



June 9, 2022

**Accessing AIAN Data from the ACS:
Opportunities and Challenges**

Dr. James Tucker

Overview

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- What is the American Community Survey (ACS)?
- How is the ACS conducted?
- How do you access ACS data?
- What are the challenges to getting an accurate ACS count in Indian Country and for urban Natives?
- How can we work together to overcome those challenges?
- Questions?

What is the American Community Survey?

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- An ongoing nationwide survey (it is conducted every month of the year)
- It covers the following topics:
 - Social
 - Economic
 - Housing
 - Demographic
- Available in one year and five year estimates

What is the American Community Survey?

Data is provided from the following topics:

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Social	Housing
Ancestry	Bedrooms
Citizen Voting-Age Population	Computer and Internet Use
Citizenship Status	House Heating Fuel
Disability Status	Kitchen Facilities
Educational Attainment	Occupancy/Vacancy Status
Fertility	Occupants per Room
Grandparents as Caregivers	Plumbing Facilities
Language Spoken at Home	Rent
Marital History	Rooms
Marital Status	Selected Monthly Owner Costs
Migration/Residence 1 Year Ago	Telephone Service Available
Place of Birth	Tenure (Owner/Renter)
School Enrollment	Units in Structure
Undergraduate Field of Degree	Value of Home
Veteran Status; Period of Military Service	Vehicles Available
Year of Entry	Year Householder Moved Into Unit
	Year Structure Built

Economic	Demographic
Class of Worker	Age; Sex
Commuting (Journey to Work) and Place of Work	Group Quarters Population
Employment Status	Hispanic or Latino Origin
Food Stamps/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	Race
Health Insurance Coverage	Relationship to Householder
Income and Earnings	Total Population
Industry	
Occupation	
Poverty Status	
Work Status Last Year	

What is the American Community Survey?

Comparing one year to five year estimates:

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1-year estimates*	1-year supplemental estimates	5-year estimates
12 months of collected data <i>Example: 2019 ACS 1-year estimates Date collected between: January 1, 2019 and December 31, 2019</i>	12 months of collected data <i>Example: 2019 ACS 1-year supplemental estimates Date collected between: January 1, 2019 and December 31, 2019</i>	60 months of collected data <i>Example: 2015-2019 ACS 5-year estimates Date collected between: January 1, 2015 and December 31, 2019</i>
Data for areas with populations of 65,000+	Data for areas with populations of 20,000+	Data for all areas
Smallest sample size	Smallest sample size	Largest sample size
Less reliable than 3-year or 5-year	Less reliable than 5-year	Most reliable
Most current data	Most current data	Least current
Annually released: 2005-present	Annually released: 2014-present	Annually released: 2009-present

What is the American Community Survey?

Comparing one year to five year estimates:

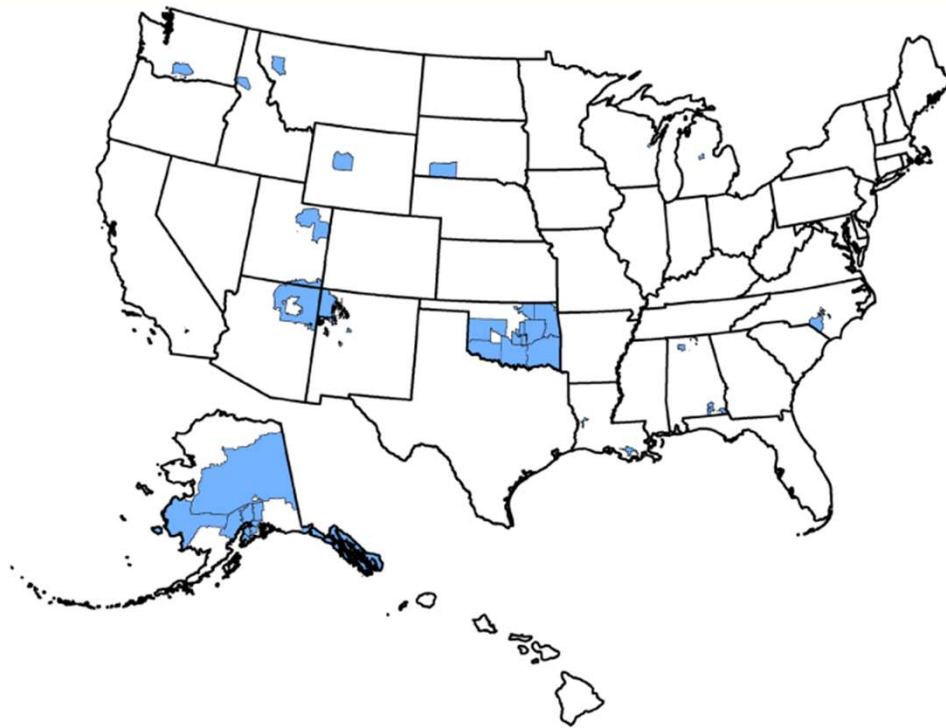
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1-year estimates*	1-year supplemental estimates	5-year estimates
Best used when	Best used when	Best used when
Currency is more important than precision Analyzing large populations	Currency is more important than precision Analyzing smaller populations Examining smaller geographies because the standard 1-year estimates are not available	Precision is more important than currency Analyzing very small populations Examining tracts and other smaller geographies because 1-year estimates are not available

What is the American Community Survey?

ACS one year estimates are limited for Indian Country

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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.

How is the ACS conducted?

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- Unlike the decennial Census, which surveys all households every 10 years, the **ACS surveys only a sample** of U.S. households
 - Each year the Census Bureau sends surveys to **3.5 million** households out of the approximately 130 million U.S. households
 - Attempts to survey about **2.7 percent of all U.S. households** annually (*not all households respond*)
- Five year estimates aggregate the responses for a rolling five year period, which covers:
 - About 17.5 million U.S. households receive surveys in each five year period
 - Attempts to survey about 13.5 percent of all U.S. households
- Because of non-responses, five year ACS estimates are based upon a sample of approximately 11.5 to 12 percent of U.S. households

How is the ACS conducted?

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How respondents are selected for sampling:


- ***Random sampling:*** The Census Bureau selects households randomly from its Master Address File
- ***Households generally only sampled no more than once in 5 years:*** The Census Bureau takes steps to minimize randomly sampling of the same households so most households are not surveyed multiple times in a five year period

How is the ACS conducted?

ACS survey form

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 **The American Community Survey**

This booklet shows the content of the American Community Survey questionnaire.

Start Here

You have two ways to respond:

Respond online today at:
<https://respond.census.gov/acs>

OR

Complete this form and mail it back as soon as possible.

Your response is required by law.
The American Community Survey is conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. This survey is one of only a few surveys for which all recipients are required by law to respond. The U.S. Census Bureau is required by law to protect your information.

