



Native Cultural Awareness

Jeanine Gaines

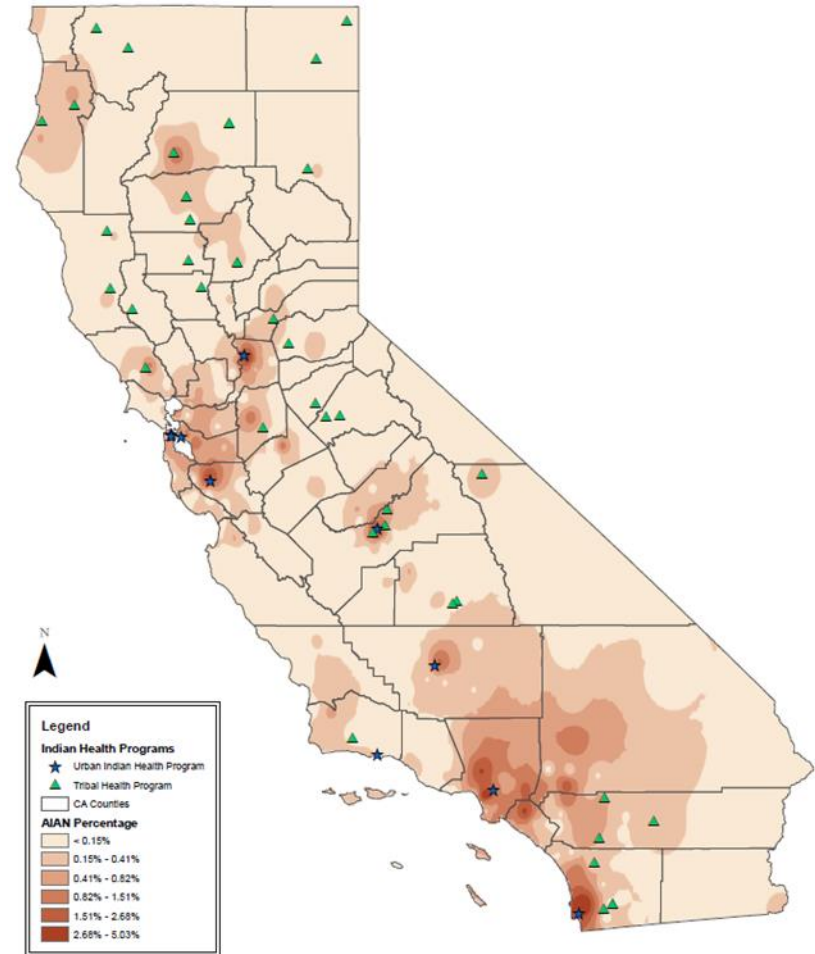
Citizen Potawatomi Nation

Communications Manager

HISTORY

California Native History

- There are currently **109** federally recognized Indian tribes in California and **78** entities petitioning for recognition. Tribes in California currently have nearly 100 separate reservations or Rancherias. There are also a number of individual Indian trust allotments. The original inhabitants of the Bay Area are the Ohlone, Coastal Miwok and Northern Valley Yokuts.
- There are **562** federally recognized Indian tribes, bands, nations, pueblos, rancherias, communities and Native villages in the United States. Approximately **229** of these are located in Alaska; the rest are located in 33 other states. Tribes are ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse.



California Native History

Like all other tribes around the country, California's tribes have a tragic and tumultuous history.

- Before the missionary, fur trapping, and gold rush era migrations, California's Native American population was estimated at about 600,000 -1,000,000 people.
- The Spanish Missionaries began to systematically colonize California in the mid to late 1700's. California Native Tribes were enslaved into the Mission system and endured physical, mental, and sexual abuses by Spanish priests and armed forces. Native Americans living in the Missions were forced into Christianity and violently punished for speaking their Native language and practicing tribal traditions. By 1836, 1/3 of the Native population was dead.
- Unprecedented numbers of colonizers arrived in the region in 1848-49 and violence erupted, particularly against Natives who resisted the intrusion of Gold Rushers onto their land. Within 2 years of the discovery of gold over two-thirds of the remaining Native population was killed, some 100,000 people.
- Between 1840 and 1870, however, that population declined to 12,000 due to disease, removal, and death/GENOCIDE.

California Native History

Between 1851 and 1852, 18 treaties were signed between the tribes and the United States. The treaties reserved 7.5 million acres for the tribes but were rejected by the U.S. Senate in secret session at the request of the State of California. The tribes, believing that the treaties were valid, relinquished the historic territories and moved to the reserved acreage. However, once they reached their new locations, they were turned away. The tribes were not officially notified of the reason for this until 1905, some 55 years later.

