

Reprinted and adapted from the 1993 American Indian Family Healing Center's
Bay Area Pow-wow Calendar
and the 1993 CSU, Humboldt's Pow Wow program.

GRAND ENTRY

Spectators should always stand and remove caps or hats during the Grand Entry, flag songs, and invocation.

The Grand Entry is an opening of a sacred ceremony where Indian people are going to carry out many important ceremonies like the naming ceremony, coming out of a new dancer, grieving ceremony for one who has left us to go to the spirit world, an Indian soldier returning from war, honoring head dancers and many other ceremonies within the ceremony of the pow-wow where our songs and dances are being carried on for all time and to teach our next generation.

The flag bearers and all dancers prepare to enter the dance arena by the dance category they are dressed for. The Arena Director gets everyone in line and makes sure all the customs are being held to with respect and honor.

First, the Eagle Staff is carried into the circle, followed by the American, Canadian, State and tribal flags. Then invited dignitaries are next, followed by the men, traditional dancers, then Grass dancers and fancy dancers. Women come next: traditional dancers, fancy shawl dancers and jingle dancers. They are followed by the junior boys, then junior girls, in the same order as the adults. The last to enter the arbor are the little boys, traditional and fancy dancers, and the little girls, traditional, and fancy shawl dancers.

The dancers dance sun-wise-clockwise around the arena, acknowledging the audience, the singers and the other dancers. They are showing that they are dressed and ready to dance, and showing their dance regalia (many dancers do not like the term "costume" and feel it is derogatory) and their steps, letting those who watch know who they are and what they can do.

When the Grand Entry song ends, there is a flag song, then an invocation blessing the gathering. After that the eagle staff (always positioned above the American flag to signify the First Nation) is tied to the pole in the center of the Arena or brought to the speakers stand. Then the dancing can begin.