If you need help or have questions about completing this form, please call 1-800-354-7271.

Text Telephone (TTY):
Call 1-800-582-8330.

¿NECESITA AYUDA? Llame sin cargo alguno al 1-877-833-5625.

For more information about the American Community Survey, visit our website at: <https://www.census.gov/acs>

Please print the name and telephone number of the person who is filling out this form. We will only contact you if needed for official Census Bureau business.

Last Name

First Name MI

Area Code + Number -


How many people are living or staying at this address?

- **INCLUDE** everyone who is living or staying here for more than 2 months.
- **INCLUDE** yourself if you are living here for more than 2 months.
- **INCLUDE** anyone else staying here who does not have another place to stay, even if they are here for 2 months or less.
- **DO NOT INCLUDE** anyone who is living somewhere else for more than 2 months, such as a college student living away or someone in the Armed Forces on deployment.

Number of people

Fill out pages 2 - 7 for everyone, including yourself, who is living or staying at this address for more than 2 months. Then complete the rest of the form.

FORM **ACS-1(INFO)(2021)** OMB No. 0607-0810
06-18-2020 OMB No. 0607-0936



- Includes 44 questions
- Questions must be answered for everyone in the household
- It takes an average of 40 minutes to complete the survey questionnaire
- The Census Bureau admits “Many households will spend more time on this form, ensuring that each question is given thorough consideration and each answer is as accurate as possible.”
- Limited-English Proficient Elders will take much longer to complete the survey with assistance.

How is the ACS conducted?

Who is considered an American Indian or Alaska Native?

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6 What is Person 1's race? Mark (X) one or more boxes.

White

Black or African Am.

American Indian or Alaska Native — *Print name of enrolled or principal tribe.* ↴

Asian Indian

Chinese

Filipino

Other Asian — *Print race, for example, Hmong, Laotian, Thai, Pakistani, Cambodian, and so on.* ↴

Japanese

Korean

Vietnamese

Native Hawaiian

Guamanian or Chamorro

Samoan

Other Pacific Islander — *Print race, for example, Fijian, Tongan, and so on.* ↴

Some other race — *Print race.* ↴

How is the ACS conducted?

Who is considered an American Indian or Alaska Native?

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The 1997 OMB standards define American Indian or Alaska Native as a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.

Tabulated data for this category include people who:

- Indicate their race as “American Indian” or “Alaska Native”;
- Report the name of an American Indian tribe (for example, Navajo or Blackfeet) or Alaska Native tribe (for example, Inupiat or Yup’ik); or
- Report entries such as Canadian Indian, French American Indian, or Spanish American Indian.

How do you access ACS data?

My Tribal Area: <https://www.census.gov/tribal/>

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The screenshot shows the 'My Tribal Area' web application interface. At the top, the title 'My Tribal Area' is displayed in large white font against a blue background. Below the title, there is a search bar labeled 'Enter name of Tribal Area'. To the right of the search bar are five icons representing different data categories: People, Jobs, Housing, Economy, and Education. Below the search bar, the word 'OR' is centered. There are two dropdown menus: the first is labeled '1 Select a State' and the second is labeled '2'. To the left of the dropdown menus is a yellow map of the United States. Below the map, the U.S. Department of Commerce logo and 'U.S. CENSUS BUREAU census.gov' are visible. At the bottom left, it says 'POWERED BY The American Community Survey'. At the bottom right, there is a 'Glossary >' link. A white text box on the right side of the interface contains the following text: 'The Census Bureau collects data for the American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) population and publishes specific counts, estimates, and statistics. My Tribal Area gives you quick and easy access to selected statistics from the American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS provides detailed demographic, social, economic, and housing statistics every year for the nation's communities. My Tribal Area is powered by the Census Application Programming Interface (API). Users should exercise caution when comparing 2016-2020 ACS 5-year estimates to other ACS estimates. For more information, please visit the 2020 ACS 5-year Comparison Guidance page. Source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates'.

How do you access ACS data?

Census Data: <https://data.census.gov>

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Explore Census Data

The Census Bureau is the leading source of quality data about the nation's people and economy.



[Advanced Search](#)

[? Help](#)

[Feedback](#)

Other Census and ACS resources? NCAI Policy Research Center:

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NCAI Policy Research Center

Improving Outcomes for Indian Country with Research

NCAI's Census Information Center:

<https://www.ncai.org/policy-research-center/initiatives/projects/cic>

What are the challenges to an accurate ACS in Indian Country and for urban Natives?

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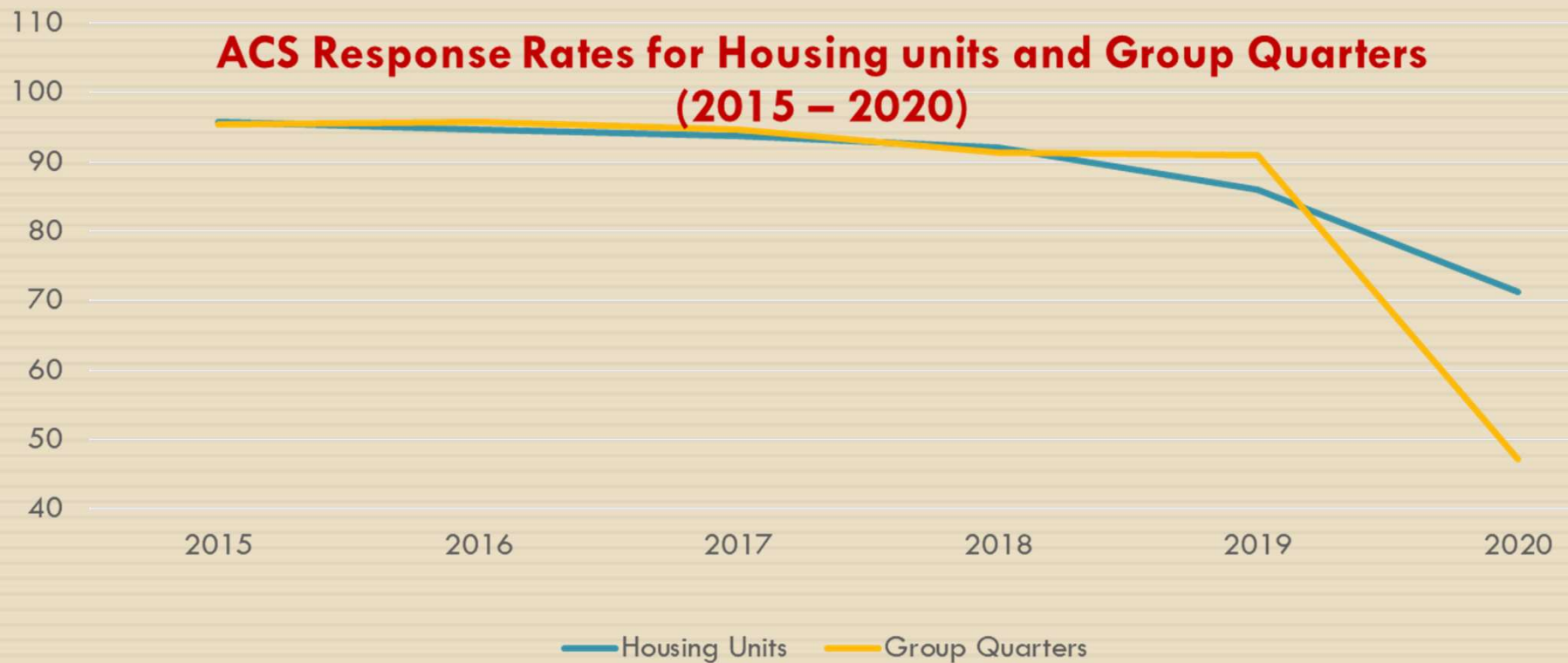
What are the challenges to an accurate ACS in Indian Country and for urban Natives?

