



Wičhóyanke NETWORK

Wotakuye Gluwasakapi- Strengthening our Kinships.

Strengthening Indigenous Communities to Eliminate Disparities in the Criminal Justice System Infographic 2024

What is the Wichoyanke Network?

Who we are:

The Wičhóyanke Network is a convening of Indigenous leaders from both the community and the criminal justice system, who have lived experience of implementing strategies to assist Indigenous communities to overcome the traumas and effects of racial disparities within the criminal justice system.

Mission:

Wičhóyanke [wičhá-oyánke] is a Lakota word that means "strengthening community." We chose this name because our mission is to identify Indigenous community-led solutions and strategies that have successfully helped in lowering or eliminating racial disparities in community criminal justice systems related to the incarceration of Indigenous people, with the ultimate goal of disseminating that information for Indigenous communities nation-wide to assist in Indigenous-led efforts to eliminate racial disparities.

American Indians and Alaska Natives in the Justice System: Marginalization, Victimization, and Challenges

Incarceration Statistics

▶ **4.3%** ◀

The incarceration rate in local jails for American Indian/Alaska Natives (AI/AN) increased by an average of 4.3%, compared to an increase of 1.4% per year for all other races combined (1999-2014).

▶ **38%** ◀

AI/AN were incarcerated at a rate 38% higher than the national incarceration rate (1992-2002).

▶ **22.7k** ◀

22,744 AI/AN were incarcerated in state and federal facilities (2016). AI/AN were about 2.1% - 3.7% of the federal offender population (2019).

▶ **60%** ◀

AI/AN incarceration rates have steadily increased over the last few decades, increasing 60% from 1990-2020.

Policing and Jail Populations

▶ **10.4k** ◀

10,400 AI/AN individuals were held in jails at midyear 2014.

▶ **316** ◀

AI/AN individuals are detained in local jails at a rate of 316 per 100,000; the national rate is 192 per 100,000, and 157 per 100,000 for whites.

▶ **3x** ◀

The ratio of deaths by police shootings is 3x higher for AI/AN individuals than for White Americans.

▶ **1.4%** ◀

AI/AN accounted for 1.4% of the total jail population in 2014.

Historical Traumas and Lasting Effects

AI/AN individuals face unique challenges and historical traumas that continue to contribute to disproportionate incarceration rates and systemic inequalities. Historical acts of oppression and trauma make Native individuals and communities particularly vulnerable to factors that lead to incarceration, such as mental illness, substance abuse, poverty, lack of resources and support, and overpolicing.

Removal

European settlers forced the removal of AI/AN people from their homelands and into reservations that held no regard for culture or access to resources.

Reorganization

Congress began to encourage tribal government development. While tribal sovereignty was established, U.S. government still opposed traditional approaches to leadership.

Self-Determination

Tribal sovereignty grows although tribal governments are often excluded from beneficial federal policies. Pipeline projects and violence against AI/AN continue to threaten AI/AN individuals and communities.



Co-existence

Trade between AI/AN people and European settlers existed, and boundaries were maintained between territories as colonists began expanding West.

Assimilation

Settlers forced AI/AN children to attend boarding schools that stripped them of their culture and language. Traditional AI/AN cultural practices were outlawed nationally.

Termination

The U.S. government continued assimilation efforts by relocating tribes, and liquidating and distributing tribal assets. From the 1940's to the 1960's, more than three million acres of tribal lands are estimated to have been relinquished nationwide as a result of termination.

What's Missing?

AI/AN representation in data collection is often incomplete and inaccurate, often omitting or misclassifying AI/AN populations, resulting in miscalculations in the representation of AI/AN impacted by the justice system.

▶ The Bureau of Justice reports on jails in Indian Country separately from other locally-operated jails and obscures the total number of AI/AN in local jails.

▶ Participation in the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting is voluntary. Some tribes report partial data, and some do not report data at all.

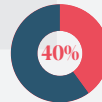
Victimization



More than **4 in 5** AI/AN individuals have experienced violence in their lifetime.



The murder rate for women living on reservations is **10x** higher than the national average.



An estimated **40%** of women who are victims of sex trafficking are AI/AN.



The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples movement seeks to bring attention and resources to battling violence against Indigenous people in the U.S. and Canada.



American Indians and Alaska Natives in the Justice System: **Models for Success**



Native-led support programs for justice-involved individuals focus on holistically strengthening the individual as well as their connections to culture, family, and community. What's more, implementing Western models of Evidence-Based Practices within AI/AN communities is currently an area of debate. Indigenous worldviews tend to focus on well-being, balance, and harmony in their connections to other people and the natural and spiritual world.

Pre- and Post- Release Cultural Programming



I. Am. Legacy (South Dakota) relies on core Lakota values as the root of their prevention, intervention, outreach, and healing services. I. Am. Legacy programs strengthen cultural connections, positive role models based on the Lakota kinship system and a strong foundation of cultural education to support justice-involved individuals.



The Flathead Reservation Reentry Program (FRRP) in Montana serves AI/AN individuals transitioning from correctional facilities back to the Flathead Reservation, with a focus on individuals struggling with mental health or substance abuse issues. FRRP uses cultural mentoring to reconnect clients with their tribal communities. The program allows clients to self-identify their own needs and requests for services, preserving autonomy of reentering individuals while connecting them to material and cultural supports.

Indigenous Mobile Response Teams



South Dakota Urban Indian Health's pilot Wo'Okiye Project partners with local programs to provide mobile primary support and aid law enforcement responding to low-level calls. By providing cultural support at first contact, the Wo'Okiye project to assist law enforcement with mitigation services, and connect vulnerable populations with care networks and available resources to break the cycle of justice involvement.

Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services



The Pascua Yaqui Behavioral Health Centered Spirit Program in Southern Arizona assists Pascua Yaqui members and immediate family seeking mental health and substance abuse services. The Centered Spirit Program focuses on "healing, personal growth, and healthy living for the individual, the family and the community". Alongside methadone/suboxone maintenance and psychiatric services, the program offers youth life skills group and therapy sessions, centering not just physical health.

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