

A KIDS COUNT/PRB Report on

# CENSUS 2000

## American Indian and Alaska Native Children in the 2000 Census

*By C. Matthew Snipp*



The Annie E. Casey Foundation and  
The Population Reference Bureau  
April 2002



## **KIDS COUNT**

KIDS COUNT, a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is a national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the United States. By providing policymakers and citizens with benchmarks of child well-being, KIDS COUNT seeks to enrich local, state, and national discussions concerning ways to secure better futures for all children. At the national level, the principal activity of the initiative is the publication of the annual KIDS COUNT Data Book, which uses the best available data to measure the educational, social, economic, and physical well-being of children. The Foundation also funds a nationwide network of state-level KIDS COUNT projects that provide a more detailed community-by-community picture of the condition of children.

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## **KIDS COUNT/PRB Reports on Census 2000**

This paper is part of a series of reports on the 2000 Census prepared for the nationwide network of KIDS COUNT projects. These reports have been guided by the recommendations of an expert advisory group of data users and child advocates, brought together in a series of meetings by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Population Reference Bureau. Members of the advisory group have provided valuable assistance about how to interpret and use data from the 2000 Census.

A list of the advisory group members can be found at the back of this report.

For more information or for a pdf version of this report, visit the Annie E. Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT Web site at [www.kidscount.org](http://www.kidscount.org) or PRB's Ameristat Web site at [www.ameristat.org](http://www.ameristat.org).

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**American Indian and Alaska Native  
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Byung Soo Kim assisted with data processing. All opinions expressed herein and any errors are the sole responsibility of the author.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

American Indians have a unique social, legal, and political status in American society. In particular, they are subject to legislative oversight unlike any other group in the United States. The American Indian Child Welfare Act, passed in 1978, established guidelines and procedures for managing the welfare of children living in distressed social situations. Data from the decennial census are important because they can be used to monitor the size and characteristics of the American Indian population living on reservations, as well as the growing number of people outside of reservations who identify themselves as American Indian. This report presents the first data for American Indians from the 2000 Census.

- The census enumeration of American Indian children was more complex in 2000 than in earlier decades, in part because respondents were instructed to mark all races that applied to indicate their racial identity.
- Historically, American Indians have had high rates of intermarriage with other groups, mostly whites and blacks, so a relatively large number of American Indian children identify with multiple racial groups.
- Comparing the numbers of American Indians reported in the 2000 Census with those from earlier censuses is problematic, because there are now two sets of numbers for which comparisons can be made. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of American Indian children increased by 21 percent (using the single-race definition), or by 99 percent (using the multiple-race definition).
- Overall, 1.4 million children were identified as American Indian in the 2000 Census. The number who reported only one racial group (American Indian, alone) was substantially smaller, at 840,000.
- Census data represent counts of self-identified American Indians, who may or may not be eligible for tribal recognition, so there is a significant mismatch between the numbers reported by the Census Bureau and the number of people considered eligible for tribal membership.
- In 2000, approximately 29 percent of all American Indian children lived on reservations or in Alaska Native villages. The overwhelming majority of children on reservations (87 percent) did not have more than one racial ancestry reported for them.

## **BACKGROUND**

American Indians occupy a singular position in U.S. society, unlike that of any other racial or ethnic minority group, by virtue of having been the first people to occupy the land that is now the United States. Their unique relationship with the federal government has grown out of a long history of conflict and struggle (Prucha 1984, Getches et al. 1998, Wilkins 2002).

American Indians' place in American society is rooted in the Constitution and is manifested in a variety of special institutions. In particular, Section 2 of Article I segregates American Indians for the purpose of allocating political representation and tax obligations. Section 8 of the same article gives Congress the responsibility for managing relations with American Indians; as a result, there are two standing congressional committees, an agency within the executive branch (the Bureau of Indian Affairs), numerous special offices within most federal agencies, an entire volume of the Code of Federal Regulations, and a long history of Supreme Court case law, all devoted to issues pertaining to American Indians. No other racial or ethnic minority group in the United States can claim similar political and legal status.

This unique relationship stems from the fact that in the early history of the United States, American Indians were not considered a part of the nation (Wilkins 2002). From 1790 to 1871, the federal government dealt with American Indians much as it would with foreign nations, using a mixture of diplomacy, treaties, and warfare. When the opportunity arose, there were also federal efforts devoted to "civilizing" American Indians by persuading them—using whatever means necessary—to surrender their tribal culture and adopt the habits and lifestyles of Euro-Americans.

