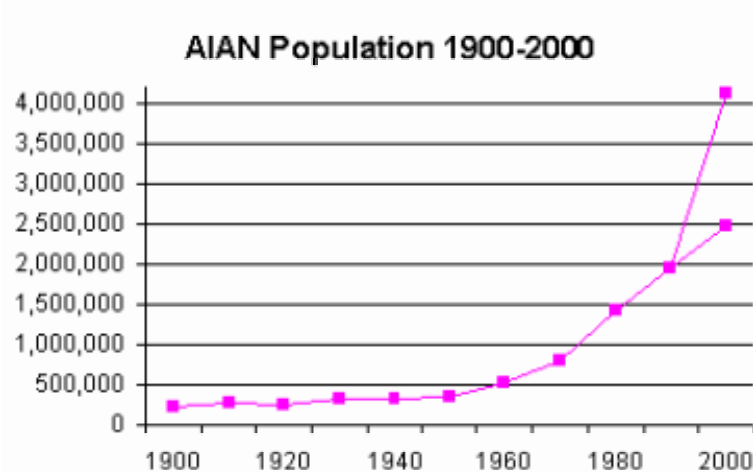


## Executive Summary - American Indians and Alaska Natives: A Demographic Perspective

- More than 10,000 years ago, the first "American Indians" are believed to have migrated to North America. They came from northeastern Asia across the Bering Land Bridge, which once connected Asia to present-day Alaska. It is uncertain how many American Indians and Alaska Natives (AIANs) lived in what is today the United States and Canada when Christopher Columbus and his crew reached America in 1492. Estimates range from two to 18 million. Largely because of European diseases (e.g. smallpox and measles), but also warfare and land pressure, the AIAN population diminished after the arrival of the Europeans. It is estimated that 90 percent perished in the century following the first European settlements. By the 1900 Census, only 237,000 American Indians and Alaska Natives lived in the United States.
- The 2000 Census identified 4.1 million people, or 1.5 percent of the U.S. population, who reported their race as partly or entirely American Indian or Alaska Native. Of this total, 2.5 million, or 0.9 percent of the U.S. population, reported their race as only American Indian or Alaska Native ("the AIAN-only population").



### The AIAN Population and the Census

- The first year that American Indians were listed as a separate group in the Census was 1860. However, American Indians living on reservations or in American Indian Territory were not counted until 1890. Alaska Natives have been counted since 1880, but they were included in the American Indian numbers until 1940. The first year that Eskimos and Aleuts were counted separately in all states and not just in Alaska was 1980.
- The 2000 Census was the first time that respondents had the option of listing more than one race. A total of 1.6 million people (40% of the total AIAN population) listed themselves as American Indian or Alaska Native in combination with one or more races.
- There has been a persistent history of undercounting of American Indians in the U.S. Census, especially of those on reservations. The 2000 Census incorporated new methodologies that are expected to have decreased the undercount.

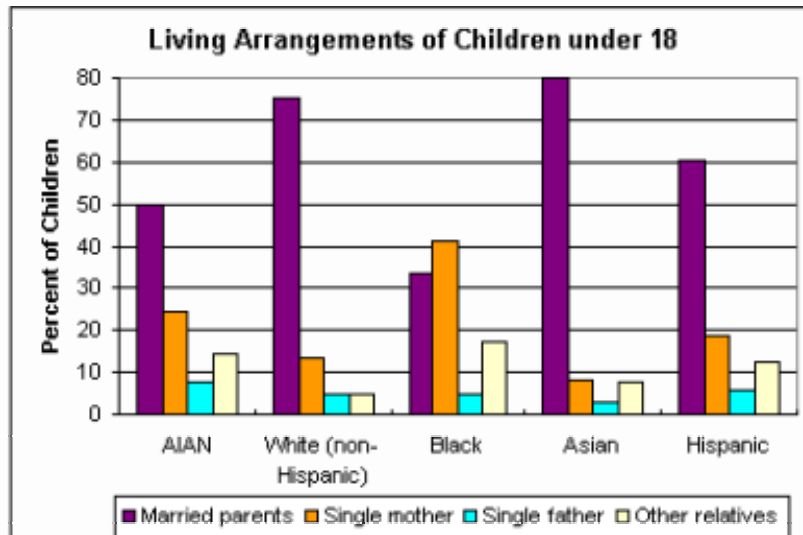


Alaska. One-quarter of the total population lived in either California (630,000) or Oklahoma (390,000).

