Fast Facts: Native American Youth and Indian Country

GENERAL INFORMATION

- There are 567 federally-recognized tribes in 36 states in the United States. A full list can be downloaded from the Bureau of Indian Affairs by clicking [here](#).

- According to the [2010 US Census](#), approximately 5.2 million self-identified American Indian/Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) live in the US, of whom 2 million qualify for federal services.

- As of 2010, there were over 2.1 million American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) under the age of 24 living in the US. More facts on youth available in our Native American Youth 101.

- The US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Minority Health (OMH) estimates that in 2016, 22% of AI/ANs lived on reservations or other US Census-defined tribal areas while 60% of AI/ANs lived in metropolitan areas.

- The [2010 US Census](#) reported that the majority of the AI/AN alone-or-in-combination population (78% percent) lived outside of American Indian and Alaska Native areas.

CHALLENGES IN INDIAN COUNTRY

As a result of historical trauma, chronically underfunded federal programs, and policies of the US government, Native Americans experience many health, educational, and economic disparities compared to the general population.

- The poverty rate among AI/ANs in 2014 was 28.8% ([United States Census](#)), and more than one in three AI/AN children live in poverty. ([United States Census](#)).

- In 2012, the average AI/AN household income was reported at $37,353 while the national average was $56,565, according to OMH and Duthu in American Indians and the Law (2008) respectively. In 2014, unemployment rates for AI/ANs nationally stood at 11.3% - twice the average for white Americans ([Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)). Some tribal communities report persistent rates of unemployment above 80%.

- As of 2013 approximately 7.5% of homes in Indian Country lack safe drinking water and proper waste removal systems ([Indian Health Service](#)).

- According to the National Conference of American Indians (NCAI) there are less than 3,000 tribal and federal law enforcement officers to patrol the more than 56 million acres of Indian Country.

- **23.1% of AI/ANs lacked health insurance coverage** in 2014 ([United States Census](#)) and relied solely on the Indian Health Service (IHS) system. In 2013 IHS per capita expenditures for patient health services were just $2,849, compared to $7,717 per person for health care spending nationally. ([NCAI](#))
• Other Health Disparities
  o In 2013, chronic liver disease was the fifth leading cause of death for all American Indians/Alaska Natives. ([Center for Disease Control](https://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/about/index.html))
  o AI/AN adults are 2.4 times as likely as white adults to be diagnosed with diabetes. ([OMH](https://www.ommh.samhsa.gov/redbook/Main.html))
  o In 2012, the tuberculosis rate for AI/ANs was 6.3, as compared to 0.8 for the White population. ([OMH](https://www.ommh.samhsa.gov/redbook/Main.html))

STATISTICS ON NATIVE AMERICAN YOUTH

• Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death - **2.5 times the national rate** – for AI/AN youth in the 15 to 24 age group ([CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/suicide)). In the US, between 1 in 9 and 1 in 5 AI/AN youth report attempting suicide each year ([Suicide Prevention Resource Center](https://www.sprc.org))).

• AI/AN youth are arrested at a rate of three times the national average, and 79% of youth in the Federal Bureau of Prison’s custody are AI/AN ([Bureau of Justice Statistics](https://bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=4299), 2004).

• About 90% of all AI/AN students attend regular public schools and about 8% attend schools administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs ([National Indian Education Association Statistics](https://www.naied.org/)).

• AI/ANs are disproportionately suspended and expelled, representing less than 1% of the student population, but 2% of out-of-school suspensions and 3% of expulsions ([White House Native Youth Report](https://whitehouse.gov)).

• The national graduation rate for AI/AN high school hovers around 79% in comparison to over 94% for white students. (High school completion includes General Educational Development (GED) certificate recipients ([Childstats.gov](https://www.childstats.gov)).

• The National Indian Child Welfare Association ([NICWA](https://www.nicwa.org)) reports that AI/AN children are **overrepresented in foster care** – at more than 2.4 times the general population – and 2 to 4 times the expected level are awaiting adoption.

• AI/AN children have the 3rd highest rate of victimization at 11.6 per 1,000 children of the same race or ethnicity. In 2009, 7,335 AI/AN children were victims of child maltreatment ([NICWA](https://www.nicwa.org)).

• In 2013, the rate of death among American Indian infants was the second-lowest among racial/ethnic groups, at 401 per 100,000. However, American Indians had the second-highest death rate for children ages one to four and 15 to 19. ([childtrends.org](https://childtrends.org)))

*More information is available on the Center for Native American Youth’s [Native American Youth 101, Last updated July 2016.](https://www.cnav.org/)