

Colorado American Indian and Alaska Native Economic Impact Report



“You thrive...
I thrive...
We thrive.”

— Stronghold Society



Colorado American Indian and Alaska Native Economic Impact Report

July 2015



COLORADO

Lt. Gov. Joe Garcia

July 28, 2015

On behalf of the State of Colorado and the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs, I am proud to support the publishing and release of the *Colorado American Indian and Alaska Native Economic Impact Report*. This collaborative report, the first of its kind to be produced in Colorado, shows the tremendous impact that American Indians and Alaskan Natives have on our State's economy, and provides empirical data needed for lawmakers, business owners, and communities to make more informed decisions on policy issues at local, state, and national levels.

The State of Colorado honors American Indian contributions to our history, present, and future, and recognizes the cultural and economic richness that its oldest and most continuous residents bring to the State. The two Ute Tribes of Colorado, the urban American Indian population, as well as other American Indian and Alaskan Native residents, support an amazing breadth and depth of innovative commercial ventures that enhance the lives of all our State residents. The State of Colorado receives a remarkable \$1.5 billion in economic activity and more than 8,000 jobs from over 400 Native owned businesses, Native-focused nonprofit organizations, Native students in higher education, and Native-focused tourism. Keeping these numbers in mind, I encourage Colorado residents to continue to support Native business, nonprofit, and higher education ventures, which positively impact both Native communities and the State as a whole.

I would like to thank all of our partners on this project and those businesses and agencies who contributed data to the economic impact study. This report is the result of an incredible collaboration between local, state, federal, and tribal partners, who expended tremendous effort to collect comprehensive data on the economic activity and contributions from our American Indian communities. I am confident that the information provided by this report will encourage further financial investment in the State of Colorado and better inform stakeholders to the benefits the American Indian community provide to our state. I am honored to share the results of this study with the State of Colorado and I look forward to continuing to support the economic development of our American Indian and Alaskan Native communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Garcia".

Joseph A. Garcia
Lieutenant Governor of the State of Colorado
Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs, Chair



Michael B. Hancock
Mayor



City and County of Denver

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A Letter from the Mayor

Native American residents have always played important roles in what makes Denver such a special place. Throughout the city's storied evolution and in its unique identity today, the First Americans have contributed a foundational part of the diversity from which our community's cultural richness derives.

Today, with the publishing of this report, we see the tremendous positive impacts that American Indians and Alaska Natives also have on our economy here in the City and County of Denver and in the State of Colorado. From globally-competitive Native-owned companies headquartered here, innovative indigenous health research that benefits the peoples around the country, and small scale artisans creating authentic Native crafts, not only do we here in Denver benefit culturally by being a capital of Indian Country, we benefit economically as well.

When I see this positive impact, however, I know that many Native Americans in our community and many on the two reservations in our state still face real economic challenges. While you read this report's findings, I encourage you to also consider those to whom this prosperity has not reached, and to engage with the Native serving organizations and agencies who participated in this study to carry forward the work of eliminating disparities of economic opportunity, education and health for Native Americans and for all our fellow citizens.

I want to applaud the efforts of all the organizations and agencies that partnered to produce this first of its kind report. I am proud that through its initiative and leadership, Denver's American Indian Commission has demonstrated how to bring such positive contributions to light and initiated an important discussion.

I am confident that as more people learn about these positive economic contributions, Native Americans through business, service, higher education, and other sectors will continue to have even greater impacts in Denver's continued growth and economic prosperity.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael B. Hancock", written over a circular stamp or seal.

Michael B. Hancock
Mayor

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In late 2013, a number of public sector entities came together to enhance the available data regarding the impact of American Indians and Alaska Natives on the Colorado economy. These initial entities included the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs, the Denver American Indian Commission and the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT). Citing a lack of centrally compiled data in this area, these organizations sought to create an Economic Impact Study whose goals were to:

- 1) Provide a more complete picture of American Indians' and Alaska Natives economic contributions to Colorado and its local economies
- 2) Demonstrate the breadth and depth of economic impact that Native America has on Colorado
- 3) Provide empirical data to policy makers, businesses, and communities to help them make more informed decisions

They brought together partners from other local, state, and tribal entities to design the study and plan for future replication. Over the next 18 months, this study was developed – the first of its kind for the State of Colorado. It creates a more comprehensive picture of American Indians' economic contributions to the State and its local economies, which will assist policy makers, communities, and businesses with a number of activities including:

- Allocating resources among competing projects
- Assessing the potential of investment policies, including retaining and expanding current businesses and attracting new businesses and economic activities
- Providing a vehicle to plan for change at local, state and national arenas

In order to understand the American Indian and Alaska Native economic impact in the State of Colorado, it is beneficial to have a picture of the population. The US Census Bureau's latest estimate of American Indian and Alaska Native population in Colorado is 83,040, or 1.58% of the total state population. The chart below compares some of the key demographics of Native Americans in Colorado to rest of the United States.

	United States	Colorado
Poverty Rate		
Total Population	15%	13%
AI/AN Population	29%	25%
Unemployment Rate		
Total Population	10%	9%
AI/AN Population	16%	17%
Educational Attainment		
Total Population		
Less than High School	14%	10%
BA or greater	29%	37%
AI/AN Population		
Less than High School	22%	20%
BA or greater	13%	15%

The focus of this study was statewide. Within Colorado, there are two federally-recognized tribes-- the Southern Ute Indian Tribe and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe. Their reservations are located in Southwestern Colorado, but as this report demonstrates, their impact reaches across the State. Colorado is also seen as a hub for Native American activity and in addition to the many Native-owned businesses and Native-focused non-profits, the federal government has a significant presence associated with agencies that work with the tribes and a number of significant events focused on Native America are held in Denver each year. In addition, Native Americans from a number of tribes live across Colorado and it is estimated that there are more than 500 businesses, non-profits, government agencies, and events owned by or focused on Native Americans that impact the economy in the State of Colorado.

In assessing the economic impact of American Indians and Alaska Natives, a number of areas were examined:

- Economic Activities from the Tribes
- Native-Owned Businesses
- Non-Profit Agencies
- Education
- Events

Economic impact is closely tied to the concept in economics known as the “multiplier effect”. Simply stated, the multiplier effect is when an initial expenditure of money results in diminishing rounds of new spending over time. Direct impacts can be measured through expenditures of a particular organization, but in order to estimate the total economic impact of American Indians and Alaska Natives in Colorado, the study calculated the multiplier effect with the following methodology.

The actual multipliers used were RIMS II (Regional Input-Output Modeling System) data

purchased from the US Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) for the defined study region (the State of Colorado). The advantage of the BEA multipliers is that they are rigorously researched and validated and provide the ability to understand trends over time. From the outset, the approach to the study was one of conservatism. An underestimation of the economic impact of Native Americans within the state of Colorado was viewed as a more favorable outcome than an overestimation. Therefore, the more conservative of the multipliers was chosen for use.

Results of the Study

The results of this study show that American Indians and Alaska Natives have a significant economic impact on the Colorado economy. As the table below shows, direct dollars injected into the economy is \$1B with a resulting economic impact of over \$1.5B. In addition, direct job creation is 8,813 jobs (enrolled students were not counted as “jobs”) and the indirect job creation is estimated at 12,539. Earnings from these jobs are estimated at more than \$549M.

Category	Final Demand Measure	Number of CO Employees / Students	Final Demand Output /1/ (dollars)	Final Demand Earnings /2/ (dollars)	Final Demand /3/ (# of jobs)	Final Demand Value Added /4/ (dollars)
Native-Owned Business	\$784,450,352	6,596	\$ 1,124,436,808	\$ 417,657,162	8,890	\$ 662,773,696
Non-Profits	55,100,079	268	79,579,358	32,808,151	853	\$ 49,286,750
Public Colleges & Universities	22,674,226	2,599	31,895,834	13,339,247	454	\$ 20,132,445
Tribes	116,115,636	1,949	239,546,710	71,567,120	1,888	\$ 142,624,705
Events	30,691,389	NA	43,994,065	14,137,642	453	25,529,601
Total	\$ 1,009,031,682	11,412	\$ 1,519,452,775	\$ 549,504,322	12,539	\$ 900,347,198

To put this data in context, the population of Colorado is 5,272,086 based on 2013 Census data and the American Indian / Alaska Native population is 83,040 or 1.58% of the total population. The total number of jobs in Colorado was estimated at 2.38 million and the State GDP was \$288.3 B based on data from the US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics and the US Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis. As such, overall economic activity is estimated at 0.52% of the State’s GDP and the number of jobs created is 0.90% of all jobs in the State.

