



# Fact Sheet

SOCIAL SECURITY

## **Social Security Is Important to American Indians and Alaska Natives**

**Social Security is neutral with respect to race or ethnicity – individuals with identical earnings histories are treated the same in terms of benefits. This Fact Sheet is provided by the Social Security Administration to highlight how American Indians and Alaska Natives benefit from the Social Security program and how certain demographic characteristics of American Indians and Alaska Natives compare with the entire population.**

- The Social Security system is progressive in that lower-wage earners receive a higher percentage benefit than higher-wage earners do. The system returns a greater percentage of pre-retirement earnings to a lower-wage worker than to a higher-wage worker. American Indians who are low-wage workers receive back more benefits in relation to past earnings than do high-wage earners.
  - In 2007, the median earnings of working-age American Indians who worked full-time year-round were about \$30,000, compared to \$40,000 for all working-age people.
- American Indians benefit from the guaranteed benefit that is annually adjusted for inflation. With longer life expectancies, elderly American Indians will live more years in retirement and benefit from Social Security's cost-of-living protections.
  - American Indians tend to have higher life expectancies at age 65 than the majority of the population.
    - American Indian men who are age 65 in 2005 can expect to live to age 84, compared to age 81 for all men.
    - American Indian women who are age 65 in 2005 can expect to live to age 88, compared to age 85 for all women.
- In 2007, the average annual Social Security income received by American Indian men 65 years and older was \$11,135 and for women it was \$8,992.
- In 2007, among American Indians receiving Social Security, 23 percent of elderly married couples and 48 percent of elderly unmarried persons relied on Social Security for 90 percent or more of their income.

- Today, American Indians and Alaska natives make up one percent of the U.S. population.

Our website at [www.socialsecurity.gov/aian](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/aian) contains more information of interest to American Indians and Alaska Natives.

*This fact sheet is designed to provide general information and may not apply to all individuals within each segment of the American Indian and Alaska Natives populations.*