



American Indian Health in Wisconsin: Results from the Family Health Survey 2021–2024

According to the 2020 Census, 9.7 million people in the United States identify as American Indian and/or Alaska Native.¹ An estimated 145,000 live in Wisconsin, constituting 2.5% of the state population.¹ Wisconsin is home to these 11 federally recognized Indian Tribes:²

- The Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
- Forest County Potawatomi
- Ho-Chunk Nation
- Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe
- Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians
- Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin
- Oneida Nation
- Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
- Sokaogon Chippewa Community Mole Lake Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
- St. Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin
- Stockbridge-Munsee Community

Demographics

According to the 2021–2024 data from the Wisconsin [Family Health Survey](#) (FHS), the American Indian population in Wisconsin is younger than the state population as a whole, with an estimated median age of 32 years compared to 40 years for the state. A larger proportion of American Indian adults did not complete a high school education compared to the state population (5.8% vs 2.5%). An estimated 71.5% of American Indians between the ages of 18 and 64 years are employed, and 93.3% of American Indian children live with at least one employed adult. The estimated rate of poverty among American Indians is 23.7%, which is higher than the 9.1% for the state. Three quarters of the American Indian population lives in metropolitan areas.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the American Indian population and the overall population of Wisconsin.

	American Indian: Percent	American Indian: 95% CI	Wisconsin: Percent	Wisconsin: 95% CI
Median age (years)	32	28.6–35.3	40.2	39.6–40.9
Highest education (ages 18 and older)	-	-	-	-
Less than high school	5.8	3.1–8.6	2.5	2.2–2.8
High school graduate	32.6	24.9–40.2	32.3	31.3–33.3
More than high school	61.5	53.8–69.1	65	63.9–66
Employed (ages 18-64)	71.5	65–78	76.3	75.3–77.2
Lives with at least one employed adult (ages 0-17)	92.3	87.2–97.5	92.8	91.8–93.8
Poverty status	-	-	-	-
Poor	23.7	18.8–28.6	9.1	8.6–9.6
Near-poor	24.1	19.1–29	16.4	15.8–17
Not poor	51	45.5–56.5	72.3	71.6–73.1
Lives in a metropolitan area	75.8	71.1–80.4	74.8	74.3–75.4

CI: Confidence interval

Poor: Household income less than 100% federal poverty level (FPL)

Near-poor: Household income between 100% and 200% FPL

Not poor: Household income greater than 200% FPL

Health insurance

When compared to the state population, a higher proportion of American Indians in Wisconsin lacked health insurance coverage in the previous year (5.9% vs 2.7%). While four fifths of American Indians had dental insurance and two thirds had mental health insurance, only two fifths had insurance that covers substance use care.

Table 2: Health insurance coverage for the American Indian population and overall state population of Wisconsin.

	American Indian: Percent	American Indian: 95% CI	Wisconsin: Percent	Wisconsin: 95% CI
Health insurance during the past year	-	-	-	-
All year	88.5	85–92	93.2	92.8–93.7
Part of the year	5	2.7–7.4	3.5	3.1–3.8
None	5.9	3.3–8.6	2.7	2.4–3

Dental insurance	80.1	75.7–84.6	77.4	76.7–78.1
Mental health insurance	66.5	61.3–71.8	69.4	68.7–70.2
Substance use insurance	40.3	35.1–45.6	49.6	48.8–50.4

CI: Confidence interval

The Indian Health Service (IHS) is a federal health care system that provides health care to those who are members of federally recognized Tribes. Some IHS facilities are administered by the federal government while others are run by individual tribes. Federal facilities serve any registered American Indian, regardless of tribal affiliation. Facilities run by individual Tribes prioritize Tribal members but also provide health care to those from other tribes as resources allow. IHS is not defined as a health insurance provider, and those who rely on IHS as their sole source of health care coverage are considered uninsured. An estimated 11.1% (95% CI: 7.7% to 14.5%) of American Indian residents were enrolled in medical care via the IHS.

Health care access and utilization

Among American Indian residents of Wisconsin, an estimated 74.5% received care from a medical doctor, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant in the previous year, compared to 80.3% of all state residents. With regards to mental health, 17.3% received care in the previous year, which is similar to the overall state population. However, a greater proportion of American Indians received substance use care compared to the state (3.2% vs 0.8%). When it comes to dental care, 67% of American Indians had visited the dentist within the past year, compared to 74.4% of Wisconsin as a whole. An estimated 4.4% of American Indian residents were unable to get care when they needed it. Similarly, 4.4% had difficulty getting health care due to a lack of reliable transportation.

Table 3: Health care access and utilization among the American Indian population and overall state population of Wisconsin.

	American Indian: Percent	American Indian: 95% CI	Wisconsin: Percent	Wisconsin: 95% CI
Received medical care in the last year	74.5	69.6–79.5	80.3	79.6–80.9
Received mental health care in the last year	17.3	13.2–21.4	17.7	17.1–18.4
Received substance use care in the last year	3.2	0.9–5.4	0.8	0.6–0.9
Have a usual place of care	92.6	89.4–95.8	95.2	94.8–95.5
Last general check-up	-	-	-	-
Never	1.4	0–2.8	1.1	0.9–1.3
In past year	77.9	73.3–82.6	76.4	75.7–77.1
1-2 years ago	9.5	6.3–12.8	11	10.5–11.6

>2 years ago	9.8	6.4–13.3	10.3	9.8–10.8
Last dental check-up	-	-	-	-
Never	2.3	0.6–4	2.4	2.2–2.7
Within past year	67	61.7–72.2	74.4	73.6–75.1
1-2 years ago (13-24 mo)	9.4	6.2–12.7	8.8	8.3–9.3
2-5 years ago	9.9	6.6–13.2	7.1	6.7–7.6
>5 years ago	8.7	5.4–12	6.2	5.8–6.6
Needed care in the past year but did not get it	4.4	2.2–6.5	2.3	2.1–2.6
Had difficulty getting health care due to lack of transportation	4.4	2.4–6.4	3.6	3.2–3.9

CI: Confidence interval

About the data

Estimates were calculated from combined 4-year data from FHS 2021–2024. FHS is a statewide, random sample, address-based telephone survey of Wisconsin households. Once weighted, the survey results represent all people living in Wisconsin households. For the purposes of this report, American Indian is defined as any individual who reports American Indian as their race, either alone or in combination with one or more other races. More details about FHS, including methodology, questionnaires, data dictionaries, and other reports can be found on the [FHS website](#).

References

1. U.S. Census Bureau. "Race and Ethnicity in the United States: 2010 Census and 2020 Census." August 12, 2021. <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/race-and-ethnicity-in-the-united-state-2010-and-2020-census.html>.
2. Bureau of Indian Affairs & Department of the Interior. "Indian Entities Recognized by and Eligible To Receive Services From the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs." January 29, 2021. <https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2021-01606>.