Economic Impact Contrasted with Economic and Social Status

It is important to note that while the economic impact analysis shows a significant contribution to the Colorado economy from American Indians and Alaska Natives, it does not imply any sort of universal prosperity for any individuals or groups. Economic impact demonstrates the incremental economic contribution to the State, but cannot tell the story of the status of American Indian and Alaska Native individuals or communities. These statistics must be viewed in the context of the overall economic and social status of the Native American population within Colorado. It is also important to contrast the conditions on and off the reservations.

From an education and economic perspective in the US overall, the Office of Minority Health in the US Department of Health and Human Services reports in 2012 that 82 percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives alone, age 25 and over have at least a high school diploma, as compared to 92 percent of non-Hispanic Whites. 17 percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives age 25 and over have at least a bachelor's degree, in comparison to 33 percent of non-Hispanic Whites. 6 percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives have at least an advanced graduate degree (i.e., master's, Ph.D., medical, or law), as compared to 12 percent of the non-Hispanic White population. The median household income for American Indian and Alaska Natives is \$37,353, as compared to \$56,565 for non-Hispanic Whites. Twenty-nine percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives age 16 and over are employed in management and professional occupations, in comparison to 40 percent of Whites. Also, 26 percent of this racial group lives at the poverty level, as compared to 11.0 percent of non-Hispanic Whites, in 2012. In each of these categories, there is significant room for improvement in the economic status of American Indians and Alaska

Natives. Statistics from the 2011 Community Health Profile: Denver Indian Health and Family Services paint a similar picture of economic and health statistics among Native Americans in Colorado.

Implications and Future Directions

The results of this report have many implications for the future. One of the most important implications of the study is the potential to enhance what is already a significant economic impact from Native-owned and Native-focused organizations within the State of Colorado. While the economic impact today is strong, there are a number of opportunities to further promote and grow these organizations within the State. Policies aimed at entrepreneurial development, business growth, and creating additional opportunities for Native-owned firms would benefit not only the American Indian and Alaska Native population, but also the State overall. As shown in this study, the dollars that flow through Native-owned and Native-focused organizations created a positive economic multiplier for Colorado.

There is also an opportunity for the State of Colorado to cooperate more directly with the tribes in terms of economic development and business development. The unique legal and tax status of the reservations can provide a significant economic advantage to businesses hoping to relocate to the State of Colorado, and the existing workforce and business infrastructure from native-owned firms can help further support this. A recent trend for tribes is attracting businesses that are seeking to relocate functions that were previously outsourced offshore back to the US. A recent Forbes survey showed that the number of Chief Financial Officers who were examining the “re-shoring” of operations had nearly doubled in a year. Other tribes have had success in attracting these businesses to the reservation and this creates an opportunity for both the tribes and the State.

This is but one example of how increased cooperation could benefit all of Colorado.

Conclusion

At \$1.5 Billion dollars, the economic impact to the state of Colorado's economy is strong. More importantly, it's diverse; ranging from tribal governments and non-profit agencies providing much needed social services to large, financially stable businesses that provide goods and services not just to Native Americans but to all citizens of Colorado. As important players in the Colorado economy, the Native Americans need to be considered in policy decisions.

There is a potential to grow impact through closer relationships among Tribes, government, businesses and schools. These entities can recognize that Native American businesses do exist and may be able to provide the goods and services that they need, fostering future growth and economic stability and independence in the Native

American community. As important as the knowledge provided by this study is, there remains work to be done to advance the economic status of the Native American population in Colorado at large.

NOTE: The terms Native American, American Indian and/or Alaska Native are monikers commonly used to discuss the Indigenous peoples of North America (In Canada, the terms Aboriginal or First Nations are more common). While these terms fail to adequately represent the vast cultural diversity of Indigenous peoples, communities, and perspectives we use Native American and/or Alaska Native for the purposes of this study as these most closely align with the current methods of collecting and reporting economic and other statistics. These terms are in no way meant to minimize the diversity found within indigenous communities in the United States or the State of Colorado.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A report of this nature requires the support of many organizations and individuals to make it happen. We would first like to acknowledge the support of the State of Colorado and Governor John Hickenlooper and Lieutenant Governor Joseph A. Garcia as well as the City and County of Denver and Mayor Michael B. Hancock. Without their support, this report would not have been possible. This report would also not have been possible without the generous assistance of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe. Their support of the project and willingness to provide their data and insight is greatly appreciated.

This report is the result of extensive collaboration among a number of public and private entities who have contributed their time and talents over nearly a 3-year period. The sponsors of this

report formed a Core Team that not only guided the efforts of this project, but also contributed countless hours of work for data gathering, analysis, promotion of the study, and many other tasks. The organizations that were part of the core team include:

- Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs
- Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT)
- Corporation for National and Community Service / AmeriCorps
- Denver American Indian Commission
- Rocky Mountain Indian Chamber of Commerce
- Revolution Advisors LLC
- Spirit of the Sun



Revolution Advisors, a Colorado-based strategy and planning consulting firm, was selected as the partner to lead the analysis associated with this study and we appreciate their efforts and expertise.

Finally, this report would not have been completed without the information provided by the many

businesses, non-profits, educational institutions, and other organizations that participated in this study. We would like to thank each of them for their time and efforts to make this report a success.

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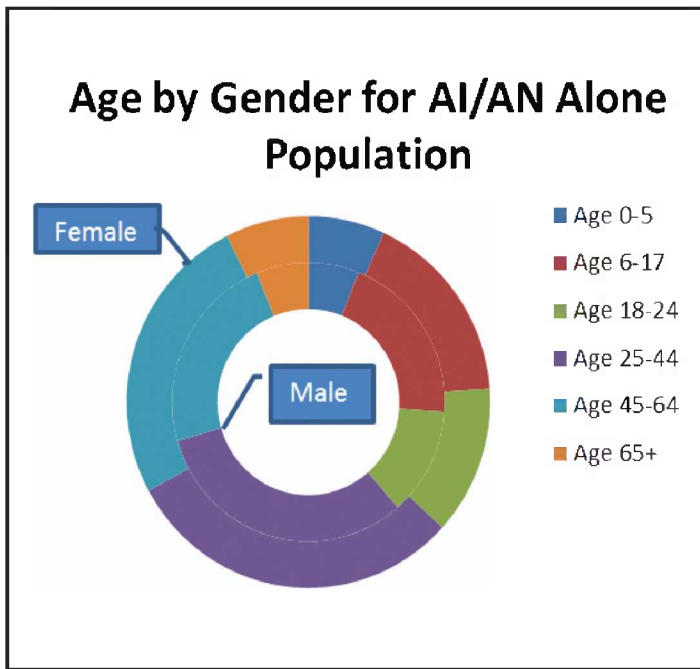
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DEMOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE

In order to understand the American Indian and Alaska Native economic impact in the State of Colorado, it is beneficial to have a picture of the population. The US Census Bureau's latest estimate of American Indian and Alaska Native population in Colorado is 83,040, or 1.58% of the total state population.

Using US Census, American Community Survey data it is seen that while the total percentage of males is slightly higher than females (51.6% to 48.4%), the age distribution does not vary much between the genders. The outer circle represents the female population, with the male population as the inner circle.