- In Alaska, 19 percent of residents were American Indian/Alaska Native. Oklahoma and New Mexico had the next highest proportions, at 11 percent each.
- American Indians and Alaska Natives were the majority population in 26 U.S. counties in 2000. These counties were located in Alaska, Arizona, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wisconsin. Los Angeles County, CA was the county with the largest number of American Indians, although they were less than two percent of the total population; 140,000 American Indians resided there.

### Family and Household Structure

- In 2000, there were a total of 770,000 AIAN-only households, which was 0.7 percent of all households in the U.S. Family households composed 73 percent and married couple households were 61 percent of family households. This is a greater proportion of married couple family households than blacks (46%), but less than non-Hispanic whites (82%). The average AIAN family size was 3.6 persons.
- American Indians and Alaska Natives had the highest rate of coupled households in which the couple was unmarried; 17 percent of coupled AIAN-only households were unmarried-partner households, compared to a national average of nine percent.



- One-half of AIAN children under age 18 lived with their married parents in 2000, 24 percent with their single mother, eight percent with their single father and 15 percent with other relatives.
- The 2000 Census found that 15 percent of AIAN-households were overcrowded, meaning that they had more than one occupant per room. In comparison, two percent of white non-Hispanic households, nine percent of black households, 21 percent of Asian households and 29 percent of Hispanic households were overcrowded.

### Education and Employment

- Among the AIAN-only population, 71 percent of those over age 25 in 2000 had earned a high school diploma; 11 percent had attained a bachelor's degree.
- The AIAN population had a lower proportion of "white collar" workers (51%) than whites (63%) or Asians (65%) in 1998, but higher than Hispanics (38%) and comparable to blacks (50%). "Blue collar" workers composed 29 percent of the AIAN workforce, those in services accounted for 17 percent, and farming, fishing and forestry were two percent. At the time of the 2000 Census, 12.4 percent of civilian AIAN workers were unemployed.
- The 1997 Economic Census counted nearly 200,000 AIAN-owned businesses in the United States. Women owned 27 percent of these businesses.
- Of the 562 recognized AIAN tribes, 201 are involved in "gaming," meaning that they sponsor gambling activities in a total of 330 different locales. In 2002, the revenue from tribal gaming was \$14.5 billion; this was less than 10 percent of total gaming revenues nationwide. Tribal gaming began in the late 1970s with bingo games, and has continued to expand since the passage of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act in 1988, which occurred one year after the Supreme Court affirmed the right of tribes to run gaming activities.

### **Income and Poverty**

- The median household income for American Indians and Alaska Natives, based on a 1999-2001 average, was \$32,116. This is higher than the median for African Americans (\$29,870), comparable to Hispanics (\$33,439), and lower than non-Hispanic whites (\$46,702) and Asians and Pacific Islanders (\$55,026).
- For the period 1999-2001, the poverty rate for American Indians and Alaska Natives was 24.5 percent. This rate was not statistically different from the rate for African Americans, but it was higher than the rates for all other groups.

