

## **Fast Facts: Native American Youth and Indian Country**

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

- There are **566 federally-recognized tribes in 35 states** in the Unites States. A full list can be downloaded from the Bureau of Indian Affairs by clicking <a href="https://example.com/here/">here</a>.
- According to the <u>2010 Census</u>, there are approximately 5.2 million self-identified American Indian/Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) living in the US, of whom 2 million qualify for federal services.
- There are currently over 2.1 million American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) under the age of 24 living in the United States. More facts on youth available in our <u>Native American Youth 101</u>.
- The US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Minority Health (OMH) estimates
  that in 2011, 22% of AI/ANs lived on reservations or other US Census-defined tribal areas while 60%
  of AI/ANs lived in metropolitan areas.

## **CHALLENGES IN INDIAN COUNTRY**

As a result of historical trauma, chronically underfunded federal programs, and broken promises on the part 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 2010 was 28% (<u>OMH</u>), and 32.4% of the population under-18 lives in poverty (<u>NCAI Policy Research Center</u>).
  - In 2010, the average AI/AN household income was reported at \$39,664 while the national average was \$46,200, according to <u>OMH</u> and Duthu in American Indians and the Law (2008) respectively. In 2011, unemployment rates for AI/ANs nationally stood at 14.6% twice the average for white Americans (<u>Bureau of Labor Statistics</u>). Some tribal communities report persistent rates of unemployment above 80%.
- Approximately 13% of homes in Indian Country lack safe drinking water and proper waste removal systems (US National Library of Medicine).
- There are less than 3,000 tribal and federal law enforcement officers to patrol the more than 56 million acres of Indian Country.

<sup>\*</sup>More information is available on the Center for Native American Youth's <u>Native American Youth 101</u>. Last updated April 2014.

- 29.2% of AI/ANs lacked health insurance coverage in 2010 (<u>OMH</u>) and relied solely on the Indian Health Service (IHS) system. The <u>Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration</u> (<u>SAMHSA</u>) reports that only 1 in 5 AI/ANs have access to IHS services, including mental health). This is one factor leading to major health disparities among the AI/AN population (<u>NIHB</u>):
  - o Alcoholism mortality rates are 514% higher than the general population.
  - Diabetes incidence is 177% higher, with the highest rate of type 2 diabetes of any specific population in the United States.
  - o Tuberculosis incidence is 500% higher.

## STATISTICS ON NATIVE AMERICAN YOUTH

- Suicide is the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death **2.5 times the national rate** for AI/AN youth in the 15 to 24 age group (<u>SAMHSA</u>). In the US, between 1 in 9 and 1 in 5 AI/AN youth report attempting suicide each year (<u>Suicide Prevention Resource Center</u>).
- Adolescent AI/ANs have death rates **2 to 5 times the rate of whites** in the same age group (SAMHSA), resulting from higher levels of suicide and a variety of risky behaviors.
- Violence, including intentional injuries, homicide and suicide, account for 75% of deaths for AI/AN youth age 12 to 20 (SAMHSA).
- 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 (<u>Bureau of Justice Statistics</u>, 2004).
- During the 2010-11 school year, there were 378,000 AI/AN (alone) students in public schools, while 49,152 students attended Bureau of Indian Education Schools (NIEA Statistics).
- The national graduation rate for AI/AN high school students hovers around 50% in comparison to over 75% for white students. Only 13.3% of AI/ANs have obtained undergraduate degrees, versus 24.4% of the general population (National Indian Education Association).
- The <u>National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA)</u> reports that AI/AN children are **overrepresented in foster care** at more than 2.1 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).
- Recent research shows that while the US child mortality rate for children ages 1 to 14 has
  decreased by 9% since 2000, it has increased by 15% among AI/AN children (<u>National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association</u>).

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