

Fun Facts: Native American Heritage Month



The Start of Native American Heritage Month

The first American Indian Day was celebrated in May 1916 in New York. Red Fox James, a member of the Blackfeet Nation, rode horseback from state to state to get endorsements from 24 state governments to have a day to honor American Indians. In 1990, President George H.W. Bush signed a joint congressional resolution designating November 1990 as "National American Indian Heritage Month." Similar proclamations have been issued every year since 1994, and we now refer to this celebration as "Native American Heritage Month."

What's the Age?

32 – Median age of the American Indian and Alaska Native population in 2023.

Educational Attainment

Of American Indian and Alaska Natives 25 years and over, approximately...

- **16%** have less than a high school diploma
- **28%** are high school graduates (includes equivalency)
- **33%** have some college or an associate's degree
- **15%** have a bachelor's degree
- **9%** have a graduate or professional degree



AIAN-Owned Businesses

0.82% or 48,582 businesses were owned by American Indian and Alaska Natives.
(This number only represents employer businesses.)

Some of the American Indian and Alaska Native-owned businesses were:

- Construction – **10,065**
- Professional, scientific, and technical services – **5,931**
(includes architectural, engineering and veterinary services)
- Healthcare and social assistance – **5,625**
(includes dentist and doctors' offices)
- Accommodation and food services – **4,816**
- Retail trade – **3,881**
(includes clothing, shoe, and book stores)



Total Population of AIAN Origin

2.2% or 7.4 million – The number of American Indian and Alaska Natives in the United States in 2023. These states have among the highest percentage of American Indian and Alaska Native residents:

20.4%
Alaska



14.3%
Oklahoma



Largest Tribal Groupings



574 – The number of federally recognized Indian tribes in 2023.

3 largest American Indian tribal groupings*

- Navajo – **318,159**
- Mexican American Indian – **313,771**
- Cherokee – **232,990**

3 largest Alaska Native tribal groupings*

- Yup'ik – **36,474**
- Inupiat – **28,444**
- Alaskan Athabaskan – **14,879**

Tribal groupings refer to the combining of individual American Indian and Alaska Native tribes, such as combining Fort Sill Apache, Mescalero Apache, and San Carlos Apache, into the general Apache tribal grouping.

*2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Note: All of the data on this page, except the business data, is for AIAN alone or in combination with other races.

Sources: Vintage 2023 Population Estimates; Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2023; 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year Estimates; 2011-2015 ACS, Selected Population Detailed Tables, 5-Year Estimates; 2021 Annual Business Survey.