



## NATIVE AMERICAN DEMOGRAPHICS—UNITED STATES, 2008

### Who Is an Indian

- There is no single federal or tribal criterion that establishes Indian identity.
- Tribal membership is determined by the enrolment criteria of the tribe/nation. Generally, if linkage to an identified tribal member is far removed, one would not qualify for enrolment.
- Tribes/nations determine their own membership criteria. Blood quantum needed varies from tribe to tribe. Some tribes only require proof of descent from an Indian ancestor, while others require as much as one-half blood quantum.
- To be eligible for Bureau of Indian Affairs Services, an Indian must be (1) a member of a federally recognized tribe; (2) of 1/2 or more Indian blood of tribes Indigenous to the United States; or (3) of 1/4 or more Indian ancestry.
- There are many terms used, including American Indian, Indians, Indigenous Peoples, First Nations, Native Americans, and American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN). However, most Indians prefer their tribal name. For example, a Navajo person would prefer to be called Dené, which is the name of the tribe in the Navajo language.

### Population

Note: In the 2000 U.S. Census, for the first time, respondents were permitted to select more than one "race." Also for the first time, Indian respondents whose origin was from various Indigenous peoples in South and Central America were recognized, but grouped together as "Latin American Indian." (103,354 Latin American Indian alone; 180,940 Latin American alone or in combination with another "race".)

- 4.5 million American Indian and Alaska Native (one tribe or any combination of Native and other mix)

- 1.5% of the U.S. population
- 2.4 million Native American or Alaska Native and also Native American and Alaska Native in combination with another race.
- Between 1990 and 2002, the Native American population grew significantly: on reservations, it increased by 25%, and in non-reservation areas, it increased by 21%.
- The median age of Native Americans living on reservations is 25 years and 29 years for the total population. (Median age of the United States population is 35 years.)

### Tribes and Nations

- 562 federally recognized tribes and nations, including 200 Native villages in Alaska.
- Additionally, there are at least 100 state-recognized tribes.
- Many other groups remain unrecognized.
- 1.9 million AI/AN live on reservations or other trust lands
- A **federally recognized tribe** is a tribe that has a legal relationship with the U.S. government. This is referred to as a **government-to-government relationship**.
- **State-recognized tribe** means that though the Indian tribe is not federally recognized, the state in which it is located recognizes the tribe's status.
- Indians are the only U.S. minority group that must legally prove its minority status (race or ethnicity).

### Ten Largest American Indian Tribal Groupings (2000 Census)

1. Cherokee, 729,533 in combination; 281,069 only Cherokee
2. Navajo, 298,197 in combination; 269,202 only Navajo
3. Latin American Indian, 180,940 in combination; 104,354 one tribal group

4. Choctaw, 158,774 in combination; 87,349 only Choctaw
5. Sioux, 153,360 in combination; 108,272 only Sioux
6. Chippewa, 149,669 in combination; 105,907 only Chippewa
7. Apache, 96,833 in combination; 57,060 only Apache
8. Blackfeet, 85,750 in combination; 27,104 only Blackfeet
9. Iroquois, 80,822 in combination; 42,212 only Iroquois
10. Pueblo, 74,085 in combination; 59,533 Pueblo only

#### Reservation/Non-reservation Distribution:

- In 2000, 34% of Native Americans lived on reservations and 66% lived in urban areas.
- In 2007, Los Angeles County had the highest population of AI/AN, at 146,500.
- Most off-reservation people maintain contact with their home areas and reservations, rancherias, villages, or Native communities.
- There are only two reservations in Alaska, and there are none in Oklahoma, although both states have significantly large Native American populations.
- A reservation is land a tribe reserved for itself or assigned to the tribe when it relinquished other land areas to the United States.
- In 2007, California had the highest population of AI/AN (689,120); followed by Oklahoma (393,500) and Arizona (335,381).
- In 2007, 18% of Alaska's population identified as AI/AN; Oklahoma, 11%; and New Mexico, 10%.
- In 2007, 62% of the U.S. AI/AN population lived in California, Oklahoma, Arizona, Texas, New Mexico, New York, Washington, Florida, North Carolina, Michigan, and Alaska.

#### Top Ten Cities Where AI/AN Live

1. New York (87,241)
2. Los Angeles (53,092)
3. Phoenix (35,093)
4. Tulsa, OK (30,227)
5. Oklahoma City, OK (29,001)
6. Anchorage (26,995)
7. Albuquerque (22,047)
8. Chicago (20,898)
9. San Diego (16,178)
10. Houston (15,743)

#### Indian Country

- **Indian country** is a legal concept and is defined as Indian reservations, the Pueblo villages of Arizona and New Mexico, the Native villages of Alaska, and the historical Indian areas of Oklahoma.
- The term is also used to denote everywhere that Indian people live or refer to as their home.

#### Reservation Resources

- There are 302 forested Indian reservations, which encompass 17.9 million acres of Indian forest lands—7.7 million acres of timberlands and 10.2 million acres of woodlands.
- 199 reservations contain timberlands and 185 reservation contain woodlands.

- Indian land contains an estimated 10% of all energy resources in the United States.

