

2. THE GEOGRAPHY OF AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE AREAS

Data from the American Community Survey (ACS) are tabulated for a variety of different geographic areas, including states, counties, cities, towns, census tracts, and block groups, as well as American Indian and Alaska Native legal and statistical areas, such as American Indian Reservations, Alaska Native Village Statistical Areas, or Oklahoma Tribal Statistical Areas.

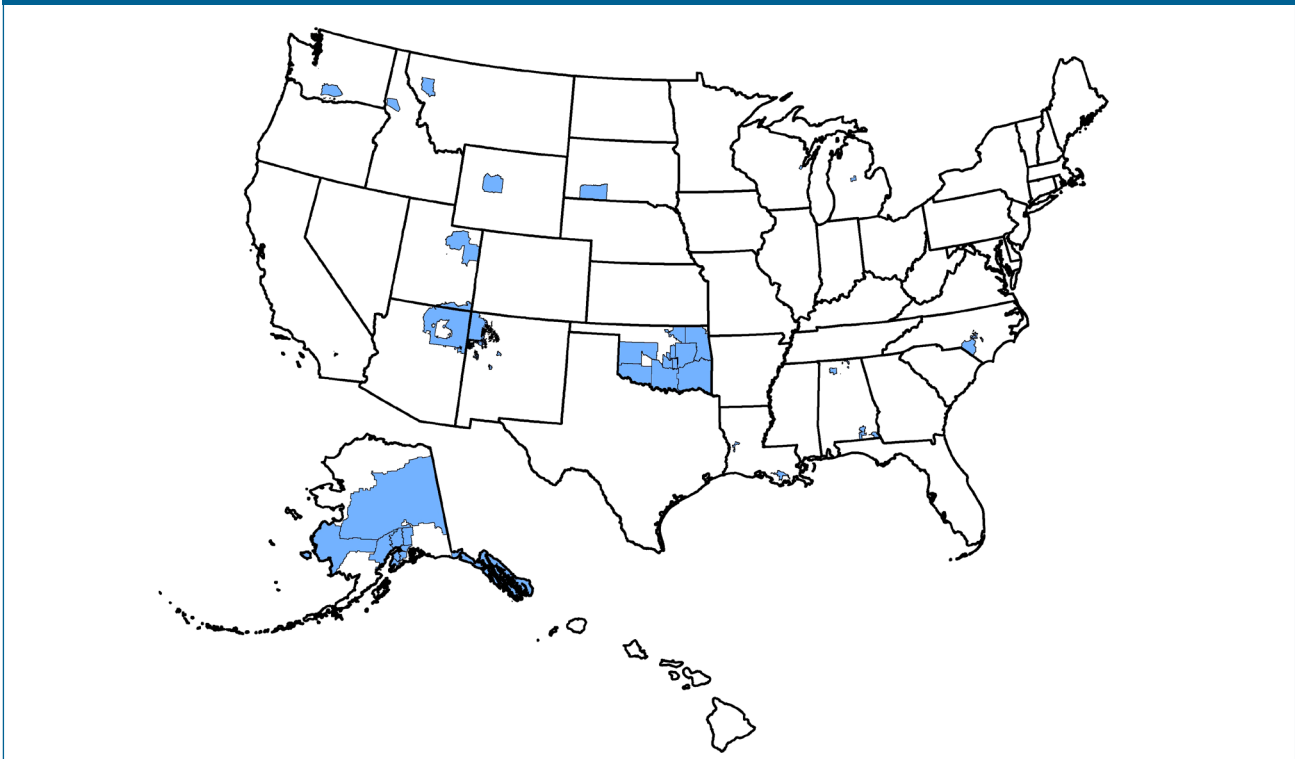
The availability of data for a specific population group will depend on the size of that population group or the population size of the geographic area of interest.

TIP: Most American Indian and Alaska Native areas have populations of less than 20,000 and therefore receive only 5-year data products. This means that for many topics, 1-year estimates of the American Indian and Alaska Native population are only available at the national- and state-level.

