

## Section 1 - American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut Population

### Although we are the First Americans, we have only been counted as a population for 100 years.

Estimates of the number of American Indians (including Eskimos and Aleuts) have been made since the founding of the Nation, but it was not until 1860 that the Federal Government counted this group. In 1860, Indians were counted if they had left their reservations and lived among other Americans. The 1890 census was the first to obtain a complete census of American Indians throughout the country.

In the first half of this century, the American Indian population grew slowly in contrast to the period from 1950 to 1990, which was one of rapid growth.

Projections show growth of the American Indian population, reaching 4.6 million by 2050.

Nearly one-half of the American Indian population lived in the West in 1990, 29 percent in the South, 17 percent in the Midwest, and 6 percent in the Northeast. Between 1980 and 1990, the proportion of American Indians increased noticeably only in the South, from 26 percent to 29 percent.

### Our 500 tribes vary greatly in size.

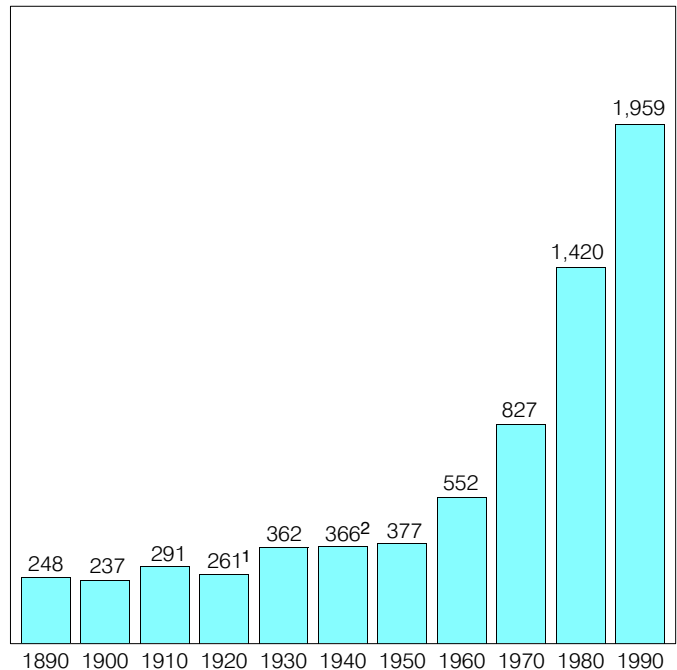
In 1990, the only tribes with more than 100,000 persons were the Cherokee, Navajo, Chippewa, and Sioux. Approximately 16 percent of all Indians reported themselves as Cherokee, 12 percent as Navajo, and 6 percent each as Chippewa and Sioux.

The Choctaw, Pueblo, and Apache had populations of at least 50,000 persons. The Choctaw accounted for 4 percent of the American Indian population. The Iroquois Confederacy, Lumbee, and Creek all had 43,000 or more persons.

The 1990 census showed that 14 tribes had a population between 10,000 and 21,000 persons. Most tribes had populations of less than 10,000.

Figure 1.  
American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut Population: 1890 to 1990

(Thousands)

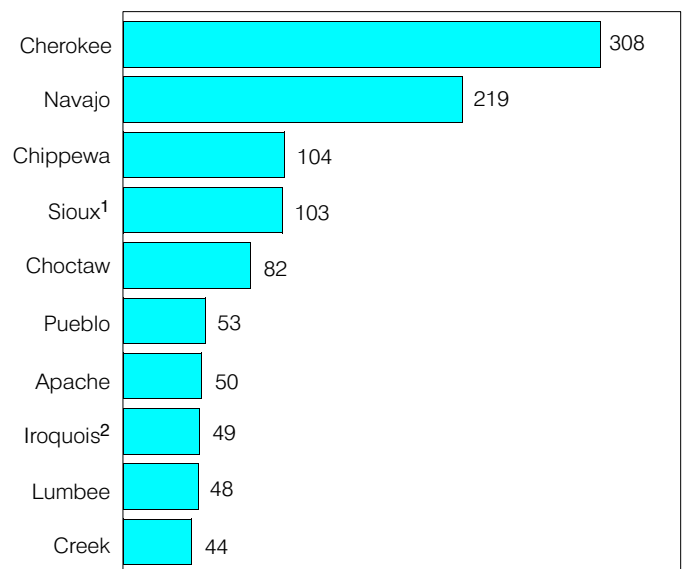


<sup>1</sup> Partially estimated.