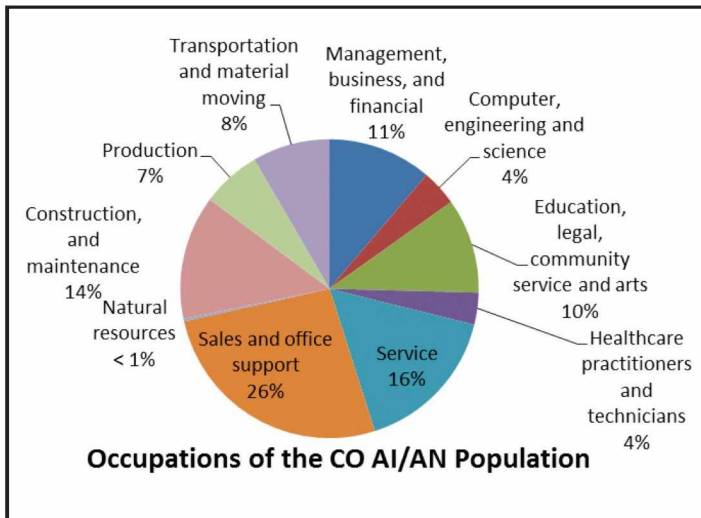


Other aspects of the AI/AN population to consider for a clearer picture are the poverty rates, the unemployment rates, educational attainment and occupations. A comparison to the overall populations of the United States and Colorado and the total US AI/AN population was conducted to see where the CO Natives have strengths and weaknesses.

	United States	Colorado
Poverty Rate		
Total Population	15%	13%
AI/AN Population	29%	25%
Unemployment Rate		
Total Population	10%	9%
AI/AN Population	16%	17%
Educational Attainment		
Total Population		
Less than High School	14%	10%
BA or greater	29%	37%
AI/AN Population		
Less than High School	22%	20%
BA or greater	13%	15%

Native Americans are twice as likely to be living in poverty as other citizens whether they are Colorado residents or residing in other states. Poverty rates have long been linked to other socio-economic factors. Contributing to the higher levels of poverty for Native Americans in the US and Colorado are the higher rates of unemployment and the lower levels of educational attainment. The unemployment rate for the Colorado AI/AN population is also much higher than the overall rate in the state; 17% to 9%. The unemployment rate for Colorado Native American residents is slightly higher than the rate for Native Americans in the country as a whole despite the higher educational attainment of the state's Native population. These educational achievement levels still remain lower than the overall state education levels. One in five Native Americans over the age of 25 living in Colorado have less than a high school education, while overall for the entire state over age 25, the ratio is one in ten.

Working Native Americans in Colorado are employed in a varied number of occupations. Over one-fourth of the population is employed in Sales and Office Support occupations. Another half of the workforce are in Service; Construction and Maintenance; Management, Business and Financial; and Education, Legal, Community Service and Arts occupations.



plan for future replication. Over the next 18 months, this study was developed – the first of its kind for the State of Colorado.

As noted, one of the main goals of the study is to provide a more complete picture of American Indians’ economic contributions to the State and its local economies. Data regarding American Indians’ economic activity in Colorado is not often collected or is collected in isolated endeavors. This study creates a more comprehensive picture, which will assist policy makers, communities, and businesses with a number of activities including:

- Allocating resources among competing projects
- Assessing the potential of investment policies, including retaining and expanding current businesses and attracting new businesses and economic activities
- Providing a vehicle to plan for change at local, state and national arenas

Study Overview

The focus of this study was statewide. Within Colorado, there are 2 federally-recognized tribes—the Southern Ute Indian Tribe and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe. Their reservations are located in Southwestern Colorado, but as this report demonstrates, their impact reaches across the State. Colorado is also seen as a hub for Native American activity and in addition to the many Native-owned businesses and Native-focused non-profits, the federal government has a significant presence associated with agencies that work with the tribes and a number of significant events focused on Native America are held in Denver each year. In addition, Native Americans from a number of tribes live across Colorado and it is estimated that there are more than 500 businesses, non-profits, government agencies, and events owned by or focused on Native Americans that impact the economy in the State of Colorado.

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Purpose of the Study

In late 2013, a number of public sector entities came together to enhance the available data regarding the impact of American Indians and Alaska Natives on the Colorado economy. These initial entities included the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs, the Denver American Indian Commission and the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT). Citing a lack of centrally compiled data in this area, these organizations sought to create an Economic Impact Study whose goals were to:

- 4) Provide a more complete picture of American Indians’ and Alaska Natives economic contributions to the Colorado and its local economies
- 5) Demonstrate the breadth and depth of economic impact that Native America has on Colorado
- 6) Provide empirical data to policy makers, businesses, and communities to help them make more informed decisions

They brought together partners from other local, state, and tribal entities to design the study and

In assessing the economic impact of American Indians and Alaska Natives, a number of areas were examined:


- **Economic Activities from the Tribes:** The Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute tribes have both an internal Tribal Government that produces economic activity and also contribute to the economy by owning businesses in a variety of industries. Both areas were included in the economic impact assessment.
- **Native-Owned Businesses:** Businesses that are owned by individuals or groups who are Native American and whose business address is located in the state fall under the category of Native Owned Businesses. These are exclusive of those firms owned by the tribes, which would be captured in the previous category.
- **Non-Profit Agencies:** Colorado is a headquarters for a number of non-profit agencies that focus on the needs of Native Americans. The service areas for some of these non-profits are not just Colorado but have spread throughout the country. The study focused on those agencies that are headquartered here and does not include non-profits that are located in other states but may provide services within the state. It also does not include non-profits that may serve Native American populations as a part of their mission, but rather includes those where Native America is the focus.
- **Education:** The Education component of the economic impact study focuses on Native American individuals that are students in the Colorado public Higher Education system. The state colleges and universities have Native American students that are both residents and non-residents of Colorado and both are included in the study. Data on Native American student enrollment in private institutions was not included.
- **Events:** Colorado is host to a variety of events that are sponsored by or focus on Native



Americans and their culture. Some of the more commonly known events are the Denver March Pow-Wow and the Denver Indian Market, both of which bring visitors from across the country, but these events include Pow Wows, professional conferences and meetings, policy events, and social gatherings bringing together tribes, local residents, and visitors from other states.

These sources of economic impact were the focus of this initial study, but there are a number of others that can be measured. Because of this, the economic impact identified in this study should be considered a conservative estimate. In addition, the economic impact assessment looks at the gross economic contribution to the economy from the various sources noted above. The study did not examine the cost of services provided to Native Americans at the State or local level, and again, this could be a direction for future studies.

The results of this study show that the impact of American Indians and Alaska Natives on the Colorado economy is significant – well in excess of their representation in the population. However, it is important to place these results in context. While the overall economic impact is significant, it is in stark contrast to the challenges that many individual Native Americans face within



the State. Issues such as poverty, homelessness, and health problems are still common within the Native American population and like the US economy overall, economic activity is not evenly distributed among the population. The analysis within the report will explore these issues in further detail.

Methodology for Study

As the first of its kind in Colorado, this study required significant effort to establish a baseline of data to measure economic impact. The type of data used in the study is not centrally collected and managed and required multiple methods to gather, validate, and analyze the data. The sections below outline the methodology used for the study. As a general principle, the study used a conservative approach to estimating economic impact. The methods focused on ensuring that the data was from a definitive source and validated wherever possible and the approaches to calculating impact relied on accepted practices in this field.

Data Gathering Approach

Collecting data on Native America can be challenging, and as such, an extensive methodology for data gathering was developed and executed for this study. This included multiple methods of collecting and validating data. At the start of the project, extensive discussions were held as to what sources of economic impact would be analyzed and how that data would be collected. All of the organizations who were part of this study played an important role in gathering the data. In addition, important discussions regarding the purpose and use of this study took place among all of the partners and in particular, between the tribes and the government agencies involved in the study. The focus of these discussions was to ensure that the data collected would be used to present as accurate and balanced of a picture of

the economic impact as possible.

A deliberate choice was made at the start of this effort to focus the study Statewide. There were several reasons for this:

- The economic impact covered nearly all areas of the State
- The impact outside of the reservations and the surrounding areas is significant and not well understood
- The focus was on the activity generated not only by the tribes themselves, but also on all other Native-owned and Native-focused organizations
- Economic activity obviously frequently crosses jurisdictional boundaries
- The various data sources had varying levels of resolution in terms of geographic impact

Data collection included both primary and secondary methods from multiple sources. Primary research involved direct discussions with and surveys of the tribes and the organizations that are Native-owned or Native focused. Secondary research involved collecting data from public and private sources such as the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), the U.S. Census Bureau, the US Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics and Dun & Bradstreet. These methods are further detailed below.

