

# INDIAN SERVICE POPULATION AND LABOR FORCE ESTIMATES

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS



January 1991

LOCAL ESTIMATES OF RESIDENT INDIAN POPULATION AND LABOR FORCE ESTIMATES  
JANUARY 1991

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

The main purpose of this report is to identify and determine the status of the Indian labor force in the total Indian Service population. The report is intended to supply estimated information related to the labor force itself and does not collect or provide any other combinations of data or conclusions than those represented on these pages.

DEFINITIONS AND COVERAGE

This report does not contain exhaustive demographic data concerning the entire Indian population of the United States. The Statistics gathered only concern those Indians who are members of Indian tribes. or who are one-fourth degree or more blood quantum descendants of a member of any Indian tribe, band, nation, rancheria, colony, pueblo, or community, including Alaska Native Villages or regional village corporations defined in or established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. The study is confined to Indians living on Federal reservations or in areas or communities adjacent or contiguous to reservations which are considered part of the service population of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).

This extended service population is based upon mutual recommendation of the tribal governing body of the reservation and the local BIA Agency Superintendent. Criteria considered include that published in 25 CFR 20.1(r):

- (1) the number of Indian people native to the reservation who are residing in the adjacent or contiguous area;
- (2) a written designation of the tribal governing body that members of the tribe and family members residing in the area are socially, culturally, and economically affiliated with the tribe and reservation; and
- (3) the geographical proximity of the area to the reservation; and
- (4) the administrative feasibility of providing an adequate level of services to the area.

The total Indian population of the United States, as reported in the 1990 United States census, numbers 1,959,234. This includes American Indians, Eskimos and Aleuts, who reside on or near reservations or off reservations in urban areas. This labor force report covers 1,001,441 Indians and does not represent the total enrolled tribal membership in the United States; or Indians who are not enrolled in Federally-recognized tribes; or enrolled members who reside in urban or rural areas not adjacent or contiguous to their reservations.

#### STUDY METHODOLOGY:

The methodology utilized, for study purposes was, local BIA agencies gather data through such diverse sources and methods as statistics furnished by the tribes themselves; actual house-to-house surveys conducted by tribal programs and contracts; school records; employment records; tribal election statistics; tribal membership rolls maintained by the tribes; and BIA program services records. Accuracy of information varies due to size of geographic areas covered, isolation of many communities, and differing levels of cooperation among respondents. In the majority of cases, data is estimated and is not representative of an actual count. Data is reported as collected. In those areas where no new data was obtained, 1989 statistics were used, as reported in the 1989 publication of this report, and are identified by footnote in Table 3.

#### LABOR FORCE REPORT FORMAT:

The total estimated labor force is reported on three tables. No educational information concerning those individuals too young to be included in the labor force (16 years and under) is collected. Table 3 is the most detailed, depicting the population by tribe, state, and servicing BIA organizational elements, i.e., area offices and local agencies. Table 2 reports the same data by BIA area office responsibility and composite state populations within area office jurisdictions. Table 1 provides labor force data for individual states.

Information is reported in 13 columns. As defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the "potential labor force" is comprised of all individuals 16 years old and over (columns e and 4), excluding students (column 5) and those who either must care for children, are retired, or are disabled (column 6). Thus, out of 669,635 eligible individuals, the "potential work force" is comprised of 567,150 individuals, both employed and unemployed (columns 7 and 10). This represents an increase in the labor force of 121,788 individuals compared to the 1989 report. Only 25% of the age 16 and over population earn over \$7,000 annually (column 9). This is only 1% higher than that in the previous reporting period, although the number of individuals earning in excess of \$7,000 has increased only by 6,373 since the last reporting period. Of the "potential" work force, 45% are not employed (column 11). There has been a slight change of 3% in this group since the last reporting period. Although 239,179 Indians are unemployed, only 155,380 are actively seeking work. Those 83,799 individuals not seeking work include those who have been discouraged from seeking work, and those who have no available work opportunities in the immediate area or have no means of transportation to facilitate seeking work elsewhere. These individuals are omitted from the standard Bureau of Labor Statistics' definitions of "labor force" and "unemployed". Therefore, by BLS definition, the Indian labor force consists of only those 394,559 individuals reported in columns (10) and (12), and the total Indian population unemployment rate is 45% (column 13). This represents a 3% decrease in the unemployment rate since the last publication of this report. This is approximately 37% higher than the average unemployment rate for the United States.