In the 1850s, California passed a series of laws pertaining to its Native American population. These laws allowed:

- A justice of the peace to remove Indians from lands in a white person's possession
- Any Indian to be declared vagrant (upon word of a white person), thrown in jail, and sold at auction for up to four months with no pay
- The kidnapping, selling, and use of Indian children as slaves
- Indentured servitude of any Indian (one report mentioned 110 servants who ranged from ages 2 to 50, 49 of whom were between 7 and 12 years old)
- Prohibited Indians from testifying in court against a white person

Boarding Schools and the Prison System



The U.S. government wanted to "Americanize" Native people by indoctrinating them with Euro-American ideals and extinguishing Native culture

In the late 1800s, many Hopi refused to send their children to boarding schools and also refused to give up their lands, and when they did so, they were arrested and sent to Alcatraz

California Native History

- In the 1950s, nearly 100 years later, the federal government's continued attempts to force assimilation on the entire Native American population resulted in the termination (i.e., loss of federally recognized status) of over 109 tribes throughout the United States. In California, this came about through the Rancheria Act of 1958, which resulted in the termination of federal status of 44 Indian tribes.
- The Relocation Act of 1956 provided funding to establish relocation centers for Native Americans in urban areas like Denver, Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, and to finance the relocation of individual Native Americans and their families.
- Nearly 100,000 Indians were relocated to California from 1952-1968 as a result of these and other, related policies.

CURRENT STRUGGLES

Intergenerational Trauma



How does trauma get passed down through generations?

People adapt to traumatic experiences by

1. Developing defense mechanisms and coping skills that often can be detrimental.
2. For Native people enduring immense losses, grief and post traumatic stress became a way of living.
3. People believe that feeling numb, being angry, acting self-destructively, and feeling hopeless is a normal way to be in the world.

Mental Health Environment

- Sacramento is number **17 out of 20** for the largest Native American populations in **the Nation** (Henry J. Kaiser Foundation).
- AI/AN community has the **2nd highest rates of documented emergency department visits and hospitalizations for mental health illness and substance abuse** at 832/10,000 (Sacramento County Community Health Needs Assessment, 2014).
- **27%** of AI/AN families report **living below the living wage** (Sacramento County Community Health Needs Assessment, 2014).
- **Depression** is the most serious emerging mental health disorder in the AI/AN population (CDC, 2015)
- Many AI/ANs have an **understandable distrust of government institutions** based on historical experiences
- More AI/ANs in Northern California **report never or rarely receiving the emotional and social support** that they need (9.8% v 18.0%) and report more frequent mental distress (12.6% v 9.5%).
- **24.3%** of AI/ANs indicated that they **lived with someone during childhood who was depressed, mentally ill, or suicidal** (CTBRFCS, 2015).
- **45.6%** of AI/ANs indicated that they **lived with someone throughout their childhood who struggled with alcoholism** (CTBRFCS, 2015).
- **29.6%** of AI/ANs reported that they **lived with someone who was dependent or used illegal drugs or misused prescription drugs** (CTBRFCS, 2015).

Suicide

200 AI/AN Sacramento community members identified suicide prevention as a significant need (Suicide Prevention Needs Assessment, 2015).

- **67%** agree or strongly agree that **suicide and suicidal behavior is common in their community**;
- **78%** agree or strongly agree that an **AI/AN culturally focused suicide awareness campaign is needed in their community**;
- **96%** agree or strongly agree that **traditional cultural events** (i.e. pow wows, drumming circles, beading classes) are needed;
- **94%** agree or strongly agree **education is needed to address healthy relationships**(i.e. communication, parenting, etc.);
- **94%** agree or strongly agree that **mentoring** (i.e. adult mentoring teen, teen mentoring youth) is needed;
- **80%** felt that suicide and suicidal behavior is **most common among individuals who use alcohol and/or drugs**;
- **76%** felt that AIAN youth attempt suicide because they **don't know where or how to get help**.



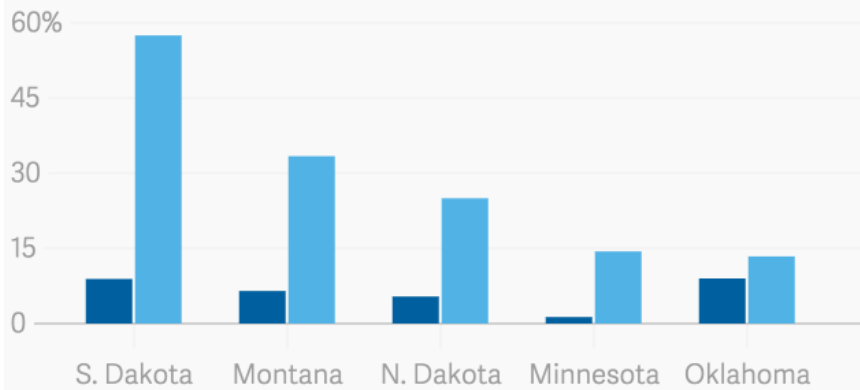
COMMUNITY STRENGTHS

Native Peoples, Tradition, and the Prison System



Native American defendants in federal courts

■ Share of state population ■ Share of federal-offense caseload



Quartz | qz.com

US Census Bureau, US Sentencing Commission

Reframing Alcohol and Drug Use



Protecting our Rivers for Future Generations



Strengths-Based Approach

Culture is Prevention!



D-Q University



Standing Rock Youth
Runners

What Can You Do?

- Understand Native History and the struggles of the Native Community today.
- Be mindful of peoples' experiences.
- Understand that healing takes various forms, and there is not one “right” way to heal.

Contact Information

Jeanine Gaines

Communications Manager

Jeanine.Gaines@snaahc.org