The overall data collection process began in the first quarter of 2014 and the associated activities included:

- Development of two separate survey instruments for data collection directly from Native-owned and Native-focused organizations (one focused on for-profit and one focused on non-profit enterprises) accompanied by a support letter from the Executive Director of the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs

- Establishment of dedicated space on the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs website to explain the study and facilitate data gathering
- Compilation of a list known Native-owned and Native-focused organizations from the input of the study group and databases of Native-owned firms provided by OEDIT, SBA, the Colorado Department of Transportation, and other sources
- Assignment of identified organizations to study team members for direct solicitation of data
- Distribution of the survey to other organizations where a direct contact did not exist

As the data gathering effort progressed, the sources were expanded in a number of ways. Collaboration with the Rocky Mountain Indian Chamber of Commerce (RMICC) was crucial for gathering data from Native-owned businesses that might be willing to share data for the study. RMICC provided significant time and expertise to facilitate data gathering with the Chamber's member firms. The Chamber also donated the digital resources and services needed to place a page describing the study on the RMICC web site. This page on the RMICC site also included downloadable versions of the study's survey instruments. Subsequent outreach included follow up with member companies and through recommendations and referrals from contacts among the Chamber's members, additional leads were generated for further outreach.

Each success recruiting firms to participate in the study represents extensive efforts that included multiple communications and follow up over periods of weeks or months. Several companies initially expressed hesitation at providing data (particularly financial data) and education was required for each participant to help them understand how the data would be used and protected. Often this required direct interaction with compa-

ny principals to secure the required permissions. Follow up was undertaken by both phone and e-mail and each member of the study team was responsible for ensuring that each organization was contacted until either their data was received or they declined to participate in the study.

The survey approach included 2 instruments – one for for-profit companies and one for non-profit organizations. The surveys included requests for data such as:

- What percentages of the organization's customers/clients are in Colorado?
- How many employees are in Colorado?
- What percentages of the organizations suppliers/vendors were Colorado-based companies?
- If the organization sponsored conferences and events in Colorado, how much was spent on them? How many people attended?
- What is the organization's operating budget?
- What county or counties does your organization serve?

The same survey formats were used when a member of the study team spoke with organizations directly to help ensure that data was collected in a consistent format. Throughout the data gathering process, the information gathered was cross-checked and validated across sources. For example, if data on a particular firm's revenue and employee count was obtained through one of the secondary data gathering exercises, this was validated across sources or with the firm directly to ensure accuracy.

In parallel, the study team collaborated with the Southern Utes and Ute Mountain Ute tribe to gather data related to their economic activity, including both government operations and ventures owned by the tribes. The tribes generously provided the data required to measure economic

impact across the State.

This data collection continued throughout 2014 and in January of 2015, a preliminary analysis was conducted to determine if sufficient data had been obtained, including analyzing sample sizes, statistical significance and other elements. At that time, it was determined that additional data gathering in targeted areas would be required to obtain the appropriate sample sizes and level of statistical significance. The additional data gathering included:

- **Native-Owned Businesses:** Data was purchased from Dun & Bradstreet (D&B). Because of the requirement that firms doing business with the federal government be registered with this organization, and because the federal market is often a target for Native-owned firms, this was considered a preferred source for firm data. D&B provided information for 489 organizations. The data from the companies was compared to data collected from the surveys where available to verify the numbers and industry classifications. The study was able to use the sales figures from D&B for output data adjusted by the ratio of employees within the state of Colorado to total employees.
- **Non-Profits:** Data on non-profit organizations gathered from the initial efforts was enhanced by collection of IRS Form 990 information for multiple non-profits in Colorado (2013 tax year as posted on www.guidestar.com). The IRS Subsection Code on the Form 990 was translated into Industry Codes when available. If the Industry Code was unavailable, further research into the services provided by the non-profit was conducted in order to classify the entity. Data for an additional 23 non-profits was gathered via this method.
- **Public Universities:** VISTA workers were able to obtain the number of resident and non-resident students by school from public records through the Colorado Department of Higher



Education website after an initial outreach to both public and private institutions of higher education. A survey form was developed specifically for institutional outreach with the following questions for the period 2011-2013:

- How many self-identified American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN) Full-Time Students enrolled?
- How many AI/AN students were classified as residents of CO for tuition purposes?
- How many AI/AN students were classified as non-residents for tuition purposes?
- What was the estimated cost of attendance for in-state students?
- What was the estimated cost of attendance for non-resident students?
- What percentage of AI/ AN students received need-based financial aid?

Contacts for higher education data were primarily admissions representatives or analysts from institutional research departments within the colleges and universities. Data collection outreach with private colleges and universities provided mixed results as accessing information was complicated by university policy for the release of information

to outside agencies. Due to this lack of response through regular outreach, the study team decided to focus on the public higher education enrollment. The tuition figures were gathered from the universities' websites and data was gathered from 28 public college and universities in the state of Colorado.

- **Visitors and Events:** Several sources contributed data to estimate the number of attendees at events focused on Native American business and culture. Attendance and expenditure numbers were obtained through outreach by the VISTA workers and committee members from Visit Denver (www.denver.org) and the events' hosts. Where expenditure figures were not available, the study used average tourist expenditure numbers reported by Longwoods International (Colorado Travel Year 2013, released May 2014.)

Challenges to Data Collection

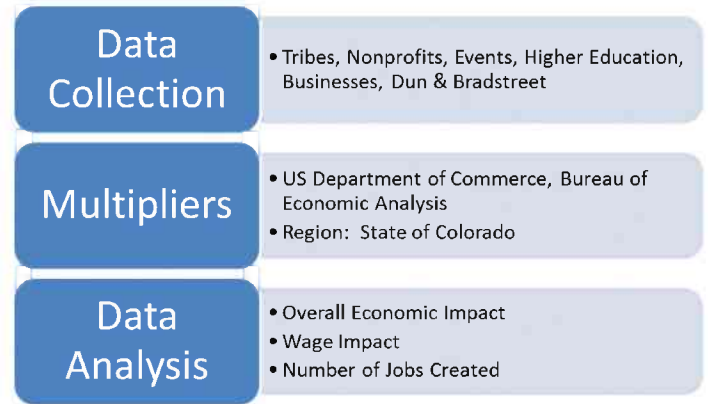
As referenced above, there were a number of challenges associated with data collection. One of these was the concern on the part of the participants as to how the data would be used. Another was the intense follow up required to secure the data and the effort associated with validating the data received. In analyzing the organizations who were targeted for this study, many of them are very small (1-2 employee) organizations, and as such did not have the time, or in some cases the records, to effectively participate in the study.

Based on the initial data gathering efforts, certain areas of economic impact were excluded from this initial study based on the level of effort that would have been required to secure and analyze the data. This included data associated with the impact of employees at federal agencies in Colorado focused on Native America, as well as student enrollment in private higher education institutions. The hope is that future versions of

this study will include this data (see Future Directions below).

Analysis Methodology

Economic impact is closely tied to the concept in economics known as the “multiplier effect”.



Simply stated, the multiplier effect is when an initial expenditure of money results in diminishing rounds of new spending over time. Direct impacts can be measured through expenditures of a particular organization, but in order to estimate the total economic impact of American Indians and Alaska Natives in Colorado, the study calculated the multiplier effect with the following methodology.

The actual multipliers used were RIMS II (Regional Input-Output Modeling System) data purchased from the US Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) for the defined study region (the State of Colorado). The advantage of the BEA multipliers is that they are rigorously researched and validated and provide the ability to understand trends over time. BEA provides a number of guidelines for use of these multipliers, which are noted below in addition to the approach used for leveraging the multipliers. All BEA guidelines were adhered to for this study.

1. Multiplier data was purchased for the entire

state as businesses, schools and non-profits cover the entire area, even though the majority of the activity is in the Denver/Colorado Springs area.

