

# 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 2021, homicide rates among American Indian and Alaska Native people were nearly four times higher than homicide rates for non-Hispanic White people.<sup>1</sup> 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.

Public health workers and their partners identify and reduce factors that may lead to violence, such as prolonged stress and economic hardship. They also find, study, and increase what protects people from violence, such as strengthening family, school, and community connections. Here's what we know about Missing or Murdered Indigenous People and what we hope will prevent violence among American Indian and Alaska Native people.



## 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 inform Missing or Murdered Indigenous People prevention efforts.

## American Indian/Alaska Native people experience high rates of homicide

- Homicide was the fifth leading cause of death among American Indian/Alaska Native males (1-44 years old).<sup>1</sup>
- Homicide was the eighth leading cause of death among American Indian/Alaska Native females (1-44 years old).<sup>1</sup>
- About 2 in 5 homicides of American Indian and Alaska Native people happened after arguments, 1 in 4 happened after another serious crime, and 22% happened after a physical fight between two people.<sup>2</sup>
- 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.<sup>1</sup>

## American Indian/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.<sup>3</sup>
- Intimate partner violence was a factor in 44% of homicides of American Indian and Alaska Native women and 11% of homicides of American Indian/Alaska Native men.<sup>2</sup>
- 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.<sup>3</sup>



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- 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.<sup>3</sup>

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## Division of Violence Prevention partners with tribal communities to prevent violence

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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, and state, territorial, and tribal sexual assault coalitions. For the first time, in 2023, CDC and the RPE program are funding these tribal sexual assault coalitions, as part of 2022 reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Examples of RPE program work in tribal communities are below.

### South Dakota Boys and Girls Club partnership

South Dakota's RPE program is partnering with seven Boys and Girls Club of America sites within South Dakota. All seven sites have a Native American population within their clubs and include McLaughlin Club on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

These sites will be 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.

Additionally, the South Dakota Health Department is working 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: Achieving Health Equity through Addressing Disparities (AHEAD) 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, during the previous iteration of DELTA (DELTA Impact), 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 ten-week program helps boys in 3rd-5th grade gain skills to build healthy relationships, using southeast Alaska traditional tribal values to promote respect, equal treatment regardless of gender, and break down unhealthy beliefs about masculinity. Adult volunteers from the community (mostly men) act as role model "coaches" who facilitate interactive activities and help boys train for a 5K community fun run.

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<sup>1</sup> According to NVSS 2021 data, among non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Natives

<sup>2</sup> According to NVDRS 2018-2020 data, among non-Hispanic American Indians/Alaska Natives

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

*Note: NVDRS 2018-2020 data are from 49 states and the District of Columbia. Not all states participated in all years. Circumstances are events that preceded or that were determined to be related to the homicide. The findings listed above are for homicides with known circumstances. Homicides may have multiple circumstances. Data on circumstances come from law enforcement and coroner and medical examiner reports. 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: <https://www.cdc.gov/tribal/>

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

For more information about the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control's interactive data query system, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html>