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- Declining ACS completion rates
- Undercounts of those on reservations, renters, young children
- Distrust of the federal government
- Survey length and intrusiveness
- Data sovereignty
- Sample size has great impact on small populations
- Differential privacy (after 2025)
- Language and literacy barriers
- Lack of affordable and reliable broadband access
- Lack of traditional addresses to receive Census communications

Need to Reverse Declining ACS Response Rates

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Historically Undercounted Populations: Repeat of Pattern in 2020 Census

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Percent Net Coverage Error by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2010 and 2020

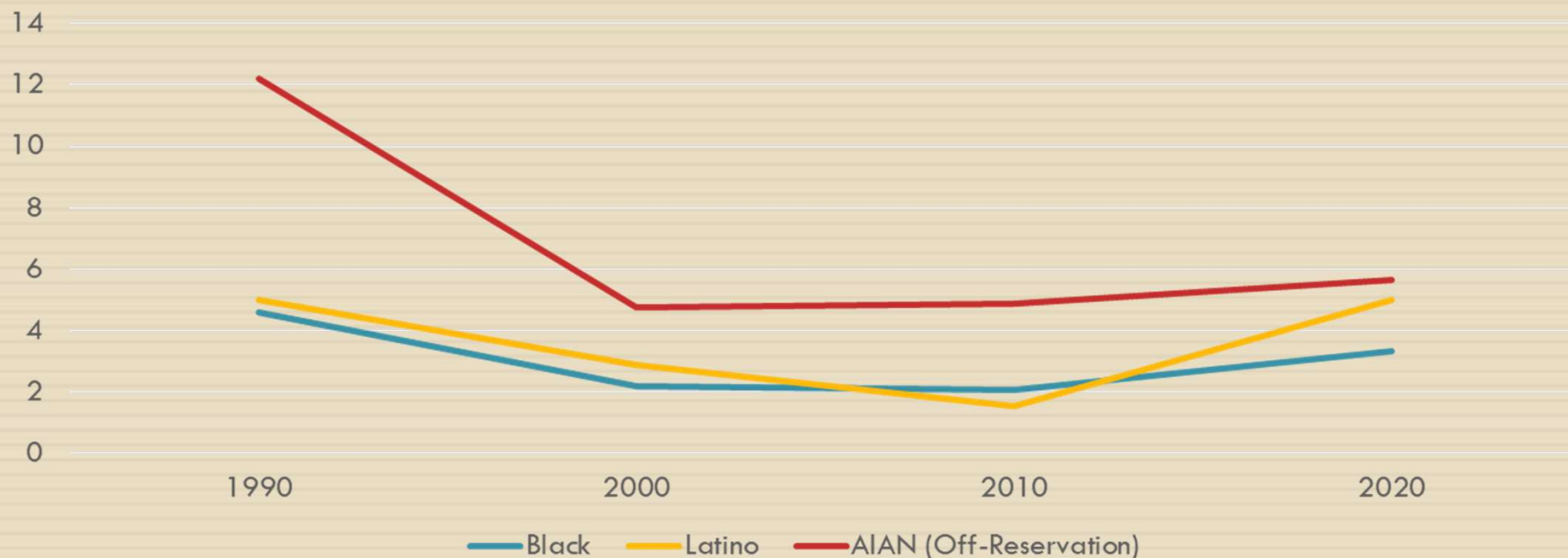
Race or Hispanic Origin	2010	2020
Total	0.01	-0.24
Race alone or in combination		
White	0.54*	0.66*
Non-Hispanic White alone	0.83*	1.64*
Black or African American	-2.06*	-3.30*
Asian	0.00	2.62*
American Indian or Alaska Native	-0.15	-0.91*
On Reservation	-4.88*	-5.64*
American Indian Areas Off Reservation	3.86	3.06
Balance of the United States	0.05	-0.86*
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	-1.02	1.28
Some Other Race	-1.63*	-4.34*
Hispanic or Latino	-1.54*	-4.99*

*Net coverage error is statistically significantly different from 0.

The Need to Eliminate the Persistent Undercount of American Indians and Alaska Natives on Reservations

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Undercount of Identified Populations of Color (1990 – 2020)



The Need to Eliminate the Persistent Undercount of Young Children (the AIAN population is greatly impacted)