2. Multipliers are created by industry and are either aggregated into 62 industry codes or detailed into 406 codes. It was decided to use 62 codes as the data BEA used to create these multipliers is newer and it proved easier to classify businesses into the appropriate code.
3. Multipliers are either Final Demand or Direct Effect; the study used Final Demand multipliers as output (sales) data was received and Direct Effect applies to earnings. Final Demand looks for incremental change in output which leads to an assumption that the output produced would not be generated otherwise if the companies in the study did not exist. Thus, the effect measured is a “gross effect” rather than a “net effect” which would assume that someone else would have produced the output.
4. Multipliers are Type I or Type II; Type I was used for the study for the following reasons:
 - In Type I multipliers, household purchases are included in the Final Demand Multipliers. Type I multipliers are also more appropriate to use when the study’s region is larger than where most households spend their earnings. As the study encompasses the entire state, Type I multipliers were more appropriate. In addition, the Type I multipliers are more conservative and it was felt that this was necessary for the integrity of the study.
 - When using Type II multipliers, the study’s region should just encompass where workers will spend most of their earnings. The larger the region, the more likely the measurement of the effects will be inflated as workers in region purchase output which is already accounted for in the data.

5. BEA instructs users when using the employment multipliers to correct the dollars to 2010 dollars. The adjustment of dollars from 2013 to 2010 is 0.94 to calculate the number of jobs created.
6. BEA recommended guidelines placed other restrictions on the data analysis. The study was unable to create analysis of impact of the Denver/Colorado Springs area or by Industry. For the Denver/Colorado Springs area: multipliers cannot be applied as output probably crosses these geographical lines. An Industry analysis can summarize the original data but it is not appropriate to apply multipliers as multipliers account for inter-industry inputs and outputs; the entire multiplier for an industry is not stand alone for that industry.

Other Input-Output models were researched as to their appropriateness, ease of use, and cost of use for this study. BEA has been producing multipliers for use in economic impact studies since the 1970s and it was determined that the use of BEA’s RIMS II multipliers would result in a study that was useful, informative and reliable.

From the outset, the approach to the study was one of conservatism. An underestimation of the economic impact of Native Americans within the state of Colorado was viewed as a more favorable outcome than an overestimation. Therefore, the more conservative of the multipliers was chosen for use. A number of techniques were used to reinforce this approach such as:

- Reported sales figures were adjusted to account for only Colorado employees
- Multipliers were only applied to tuition payments to colleges and universities and not the entire estimated cost of attendance
- The impact of non-profits was based solely on their revenues and not on their awards and donations to the community

Great care was also taken to ensure that data was not duplicated between categories. For example, some firms that are owned by the tribes were listed in the Dun and Bradstreet data and those firms were identified and removed from the private industry impact and only counted within the tribe data. The firms listed in other categories were treated in the same way. It should be noted when examining the results of this analysis that the multiplier effect has no time dimension and as such activity in a measured time, such as a year, is not stated as it is unclear as to when the full impact will be realized.

Economic impact was analyzed along 4 dimensions based on the data obtained:

- **Final Demand Output:** the total dollar change in output that occurs in all industries for each additional dollar of output delivered to the final demand by the industry. A change of output from Industry A results in changes of the output for other industries that supply intermediate inputs to Industry A. Subsequently, industries that supply the intermediate industries also see changes in their output in a diminishing manner. The Final Demand Output is the sum of all of these changes in output.
- **Final Demand Earnings:** the total dollar change in earnings of households employed by all industries for each dollar of output delivered to the final demand by the industry. The workers of the industries also experience changes to their earnings because of the changes in the industries' outputs as jobs are added and wages increase.
- **Final Demand Employment:** the total change in the number of jobs that occurs in all industries for each additional one million dollars of output delivered to the final demand by the industry. Jobs are added to area industries to support the changes in output by all industries, the initial industry plus supporting industries.
- **Final Demand Value-Added:** the total dollar change added that occurs in all industries for each additional dollar of output delivered to the final demand by the industry. Value-Added changes are comparable to area measures of gross domestic product. It is the amount by which the value of an article is increased at each stage of its production, exclusive of initial costs and earnings.

Each area of impact was measured using each of these metrics in addition to the direct dollars associated with the economic activity of each organization. The particular focus was on dollars injected into the economy and on jobs created from the activity of Native-owned and Native-focused organizations.



Assessment of Economic Impact

Economic impact was assessed overall and by each of the sources of the impact. As noted above, these sources included:

- Economic Activities from the Tribes
- Native-Owned Businesses
- Non-Profit Agencies
- Education
- Events

The following sections detail the results of this analysis. The data clearly demonstrates that American Indians and Alaska Natives are a strong contributor to the Colorado economy overall and that the economic activity associated with Native Americans in Colorado is highly diverse and vibrant.

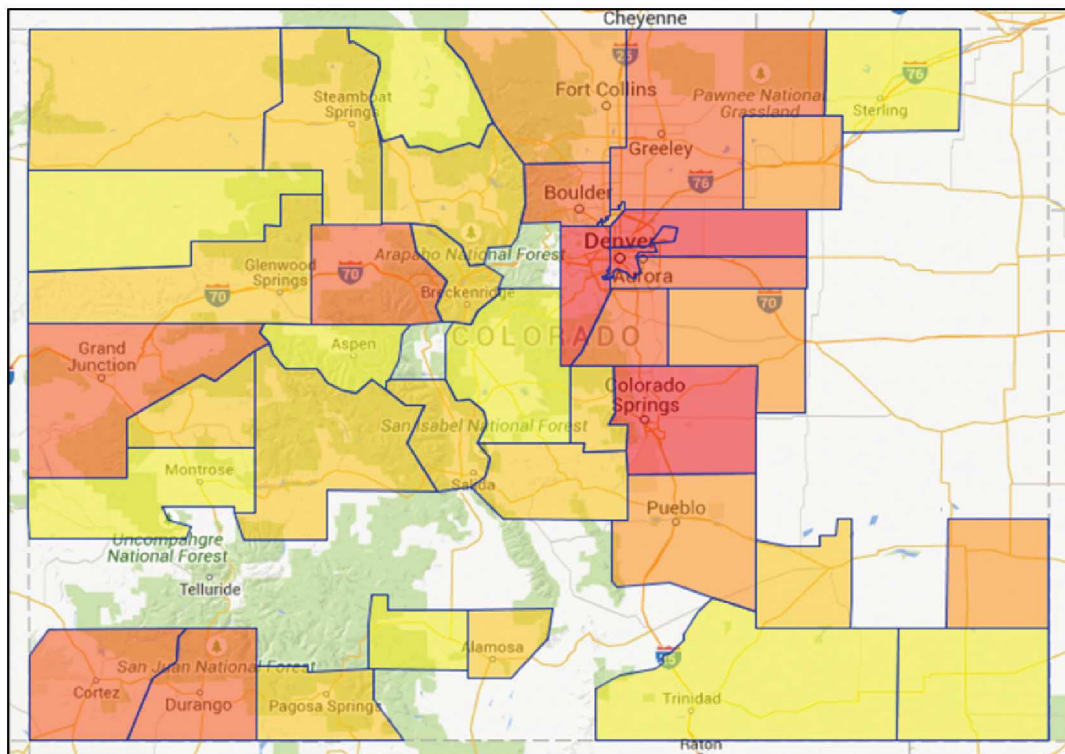
Overall Economic Impact

The results of this study show that American Indians and Alaska Natives have a significant economic impact on the Colorado economy. As the table below shows, direct dollars injected into the economy is \$1B with a resulting economic impact of over \$1.5B. In addition, direct job creation is 8,813 jobs (enrolled students were not counted as “jobs”) and the indirect job creation is estimated at 12,539. Earnings from these jobs are estimated at more than \$549M.