<sup>2</sup> Eskimo and Aleut population are based on 1939 counts.

Figure 2.  
Ten Largest American Indian Tribes: 1990

(Thousands)



<sup>1</sup> Any entry with the spelling "Siouan" was miscoded to Sioux in North Carolina.

<sup>2</sup> Reporting and/or processing problems have affected the data for this tribe.

**We have more families maintained by a female householder than the total population.**

In 1990, the vast majority of American Indian (including Eskimo and Aleut) families had both a husband and wife present. However, the proportion of families maintained by a female householder without a husband present was higher than the national figure.

Among the Nation's 442,000 American Indian families in 1990, 6 in 10 were married-couple families compared with about 8 in 10 of the Nation's 64.5 million families.

Consistent with the national trend, the proportion of American Indian families maintained by a female householder without a husband present increased during the last decade and reached 27 percent in 1990. This proportion was considerably larger than the national figure of 17 percent.

American Indian families were slightly larger than all families—3.6 persons per family versus 3.2 persons per family. In 1990, American Indian married-couple families (54 percent) were less likely to have children under 18 years old compared with all married-couple families (70 percent).

**Our educational attainment improved during the 1980's.**

The educational attainment levels of American Indians (including Eskimos and Aleuts) improved significantly during the 1980's, but remained considerably below the levels of the total population.

In 1990, 66 percent of the 1,080,000 American Indians 25 years old and over were high school graduates or higher compared with only 56 percent in 1980. Despite the advances, the 1990 proportion was still below the total population (75 percent).

American Indians were not as likely as the entire U.S. population to have completed a bachelor's degree or higher. About 9 percent of American Indians completed a bachelor's degree or higher in 1990 compared with 8 percent in 1980—still lower than the 20 percent for the total population in 1990.

Figure 5. **Families by Type of Family: 1990**

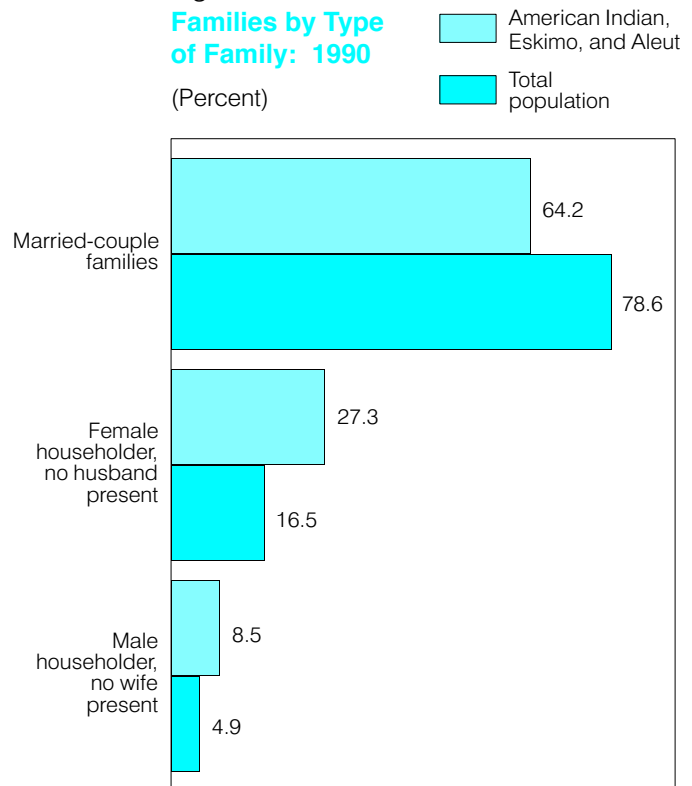
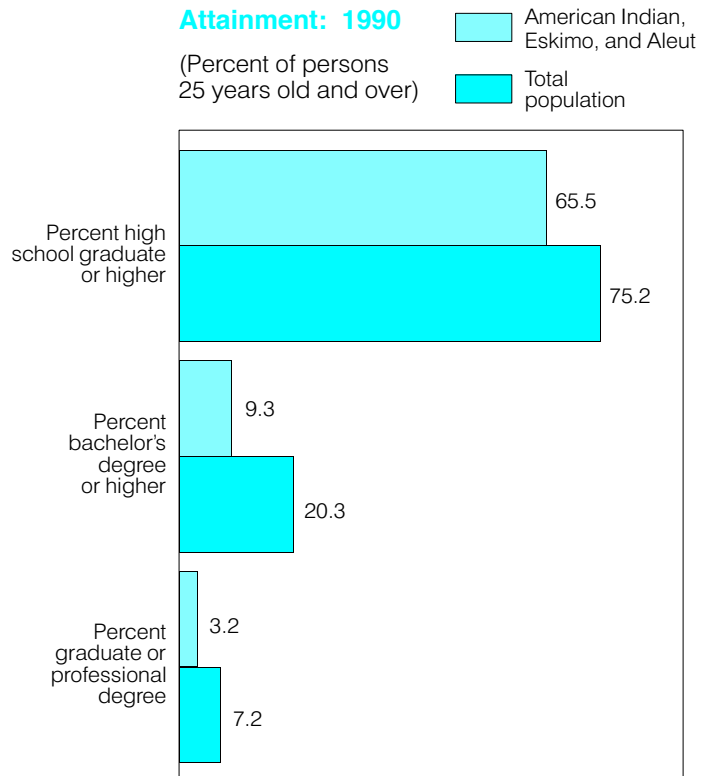


