Indian stereotypes that misrepresent Indigenous people.
• One dimensional characters that rely on stereotypical representation, like the use of casinos to represent Native wealth or corruption, and storylines and content that only depict Native people as destitute.
• Over-sexualized representation of Native women.
• Unnecessary and graphic depictions of violence against Native women, girls, or persons.
• Having non-Native actors depict a Native character.
• Bringing in Native consultants or talent to rubber stamp or fix an issue at the end of the creative process.
• Excluding Native creatives in all parts of the process, from writing, directing, acting, and production.