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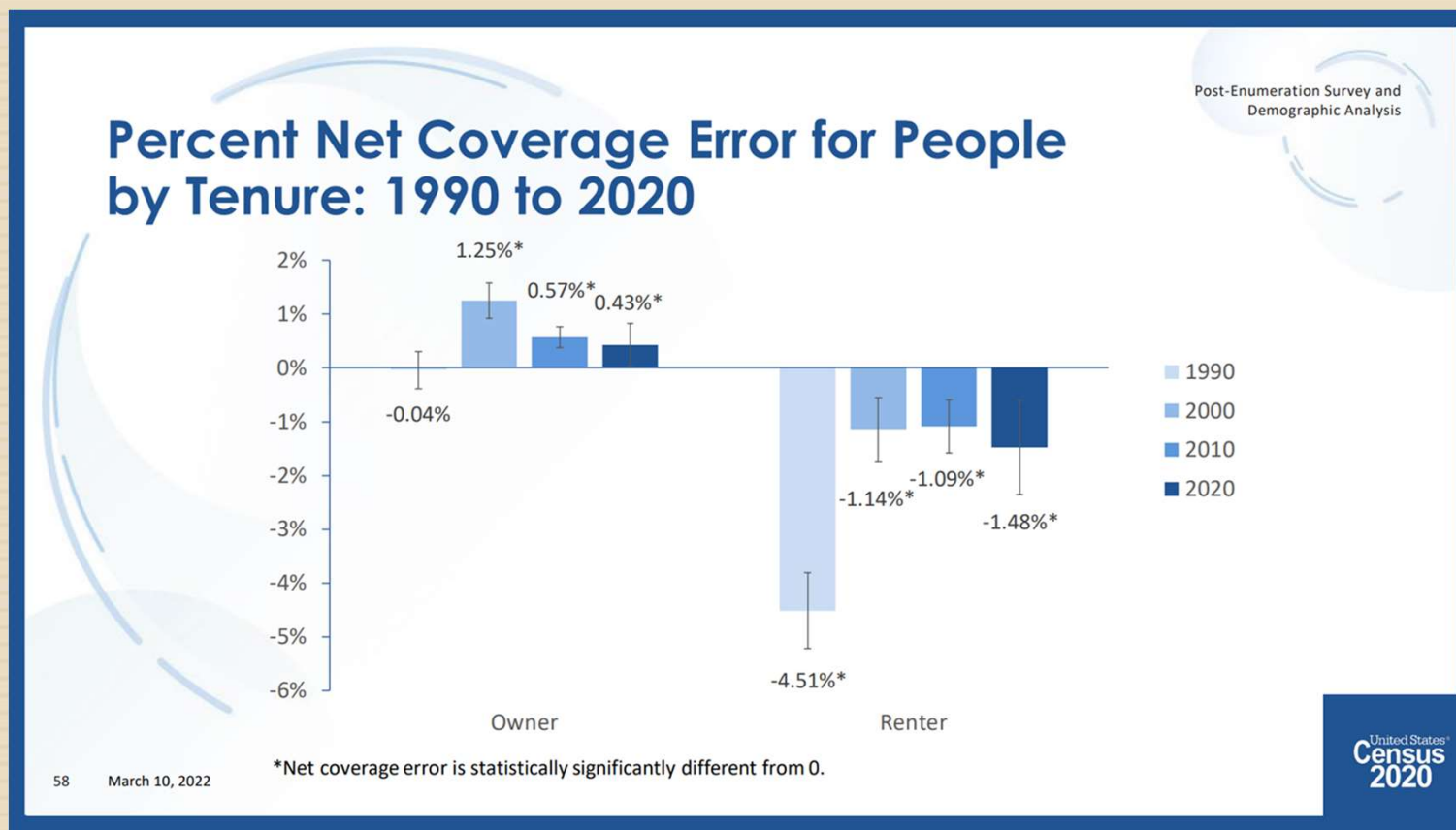
Percent Net Coverage Error by Age for Children: 1990 to 2020

Post-Enumeration Survey and
Demographic Analysis

Age	1990	2000	2010	2020
0-4	-3.18*	0.46	-0.72*	-2.79*
5-9			0.33	-0.10
10-17		1.32*	0.97*	-0.21

*Net coverage error is statistically significantly different from 0.

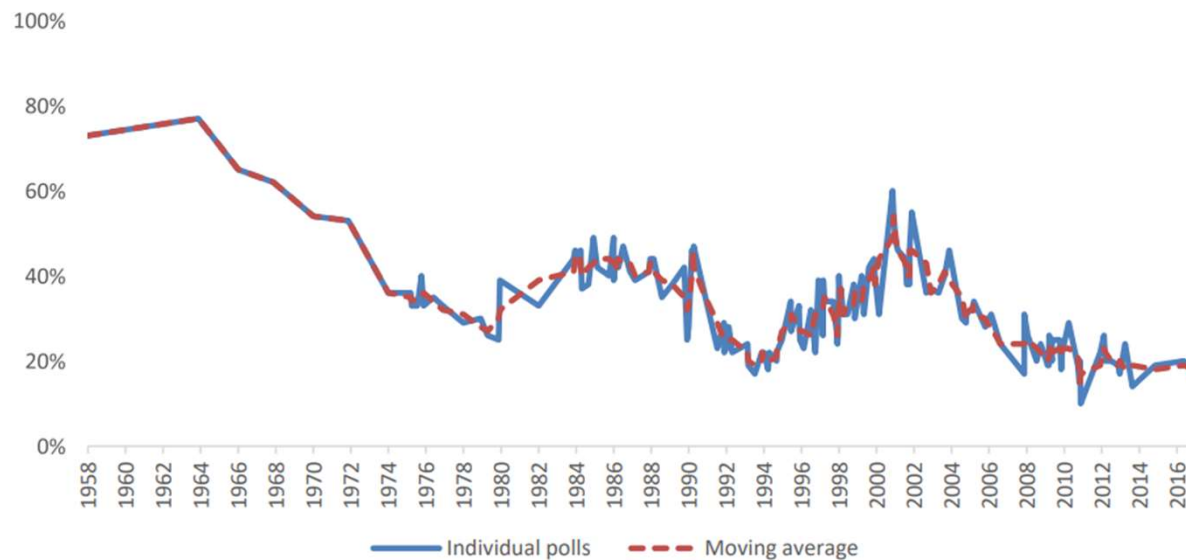
The Need to Eliminate the Persistent Undercount by Tenure of Housing (Owner vs. Renter)



Barriers to Completing Census Surveys: Distrust of Non-Tribal Governments / Federal Government

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Trust in government over time

