

CDC works to prevent violence against American Indian and Alaska Native people



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is committed to improving the health and safety of American Indian and Alaska Native people.

In 2023, homicide rates among American Indian and Alaska Native people were nearly five times higher than homicide rates for non-Hispanic White people.¹ A disproportionate number of American Indian and Alaska Native people are murdered or go missing, and multiple organizations specifically address the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous people.

Understanding why violence happens helps to prevent it. CDC works to understand violence experienced by American Indian and Alaska Native people and to address the issue of missing or murdered Indigenous people by collecting data that can guide prevention efforts and supporting violence prevention programs.

One key role of public health workers and their partners is to identify and reduce factors that may lead to violence, such as prolonged stress and economic hardship. They also work to find, study, and enhance conditions protecting people from violence, such as strengthening family, school, and community connections.

This fact sheet describes what is known about the prevalence of violence among American Indian and Alaska Native people and how CDC's Division of Violence Prevention works to prevent it.



How do we learn about this issue?

CDC uses datasets from the [National Vital Statistics System \(NVSS\)](#), the [National Violent Death Reporting System \(NVDRS\)](#), and the [National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey \(NISVS\)](#) to understand the burden of violence experienced by American Indian and Alaska Native people.

American Indian and Alaska Native people experience high rates of homicide

- Homicide was the fourth leading cause of death among 1-44-year-old American Indian and Alaska Native males.¹
- Homicide was the sixth leading cause of death among 1-44-year-old American Indian/Alaska Native females.¹
- When circumstances were known, 47% of homicides of American Indian and Alaska Native people happened after arguments, 19% happened after another serious crime, and 25% happened after a physical fight between two people.²
- Not all violence experienced by American Indian and Alaska Native people happens in isolated areas or on reservations. About 57% of homicides happened in urban areas and about 43% happened in rural areas for all age groups.¹

American Indian and Alaska Native people experience high rates of intimate partner violence and sexual violence

- About 58% of American Indian and Alaska Native women and 51% of American Indian and Alaska Native men experienced intimate partner violence during their lifetimes.³
- Intimate partner violence was a factor in 38% of homicides of American Indian and Alaska Native women and 7% of homicides of American Indian and Alaska Native men.²
- In their lifetime, about 44% of American Indian and Alaska Native women were raped. In their lifetime, about 14% of American Indian and Alaska Native men were made to penetrate someone else through physical force, threats of violence, or alcohol or drug facilitation.³
- About 32% of American Indian and Alaska Native women reported experiencing sexual coercion, which is unwanted sexual activity that happens when someone is pressured, tricked, threatened, or forced in a nonphysical way.³



CDC's Division of Violence Prevention partners with tribal communities to prevent violence

CDC's Division of Violence Prevention (DVP) works with tribal communities through its [Rape Prevention and Education](#) (RPE) and [Domestic Violence Prevention Enhancement and Leadership Through Alliances](#) (DELTA) programs.

Rape Prevention and Education (RPE) program

The RPE program works to prevent sexual violence by providing funding, tools, training, and technical assistance to state and territorial health departments in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, as well as through state, tribal, and territorial sexual assault coalitions. For the first time, in 2023, CDC is providing RPE program funding to tribal sexual assault coalitions included in the 2022 reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Examples of RPE program work in tribal communities are described below.

South Dakota Boys and Girls Club partnership

South Dakota's RPE program partners with four Boys and Girls Club of America sites within the state. All four sites have a Native American population in their clubs, including the Boys & Girls Club of Sioux Empire.

These sites are trained in the *Shifting Boundaries* curriculum. *Shifting Boundaries* is a school-based program that includes improving schools' responses to student dating violence and sexual harassment, creating poster campaigns, and increasing staff monitoring of high-risk areas. The curriculum reached 181 youth across four community organizations.

Additionally, the South Dakota Health Department worked with an Oglala Lakota Sioux Tribal Elder who created a curriculum for education and awareness for Lakota youth based on storytelling and Lakota culture.

Domestic Violence Prevention Enhancement and Leadership Through Alliances (DELTA) program

DELTA funds 13 state and domestic violence coalitions to implement statewide intimate partner violence prevention efforts and funds local communities to implement intimate partner violence prevention activities. Some of these state coalitions work with tribal communities to implement intimate partner violence prevention strategies.

For example, the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault worked with the Alaska Native community to implement the *Boys Run I toowú klatseen* afterschool program in Southeast Alaska. This 10-week program helps boys in 3rd-5th grade gain skills to build healthy relationships, using Southeast Alaska traditional tribal values that encourage respectfulness in relationships. Adult volunteers from the community act as role model "coaches" who facilitate interactive activities and help boys train for a 5K community fun run.

¹ According to NVSS 2023 data, among non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Natives

² According to NVDRS 2022 data, among non-Hispanic American Indians/Alaska Natives

³ According to NISVS 2016-2017 data, among non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Natives

Note: NVDRS 2022 data are from 50 states and the District of Columbia. The findings listed above are for homicides with known circumstances. Circumstances are events that preceded or were determined to be related to the homicide. Homicides may have multiple circumstances. Law enforcement, coroner, and medical examiner reports collect data on circumstances. As such, circumstances are limited to scene evidence and what is known and reported by informants interviewed by death investigation teams.

For more information on CDC's tribal work, visit: www.cdc.gov/tribal-health

For more information on the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control's tribal work, visit: www.cdc.gov/injury-tribal

For more information about the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control's interactive data query system, visit: wisqars.cdc.gov