Table 2.1 lists the American Indian and Alaska Native areas for which 2018 ACS data are available as 1-year estimates (16 areas) or 1-year supplemental estimates (38 areas). Alaska Native Regional Corporations—unique corporate entities established to conduct business with Alaska Natives—are included as separate geographic areas on this list. Note that the information in this table is based on current geographic boundaries and is expected to change over time. The ACS uses boundaries as of January 1 of the last year of the estimate period. For example, the 2018 ACS 1-year estimates use boundaries as of January 1, 2018, as reported to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Figure 2.1 shows a map of the 38 American Indian and Alaska Native areas that met the 65,000 population threshold for 2018 ACS 1-year estimates, or the 20,000 population threshold for 1-year supplemental estimates. Of these areas, half were located in either Alaska or Oklahoma.

Figure 2.1 American Indian and Alaska Native Areas for Which ACS 1-Year Estimates or ACS 1-Year Supplemental Estimates Were Released: 2018



Note: One-year estimates are available for areas with at least 65,000 people, and 1-year supplemental estimates are available for areas with at least 20,000 people.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.

Table 2.1. American Indian and Alaska Native Areas for Which ACS 1-Year Estimates and 1-Year Supplemental Estimates Were Released: 2018

American Indian Area/Alaska Native Area	1-year estimates	1-year supplemental estimates	2018 ACS population
Calista Alaska Native Regional Corporation, AK		X	26,343
Cook Inlet Alaska Native Regional Corporation, AK	X	X	453,587
Doyon Alaska Native Regional Corporation, AK	X	X	112,280
Sealaska Alaska Native Regional Corporation, AK	X	X	73,058
Agua Caliente Indian Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land, CA		X	27,489
Cher-O-Creek State Designated Tribal Statistical Area, AL	X	X	85,832
Cherokee Oklahoma Tribal Statistical Area, OK	X	X	513,452
Cheyenne-Arapaho Oklahoma Tribal Statistical Area, OK	X	X	184,524
Chickaloon Alaska Native Village Statistical Area, AK		X	29,000
Chickasaw Oklahoma Tribal Statistical Area, OK	X	X	312,820
Choctaw Oklahoma Tribal Statistical Area, OK	X	X	231,617
Citizen Potawatomi Nation-Absentee Shawnee Oklahoma Tribal Statistical Area, OK	X	X	129,548
Coharie State Designated Tribal Statistical Area, NC	X	X	64,285
Creek Oklahoma Tribal Statistical Area, OK	X	X	803,574
Echota Cherokee State Designated Tribal Statistical Area, AL		X	55,921
Flathead Reservation, MT		X	31,617
Four Winds Cherokee State Designated Tribal Statistical Area, LA		X	33,856
Isabella Reservation, MI		X	28,442
Kaw/Ponca joint-use Oklahoma Tribal Statistical Area, OK		X	27,772
Kenaitze Alaska Native Village Statistical Area, AK		X	36,078
Kickapoo Oklahoma Tribal Statistical Area, OK		X	20,203
Kiowa-Comanche-Apache-Fort Sill Apache Oklahoma Tribal Statistical Area, OK	X	X	190,678
Knik Alaska Native Village Statistical Area, AK	X	X	78,521
Lumbee State Designated Tribal Statistical Area, NC	X	X	501,406
MaChis Lower Creek State Designated Tribal Statistical Area, AL		X	23,393
Navajo Nation Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land, AZ—NM—UT	X	X	175,151
Nez Perce Reservation, ID		X	21,286
Oneida (WI) Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land, WI		X	22,439
Osage Reservation, OK		X	47,014
Pine Ridge Reservation, SD—NE		X	19,422
Puyallup Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land, WA		X	53,110
Sac and Fox Oklahoma Tribal Statistical Area, OK		X	59,355
Samish Tribal Designated Statistical Area, WA		X	39,553
Seminole Oklahoma Tribal Statistical Area, OK		X	22,467
Uintah and Ouray Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land, UT		X	24,335
United Houma Nation State Designated Tribal Statistical Area, LA	X	X	201,630
Wind River Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land, WY		X	25,353
Yakama Nation Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land, WA		X	32,879

Note: One-year estimates are available for areas with at least 65,000 people, and 1-year supplemental estimates are available for areas with at least 20,000 people.