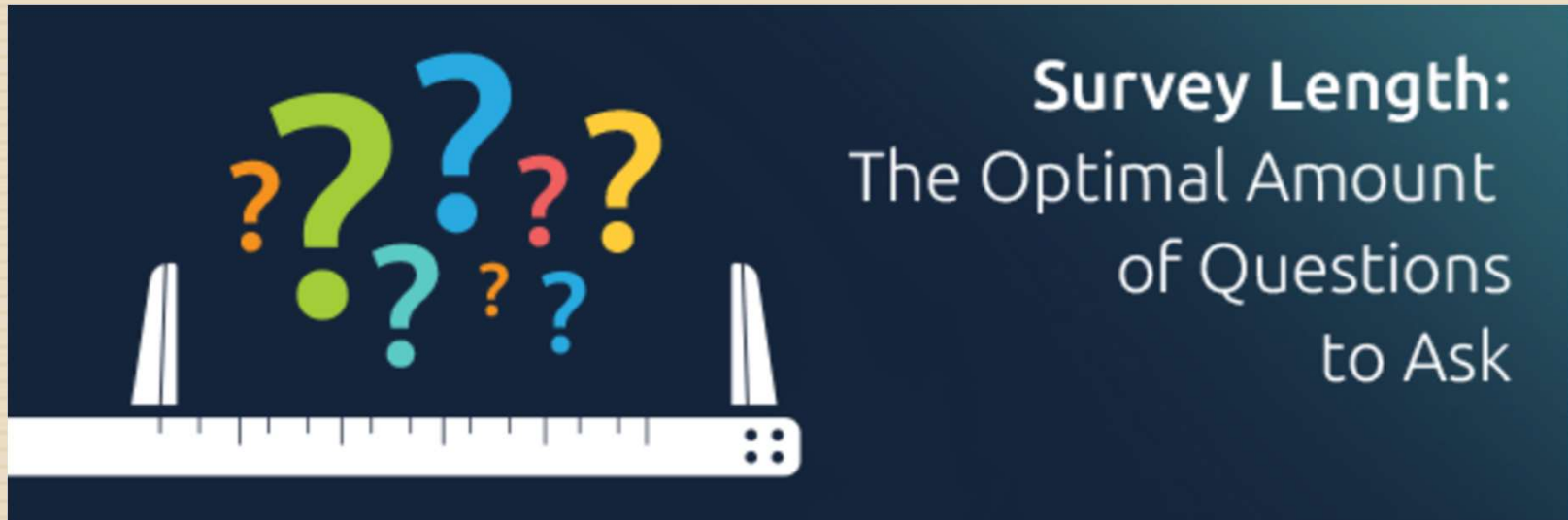


Source: *Public Trust in Government: 1958-2017*, Pew Research Center, December 14, 2017: <http://www.people-press.org/2017/12/14/public-trust-in-government-1958-2017/>



Barriers to Completing Census Surveys: Survey Length / Intrusiveness of Questions

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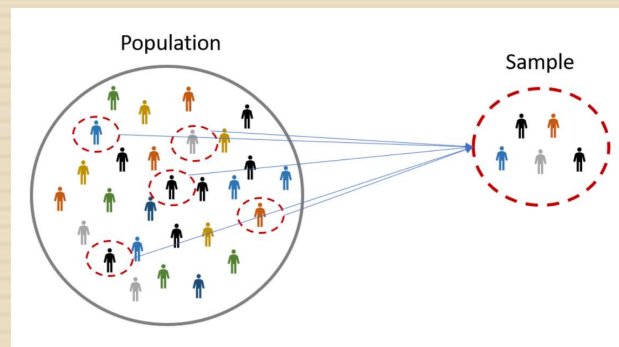
Barriers to Completing Census Surveys: Tribal Data Sovereignty

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Barriers to Completing Census Surveys: Decreased accuracy of less populated areas

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Barriers to Completing Census Surveys: Application of differential privacy starting in 2025

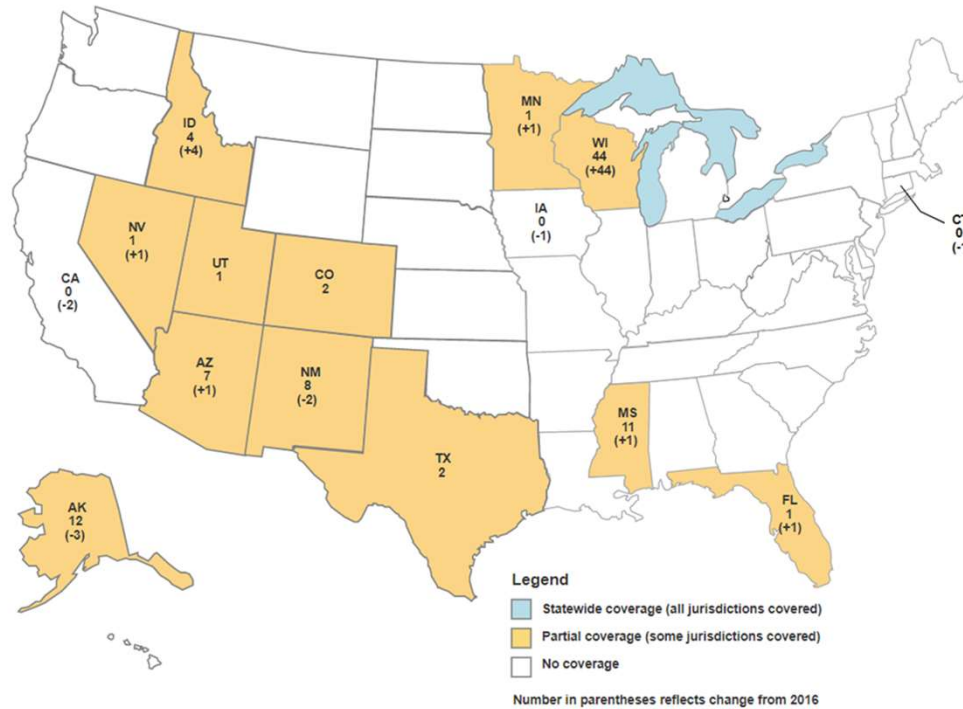
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Barriers to Completing Census Surveys: Language Needs of American Indians/Alaska Natives

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Number of County-Level Jurisdictions Covered under Section 203 for American Indian and Alaska Native languages by State, in the December 2021 Determinations



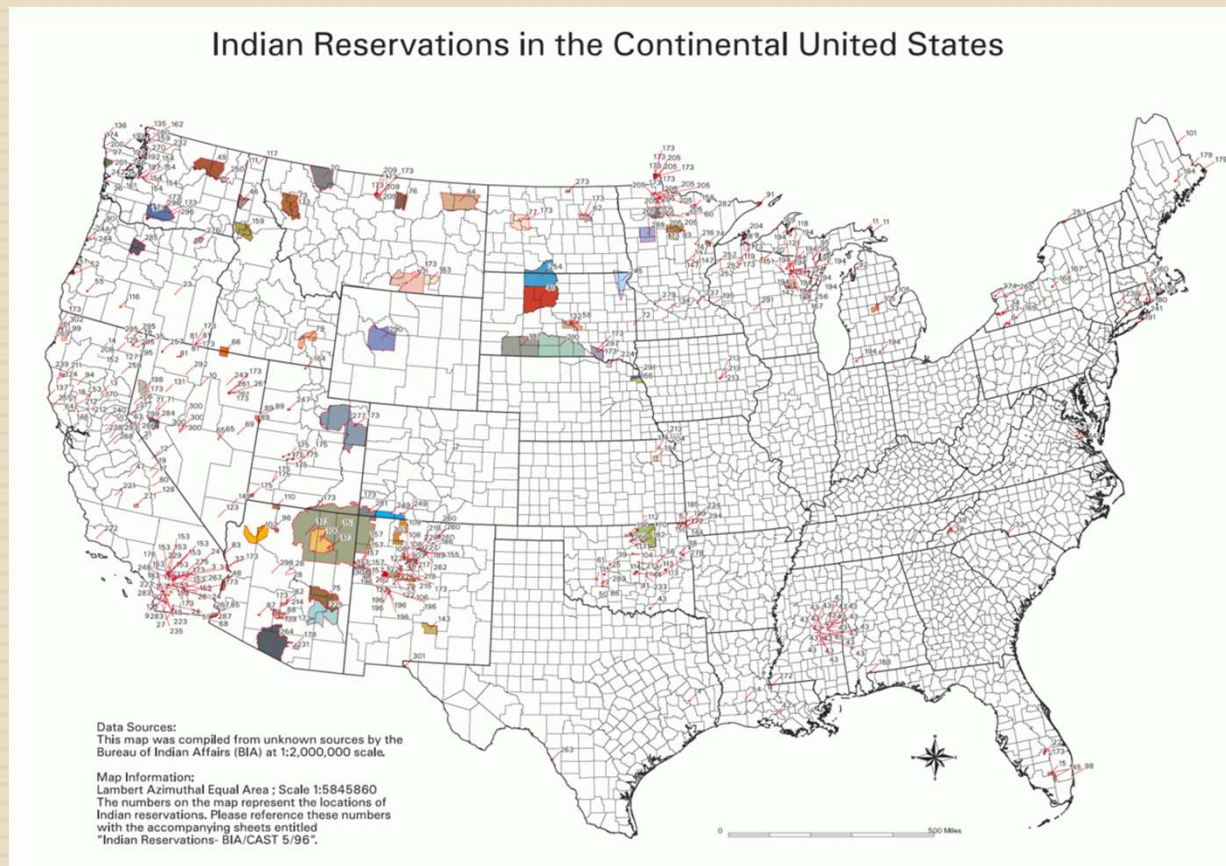
Barriers to Completing Census Surveys: Language Needs of American Indians/Alaska Natives

