

CALIFORNIA TRIBAL COURT–STATE COURT FORUM

March 2012

Native American Statistical Abstract: Population Characteristics

The Tribal/State Programs of the Judicial Council’s Center for Families, Children & the Courts has developed a series of informational abstracts that bring together the available data from various sources on American Indians and Alaskan Natives (AI/AN) nationally, statewide, and tribally specific to California’s AI/AN population. The purpose of these abstracts is to develop and disseminate justice-related information and links to reports to ensure the highest quality of justice and service for California’s AI/AN population. This information is intended for the state judicial branch, tribal justice systems, tribal organizations, state agencies, and local agencies to support effective collaboration and tribal justice development.

Note: This update was originally published in July 2011, with data from the 2000 Census. It was updated in March 2012 with data from the 2010 Census.

National Tribal Population

- According to the 2010 Census, 5.2 million U.S. residents reported being AI/AN alone or in combination with some other race, and over 2.9 million reported being AI/AN alone.¹ Among counties in the United States, Los Angeles County (CA) had the highest population of AI/AN alone in 2000 (76,988).²
- In 2010, the majority of the AI/AN-alone population (67 percent) and the majority of the AI/AN-in-combination³ population (92 percent) lived outside of tribal areas.⁴
- In 2010, Cherokee was the largest tribal population, representing approximately 16 percent of the total AI/AN population. The Cherokee population, at more than 819,000, is more than twice the size of the Navajo, the second-largest tribal population, at over 332,000. Other large tribal

¹ Tina Norris, Paula L. Vines, and Elizabeth M. Hoeffel, “2010 Census Briefs: The American Indian and Alaska Native Population: 2010.” (Bureau of the Census, Jan. 2012), p. 4, table 1, <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-10.pdf> (as of March 5, 2012).

² U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 2.

³ AI/AN alone refers to the population that self-identifies as being only AI/AN. AI/AN in combination refers to the population that self-identifies as being AI/AN in combination with one or more other races.

⁴ Norris, et al, *supra*, p. 12, figure 6.

populations (roughly 170,000 or more) include Choctaw, Mexican American Indian, Chippewa, and Sioux.⁵

California Tribal Population

- In 2010, California had the largest population of AI/AN alone (362,801); the second-largest AI/AN population was in Oklahoma (321,687), followed by Arizona (296,529). California represented 12 percent of the total AI/AN-alone population in the United States. California had more than 720,000 AI/AN citizens (alone or in combination with another race) residing in both rural and urban communities.⁶
- Although California has the largest tribal population in the United States, it has very little tribal land. (See http://www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/tribal2/docs/GW_Basins_and_Tribal_Trust_Lands_map.pdf.)
- As of 2005, only 3 percent of California's AI/AN population lived on a reservation or rancheria.⁷
- California's Native American communities include descendants or members of 108 California-based federally recognized tribes (about 20 percent of all tribes in the United States).⁸ As of 2008, an additional 74 tribes in California are petitioning for federal recognition.
- The California tribal population consists of a significant number of members of tribes not based in California. More than half of the Native Americans living in California are members of tribes located outside of California.⁹
- The AI/AN-alone or -in-combination population makes up 2 percent of California's total population. Approximately 50 percent of California's AI/AN population is AI/AN in combination with one or more other races (predominantly white), and 50 percent of California's AI/AN population identifies as AI/AN alone.¹⁰
- Cherokee is the largest tribal population in California (approximately 18 percent), followed by Apache (6 percent), Navajo (5 percent), and Choctaw (5 percent).¹¹

⁵ Norris, et al, *supra*, p. 18, figure 8. These figures are for individuals identifying as AI/AN alone or in combination with one or more other races.

⁶ Norris, et al, *supra*, p. 7, table 2.

⁷ National Indian Child Welfare Association, *American Indian/Alaska Native Fact Sheet for the State of California* (2005), www.nicwa.org/states/California.pdf (as of July 8, 2011).

⁸ For a complete listing of tribal entities by state, see the Bureau of Indian Affairs' *Tribal Leaders Directory* (Spring 2011) at www.bia.gov/idc/groups/xois/documents/text/idc002652.pdf (as of July 8, 2011).

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, "Table 19: American Indian and Alaska Native Alone and Alone or in Combination Population by Tribe for California: 2000," www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/briefs/phc-t18/tables/tab019.pdf (as of July 8, 2011).

¹⁰ Norris, et al, *supra*, p. 7, table 2.

¹¹ Elias S. Lopez, Ph.D., *Census 2000 for California: A Friendly Guide* (Cal. Research Bureau, July 2002), www.library.ca.gov/crb/02/07/02-007.pdf (as of July 8, 2011).