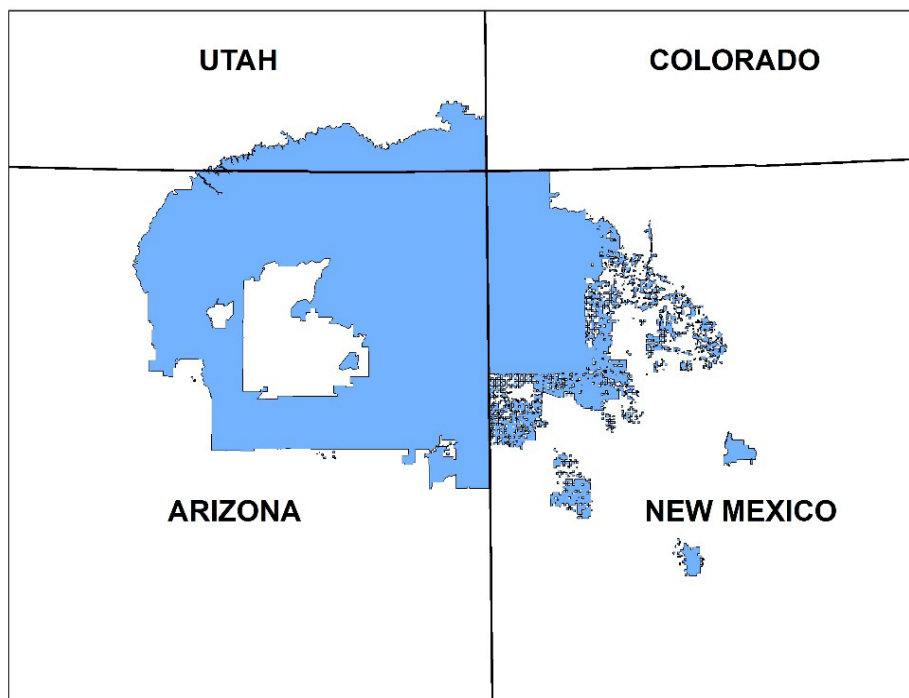
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-year estimates.

Some American Indian areas cross state lines, such as the Navajo Nation Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land. The Navajo Nation Reservation spans three states in the Mountain West: Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah (see Figure 2.2).

Socioeconomic or other characteristics for non-American Indian and non-Alaska Native populations may differ markedly from those for American Indian and Alaska Native populations. When ACS tables are disaggregated by race, differences can be easily noted for these two populations.

TIP: ACS data users also need to understand that many American Indian and Alaska Native areas have substantial populations that are neither American Indian nor Alaska Native.

Figure 2.2. **Map of the Navajo Nation Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Table 2.2. Number and Percentage of People in the Cherokee Oklahoma Tribal Statistical Area Living Below the Poverty Level by Race: 2014–2018

	Number below poverty level	Margin of error (±)	Percent below poverty level	Margin of error (±)
Total population for whom poverty is determined	94,020	2,100	18.5	0.4
White alone	47,837	1,654	14.8	0.5
Black or African American alone	9,923	605	32.3	1.7
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	19,349	1,115	22.5	1.2
Asian alone	777	240	14.1	4.5
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	193	105	30.9	12.6
Some other race alone	4,555	659	32.9	3.7
Two or more races	11,386	791	23.3	1.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, data.census.gov, Table S1701: "Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months."

For example, the Cherokee Oklahoma Tribal Statistical Area (OTSA) has a racially diverse population with different economic characteristics (see Table 2.2).¹⁷ In 2014–2018, the overall poverty rate for people living in the Cherokee OTSA was 18.5 percent, but the rate for whites (14.8 percent) was much lower than the rate for American Indians/Alaska Natives (22.5 percent).

