



LA City/County Native American Indian Commission's Self Governance Board Community Needs Assessment 2019 Survey Findings

Background: Los Angeles (LA) County has the largest American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) population in the country at over 150,000 individuals.¹ Poverty is a known issue among AI/AN in LA County, affecting nearly a quarter (23.1%) of individuals.² The findings of the Needs Assessment will help the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission's (LANAIC) Self Governance Board (SGB) determine how to allocate Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funds so that we ensure that we are most effectively meeting the poverty related needs of our community.

Methodology: In January 2019, the Urban Indian Health Institute (UIHI) was contracted by the LANAIC's SGB to assist with a poverty needs assessment among LA County AI/AN. In partnership with AIAN community-based organizations, data collection in the form of paper and electronic surveys took place in March and April 2019. Eligible participants included AI/AN over the age of 18 residing in LA County. Approximately 108 paper and electronic surveys were administered.

Preliminary Results:

Employment & Transportation:

- 34% of respondents reported they were employed full-time, regardless of income. Twenty-eight percent of participants below the federal poverty line (FPL) were employed part-time, and only 4% were employed full time.
- 32% of participants below FPL rely on public transportation.

Housing Stability:

- Renting a home was more common than owning it, regardless of income. Cost of housing in Los Angeles was high for everyone regardless of income.
- Respondents, regardless of income, were spending nearly half their monthly income just on housing (45.2%).
- Housing instability* affected 40% of all respondents regardless of income.

Food Security:

- Over half of respondents living in poverty (57%) were food insecure compared to only 18% of respondents not living in poverty.

¹ Urban Indian Health Institute, Seattle Indian Health Board (2017). *Community Health Profile: Individual Site Report. Los Angeles Urban Indian Health Program Service Area*. Seattle, WA: Urban Indian Health Institute.

² Ibid.

*At least two or more risk factors, such as having difficulty paying for housing or being threatened with eviction

- Despite experiences with food insecurity, services to improve food access like CalFresh/SNAP and WIC were consistently rated by providers and community respondents as relatively accessible and were not identified as priority areas.

Cultural Connectedness:

- Respondents thought often about the historical losses of AI/AN with nearly three-quarters of respondents (72%) reporting they thought about historical losses either daily, weekly, or monthly.
- 68% of all participants attended a cultural/spiritual event at least monthly.
- The most common cultural event attended was traditional arts & crafts (36%) followed by gathering and preparing traditional foods (25%) and traditional dancing (22%).

Recommendations:

From these results, priority needs areas for future program planning include: **housing services, transportation assistance, dental care access, vision care access, and affordable childcare.**

Housing Services: Given the high priority assigned to housing in the service gap analysis and the high prevalence of housing instability risk factors, this is a key priority area. The high cost of housing, high prevalence of housing instability, and perceived lack of availability make housing services even more critical for individuals living in poverty.

Transportation: The high cost of living and reliance on transportation other than a private vehicle, makes access to reliable transportation service for people living in poverty difficult. According to providers, lack of transportation affected access for nearly every service despite 58% of providers claiming their agency offered transport help.

Dental and Vision Care Access: These were consistently rated as highly important but were only offered by few of the responding providers.

Affordable Childcare: This was consistently found to have a large service gap among community respondents regardless of income. No providers reported that their agency offered affordable childcare services, so this is an area of opportunity.

Future planning should also continue to support cultural activities as they are frequently attended, highly valued, and offer opportunities to connect with the community outside of a service context. A sentence about how culture is prevention and healing.

We encourage you to review the below findings and interpretation of data and provide feedback by emailing aferguson@wdacs.lacounty.gov by Friday June 20th, 2019.