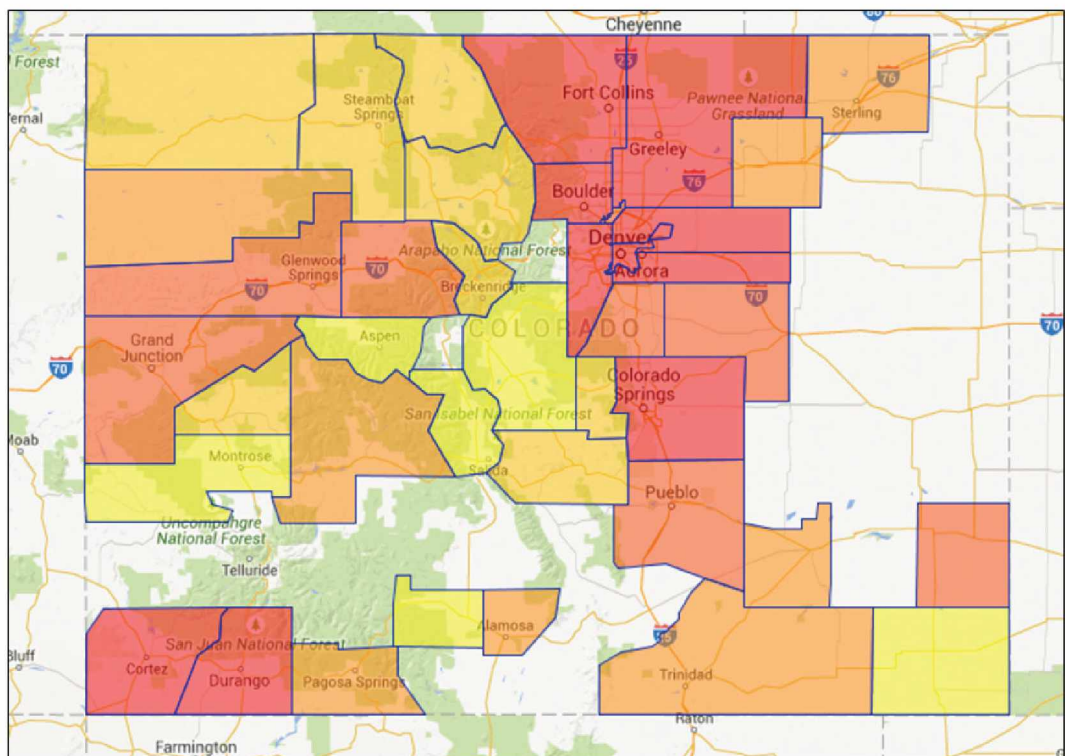
To put this data in context, the population of Colorado is 5,272,086 based on 2013 Census data and the American Indian / Alaska Native population is 83,040 or 1.58% of the total population. The total number of jobs in Colorado was estimated at 2.38 million and the State GDP was \$288.3 B based on data from the US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics and the US Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis. As such, overall economic activity is estimated at 0.52% of the State’s GDP and the number of jobs created is 0.90% of all jobs in the State.

The geographic distribution of economic activity across the State of Colorado is shown in the HEAT Map below. As can be expected, the highest economic impact is in the major metropolitan areas (where most of the Native-owned and Native-focused organizations are located) and near the tribe’s reservations. Employment shows similar concentrations though the distribution of jobs is less concentrated than the overall economic impact. This further validates that the economic impact of American Indians and Alaska Natives goes well beyond the reservations, and extends to nearly all areas of the State, with particular emphasis on the population and employment centers in Colorado.

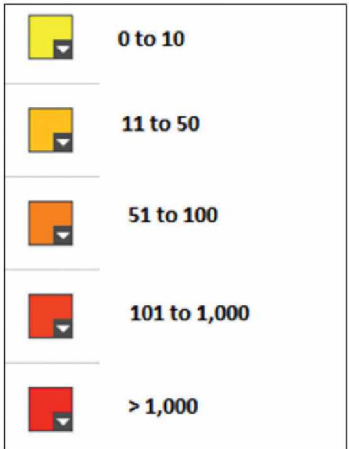
Category	Final Demand Measure	Number of CO Employees / Students	Final Demand Output /1/ (dollars)	Final Demand Earnings /2/ (dollars)	Final Demand /3/ (# of jobs)	Final Demand Value Added /4/ (dollars)
Native-Owned Business	\$784,450,352	6,596	\$ 1,124,436,808	\$ 417,657,162	8,890	\$ 662,773,696
Non-Profits	55,100,079	268	79,579,358	32,808,151	853	\$ 49,286,750
Public Colleges & Universities	22,674,226	2,599	31,895,834	13,339,247	454	\$ 20,132,445
Tribes	116,115,636	1,949	239,546,710	71,567,120	1,888	\$ 142,624,705
Events	30,691,389	NA	43,994,065	14,137,642	453	25,529,601
Total	\$ 1,009,031,682	11,412	\$ 1,519,452,775	\$ 549,504,322	12,539	\$ 900,347,198



Direct Output of Native American Tribes, Businesses, Non-Profits and Higher Education



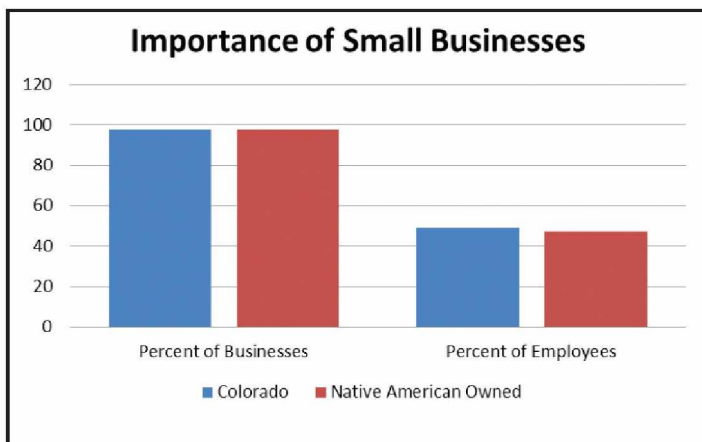
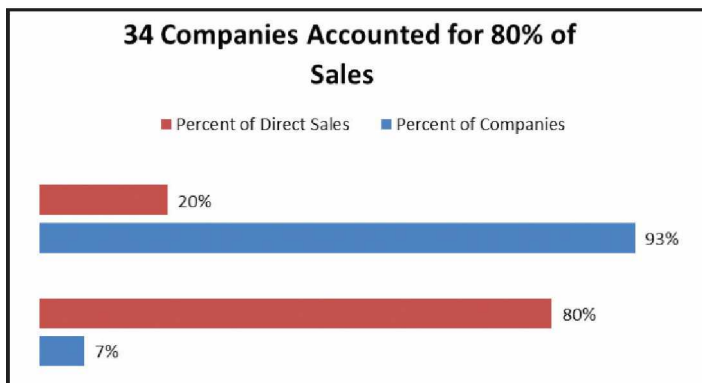
Employment by Native American Tribes, Businesses and Non-Profits plus NA Students in Higher Education



It is also important to note that much like the economy of Colorado and the US overall, a number of large businesses create a disproportionate economic impact and employment impact. Of the nearly 500 Native-owned firms analyzed in this study, 34 of them or roughly 7% account for 80% of the direct sales based on 2013 data. The types of businesses in this 80% included construction, car dealers, computer services, professional services and retail establishments. This indicates that while there are a number of Native-owned enterprises that are doing well, more can be done to promote the growth and development of Native-owned small enterprises within the State. Small businesses significantly impact Colorado's economy. They represent 97.6 percent of all employers and employ 49.2 percent of the private-sector labor force. (SBA 2012) The percentages for Native American Owned small businesses in Colorado are similar, as they are 97.7% of businesses and employ 47.5% of the labor force.

Native-owned and Native-focused enterprises do illustrate a wide diversity of industries in Colorado. Of the 62 industry divisions defined by the BEA for RIMS II multipliers, Native American owned businesses are represented in 42 of them. It is important to note that because of the particular methodology used to gather data, a number of self-employed / sole proprietor firms were not represented in this survey and as such, the economic impact will be underestimated. Industries such as professional services (lawyers, accountants, etc.), child care, elder care, home repair, computer repair, car repair, small retail stores and others would be particularly under-represented in this data.

