

Developments and Upcoming Plans for the American Indian Population and Labor Force Report

Developments in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023

Initial outreach efforts for the development of the American Indian Population and Labor Force Report (AIPLFR) began in October 2022, with the introduction of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) AIPLFR team to staff of the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) at the Department of Labor (DOL). ETA was instrumental in providing resources, including numerous email threads, from prior years when responsibility for the AIPLFR had been delegated to ETA. The BLS AIPLFR team also received important materials which highlighted Indian Country stakeholders' recommendations and suggestions to DOL regarding the AIPLFR, as well as issues related to data sources for the AIPLFR.

In November 2022, the BLS AIPLFR team joined the Indian Country Data Working Group (ICDWG), a monthly meeting of representatives from nine different governmental departments which intends to identify shared goals and actions that could be presented to Tribes in consultation. The BLS AIPLFR team has been an active participant in each of the monthly meetings since January 2023. In December 2022, the BLS AIPLFR team met with the Chief Data Officer for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs at the U.S. Department of the Interior, to discuss data priorities, tribal sovereignty, and tribal consultation, among other topics. ICDWG data priorities include elements needed for the AIPLFR.

In March 2023, the BLS team drafted a Short Term Objective (STO) for the AIPLFR for Fiscal Year 2024 that aligned with BLS's current strategic plan. The AIPLFR team participated in the Plenary Session of the P.L. 102-477 Tribal Work Group that was held in conjunction with the 43rd National Indian & Native American Employment & Training Conference on May 2, 2023, per an invitation to present by a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation who was also Co-Chair of the Tribal Work Group. BLS gave an overview of Current Population Survey (CPS) data on American Indians and Alaska Natives (AIAN), discussed plans for the AIPLFR, and conducted a roundtable discussion with conference participants on engaging with

tribal members, evaluating tribal data and other existing sources of data, and the expectations of BLS moving forward, while fielding questions from those attending the session.

On June 20, 2023, the BLS AIPLFR team participated in the ICDWG [Tribal Data Priorities Consultation Meeting](#), and spoke with tribal stakeholders and tribal members regarding the work BLS is doing to further the development of the AIPLFR. On August 28, 2023, BLS presented AIAN CPS data to the ICDWG during the group's monthly meeting. Over the course of the fiscal year, the BLS AIPLFR team has been working on an update to a paper Mary Dorinda Allard and Vernon Brundage Jr. co-authored in November 2019, which examines the labor market characteristics of American Indians and Alaska Natives during the 2019–21 period.

Upcoming Plans for FY 2024

Public Law 115-93 requires the Secretary of Labor, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior, American Indian tribes, and the Director of the Census Bureau, to issue a biennial report on the population eligible for the services which the Secretary of the Interior provides to Indian people. The report is intended to include information by state and Bureau of Indian Affairs service area, as well as information at the tribal level, for the total service population; the service population under age 16 and over age 64; the population available for work, including those not considered to be actively seeking work; the employed population, including those employed with annual earnings below the poverty line; and the numbers employed in private sector positions and public sector positions.

For Fiscal Year 2023, the BLS STO was to publish plans for the AIPLFR based on source data research and outreach with tribal groups, Federal agencies, and other organizations. As outlined in the section above, the BLS AIPLFR team has been engaging with tribal stakeholders and representatives from other federal agencies on a routine basis throughout the fiscal year. Under the constraints of a limited resource environment, the BLS AIPLFR has had two data sources to evaluate: the CPS and the American Community

Survey (ACS). The BLS AIPLFR team was able to update an article previously co-authored by Mary Dorinda Allard and Vernon Brundage Jr. in November 2019, which highlighted a measure similar to one that is required by Public Law 115-93 (population available for work, including those not considered to be actively seeking work) utilizing data from the CPS. For the article update, BLS collaborated with the Census Bureau, which resulted in Census providing special labor market tabulations to BLS that identified individuals who lived on and off tribal statistical areas. CPS data, unfortunately, do not fully meet the data requirements for the report, as the necessary granular data at a tribal level are unavailable in the survey.

In consultation with Census ACS staff, the BLS team was made aware of the existence of AIAN special population tables, which are available on a non-overlapping 5-year basis. The BLS team intended to evaluate the most recent ACS 5-year data by tribal affiliation originally scheduled for release in March 2023. However, due to a [processing error](#), these data were not released until June 2023. The BLS team has had insufficient time to work with the ACS data to formulate its own impression of whether, or how, the data might be used to satisfy the requirements of the AIPLFR. Furthermore, tribal stakeholders have been vocally opposed to use of the ACS as the data source for the report, suggesting tribally generated data as the best existing data source, with some tribal stakeholders recommending the use of administrative data on participants in various federal programs. Unfortunately, there is a current lack of access to tribal survey instruments and documentation. Moving forward, the BLS team will continue to engage and collaborate with tribal stakeholders, tribal members, and federal agencies, as well as publish the article highlighting CPS data similar to the measure required by Public Law 115-93 and evaluate the updated ACS data by tribal affiliation as a potential data source for the AIPLFR.