



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

JUL 02 2012

Dear Tribal Leader:

I write to inform you that the Department of the Interior will not release the 2010 Indian Population and Labor Force Report because of methodology inconsistencies. We believe this to be the best decision given the circumstances involved, and a determination that will best serve the long-term interests of American Indians and Alaska Natives.

In 2010, tribes were asked to participate in the web-based survey on population and employment statistics to provide the information needed for the 2010 Labor Force Report. Tribes responded to this survey with an understanding that they were contributing to this important report and devoted valuable time and effort in providing accurate information. The Department acknowledges and is extremely grateful for the collaboration and tremendous efforts put forth by tribes towards accomplishing this goal. Regrettably, the decision not to release the Labor Force Report is rooted in the survey methodology. The collected data from those 2010 methods did not adequately meet the standards of quality and reliability that are required of Federal agencies in reporting official statistics.

Upon review of the data provided by tribes, the Department did not provide clear direction to obtain the specific information requested in the survey. A variety of factors have contributed to this problem, most of which are historically driven. The measurements of population and employment statistics on American Indians and Alaska Natives have always been difficult to obtain. Indian Affairs plans to devote more expertise in these areas that will lead to better methods of acquiring and processing high quality and reliable information for future reports.

Although the survey findings will not be released, the data that were collected are extremely valuable as information that will lead toward the development of a better survey and report. These essential benefits for the future of the survey and report would not be possible without tribes' participation in the 2010 survey. To ensure that the next labor force survey meets the data quality standards set by Office of Management and Budget, we will develop a new survey to yield quality and accurate data. The next survey and report will be designed through extensive consultation with tribal leaders, other offices in the Department, the Bureau of the Census, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and other Federal agencies. The survey's new design will provide background explanations of the questions to allow for a more comprehensive understanding of tribal populations and employment data.

Tribal Consultations and meetings will be scheduled and forthcoming with engagement from tribes and other Federal agencies. Indian Affairs has been seeking comments on a preliminary revision of the survey questions, as mentioned in a Federal Register notice that was published on May 29, 2012 (Vol. 77 No. 103, 31637). Enclosed is a sample of preliminary survey questions that are being considered for the next survey. Please send any comments you may have on these questions to Dr. Steven Payson, Economist, at Steven.Payson@bia.gov or please call (202) 513-7745.

Thank you for your interest in this important matter.

Sincerely,



Donald E. Laverdure
Acting Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs

Enclosure

American Indian Population and Labor Force Survey

Draft for Review Comments Only

Population: Population estimates should be in reference to April 1st of the year of this survey. For example, if a 15-year old on March 31st turns 16 years old on April 1st then that person would count as a 16-year-old. If that person's birthday is on April 2nd, however, the person should be counted as a 15-year-old. If information is not available in reference to April 1st, then estimates should be made as best as possible for the calendar year of the survey, where each individual is only counted once in a particular age group.

		Male	Female	Total
1.	Tribal Enrollment (official tribal membership)			
2.	Service Area Population (all individuals living in the tribal area who are eligible for services which the Secretary of the Department of the Interior provides to American Indians and Alaska Natives)			
2.a.	Under 16 years old			
2.b.	Ages 16 through 64			
2.c.	Ages 65 and above			

Employment: Of those individuals 16 years and older within the service area population, how many fall into the following categories (where each individual can belong to only one category so that the sum of all the categories equals to the total number of individuals 16 years and older)? Ideally, these employment estimates should be made in reference to the status of individuals' employment during the week prior to the week of April 1st of the year of this survey. Employment during this week is defined as having a job during this week, regardless of whether the individual is temporarily absent from that job due to vacation, temporary illness, maternity leave, other family/personal reasons, bad weather, etc. If information is not available in reference to this week before the week of April 1st, then estimates should be made as best as possible for the calendar year of the survey. You are "working" if you are an employee, or managing your own business or other type of organization, where you are receiving earnings from what you are doing.

3.	Total Employed or Not Employed (equals the sum of 2.b. and 2.c., and the sum of 3.a. through 3.h)			
3.a.	Working full-time (35 hours or more per week) for any government organization, including a tribal, federal, state, county, or municipal government.			
3.b.	Working full-time for any other type of organization, such as a private company or a nonprofit organization that is not affiliated with any government organization.			

Working seasonally or short-term means that employment is expected to terminate when particular work is over for the season, or when a particular project (such as a construction project) is completed.

3.c.	Working part-time (less than 35 hours per week), seasonally, or short-term.			
3.d.	Either retired (after spending a large portion of their life previously working) or have a disability (which may or may not be age-related) that prevents them from being able to work.			
3.e.	Full-time students (who are not also working full- or part-time).			

Actively seeking work means that, during the last four weeks (prior to the week of the reference date of the survey – ideally, April 1st) the individual took some action to find a job such as contacting an employer directly for an interview, contacting an employment agency, calling friends or relatives asking about an employment opportunity, filling out applications for jobs, looking at or responding to job advertisements, attending job training programs to improve the chances of getting a job, etc.

3.f.	Not working, not full-time students, and who are actively seeking work.			
3.g.	Not in any of the above groups (3a-3f), who would like to have a job but are not actively seeking work because they do not believe they will be able to find a job even if they searched for one.			
3.h.	Not in any of the above groups for various reasons, such as preferring not to work while living on other sources of household income (but generally below the age of retirement), or needing time to care for children or other dependants in the household.			

4.	Of all the individuals who are working full-time or part-time/seasonal, in 3a, 3b, or 3c above, how many have annual earnings that are below the poverty line in the area? (See instructions on how to find out the poverty line for your area.)			
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