Colorado is in a unique position in regards to educational attainment of American Indians and Alaska Natives in the United States. Comparing Colorado to neighboring states with large Native American populations such as Arizona and New Mexico, the population in Colorado has a higher percentage of bachelor's and master's degrees. 14.3% of Colorado's Native American population has attained a bachelor's degree, which is nearly double the rate of New Mexico and Arizona. Similarly with master's degrees, 10% of Colorado's Native American population has achieved a graduate degree, which is more than 2.5 times the rate in New Mexico and Arizona. This level of educational attainment supports the strong prominence of Professional, Scientific and Technical firms that appear in the data on Native American firms – the education pipeline is a strong feeder for these industries. Colorado has programs that support this such as the Indian Scholars license plate program that has delivered more than \$100,000 in scholarships to Native American students in Colorado. RMICC is also active in distributing scholarships to Colorado Native American students with amounts increasing every year.



Economic Impact Contrasted with Economic and Social Status

It is important to note that while the economic impact analysis shows a significant contribution to the Colorado economy from American Indians and Alaska Natives, it does not imply any sort of universal prosperity for any individuals or groups. Economic impact demonstrates the incremental economic contribution to the State, but cannot tell the story of the status of American Indian and Alaska Native individuals or communities. These statistics must be viewed in the context of the overall economic and social status of the Native American population within Colorado. It is also important to contrast the conditions on and off the reservations. While some of this data is difficult to obtain, there are a number of federal and non-profit sources that can help paint this picture.

From an education and economic perspective in the US overall, the Office of Minority Health in the US Department of Health and Human Services reports in 2012 that 82 percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives alone, age 25 and over have at least a high school diploma, as compared to 92 percent of non-Hispanic Whites. 17 percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives age 25 and over have at least a bachelor's degree, in comparison to 33 percent of non-Hispanic Whites. 6 percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives have at least an advanced graduate degree (i.e., master's, Ph.D., medical, or law), as compared to 12 percent of the non-Hispanic White population. The median household income for American Indian and Alaska Natives is \$37,353, as compared to \$56,565 for non-Hispanic Whites. Twenty-nine percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives age 16 and over are employed in management and professional occupations, in comparison to 40 percent of Whites. Also, 26 percent of this racial group lives at the poverty level, as compared to 11.0 percent of non-Hispanic Whites, in 2012. In each of these categories, there

is significant room for improvement in the economic status of American Indians and Alaska Natives.

The data paints a similar picture in terms of overall health statistics. The Centers for Disease Control's Health Disparities & Inequalities Report - United States, 2013 (CHDIR) highlights health disparities and inequalities across a wide range of diseases, behavioral risk factors, environmental exposures, social determinants, and health-care access by sex, race and ethnicity, income, education, disability status and other social characteristics. Examples of some important health disparities reported in the CHDIR:

- In 2010, American Indian/Alaska Native and Hispanic adults had the highest age adjusted mean number of physically unhealthy days in the past 30 days compared with other racial/ethnic populations.
- In 2010, the preterm birthrate for American Indian/Alaska Native infants (13.6%) was higher than for white (10.8%) and Asian/Pacific Islander infants (10.7%).
- During 1999–2010, drug-induced death rates in the 30-39 year age group were highest among American Indians/Alaska Natives compared to other racial/ethnic populations.
- In 2009, the homicide death rate was highest among non-Hispanic blacks (19.9 deaths per 100,000), followed by American Indians and Alaska Natives (9.0 deaths per 100,000).
- In 2008, the infant mortality rate was 53% higher for American Indian/Alaska Native women (8.42 infant deaths per 1,000 live births) compared with non-Hispanic white women (5.52 infant deaths per 1,000 live births).
- In 2009, American Indians and Alaska Natives had the highest motor vehicle–related death

rates. Among males, the American Indian/Alaska Native death rate was approximately 2-5 times the rates of other races/ethnicities. Among females, the American Indian/Alaska Native motor vehicle-related death rate was approximately 2-4 times the rates of other races/ethnicities.

- Although the 2009 overall suicide rates for American Indians and Alaska Natives were similar to those of non-Hispanic whites, the 2005–2009 rates among adolescent and young adult American Indians and Alaska Natives aged 15–29 years were substantially higher.
- In 2011, the age-standardized prevalence of not completing high school among adults aged 25 years and older was the second largest for American Indians and Alaska Natives --second to Hispanics and similar to African Americans.
- In 2011, the age-standardized percentage of American Indian/Alaska Native adults living in poverty was among the largest compared with non-Hispanic whites.
- In 2010, prevalence of unemployment among adults aged 18-64 years was highest among non-Hispanic blacks (16.5%) and American Indians/Alaska Natives (15.8%).

Focusing on Colorado and the non-reservation population of American Indians and Alaska Natives specifically, the best available data comes from the Urban Indian Health Institute. Their 2011 Community Health Profile: Denver Indian Health and Family Services focuses on education, economic, and health statistics for the Denver metro area specifically. The study is based on the specific counties that they serve, which include Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, Gilpin, and Jefferson and these are aligned with the largest concentration of American Indians and Alaska Natives living off of the reservation in Colorado. Some of the statistically significant disparities that the study shows include:

- A higher percentage of American Indians and Alaska Natives age 25 and older in this service area have not completed high school or obtained a GED (20.8%) compared with the general population (11.1%). A lower percentage of American Indians and Alaska Natives (17.1%) report an undergraduate or graduate degree as their highest level of education compared with the general population (39.2%).
- A higher percentage of American Indians and Alaska Natives in this service area live below the federal poverty level (18.3%) compared with the general population (11.5%). In this service area, 21.6% of American Indian / Alaska Native children under age six live in households below poverty level compared with 18.5% of children in the general population. Among children 6-17 years of age in this service area, 21.6% of American Indians and Alaska Natives and 13.8% of children in the general population live in households below poverty level.
- In this service area, 10.7% of American Indians and Alaska Natives age 16 and older and 6.2% of the general population age 16 and older are unemployed. (These rates do not include individuals in the military or individuals who are institutionalized.)
- In this service area, a higher percentage of American Indians and Alaska Natives (23.1%) report being unable to see a doctor because of cost than the general population (12.3%).
- Among American Indians and Alaska Natives in this service area, 9.6% report having been told by a doctor that they have diabetes compared with 5.4% of the general population. American Indians and Alaska Natives in this service area

A higher percentage of American Indians and Alaska Natives in this area live below the federal poverty level (18.3%) compared with the general population (11.5%). Also, 10.7% of American Indians and Alaska Natives age 16 and older and 6.2% of the general population age 16 and older are unemployed

have a diabetes mortality rate of 34.7 per 100,000 compared with 16.4 per 100,000 in the general population (data not shown).

- Infant mortality measures the rate of death for children under the age of one. Among American Indians and Alaska Natives in this service area, the infant mortality rate is 9.1 per 1,000 live births. In the general population in this service area the infant mortality rate is 5.9 per 1,000 live births.

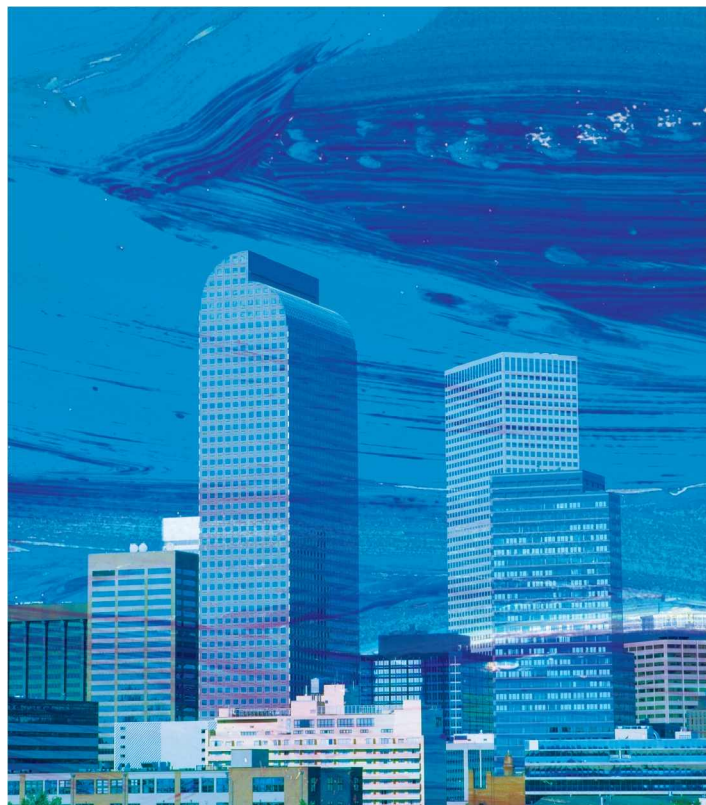
Whether looking at the data nationally or within Colorado, there is compelling evidence that while the overall economic impact of American Indians and Alaska Natives in the State is significant, there is more to be done to ensure that this economic activity translates to real quality of life improvements across the population. Many of these statistics hinder the potential for increased economic impact within the American Indian and Alaska Native communities. Below are recommendations for how economic impact can be increased within the State.