#### Health

- AI/AN frequently contend with issues that prevent them from receiving quality medical care, including cultural barriers, geographic isolation, inadequate sewage disposal, and low income.
- Some of the leading diseases and causes of death among AI/AN are heart disease, cancer, accidents, diabetes, and stroke.
- AI/AN have increased prevalence of and risk factors for mental health and suicide, obesity, substance abuse, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), teenage pregnancy, liver disease, and hepatitis.
- AI/AN have 30% higher AIDS rates than the non-Indian population.
- AI/AN adults are 1.2 times more likely to have heart disease than the non-Indian population.
- AI/AN adults are 2.3 times more likely to have diabetes as the non-Indian population.
- In 2007, the tuberculosis rate for AI/AN was 5.9% than compared to 1.1% for the non-Indian population in the Pima India of Arizona.
- In 1999–2001, life expectancy for Indians was 2.4 years less than for all other races. This figure represents a 4-year increase over the 1996–1998 rates.
- In 2000–2002, Native infants died at a rate of 8.5 per every 1,000 live births, as compared to 6.8 per 1,000 for the U.S. population in general.
- Native people die at higher rates than other Americans from:
  - Tuberculosis: 600% higher
  - Alcoholism: 510% higher
  - Motor vehicle crashes: 229% higher
  - Diabetes: 189% higher
  - Unintentional injuries: 152% higher
  - Suicide: 62% higher
- Indian youth have the highest rate of suicide among all ethnic groups in the United States, and suicide is the second leading cause of death for Native youth aged 15 to 24 years.

#### Education

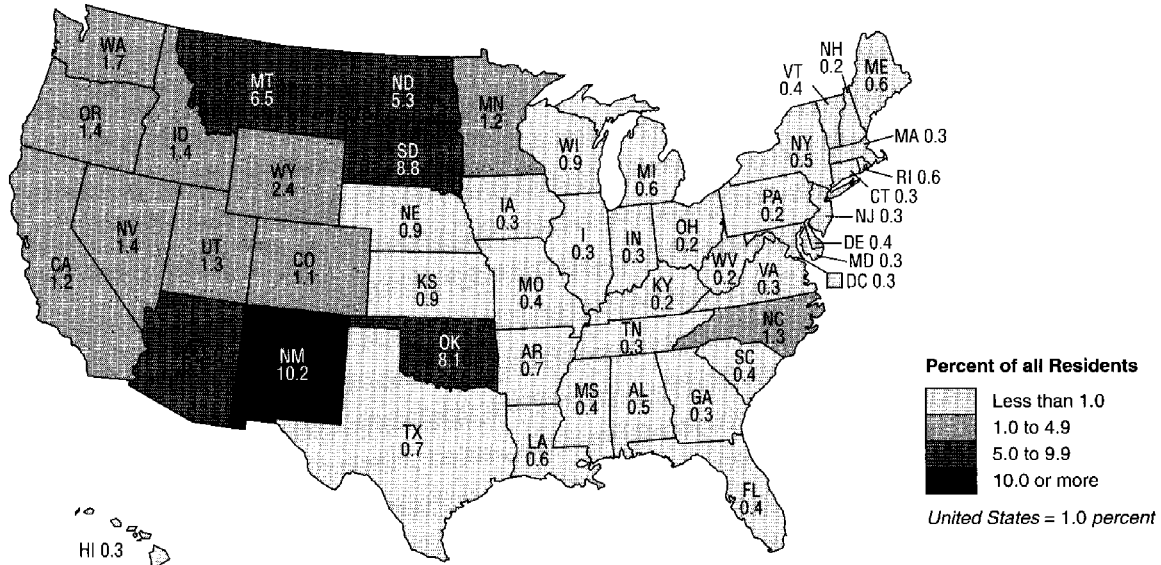
- 76.3% of Indians finish high school.
- About 250 tribal languages are still spoken, but their use is discouraged in the classroom. Native American languages and cultures are undervalued by mainstream institutions.
- 18% of Indians attend college (89,000 are currently enrolled).
- 13% of Indians graduate from college.
- 4.5% of Indians attain graduate degrees

#### Economic Welfare

- The average household income is \$33,300, as compared with \$46,200 nationally.
- The poverty rate is 21.2% for Indian families, as compared with 10.2% nationally.
- Unemployment averages 8.6% for Native Americans nationally. Real per capita income of Indians living on reservations is still less than half of the national average,



**Percent of American Indian and Alaska Native\* in the Population for States: 2005**



\*Single race.  
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program, July 1, 2005.

and unemployment is still double that of the rest of the country.

- Between 1990 and 2000, income levels rose by 33%, and the poverty rate dropped by 7%, with little difference between those tribes with gaming and those tribes without gaming.
- Between 1992 and 1997, the number of Native-owned businesses grew by 84%, to a total of 197,000 business, and their receipts increased by 179%.

**Other Facts**

- Indians do not get payments from the government for being Indian. However, a tribe or an individual may receive payment of income from their lands and resources that the federal government administers for them, such as fees collected from grazing leases.

- Indians do not receive a free college education just for being Indian; however, there are financial aid programs administered through the Bureau of Indian Affairs.
- Indians are U.S. citizens and were extended full citizenship in 1924.
- Indians pay taxes.
- The same laws apply to Indians as to non-Indians.
- Indians do not get casino checks; Indian gaming is strictly regulated by the federal government.
- Indians do not have "special rights"; however, all rights tribes do have are based on treaty agreements and are given in exchange for relinquishing their land to the United States.
- There is not one 'Indian' language. English is the language generally spoken by Native Americans, but nearly 250 tribal languages are still spoken as a first or second language.