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Language	Political Subdivisions Covered	Affected States
All other AI Tribes	51	ID, MN, TX, WI
Choctaw	11	MS
Navajo	11	AZ, NM, UT
Yup'ik (Alaska Native)	9	AK
Pueblo	4	AZ, NM
Ute	4	CO, NM, UT
Apache	3	AZ
Inupiat (Alaska Native)	3	AK
Hopi	2	AZ
Paiute	2	AZ
Aleut (Alaska Native)	1	AK
Seminole	1	FL
Shoshone	1	NV

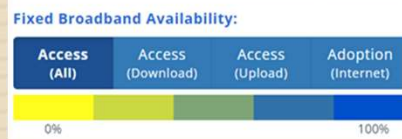
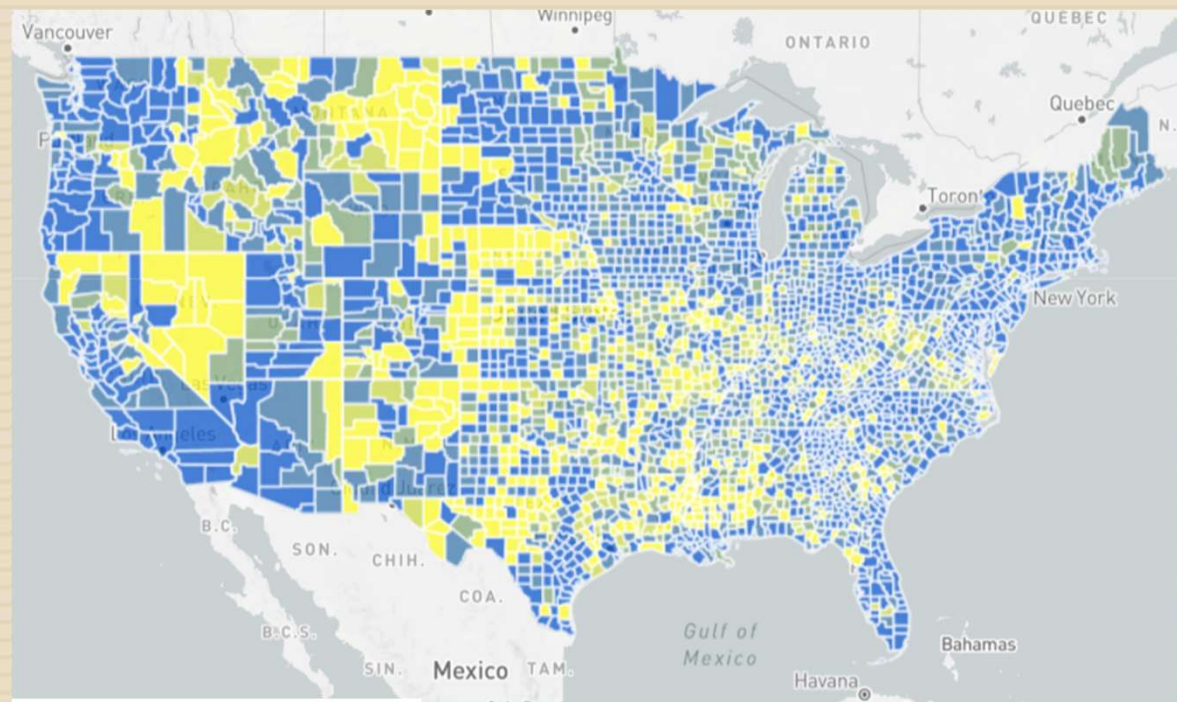
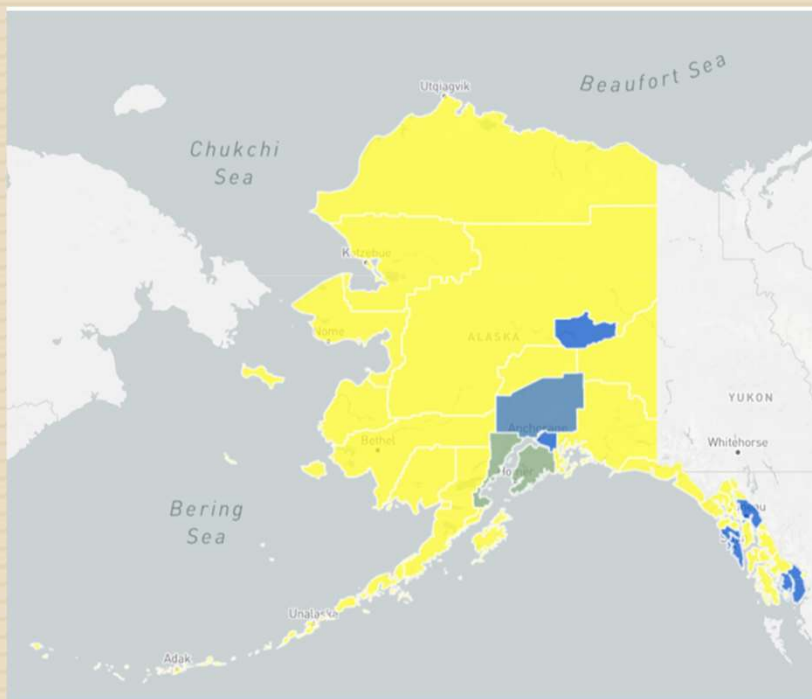
Barriers to Completing Census Surveys: Lack of Broadband for American Indians/Alaska Natives