By the late 19th century, the federal government had successfully overwhelmed American Indians' military resistance and had turned to the task of assimilating them into modern society.

Adults were expected to become farmers and, later, workers in urban labor markets (Hoxie 1984, Fixico 1986). Children were frequently sent to boarding schools far from their homes; the schools' curricula were intended to indoctrinate Indian children with Anglo-American cultural ideals while at the same time imparting basic academic skills.

The campaign to assimilate American Indians lasted throughout much of the 20th century. However, the failure of these efforts, combined with increasing American Indian opposition, led the federal government to abandon them in the 1960s. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the federal government gradually replaced the old assimilationist policies with new ones allowing self-determination. These new policies recognized American Indians' rights to decide their own future and to have the principal responsibility for overseeing the affairs of their communities (Gross 1989, Castile 1998).

### **Self-Determination and the Indian Child Welfare Act**

There are few matters of more vital concern to any community than the maintenance of family life and the well-being of its children. For American Indian communities, self-determination included the right to oversee how families experiencing problems were treated, and if necessary, to ensure the protection of American Indian children within the confines of the tribe (Prucha 1984). However, this interpretation of self-determination required a sharp departure from past practices.

Before the passage of the Indian Child Welfare Act in 1978, responsibility for child welfare lay with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and sometimes with local authorities. The decommissioning of the boarding school system began in the early 1930s and accelerated after World War II, so ever-larger numbers of Indian children were able to remain at home with their

parents. To oversee the welfare of these children, and especially of those in distressed or abusive homes, the BIA established the Indian Adoption Project in 1958. This program was a collaborative effort with the Child Welfare League of America.

The number of American Indian children in foster or adoptive homes grew rapidly. In 1961, the BIA placed more than 2,300 children with foster or adoptive parents. Very few of the placements were made on reservations with American Indian families; indeed, the overwhelming majority were made in non-Indian families at considerable distances from tribal communities. There was very little consideration of tribal culture or the value of the child remaining in the tribal community. One quote from this program reveals its lack of cultural sensitivity: “One little, two little, three little Indians—and 206 more—are brightening the homes and lives of 172 American families, mostly non-Indians, who have taken the Indian waifs as their own” (Prucha 1984, p. 1154).

By the late 1960s, American Indian advocates had become alarmed by the statistics showing that American Indian children were placed in foster and adoptive homes at rates far higher than the rates for non-Indian children. For example, between 25 percent and 35 percent of all American Indian children were being raised in foster and adoptive homes. About 85 percent of those in foster care were in non-Indian homes. Some advocates accused the placement services of being motivated primarily by financial motives and of caring little about the well-being of Indian children.

In 1976, the American Indian Policy Review Commission investigated these claims and issued a report agreeing that the problem was serious. The following year, legislation was introduced in both houses of Congress to deal with what one House committee called the “Indian child welfare crisis.” After a year of hearings and deliberations, Congress passed the Indian Child

Welfare Act (ICWA) late in 1978. About six months later, the *Federal Register* of July 21, 1979, published detailed guidelines for the act's implementation (AIPRC 1977).

The ICWA contained a number of provisions designed to slow the adoption of Indian children outside of tribal communities. Perhaps the most significant provision gave American Indian tribes—and American Indian parents—the jurisdictional authority to intervene in child custody proceedings held in state courts when American Indian children were involved. The law also set forth criteria that state courts must adhere to when rendering decisions in child custody cases involving American Indian children. The criteria gave preference in adoption proceedings to members of the child's extended family, other members of the child's tribe, and other American Indian families. The law strives to keep American Indian children in cultural environments similar to, if not the same as, those into which they were born.

Initially, the Indian Child Welfare Act was hailed as a victory by Indian rights activists, and was widely praised as a much-needed action to deal with a very grave problem. But in the more than 20 years that have passed since its enactment, the ICWA has come to be viewed in less sanguine terms. American Indian children continue to be placed in non-Indian homes, and the ICWA has been at the center of a number of intensely controversial child custody cases. One outcome of these controversies is that the act has been vigorously attacked by its critics, prompting Congress to introduce legislation that would diminish or eliminate key provisions of the act.