While some ACS tables in the Census Bureau's data.census.gov provide data disaggregated by race/ethnicity, most do not.

TIP: It would be incorrect to interpret an economic indicator such as poverty rate or a social indicator such as school enrollment rate for an American Indian or Alaska Native area as describing the characteristics of the American Indian or Alaska Native population.

ACS data products for legal entities, such as reservations and incorporated places, reflect the Census Bureau's information about the legal boundaries for those entities as of January 1 of the year of data collection (or, as of January 1 of the last year of data collection for 5-year estimates). The Census Bureau uses the results from an annual Boundary and Annexation Survey to update information about the legal boundaries and names of all governments, including many American Indian and Alaska Native areas.¹⁸

¹⁷ OTSAs include federally recognized American Indian tribes that do not currently have a reservation, but once had a reservation in Oklahoma.

¹⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, Boundary and Annexation Survey, <www.census.gov/programs-surveys/bas.html>.

Boundaries for statistical areas, such as counties and census tracts, are updated by local participants prior to each decennial census as part of the Census Bureau's Participant Statistical Areas Program.¹⁹ A comparable program for tribal governments, the Tribal Statistical Areas Program, has provided for the delineation of tribal statistical areas, such as tribal census tracts, by the Census Bureau in conjunction with tribes.²⁰

A description of the American Indian and Alaska Native areas included in ACS data products is provided below.

Legal Entities

Alaska Native Regional Corporations (ANRCs) are corporate entities established to conduct both business (for profit) and nonprofit affairs of Alaska Natives pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1972 (Public Law 92-203). Twelve ANRCs cover the entire state of Alaska except for the area within the Annette Island Reserve—a federally recognized American Indian reservation under the governmental authority of the Metlakatla Indian Community. A 13th ANRC represents Alaska Natives who do not live in Alaska and do not identify with any of the 12 corporations.

¹⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, Overview of the 2010 Census Participant Statistical Areas Program (PSAP), <www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/about/partnerships/2010-census-partnerships/psap.html>.

²⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, Overview of the 2010 Census Tribal Statistical Areas Program (TSAP), <www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/about/partnerships/2010-census-partnerships/tsap.html>.

American Indian Reservations (AIRs) are areas that have been set aside by the United States for the use of tribes, the exterior boundaries of which are more particularly defined in tribal treaties, agreements, executive orders, federal statutes, secretarial orders, or judicial determinations. The Bureau of Indian Affairs maintains a list of all federally recognized tribal governments and makes final determination of the inventory of federal AIRs.²¹ The Census Bureau recognizes federal reservations (and associated off-reservation trust lands) as territory over which American Indian tribes have primary governmental authority. American Indian reservations can be legally described as colonies, communities, Indian colonies, Indian communities, Indian rancherias, Indian reservations, Indian villages, pueblos, rancherias, ranches, reservations, reserves, settlements, or villages. Federal reservations may cross state and all other area boundaries.

ACS data are also provided for **State American Indian Reservations (SAIRs)**, which are established by some state governments for tribes recognized by the state. A governor-appointed state liaison provides the names and boundaries for state-recognized American Indian reservations to the Census Bureau. State reservations must be defined within a single state but may cross county and other types of boundaries.

Lands that are administered jointly or claimed by two tribes, whether federally or state recognized, are called “joint-use areas” and are treated as if they were separate American Indian reservations for data presentation purposes.

American Indian Off-Reservation Trust Lands (ORTLs) are areas for which the United States holds title in trust for the benefit of a tribe or individual Indian. Trust lands may be located on or off of a reservation. The Census Bureau recognizes and tabulates data for off-reservation trust lands, which are always associated with a specific federally recognized reservation and/or tribal government. Off-reservation trust lands associated with tribes that do not have a reservation appear in ACS data tabulations by tribal area name, interspersed alphabetically among reservation names.