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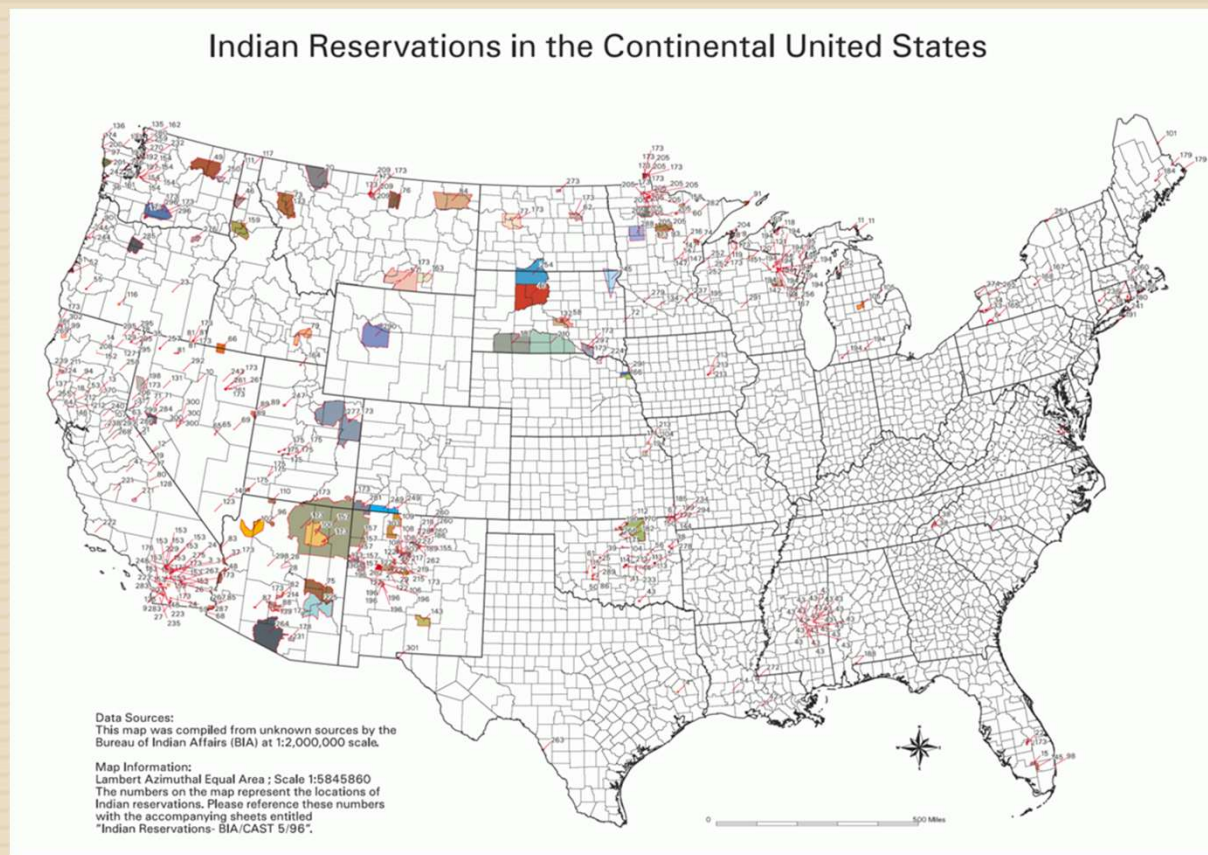
The Need to Address Lack of Broadband Access and Affordability in Indian Country and Rural Areas

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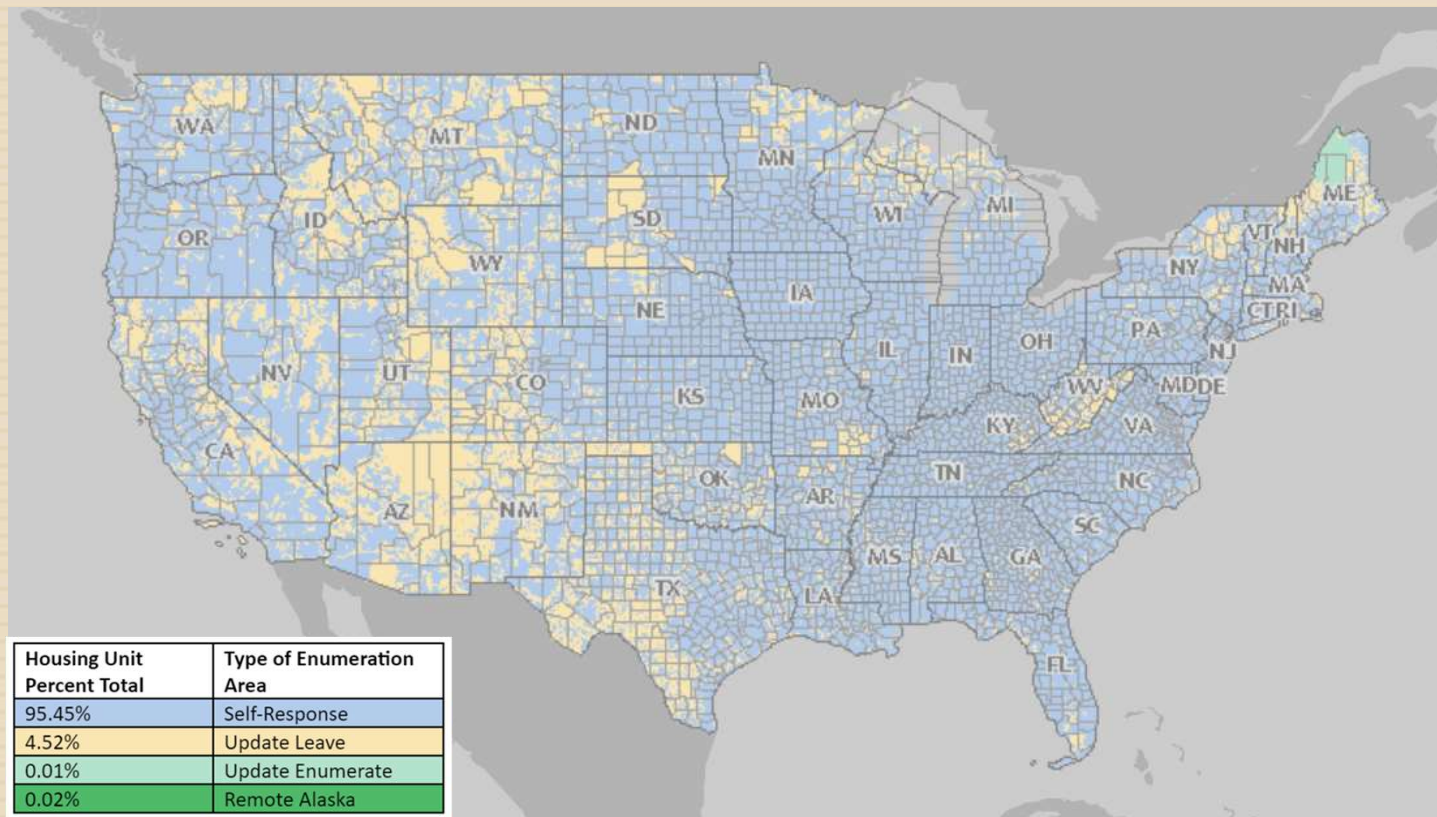
AIAN Households Are Disproportionately Affected by Lack of Mailing to Nontraditional Addresses