After several highly publicized custody battles in the early 1990s, a bill that would have significantly weakened the ICWA was introduced in the House of Representatives. The 1996 bill, H.R. 3286, would have restricted tribal jurisdiction over Indian children residing on reservations. It also would have required that one of the child's biological parents "maintain(s) a significant



social, cultural, or political affiliation” with the tribe. In other words, the law would have required one of the child’s parents to demonstrate that he or she was a “real” Indian, forcing the courts to determine the validity of parental claims to an ethnic identity. Despite vociferous opposition from advocates for Indian children’s welfare, the House passed the bill, which was ultimately killed by a Senate committee. Since 1996, several other amendments have been introduced, but none would significantly affect the ICWA’s original intent.

### **Who Is Counted as an American Indian Child?**

Although H.R. 3286 eventually failed, it illustrated a key point of contention that arose in the custody proceedings that prompted it: namely, who is a “real” Indian. A multitude of legal disputes and federal legislation have established the importance of this question, which is also directly relevant to understanding data about American Indian children. There are a number of ways in which an individual might qualify for the ethnic appellation of “American Indian,” but only one pertains to the numbers in this report. Nevertheless, it is worth understanding the various definitions and how they do and do not overlap.

Historically, the federal government has applied a rule of hyperdescent in deciding who will be officially recognized as an American Indian. Since the 19th century, the Bureau of Indian Affairs has maintained records about the blood quantum ancestries of the American Indian population. Blood quantum was once believed to convey information about people’s cultural assimilation as well as about their ancestry. “Full-bloods” had no biological ties to European or African ancestry, and were thought to possess a complete repertoire of Indian cultural characteristics. A person whose ancestry was half European and half American Indian would have a blood quantum of one-half. Perhaps more significantly, this person would have been

considered twice as civilized as a full-blood American Indian, having only half the cultural characteristics of an American Indian. For most official purposes, a person ceased to be considered an American Indian once their blood quantum fell below one-quarter. In practical terms, if three of an individual's grandparents were non-Indians, that individual would have been considered an American Indian only if the fourth grandparent was a full-blood (Snipp 1989, Thornton 1996).

For much of the 20th century, blood quantum was the operational standard for determining who would be officially recognized as an American Indian. But by the 1970s a series of legal challenges had begun to undermine the criterion's usefulness. The American Indian Policy Review Commission (AIPRC) noted the problems associated with defining identity by using blood quantum, and reiterated an earlier congressional action that defined American Indians as "members of American Indian tribes" (AIPRC 1977). Although somewhat circular, this definition for who is an American Indian has the virtue of allowing tribes to establish their own membership criteria. The decision to let tribes determine their membership was consistent with other congressional actions related to tribal self-determination: If tribes are to be allowed to manage their own affairs, there are few matters more fundamental than determining who is to be recognized as a tribal member.

For many official purposes, tribal membership is considered a basic standard for determining who is an American Indian. But this criterion is also a source of considerable misunderstanding, in part because the procedures and documentation used for determining tribal membership vary considerably between tribes. Some tribes use highly restrictive criteria and have very strict requirements for documentation, while other tribes have more inclusive standards.

Confusion also stems from the fact that not all people who claim to be American Indian are enrolled members of recognized tribes. The number of enrolled American Indians is typically smaller than other estimates of the American Indian population, such as those from the census. The difference appears because not every individual eligible to enroll in a tribe bothers to do so, especially in urban areas far from tribal government offices, where there are few incentives to enroll. Also, some people who regard themselves as American Indians are nonetheless ineligible for membership.

A third source of confusion is that some tribes are recognized by the federal government, some by states, and some by neither state nor federal authorities. The reasons for these different levels of official recognition are too complex to detail in this report. Suffice it to say that not everyone who might have a valid claim to being an American Indian is recognized as such by federal authorities, or even by other American Indians.

Some branches of the federal government have eschewed the difficult task of verifying the ethnic identity of their constituencies. The Census Bureau is especially notable in this regard. After evaluating the 1950 Census, the Census Bureau realized that allowing enumerators to observe and record the race of household members was a source of considerable error. To remedy this problem, the 1960 Decennial Census asked respondents to identify their own race and that of other members of the household. Self-identification significantly improved the coverage of racial and ethnic minorities in the census, and the reported size of the American Indian population increased much more than had been expected. But the revised count included some people who were not enrolled tribal members, who were not eligible for tribal membership, or who could claim little or no connection with other American Indians beyond a weak recollection of racial heritage.