²¹ U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, <www.bia.gov/>.

Statistical Entities

Alaska Native Village Statistical Areas (ANVSAs) represent the more densely settled portion of Alaska Native villages (ANVs). The ANVs constitute associations, bands, clans, communities, groups, tribes, or villages recognized in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 (Public Law 92-203). Because ANVs do not have boundaries that are easy to locate, the Census Bureau does not delimit ANVs. Instead, the Census Bureau presents statistical data for ANVSAs that represent the settled portion of ANVs. In addition, each ANVSA should include only an area where Alaska Natives, especially members of the defining ANV, represent a substantial proportion of the population during at least one season of the year.

Oklahoma Tribal Statistical Areas (OTSAs) are statistical entities identified and delineated by the Census Bureau in consultation with federally recognized American Indian tribes in Oklahoma that do not currently have a reservation, but once had a reservation in that state. OTSAs primarily represent the former reservation boundaries and are not required to conform to any other geographic entity for which the Census Bureau tabulates data (although they must be located entirely within the state of Oklahoma). Lands that are administered jointly or claimed by two OTSAs are called “joint-use areas” and are treated as if they were separate OTSAs for data presentation purposes.

Tribal Designated Statistical Areas (TDSAs) are statistical entities identified and delineated by the Census Bureau in consultation with federally recognized American Indian tribes that do not currently have a federally recognized land base (that is, a reservation or off-reservation trust land). A TDSA generally encompasses a compact and contiguous area that contains a concentration of people who identify with a federally recognized American Indian tribe and in which there is structured or organized tribal activity. A TDSA may be located in more than one state, and it may not include area within an American Indian reservation, off-reservation trust land, Alaska Native Village Statistical Area, state designated American Indian statistical area, or OTSA. The intent of the TDSA program is to collect and tabulate data analogous to the data provided to tribes with a reservation and/or off-reservation trust land.

State Designated Tribal Statistical Areas (SDTSAs)

are statistical entities for state-recognized American Indian tribes that do not have a state-recognized land base, or reservation. SDTSAs are identified and delineated for the Census Bureau by a state liaison identified by the governor's office in each state. SDTSAs generally encompass a compact and contiguous area that contains a concentration of people who identify with a state-recognized American Indian tribe and in which there is structured or organized tribal activity. An SDTSA may not be located in more than one state, and it may not include area within an American Indian reservation, off-reservation trust land, Alaska Native Village Statistical Area, tribal designated statistical area, or OTSA. The intent of the SDTSA program is to collect and tabulate data analogous to the data provided to tribes with a state reservation.

Tribal Tracts and Tribal Block Groups are defined by the Census Bureau in cooperation with tribal officials to provide meaningful and relevant data for small geographic areas within the boundaries of federally recognized reservations and off-reservation trust lands. In the past, census tracts and block groups defined by state and county officials have sometimes had the effect of separating American Indian populations located within a single reservation and/or off-reservation trust land such that statistics for these populations were adversely affected. To address this situation, and create a more effective program to provide small-area data for reservations, the Census Bureau provides tribal officials for federal Reservations and off-reservation trust lands the opportunity to

define tribal tracts and block groups for federal reservations and off-reservation trust lands.

Tribal tracts and tribal block groups are conceptually identical to census tracts and block groups defined within the standard state-county-tract-block group geographic hierarchy used for tabulating and publishing statistical data. Also, just as is the case with standard census tracts, the Census Bureau emphasizes in its guidelines for defining tribal tracts the need for consistent boundaries to enhance the comparisons of ACS and other data across time.

Additional Background Information

Geography & ACS

<www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/geography-acs.html>

This Web page includes information about changes in geographic boundaries in the ACS, key concepts and definitions, and reference maps.

Geographic Terms and Concepts

<https://www2.census.gov/geo/pdfs/reference/GTC_10.pdf>

This Web page summarizes the legal and statistical American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian areas for which the Census Bureau provides data.