County Tribal Populations

- Based on the 2000 U.S. Census, Los Angeles County (CA) has the largest AI/AN-alone population (76,988) in the United States.
- Ten California counties are included in the 50 U.S. counties with the highest AI/AN-alone populations. In addition to Los Angeles County, San Diego, San Bernardino, Orange, and Riverside Counties are among the top 20 in that group (see table 1).¹²
- Alpine County has the highest proportion of AI/AN-alone residents (19 percent), followed by Inyo County (10 percent), and Del Norte County (6 percent).¹³

Table 1. California Counties With the Largest AI/AN-Alone Populations

County	Population	U.S. Rank
Los Angeles	76,988	1
San Diego	24,337	11
San Bernardino	19,915	14
Orange	19,906	15
Riverside	18,168	17
Sacramento	13,359	24
Fresno	12,790	26
Santa Clara	11,350	30
Kern	9,999	38
Alameda	9,146	43

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Education and Household Income

- Nationally, the AI/AN-alone population has a lower percentage of individuals with at least a high school diploma (71 percent) than does the general population (80 percent). This discrepancy is largely because the AI/AN population is less likely to have a bachelor's (or higher) degree (11 percent) than the general population (24 percent).¹⁴
- In California we see a similar discrepancy in educational attainment. The percentage of individuals with at least a high school diploma is lower for the AI/AN-alone population than for the California population as a whole (68 percent and 74 percent, respectively) as is the percentage of those with a Bachelor's (or higher) degree (11 percent, compared to 27 percent of California as a whole).¹⁵
- The median income for all California households is \$47,493, whereas the median income for the AI/AN-alone population is \$36,547.¹⁶
- Thirty-four percent of AI/AN households have an income of less than \$20,000. Of those, roughly half (17 percent) have an income of less than \$10,000.
- About 62 percent of all AI/AN households fall below the U.S. median household income level.

¹² U.S. Census Bureau, "Table 9: Counties with an American Indian and Alaska Native Alone Population Greater Than Zero, Ranked by Number: 2000" (Aug. 2001), www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/briefs/phc-t14/tables/tab09.pdf (as of July 8, 2011).

¹³ U.S. Census Bureau's American FactFinder, Census 2000, Summary File 1, "GCT-P6. Race and Hispanic or Latino: 2000."

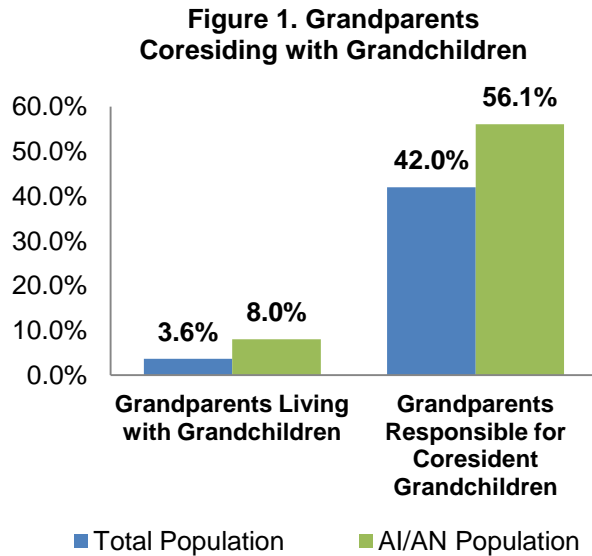
¹⁴ U.S. Census Bureau's American FactFinder, Census 2000, Summary File 2 and Summary File 4, "Census 2000 Demographic Profile Highlights: Selected Population Group: American Indian and Alaska Native alone."

¹⁵ *Ibid*

¹⁶ *Ibid*

Households and Families

- The AI/AN population has a lower proportion of married-couple households (45 percent) than does the U.S. population as a whole (53 percent) and a higher proportion of both male-headed and female-headed households with no spouse present (28 percent) than that of the total U.S. population (16 percent).¹⁷
- The AI/AN population has a higher average household size (3.06 persons) than does the U.S. population as a whole (2.59).¹⁸
- Nearly 4 percent of the total U.S. grandparent population (30 years old and over) live with grandchildren, whereas 8 percent of the AI/AN population of grandparents live with grandchildren.¹⁹
- AI/AN grandparents are more likely to be responsible for coresident grandchildren (56 percent) than is the total U.S. population (42 percent), as illustrated in figure 1.²⁰



¹⁷ Stella U. Ogunwole, U.S. Census Bureau, *We the People: American Indians and Alaska Natives in the United States* (2006).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, *Grandparents Living With Grandchildren: 2000* (Oct. 2003).

²⁰ *Ibid.*

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The views in this research update are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official positions or policies of the Judicial Council of California.

The staff names listed above have been updated as of October 2013; otherwise the content of this research update remains unchanged.