## **CENSUS DATA ON AMERICAN INDIAN CHILDREN**

### **Recent trends**

The Census Bureau's reliance on self-identification to elicit information about race has been associated with the very dramatic growth in the American Indian population. Between 1970 and 1980, the American Indian population increased by about 73 percent; between 1980 and 1990, it increased by approximately 45 percent. Population growth of such magnitude cannot be accounted for simply by an excess number of births relative to deaths. Some of the growth is attributable to improved coverage by the census, but the largest part is almost certainly the result of people changing the race they report for themselves from one census to the next. The fact that a substantial number of "new" American Indians have appeared in each census makes comparisons over time very difficult. Analysts cannot be certain whether changes in population characteristics, such as household income, are due to the addition of people who formerly identified themselves as some other race, or if it is due to changing conditions in the social environment of American Indians (Passell 1996).

Compared to the population as a whole, increases in the numbers of American Indian children have been more moderate. For example, between 1980 and 1990, the American Indian child population grew 25 percent, from 556,000 to 697,000. But ethnic switching may still have affected the counts for children. This is most clearly shown in a comparison of cohorts of children across censuses. For instance, there were 147,000 American Indian children ages 5 to 9 reported in the 1980 Census. Allowing for some small improvements in finding and counting American Indians, as well as for a small number of deaths in this age group, the number of American Indian children ages 15 to 19 reported in 1990 should have been about the same as the number of children ages 5 to 9 in 1980. But 181,000 American Indians ages 15 to 19 were

reported in 1990, an increase of about 34,000 people, or 23 percent. Considering the expected stability of this age cohort, the increase is quite large. Such changes in the number of people reporting themselves as American Indians have made it difficult to evaluate the causes of change in other characteristics such as household income, poverty rates, and other measures of child well-being.

Since 1960, self-identification has been the vehicle for enumerating American Indians, but there were some important differences in how it was implemented for the 2000 Census. The changes stem from rules, adopted in 1997 by the Office of Management and Budget, that stipulate how racial data should be collected for use in federal statistical systems. One rule specifies that “American Indian” may include people of Central or South American heritage. The rule’s impact is difficult to gauge. The number of Central and South American Indians in the United States is probably quite small, so the rule should have a negligible effect on the number of people enumerated as American Indian. The rule that allows respondents to select as many categories as they wish to express their racial heritage, however, could significantly affect estimates of the size of the American Indian population.

Allowing respondents to mark all races that describe them has had a major effect on the count of American Indians, because the American Indian population includes a very large number of mixed-race individuals. Historically, American Indians have had high rates of intermarriage with other groups, mostly whites and blacks (Sandefur and Liebler 1996, Sandefur and McKinnell 1986); the first celebrated instance involved the wedding of John Rolfe and Pocahontas. It was common for American Indians in the Midwest to marry French fur traders (White 1991), and for those in the southeast to marry runaway slaves and Scots-Irish traders (Usner 1992). Some 19th-century reformers advocated intermarriage as a means of civilizing

American Indians (Bieder 1986). The 1910 Census found that barely half of all American Indians were “full-bloods.” Today, many people can legitimately identify themselves as American Indian and white, American Indian and black, or some other combination, even though many choose to identify themselves simply as “American Indian.”

Comparing the numbers of American Indians reported in the census with those from earlier censuses is more problematic than it was in the past, since there are now two sets of numbers for which comparisons can be made. In 2000, the lower-bound estimate shows the number of people who reported only American Indian heritage. There were approximately 840,000 such children in the 2000 Census (see Table 1). The upper-bound estimate includes both American Indian children with heterogeneous ancestry and those reporting only American Indian heritage, adding up to about 1.4 million children. Thus, the number of American Indian children increased by somewhere between 21 percent (if the lower-bound estimate is used) and 99 percent (if the upper-bound estimate is used) between 1990 and 2000.

Table 1. American Indian and Alaska Native Population Under Age 18, 1990 and 2000

	1990	2000	Percent change, 1990–2000
American Indian	696,967	—	—
American Indian, alone	—	840,312	20.6
American Indian, alone or in combination	—	1,383,502	98.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1.

### **Geographic Distribution of American Indian Children**

The four tables that follow this discussion reflect the size and distribution of American Indian children for different types of geographic areas: reservations, states, counties, and cities with large American Indian populations. Each table provides different insights into the American

Indian child population. These numbers should be especially valuable in identifying where populations of American Indian children are most concentrated.