Figure 6. **Educational Attainment: 1990**



**We have lower labor force participation rates than the total population.**

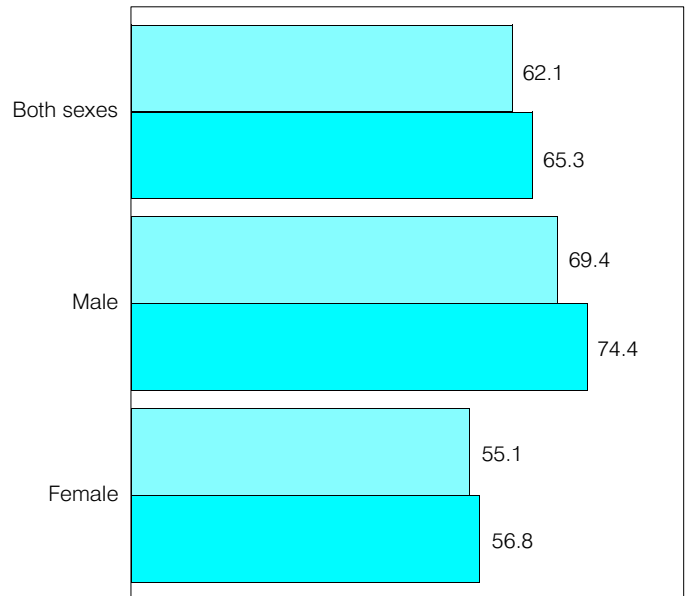
Overall, 62 percent of the 1,395,009 American Indians (including Eskimos and Aleuts) 16 years old and over were in the labor force in 1990, 3 percentage points below the 65 percent for the total population.

Sixty-nine percent of American Indian males 16 years old and over were in the labor force compared with more than 74 percent for all males.

American Indian women have shared in the national trend of increased labor force participation by women. The proportion of American Indian women in the labor force increased from 48 percent in 1980 to 55 percent in 1990. The rate for all women in 1990 was only slightly higher at 57 percent.

Figure 7.  
**Labor Force Participation Rates by Sex: 1990**

(Percent of persons 16 years old and over)