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Barriers to Completing Census Surveys: Addressing Issues of American Indians/Alaska Natives

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Continuing challenges because of COVID

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Summary of barriers during 2020 ACS

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- ❑ **The COVID-19 pandemic “significantly disrupted data collection for the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS)”**
- ❑ **The disruption caused those responding to the survey having “significantly different social, economic, and housing characteristics than those who didn’t respond”**
 - ✓ Raised concerns of nonresponse bias
 - ✓ It was not possible to adjust for nonresponse bias by giving more weight to responses from underrepresented groups; would have resulted in lower quality data
- ❑ **The Census Bureau decided to not release the standard 2020 1-year estimates**
 - ✓ The Bureau instead will release “1-year estimates using experimental weights”

Summary of barriers during 2020 ACS

Table 2.1. Pandemic Impact to 2020 ACS Housing Unit Data Collection

Panel	Mailout Strategy					CAPI Operation ²		
	Initial Mailing	Reminder Letter	Questionnaire Package	Reminder Postcard	Final Reminder	Interviewing Month	Impact to Interviewing	CAPI letter sent
January	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	March	In-person stopped on March 20	
February	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	April	Telephone only	
March	✓	✓	!	✗	✗	May	Telephone only - increased workload	
April	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	June	Telephone only - increased workload	
May	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	July	In-person available - Some areas	✓ From Regional Office
June	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	August	In-person available - Some areas	
July	✓	✗	—	✗	✗	September	In-person available - All areas	
August	✓	✗	—	✗	✗	October	In-person available - All areas	
September	✓	✗	—	✗	✗	November	In-person available - Most areas	
October	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	December	In-person available - Most areas	✓ From NPC
November	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	January '21	In-person available - Most areas	
December	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	February '21	In-person available - All areas	

✓ Mailed ! Part of workload mailed — Part of workload received questionnaire, remainder received reminder letter ✗ Was not mailed

Summary of barriers during 2020 ACS

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❑ To illustrate, here is the impact on self-response rates for those in group quarters:

- ✓ 2019, Jan. 2020 and Feb. 2020: 92 percent
- ✓ March 2020: 55 percent
- ✓ April-June 2020: No surveys mailed
- ✓ July 2020: 64 to 70 percent across geographic areas

❑ Compare 2020 self-response rates to past ACS self-response rates:

- ✓ 2018: 92 percent
- ✓ 2019: 86 percent
- ✓ 2020: 71 percent, the lowest in the history of the ACS

Current need in Alaska

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- The Census Bureau has asked us to help get the ACS count completed in the Remote Alaska operations
- Pandemic closures are limiting the ability of Census enumerators to get counts in the villages
- **Please let us know if you can assist** – I am working with the Alaska Federation of Natives to schedule a meeting next week during NCAI's mid-year

How to improve the count: Organize Community Partnerships

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- ***Expand partnerships*** between Census Bureau, CBOs and the business community
- ***Increased education and outreach*** about importance of ACS and completing the survey, to improve self-response rates
- Improve ***language resources*** for Limited-English Proficient households to complete the ACS

Natives Count Census Group

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- **Focus on improving the count in ACS and all Census surveys**
- **Improving:**
 - **Messaging to American Indians and Alaska Natives**
 - **Outreach and the means of communicating messaging**
 - **Access by overcoming barriers to participation**

Responding to Barriers to Completing Census Surveys: Census Initiatives (Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs)

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**Dee Alexander, Tribal Affairs Coordinator
(Cheyenne - Arapaho)**



Dee.A.Alexander@census.gov

Responding to Barriers to Completing Census Surveys: Census Initiatives (Office of Strategic Alliances)

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United States[®]
Census
Bureau

Introducing the Office of Strategic Alliances



Maria Olmedo-Malagon, Chief



Anna Owens, Deputy Chief

Responding to Barriers to Completing Census Surveys: Census Initiatives (Tribal Relations Specialists)

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Tribal Relations Program

A Field Division Initiative

Responding to Barriers to Completing Census Surveys: Census Initiatives (Tribal Relations Specialists)

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Tribal Relations Specialists



Jessica Imotichey
Chickasaw Nation (OK)
Resides in Pueblo Laguna, NM



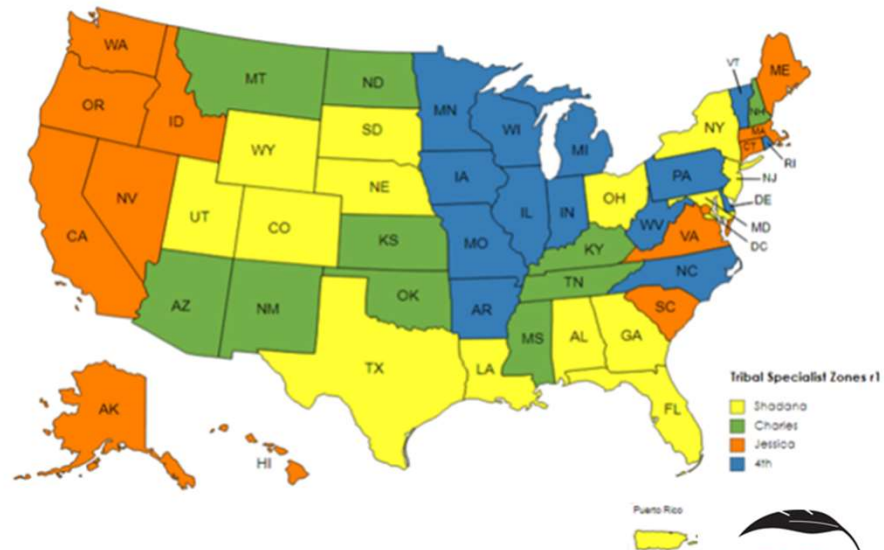
Shadana Sultan
Oglala -Lakota Nation (SD)
Resides in Denver, CO



Charles Tippeconnic
Comanche Nation (OK)
Resides in Elgin, OK



Fourth Specialist
TBA



Jessica Imotichey (Chickasaw)

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45



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Charles Tippeconnic (Comanche Nation)

46



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Bottom Line: Making Natives Count in all Census surveys

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Questions?

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Contact Information

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