With American Indians' levels of intermarriage exceeding 50 percent, the population of American Indian children includes a very large proportion with mixed heritage. Some American Indian children have only one racial ancestry, while many others have more than one; some children have as many as six. For simplicity's sake, only three sets of numbers appear in the tables that follow: One set for children for whom only one racial category—American Indian—was reported (American Indian, alone), another for children whose race was reported as American Indian in combination with some other racial heritage (American Indian, in combination), and a third that combines the other two numbers (American Indian, alone or in combination).

The 2000 data presented in this report have been derived from the PL 94-171 files released in March 2001 by the U.S. Census Bureau. Later this year, data on American Indians will be available from the 2000 Census long form.

#### American Indian Children on Reservations

The data in Table 2 show where the federal government's oversight of Indian affairs is most concentrated. This table shows the 25 federally- or state-recognized reservations with the largest numbers of American Indian and Alaska Native children. In 2000, there were 619 reservations and Alaska Native Villages in the United States, home to about 29 percent of all American Indian and Alaska Native children.

The largest of these lands, the Navajo reservation, overlaps the boundaries of three states (Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah), and is about the size of the state of West Virginia or the nation of Ireland. In 2000, there were 73,000 American Indian children living on the Navajo

reservation, about two-thirds of whom lived in the Arizona portion of the reservation. Although there are other large reservations in the West, especially in Oklahoma, they are physically and demographically smaller than the Navajo reservation. The Lumbee American Indian Statistical Area in North Carolina was the only reservation east of the Mississippi with a relatively large number of American Indian children in 2000 (about 20,000). Most reservations are small settlements, with fewer than 500 American Indians, and a few are so small that they reported that there were no children in their community.

Table 2. 25 Reservations with the Largest American Indian and Alaska Native Populations Under Age 18, 2000

Rank		American Indian, alone	American Indian, in combination	American Indian, alone or in combination
1	Navajo Nation Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land, AZ-NM-UT	71,997	839	72,836
2	Cherokee OTSA, OK	27,950	10,653	38,603
3	Creek OTSA, OK	17,862	9,373	27,235
4	Lumbee SDAISA, NC	18,573	1,840	20,413
5	Choctaw OTSA, OK	10,981	3,813	14,794
6	Chickasaw OTSA, OK	8,650	3,615	12,265
7	Pine Ridge Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land, NE-SD	6,688	82	6,770
8	United Houma Nation SDAISA, LA	4,052	1,578	5,630
9	Fort Apache Reservation, AZ	5,259	83	5,342
10	Kiowa-Comanche-Apache-Fort Sill Apache OTSA, OK	3,284	1,398	4,682
11	Gila River Reservation, AZ	4,519	118	4,637
12	Rosebud Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land, SD	4,282	57	4,339
13	San Carlos Reservation, AZ	3,942	69	4,011
14	Cheyenne-Arapaho OTSA, OK	2,790	1,154	3,944
15	Citizen Potawatomi Nation-Absentee Shawnee OTSA, OK	2,416	1,400	3,816
16	Tohono O'odham Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land, AZ	3,765	47	3,812
17	Blackfeet Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land, MT	3,395	75	3,470
18	Yakama Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land, WA	3,079	364	3,443
19	Osage Reservation, OK	2,369	1,013	3,382
20	Turtle Mountain Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land, MT-ND-SD	3,353	6	3,359
21	Flathead Reservation, MT	2,661	401	3,062
22	Fort Peck Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land, MT	2,791	92	2,883
23	Cheyenne River Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land, SD	2,818	48	2,866
24	Wind River Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land, WY	2,687	140	2,827
25	Zuni Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land, AZ-NM	2,710	23	2,733

