



Facts about the First Americans

POPULATION:

According to the latest numbers from the U.S. Census, nearly **seven** out of **10 American Indians** and **Alaska Natives—2.8 million people—**live in or near **urban areas** because of economic conditions, changing lifestyles or other factors. The **states with the largest Native American populations** are:

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|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Oklahoma—179,542 | 16. New York—26,198 |
| 2. New Mexico—163,907 | 17. Oregon—26,356 |
| 3. North Carolina—141,321 | 18. Michigan—25,464 |
| 4. California—116,886 | 19. Louisiana—22,508 |
| 5. Arizona—105,453 | 20. Illinois—20,348 |
| 6. Washington—84,978 | 21. Mississippi—19,820 |
| 7. Alaska—67,194 | 22. Nevada—19,525 |
| 8. South Dakota—62,858 | 23. Nebraska—18,553 |
| 9. Wisconsin—41,169 | 24. Arkansas—17,790 |
| 10. Texas—40,619 | 25. Kansas—17,678 |
| 11. Montana—38,512 | 26. Florida—15,973 |
| 12. North Dakota—32,257 | 27. Utah—15,814 |
| 13. Minnesota—28,954 | 28. New Jersey—15,625 |
| 14. Missouri—28,246 | 29. Ohio—14,526 |
| 15. Colorado—26,943 | 30. Georgia—14,526 |

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Other population facts from the U.S. Census include:

- **4.1 million**—The number of U.S. residents who reported American Indian or Alaska Native alone or in combination with one or more races. These people made up 1.5 percent of the total American Indian population.
- **2.2 million**— The increase in the number of people who reported as American Indian and Alaska Native alone or in combination with one or more races since the 1990 census (when respondents could choose only one race). The increase in the population who reported as American Indian and Alaska Native alone was 516,700 or 26 percent.
- **19%**— Percentage of Alaska's population who reported as American Indian and Alaska Native alone or in combination with one or more races in Census 2000. Alaska led all states, followed by Oklahoma and New Mexico, each at 11 percent, and South Dakota, at 9 percent.
- **138,700**—The number of people in Los Angeles County, Calif., who in the 2000 Census reported as American Indian and Alaska Native alone or in combination with one or more races. This is followed by Maricopa County, Ariz., at 75,900, and McKinley County, N.M. at 57,100.
- **87,200**—The number of people in New York City who in the 2000 Census reported as American Indian and Alaska Native alone or in combination with

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one or more races. New York City led all the nation's cities in this category. Los Angeles was second, with 53,100, followed by Phoenix at 35,100.

TRIBES AND LANGUAGES:

- There are more than **569 federally-recognized tribes** in 35 states, with a total membership of 2.5 million.
- The largest tribes in the U.S. are:
 1. Navajo
 2. Cherokee
 3. Choctaw
 4. Sioux
 5. Chippewa
 6. Apache
 7. Blackfeet
 8. Iroquois
 9. Pueblo (there are 19 Pueblos in New Mexico and one, the Hopi, in Arizona)
- There are about **175 Native languages still spoken** in the United States, but scholars believe that 89 percent of these—155 languages—are moribund, meaning that they are spoken only by adults who are no longer passing the language actively down to the next generation.
- Only **16 tribes** have received federal recognition through the federal acknowledgement process since 1978. Tribes seek federal recognition to gain sovereignty status that allows them to become their own governing nation. Sovereignty also allows tribes to seek gaming licenses. But out of the 16 that have received federal recognition, only one has a gaming operation. Twenty petitions for recognition have been denied since 1978, according to the National Indian Gaming Association.

TERMINOLOGY: NATIVE AMERICAN OR AMERICAN INDIAN?

Native American was a term that has been used to collectively describe the people indigenous to the United States of America. **Native American** and **American Indian** can be used interchangeably. However, if a person is referring to a specific tribal group or another person who is a member of a specific tribe, the name of the tribe is preferable. Tribal reference is more accurate but be careful of being redundant. It is repetitive to say *Navajo Native American* or *Navajo Indian*, or the *Navajo Native American tribe* or *Navajo Indian tribe*. The correct description is *Navajo* or *Navajo Nation* or *Navajo tribe*. NAPT prefers the usage of Native American.

RESOURCES:

Here are some suggested Web sites to find out more information about Native Americans in various subjects:

- **Arts:**
 - Indian Arts and Crafts Association: www.iaca.com
 - U.S. Department of Interior Indian Arts and Crafts Board: www.doi.gov/iacb

- **Education:**
 - American Indian College Fund: www.collegefund.org
 - American Indian Higher Education Consortium: www.aihec.org
 - American Indian Graduate Center: www.aigc.com
 - National Indian Education Association: www.niea.org
- **Gaming:**
 - National Indian Gaming Association: www.indiangaming.org
 - National Indian Gaming Commission: www.nigc.gov
- **Environment:**
 - National Tribal Environmental Council: www.ntec.org
- **Health Care:**
 - Association of American Indian Physicians: www.aaip.org
 - Indian Health Service: www.ihs.gov
 - National Council of Urban Indian Health: www.ihs.gov/NonMedicalPrograms/Urban/ncuih
 - National Indian Health Board: www.nihb.org
- **Housing:**
 - National American Indian Housing Council: www.naihc.net/index.asp
- **Libraries:**
 - American Indian Library Association: www.ailanet.org
- **Policy/Law:**
 - Indian Law Resource Center: www.indianlaw.org
 - National Congress of American Indians: www.ncai.org
 - National Indian Justice Center: www.nijc.org
 - Native American Rights Fund: www.narf.org
- **Science:**
 - American Indian Science and Engineering Society: www.aises.org
- **Veterans:**
 - National Native American Veterans Organization: www.nnava.org
- **Youth:**
 - United National Indian Youth Council: www.unityinc.org