



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
 - In 2013, chronic liver disease was the fifth leading cause of death for all American Indians/Alaska Natives. ([Center for Disease Control](#))
 - AI/AN adults are 2.4 times as likely as white adults to be diagnosed with diabetes. ([OMH](#))
 - In 2012, the tuberculosis rate for AI/ANs was 6.3, as compared to 0.8 for the White population. ([OMH](#))

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](#)). In the US, between 1 in 9 and 1 in 5 AI/AN youth report attempting suicide each year ([Suicide Prevention Resource Center](#)).
- 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](#), 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](#)).
- 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](#)).
- 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](#)).
- The [National Indian Child Welfare Association \(NICWA\)](#) 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](#)).
- 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](#))