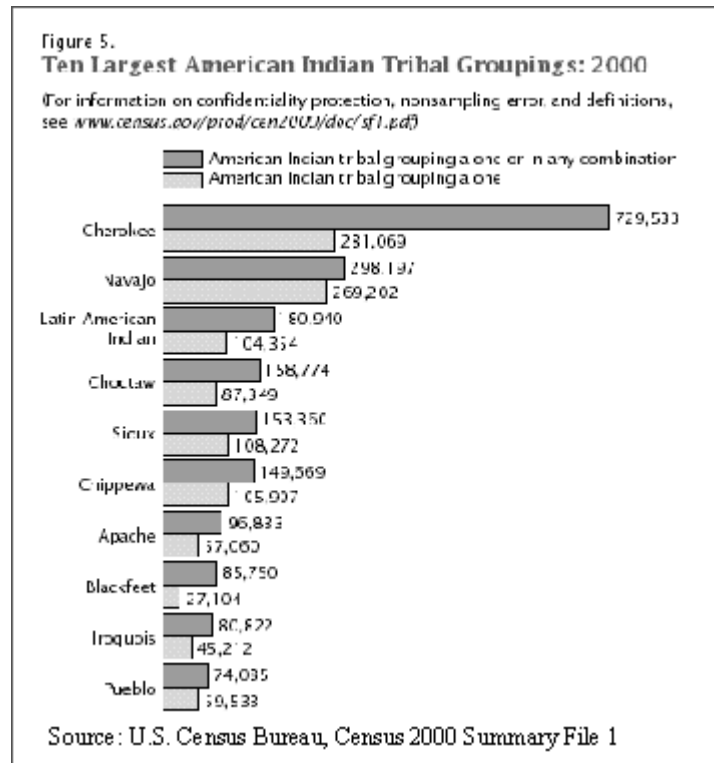
### **Fertility and Health**

- The total fertility rate for AIAN women was 2.1 in 2000, equivalent to the national average. There were 71.4 births per 1,000 women aged 15-44, and 19.1 percent of births were to women who already had at least three children, which was almost twice the national rate (10.6%). More than one-half (58.4%) of all AIAN births were to unmarried women.
- The teen birth rate was 67.8 births per 1,000 teens aged 15-19 in 2000, down from 85.0 in 1990. This was higher than the national average (48.5), but lower than the rates for blacks (81.9) and Hispanics (94.4). One-in-five births in 2000 was to a woman under age 20, compared to the national rate of one-in-nine births.
- The leading causes of death for the AIAN population, as for the U.S. population as a whole, are heart disease and cancer, however the proportion of American Indians and Alaska Natives that die from these causes is smaller (38% compared to 53% for the general population in 2000). Unlike the total U.S. population, accidents are the third leading cause of death for the AIAN population; they cause 12 percent of deaths, compared to just four percent for the U.S. overall. American Indians and Alaska Natives also die from chronic liver disease and cirrhosis (4.7%), and suicide (2.6%) at higher rates

than the general population. The AIAN infant mortality rate is 7.8 deaths per 1,000 live births, greater than the national average of 6.9.

- On average, American Indians and Alaska Natives live almost eight years less than the general U.S. population. In 2002, their life expectancy was 71.1 years, compared to 78.9 years for the general population.

### Tribes of the AIAN Population



- Today there are 562 tribal nations recognized by the U.S. government. Of these, 227 are in Alaska and the other 335 are in the lower 48 states.
- The largest tribal groupings in the 2000 Census were Cherokee, Navajo, Latin American Indian, Choctaw, Sioux, and Chippewa. Among these groupings, the Navajo had the highest percentage of people (90%) reporting only one race / tribal grouping. The Cherokee had the lowest percentage (39%). Only three-quarters of respondents indicated a tribe in the 2000 Census, but 55 percent of those designating a tribe named one of the above.
- The largest Alaska Native tribes are the Eskimo (55,000 in the 2000 Census) and the Tlingit-Haida (22,000).

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This Executive Summary was prepared by Becca Jones of the [Population Resource Center](#) in July 2003 and reviewed by xxxx. Sources include the [U.S. Bureau of the Census](#), the [Population Reference Bureau](#), the [National Indian Gaming Commission](#), the [National Indian Gaming Association](#), [Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition](#), [Encarta Reference Library](#), the [Bureau of Indian Affairs](#), the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration on Aging](#), and the [National Center for Health Statistics](#). For further information, please contact the Center at (202) 467-5030; 1725 K Street NW, Suite 1102 Washington, DC 20006.