

# It's time. Make yourself count.

Census 2010



## Native American Communities: High Stakes and Big Opportunities in the 2010 Census

The Constitution requires a count of every person living in the United States once every ten years. The 2010 census will influence the health and well-being of Native American families and the political power of their communities. More than \$400 billion in federal funds is distributed every year based on census counts – so getting an accurate count will have a concrete impact on the health, education, and economic development of Native-American communities throughout the coming decade.

- **Political Power** – The census shapes voting districts, which can determine whether or not communities are fairly represented in Congress, state legislatures and local governments. The census is also used to monitor whether people have access to the voting booth.
- **Education** – Billions of dollars in education funding are distributed based on census information.
- **Health care** – Census information is used to address specific health issues that Native Americans face.
- **Jobs** – The census influences the distribution of community development block grants and is used by governments and private companies to decide where to invest in new housing, roads, and shopping centers. Census information also helps the government monitor discrimination and enforce the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which ensures equal opportunity in the workplace.

There are an estimated [4.4 million](#) American Indians and Alaskan Natives living in the United States. The Native Community faces considerable challenges in the areas of health, education and poverty. For example, [roughly one-third](#) of Native American families subsist on income levels below the federal poverty line. Close to one in five do not have a high school diploma and many do not have ready access to health care.

Among the federal programs whose funding is based directly or indirectly on the census count, here are some that are important to Native Americans.

### Healthcare

Native Americans suffer from disparities in access to health care, have a shorter life expectancy than the rest of the population, and suffer disproportionately from diabetes, pneumonia, mental health disorders, and cardiovascular disease. For example, [18 percent of Native Americans](#) have diabetes compared to 8 percent of non-Hispanic white Americans. Native American children have distinctly high proportions of hearing and visual problems, unmet medical/dental needs, and frequently lack a regular source of medical care.

- **Medicaid – \$197 billion**  
Medicaid provides access to affordable and comprehensive health care for more than [60 million](#) children and adults in low-income working families and for seniors and people with disabilities. [More than a quarter](#) of Native Americans are covered by Medicaid and other types of public health coverage.
- **Indian Health Service – \$3.1 billion**  
The IHS provides access to comprehensive and culturally acceptable healthcare to American Indians and Alaska Natives. The IHS [provides services to 60 percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives nationwide](#). Over the last thirty years, the IHS has succeeded in significantly reducing the rate of conditions such as infant mortality, cervical cancer, and tuberculosis.

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- **IHS Urban Indian Health Program – \$32.7 million**  
The IHS Urban Health Program reaches American Indians who are not able to access the hospitals, health care centers or contract health services managed by the IHS and tribal health programs. UIHP programs provide medical care, dental care, alcohol and drug abuse counseling, AIDS treatment and prevention, and nutritional counseling. The IHS UIHP serves roughly 100,000 Native Americans accessing 23 health programs; an additional 49,000 use urban health care programs within designated IHS areas.
- **Rural Health Outreach Grant Program – \$29.9 million**  
The Rural Health Outreach Grant Program provides grants to rural nonprofit or public entities and Tribal Governments to fund innovative approaches to delivering health care to rural communities. Projects funded by the Outreach Program have enabled rural communities to deliver pre-natal care, checkups for children, and other critical services that are often scarce in remote areas of the country.

## *Housing and Economic Development*

Housing conditions for Native Americans continue to be among the poorest relative to other racial and ethnic groups in the United States. [In fiscal year 2008](#), 90,000 Native Americans were homeless or “underhoused,” 11 percent lacked proper plumbing, 14 percent lacked electricity, and 12 percent lacked regular access to clean water.

- **Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers – \$16 billion**  
Section 8 vouchers are the nation’s leading source of housing assistance for low-income seniors, people with disabilities, and families with children, helping approximately 2 million households to secure modest, affordable rental housing in the private market. Native Americans make up [nearly 40 percent](#) of the participating families who pay more than 31 percent of their income toward rent.
- **The Indian Housing Block Grant – \$623.4 million**  
[The Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act of 1996](#) created two programs, the Indian Housing Block Grant and the Title VI Loan Guarantee Program, which allow tribes to use future grants as leverage for obtaining loans. The block grant program, which is based almost entirely on census data, [served 6,168 households](#) in FY 2008.
- **Indian Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) – \$59 million**  
[The Indian CDBG](#) assists low-to-moderate income Native communities to improve housing, community resources, and economic development on the reservation.
- **Native American Employment and Training – \$53.9 million**  
The Native American Employment and Training Program provides Native Americans with training and skills to be more competitive in the workforce, with additional funding to provide support services such as daycare and transportation. The program, which is based almost entirely on census data, allocates funds for youth programs that help young people achieve academic and employment success through mentoring, community service, leadership development and other activities. In 2005, [12,539 participants](#) successfully completed the program.
- **Rural Business Opportunity Grants – \$8.8 million**  
The RBOG program promotes sustainable economic development through training and technical assistance for development officials and rural entrepreneurs. Indian Tribes are eligible to apply for grants of up to \$50,000 for projects in a single state, and up to \$150,000 for projects serving two or more states.

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## Education

The [Alliance for Education](#) reports that 70 percent of schools administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs failed to meet standards set by the No Child Left Behind Act in 2005. Among Native American high school seniors, 74 percent have reading skills below grade level, compared to 57 percent of non-Hispanic White high school seniors.

- **Head Start – \$6.18 billion**  
Head Start provides grants for early childhood education and development programs for economically disadvantaged children and families, with a focus on helping pre-school children get ready for school and engaging parents in the learning process. More than [\\$475 million](#) is for programs targeting Native Americans and Migrant Populations.
- **Title I: Support for schools serving low-income students – \$7.7 billion**  
Title I is designed to enhance educational opportunities for children living in concentrated poverty. In school year 2006-07, Title I served more than 17 million children in a majority of U.S. public schools. About 90 percent of Native American students attend regular public schools and account for 2 percent of Title I participants.

## Community Support

- **Special Programs for the Aging Title VI, Part A – \$24 million**  
Special Programs for the Aging provides grants to Tribal organizations to promote the delivery of home and community-based supportive services, including nutrition services and support for family and informal caregivers, to Native American, Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian elders. A population-based formula is used to allocate funds for each Tribe, but once requirements have been met they are free to use the funds for the services they deem most useful for the community.

## Indian Country Counts

The 2010 census is an important opportunity for Native American people to make sure their communities get the respect, resources, and representation they deserve. The Leadership Conference Education Fund is working with partners like the [National Congress of American Indians](#) (NCAI) and its [Indian Country Counts](#) campaign to make sure every Native American is counted in 2010.

More information is available from The Leadership Conference Education Fund at [www.civilrights.org/census](http://www.civilrights.org/census) and from NCAI's Indian Country Counts campaign at [www.indiancountrycounts.org](http://www.indiancountrycounts.org).