**Our choices of occupations differ from those of all Americans.**

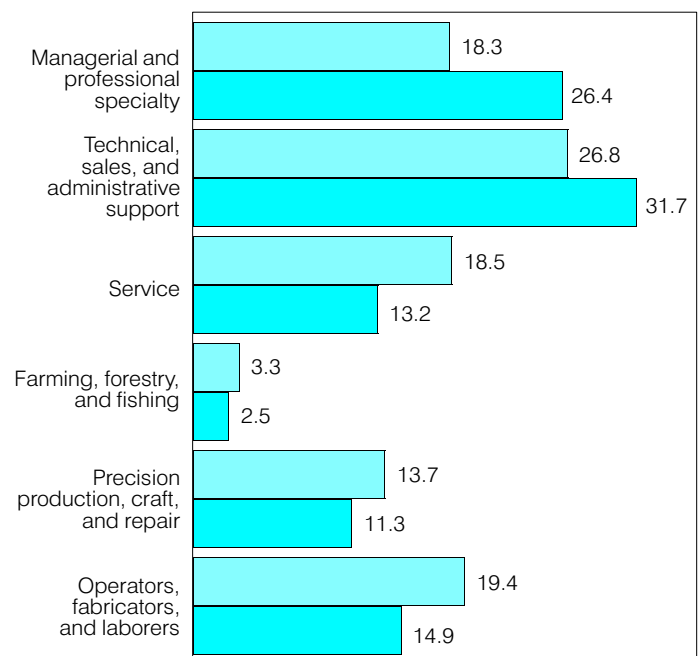
In 1990, 729,000 American Indians (including Eskimos and Aleuts) were employed in various occupations. The distribution of employed American Indians among the six major occupational categories differed from that of the general population.

A smaller proportion of American Indians than of the total population were employed in managerial and professional specialty occupations. This was also true for technical, sales, and administrative support jobs.

A larger proportion of American Indians than of the total population were employed in service occupations; farming, forestry, and fishing jobs; precision production, craft, and repair occupations; or were employed as operators, fabricators, and laborers.

Figure 8.  
**Occupation: 1990**

(Percent of employed persons 16 years old and over)



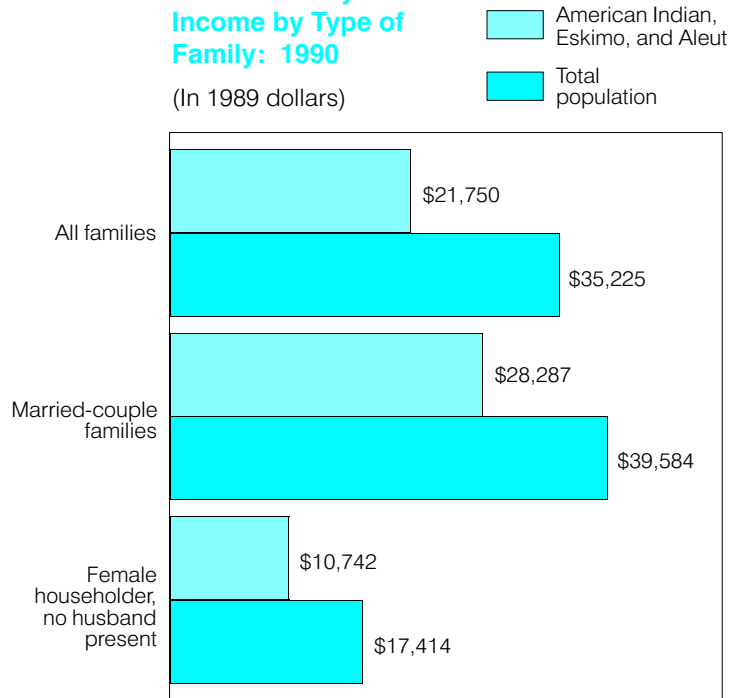
**Our incomes are well below those of all Americans.**

In 1990, the median family income of American Indians (including Eskimos and Aleuts) was \$21,750 compared with \$35,225 for the total population. Stated another way, for every \$100 U.S. families received, American Indian families received \$62.

The median income of American Indian married-couple families was \$28,287, or 71 percent of the \$39,584 median for all married-couple families.

Twenty-seven percent of all American Indian families were maintained by a female householder with no husband present in 1990. The median income for these families was \$10,742, about 62 percent of the \$17,414 median for all families maintained by women without husbands.

Figure 9.  
**Median Family Income by Type of Family: 1990**  
(In 1989 dollars)



**Many of our people live in poverty.**

The proportion of American Indian (including Eskimo and Aleut) persons and families living below the official Government poverty level in 1989 was considerably higher than that of the total population.

In 1989, about 603,000, or 31 percent, of American Indians were living below the poverty level. The national poverty rate was about 13 percent (31.7 million persons).

Twenty-seven percent, or 125,000, American Indian families were in poverty in 1989 compared with 10 percent of all families (6.5 million).

Fifty percent of American Indian families maintained by females with no husband present were in poverty compared with 31 percent of all families maintained by women without husbands.

Figure 10.  
**Poverty Rates in 1989 by Type of Family**  
(Percent in poverty)

