American Indian Dance Styles

Powwow dances are rooted in traditional practices that stretch back many decades. Each dance has many different stories and interpretations based on tribal and family background.

**Women's Traditional Dance**
The graceful moves of the dancer sway the shawl that is folded over her arms. The regalia of either buckskin or cloth is often decorated with appliquéd ribbonwork and beads.

**Women's Jingle Dress Dance**
The dancer's flowing steps cause the metal cones adorning her dress to jingle. The cones are often made from the lids of snuff cans.

**Women's Fancy Shawl Dance**
The dancer performs elaborate footwork in this athletic dance. Some people think the quick movements and the colorful shawl worn over the dancer's shoulders mimic the movements of a butterfly.

**Men's Traditional Dance**
The old-style dancer's movements symbolize tracking game or the story of a battle. The regalia features a feather bustle worn on the back, near the waist of the dancer.

**Men's Grass Dance**
With his intricate footwork and agile movements, the dancer causes his regalia, decorated with long strands of yarn or ribbon, to sway. This movement resembles tall grass waving in the wind.

**Men's Fancy Dance**
This dancer uses spins, turns, jumps, and hops in elaborate and artistic movements. Two vividly colored U-shaped bustles, one at the waist and another at the shoulders, highlight his regalia.