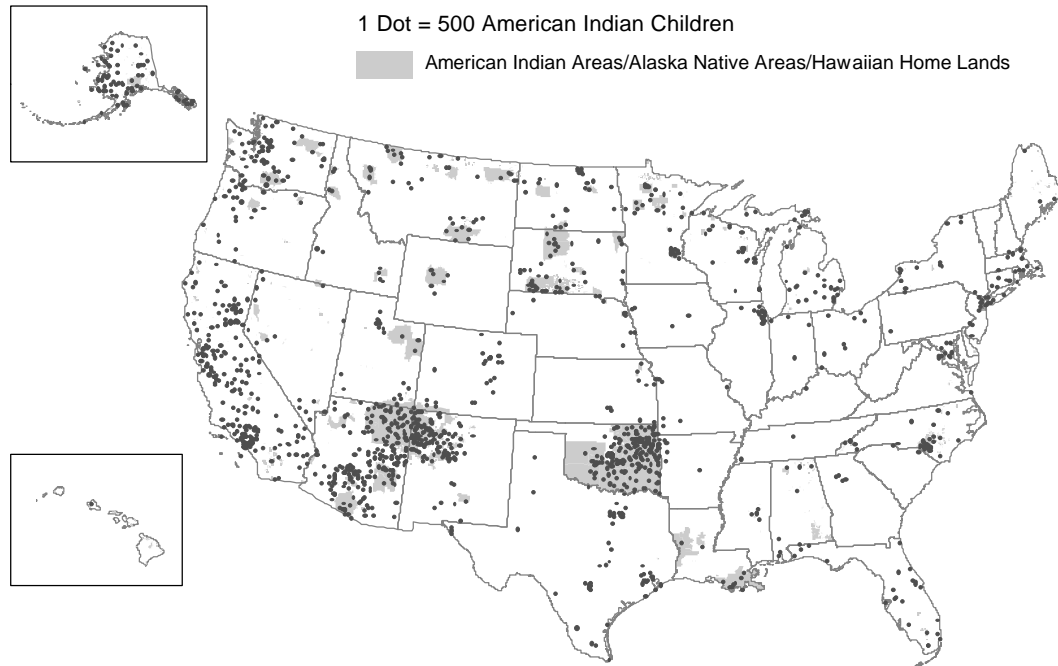
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1.

Note: OTSA = Oklahoma Tribal Statistical Area.



About 87 percent of American Indian children living on reservations reported only one race, compared with 61 percent of American Indian children as a whole. On the Navajo reservation, about 99 percent of American Indian children reported only one race. The map below shows the geographic distribution of American Indian children who selected only one race. Indian reservations are highlighted in gray, showing the concentration of American Indian children in those areas. The map also shows relatively large numbers of children outside of reservations in Alaska and in states on the Pacific Coast.

### Distribution of American Indian Children\*



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1.  
 \*Note: Includes only those who selected "American Indian" alone.

### American Indian Children by State

Table 3 shows the number of American Indian children living in each state in 1990 and 2000. In 2000, nearly 70 percent of all American Indian children lived in states west of the Mississippi river.

Table 3. American Indian and Alaska Native Population Under Age 18, by State, 1990 and 2000

	2000			
	1990	American Indian, alone	American Indian, in combination	American Indian, alone or in combination
United States	696,967	840,312	543,190	1,383,502
Alabama	5,697	6,286	5,768	12,054
Alaska	34,753	37,791	10,818	48,609
Arizona	85,498	100,596	14,665	115,261
Arkansas	3,693	5,318	5,399	10,717
California	73,986	106,386	98,702	205,088
Colorado	9,212	13,143	12,602	25,745
Connecticut	1,735	2,899	4,694	7,593
Delaware	498	667	1,076	1,743
District of Columbia	241	352	564	916
Florida	9,555	13,977	17,022	30,999
Georgia	3,442	5,633	8,405	14,038
Hawaii	1,578	714	8,728	9,442
Idaho	5,122	6,034	3,693	9,727
Illinois	6,182	9,415	12,889	22,304
Indiana	3,661	4,299	6,809	11,108
Iowa	2,780	3,148	3,461	6,609
Kansas	7,276	7,836	8,014	15,850
Kentucky	1,432	2,070	3,839	5,909
Louisiana	6,547	8,230	5,194	13,424
Maine	2,126	2,282	1,966	4,248
Maryland	3,412	4,119	7,408	11,527
Massachusetts	3,577	4,600	7,210	11,810
Michigan	19,018	18,488	23,475	41,963
Minnesota	20,491	20,607	11,422	32,029
Mississippi	3,312	4,023	2,054	6,077
Missouri	5,648	6,792	10,297	17,089
Montana	19,880	22,082	4,349	26,431
Nebraska	5,234	5,940	3,072	9,012
Nevada	6,313	8,068	5,530	13,598
New Hampshire	554	801	1,444	2,245
New Jersey	3,897	5,677	8,607	14,284
New Mexico	54,455	64,953	7,368	72,321
New York	19,012	27,313	26,887	54,200
North Carolina	26,506	30,029	10,058	40,087
North Dakota	11,629	12,904	1,989	14,893
Ohio	5,391	6,334	15,289	21,623
Oklahoma	94,136	98,144	43,856	142,000
Oregon	13,358	14,480	13,899	28,379
Pennsylvania	3,817	5,093	10,603	15,696
Rhode Island	1,361	1,877	2,024	3,901
South Carolina	2,333	3,754	3,926	7,680
South Dakota	23,489	27,804	2,966	30,770
Tennessee	2,487	3,622	5,770	9,392
Texas	18,621	35,508	27,786	63,294
Utah	10,857	11,618	4,896	16,514
Vermont	542	655	1,162	1,817
Virginia	3,602	5,225	9,144	14,369
Washington	29,412	31,217	24,371	55,588
West Virginia	589	767	1,596	2,363
Wisconsin	15,115	16,668	8,982	25,650
Wyoming	3,905	4,074	1,442	5,516

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1.

California and Oklahoma had the largest populations of children identified as being American Indian, with 205,000 and 142,000 Indian children, respectively. In 1990, the number of American Indians in Oklahoma (94,000) exceeded the number in California (74,000). However, in 2000, there were 99,000 American Indian children with a multiracial ancestry in California, more than double the number living in Oklahoma. Thus, it appears that the structure of the 2000 question about race prompted a substantial number of people in California to report that they were American Indians. Although California had the largest numerical increase of American Indian children over the decade, Hawaii had the largest percentage increase (almost 500 percent).

Other states with large American Indian populations in 2000 included Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and Washington. For historical reasons, New England and the southeastern United States have relatively few American Indians, and a fairly large fraction of the American Indian population in those areas reports a multiracial background. In Vermont, about two-thirds of the 1,800 American Indian children who live in the state reported having a heritage that included some other race.

#### American Indian Children by County

Table 4 shows the 25 counties with the largest numbers of American Indian and Alaska Native children in 2000. Of the top 25 counties, 21 were in the West, three were in the East, and one was in the Midwest. Los Angeles topped the list, with 44,000 American Indian children in 2000, followed by Maricopa County, Arizona (28,000), and McKinley County, New Mexico (24,000). About 42 percent of American Indian children in Los Angeles reported more than one race, compared with 27 percent of children in Maricopa County and only 3 percent of children in McKinley County.

Table 4. 25 Counties with the Largest American Indian and Alaska Native Populations Under Age 18, 2000

			American Indian, alone	American Indian in combination	American Indian, alone or in combination
1	Los Angeles	California	25,280	18,566	43,846
2	Maricopa	Arizona	20,426	7,689	28,115
3	McKinley	New Mexico	22,875	770	23,645
4	Apache	Arizona	21,905	379	22,284
5	Navajo	Arizona	19,633	592	20,225
6	San Juan	New Mexico	16,220	857	17,077
7	Tulsa	Oklahoma	9,875	6,164	16,039
8	Robeson	North Carolina	14,959	623	15,582
9	Coconino	Arizona	13,737	791	14,528
10	San Diego	California	7,116	7,318	14,434
11	San Bernardino	California	6,641	6,504	13,145
12	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	7,231	5,293	12,524
13	Pima	Arizona	9,840	2,367	12,207
14	Orange	California	6,269	5,935	12,204
15	Riverside	California	6,235	5,153	11,388
16	Cook	Illinois	4,988	5,641	10,629
17	Anchorage	Alaska	6,425	4,139	10,564
18	Sacramento	California	3,994	6,447	10,441
19	King	Washington	4,213	5,689	9,902
20	Bernalillo	New Mexico	7,147	2,291	9,438
21	Harris	Texas	4,818	3,708	8,526
22	Queens	New York	3,849	4,340	8,189
23	Fresno	California	4,691	2,807	7,498
24	Bronx	New York	4,616	2,760	7,376
25	Pierce	Washington	3,304	4,016	7,320

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1.

Most counties are home to relatively few American Indian children. In 2000, over half of the counties in the United States had fewer than 100 American Indian children apiece. Given the relatively small size of the American Indian population, this is not surprising. Table 4 also underscores the point that most American Indians live either on reservations or in a small number of cities; counties that have a sizable number of American Indians almost always include all or part of such places. For example, Cook County, Illinois, has a relatively large American Indian population because it is part of the Chicago metropolitan area, where a large number of American Indians live.

## American Indian Children by City

Finally, Table 5 shows the 50 U.S. cities with the largest numbers of American Indian children, according to 2000 Census.

Table 5. 50 Cities (100,000 or More Population) with the Largest American Indian and Alaska Native Populations Under Age 18, 2000

Rank		American Indian, alone	American Indian in combination	American Indian, alone or in combination
1	New York City, New York	14,754	12,277	27,031
2	Los Angeles, California	9,545	6,308	15,853
3	Phoenix, Arizona	9,303	3,394	12,697
4	Anchorage, Alaska	6,425	4,139	10,564
5	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma	5,681	4,009	9,690
6	Tulsa, Oklahoma	5,810	3,873	9,683
7	Albuquerque, New Mexico	5,233	1,836	7,069
8	Chicago, Illinois	3,281	3,041	6,322
9	Tucson, Arizona	3,493	1,518	5,011
10	San Antonio, Texas	3,169	1,669	4,838
11	Minneapolis, Minnesota	2,971	1,836	4,807
12	San Diego, California	1,937	2,657	4,594
13	Houston, Texas	2,741	1,823	4,564
14	Fresno, California	2,480	1,695	4,175
15	San Jose, California	2,026	2,068	4,094
16	Sacramento, California	1,641	2,270	3,911
17	Denver, Colorado	2,201	1,516	3,717
18	Portland, Oregon	1,428	2,073	3,501
19	Milwaukee, Wisconsin	1,806	1,612	3,418
20	Mesa, Arizona	2,263	1,081	3,344
21	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	1,231	1,958	3,189
22	Dallas, Texas	1,835	1,235	3,070
23	Detroit, Michigan	936	1,935	2,871
24	Seattle, Washington	1,073	1,685	2,758
25	Wichita, Kansas	1,221	1,441	2,662
26	Tacoma, Washington	1,320	1,333	2,653
27	Long Beach, California	1,233	1,173	2,406
28	St. Paul, Minnesota	1,177	1,215	2,392
29	Colorado Springs, Colorado	910	1,464	2,374
30	El Paso, Texas	1,623	565	2,188
31	Bakersfield, California	1,190	996	2,186
32	Spokane, Washington	1,156	1,009	2,165
33	Las Vegas, Nevada	1,017	1,106	2,123
34	Santa Ana, California	1,495	627	2,122
35	Stockton, California	928	1,178	2,106
36	Columbus, Ohio	537	1,380	1,917
37	Oakland, California	753	1,145	1,898
38	Riverside, California	907	932	1,839
39	Glendale, Arizona	1,210	586	1,796
40	Austin, Texas	986	809	1,795
41	Omaha, Nebraska	901	876	1,777
42	Anaheim, California	1,075	695	1,770
43	Modesto, California	788	967	1,755
44	San Bernardino, California	997	748	1,745
45	Green Bay, Wisconsin	1,254	459	1,713
46	Fort Worth, Texas	911	791	1,702
47	Aurora, Colorado	666	993	1,659
48	Honolulu, Hawaii	118	1,509	1,627
49	Boston, Massachusetts	761	804	1,565
50	San Francisco, California	495	989	1,484

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1.

Only eight of the cities are located east of the Mississippi River. In 2000, New York City was home to over 27,000 American Indian children, the largest number of any city in the United States, while Los Angeles had nearly 16,000. In past censuses, Los Angeles had usually reported the largest American Indian population. Not only is Los Angeles in the West, it also was one of the cities to which the Bureau of Indian Affairs relocated thousands of American Indians during the 1950s and 1960s. The BIA relocation programs also operated in cities such as Seattle, San Francisco, Phoenix, Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and Minneapolis-St. Paul. Although these programs were curtailed in the late 1960s, large numbers of American Indians continue to reside in these cities.



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### **Websites**

Indian Health Service: [www.ihs.gov](http://www.ihs.gov). Provides statistics and information about American Indian health and about the services provided by the Indian Health Service, a branch of the Public Health Service in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Bureau of Indian Affairs: [www.doi.gov/bureau-indian-affairs.html](http://www.doi.gov/bureau-indian-affairs.html). Provides statistics and information about the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the tribal governments that the bureau serves. The BIA is a branch of the U.S. Department of Interior.

Many tribal governments and other American Indian organizations also maintain a presence on the World Wide Web. They can be found using a search engine, such as Yahoo! or Alta Vista.





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