Economic Impact by Segment

The following sections break down the economic impact calculations by the source of that impact, and provide further commentary on the data discussed above.

Impact of the Tribes

As noted throughout the report, there are 2 federally recognized tribes within the State of Colorado - Southern Ute Indian Tribe and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe. Both of their reservations are located in Southwestern Colorado and both own ventures on and off the reservation, with an economic impact that extends well beyond the borders of the reservation. Both are an important contributor to the economy in their particular region, where they have one of the most significant economic impacts of any entity in the area, and across the



State. Tribal data includes businesses owned by the tribes and the economic activity of the tribal government. Figures provided by the tribes were combined to ensure the confidentiality of the data and as with other aspects of the study, the calculated impact would be considered conservative. Economic activity of the tribes is diversified, representing 17 different types of industry. The major industries that comprise tribal activity (as defined by having greater than 100 employees) are: Mining, Quarrying and Oil and Gas Extraction; Construction; Educational Services; Arts, Entertainment and Recreation; and Accommodation and Food Services. The impact of the tribes is summarized below.

- Overall economic impact of \$239.5M
- Wage Impact of \$71.5M
- Direct job creation of 1,949
- Indirect job creation of 1,888

Impact of Native-Owned Businesses

Native-owned businesses as a whole are the largest contributor to statewide economic impact in this study. Native-Owned businesses are different than the tribal-owned businesses as they are owned by Native American individuals or groups of individuals but not the tribes themselves. Much of the data about these businesses was acquired from Dun & Bradstreet. While this is considered a good source of data for this sector, there are an unknown number of Native-American owned businesses that are not in the Dun & Bradstreet data and therefore, their economic impact is not counted in this study. Data was adjusted by the proportion of employees in Colorado to total employees to estimate the economic impact only in the State of Colorado. To summarize their impact:

- Overall economic impact of \$1.12B
- Wage Impact of \$417.7M
- Direct job creation of 6,596
- Indirect job creation of 8,890

This data can be further analyzed by industry. The biggest impact sectors by level of sales in Colorado include: Construction; Professional, Scientific and Technical Services; Utilities; Management of Companies and Enterprises and Retail Trade. Those sectors that have 100 or more employees in Colorado include: Professional, Scientific and Technical Services; Management of Companies and Enterprises; Construction; Utilities; Retail Trade; Administrative and Support Services and Other Services. The chart below compares the relative size of Native-owned businesses in various sectors to the size of these sectors in Colorado overall.

Largest Industries by Employment in Native Owned Firms	NATIVE OWNED BUSINESS				STATEWIDE PRIVATE BUSINESS							
	Number of Jobs	Number of Firms	Average Number of Jobs Per Firm	Industry % of NO Jobs	Number of Jobs	Number of Firms	Average Number of Jobs Per Firm	Industry % of NO Jobs	Average Number of Jobs Per Firm	Industry % of All firms	Jobs in NO firms as % of state industry jobs	# of NO firms as % of State Industry firms
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	2,166	187	11.6	33.0	38.4	188,989	31,020	6.1	9.7	18.1	1.1	0.6
Construction	1,071	74	14.5	16.3	15.2	127,604	16,667	7.7	6.5	9.7	0.8	0.4
Management of Companies & Enterprises	1,540	9	171.1	23.5	1.8	34,593	1,806	19.2	1.8	1.1	4.5	0.5
Utilities	328	9	36.4	5.0	1.8	7,832	381	20.6	0.4	0.2	4.2	2.4
Retail Trade	315	33	9.5	4.8	6.8	249,242	17,296	14.4	12.8	10.1	0.1	0.2
Administrative Services	268	17	15.8	4.1	3.5	141,624	9,536	14.9	7.3	5.6	0.2	0.2
Other Services	137	17	8.1	2.1	3.5	69,568	13,320	5.2	3.6	7.8	0.2	0.1
Total of all Industries	6,566	487	13.5			1,962,166	171,204	11.4				



It is important to note that six of the seven largest industries by employment that are Native American owned have a larger average firm size than same industry firms statewide. These sectors can be considered strengths in terms of Native-owned businesses. Colorado is considered a hub for technology employment and Native-owned firms are certainly a part of this. Professional, Scientific and Technical Firms account for 38.4% of the Native American owned companies and 33% of the employment in

Over 2,100 people are employed in Native-Owned Professional, Scientific and Technical Firms.

Native Owned Construction Firms

- 74 Construction Firms
- Employ over 1,100 people
- 4% with less than 10 employees
- Only 3 Firms with greater than 100 employees

Colorado Native American firms. Native American owned Construction is made up mainly of small firms. Of the 74 construction companies in the state that are owned by Native Americans, only three of the firms have more than 100 Colorado employees and the majority (74%) of have less than 10 employees. Native Owned Utilities companies account for 4.19% of jobs in the Utilities industry statewide and 2.36% of the firms in the industry.

It should be noted that while Management of Companies and Enterprises makes a strong economic impact, this segment is dominated by one firm with all employees in the state. While this industry makes up less than 2% of the number of Native owned firms, it employs 23.5% of the workers. When comparing the firms in this industry to firms statewide, it is seen that Native Owned firms have created 4.45% of the jobs in Management of Companies and Enterprises statewide.

Impact of Non-Profit Organizations

Colorado is one of the states in the US that attracts a number of Native-focused non-profit organizations. This dynamic is both historical and practical. Traditionally Colorado was a gathering place and trade hub for many tribes and it continues to be a hub of activity. Several prominent national non-profits focused on Native America are headquartered here, and this sector generates significant economic activity. As noted above, this study only includes non-profits focused solely on Native America who have offices within the State of Colorado. It is recognized that there are other non-profits that serve the Colorado Native Americans in addition to other populations and it is hoped that these can be addressed in future studies. The non-profits in this study provide services to the population in education, health, social assistance and emergency assistance. Also included are community foundations, professional societies, and groups supporting Native American cultural ethnic awareness. The economic impact of the non-profit sector is summarized below.

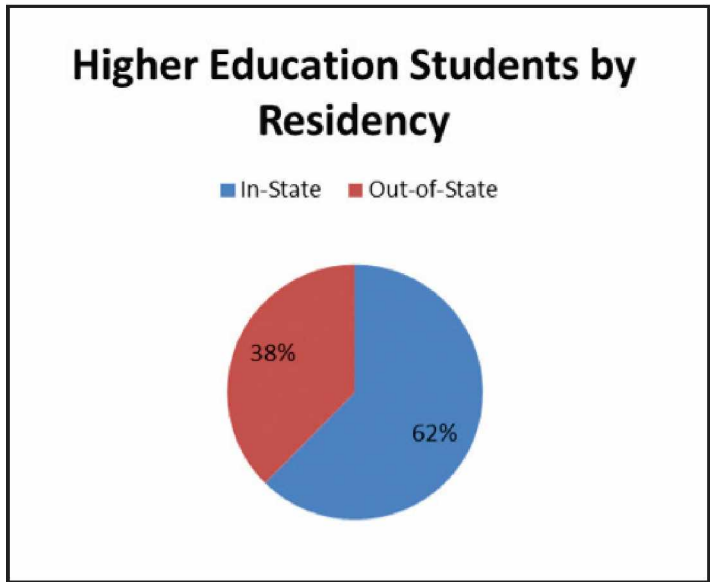
- Overall economic impact of \$79.6M
- Wage Impact of \$32.8M
- Direct job creation of 268
- Indirect job creation of 853

Impact of the Education Sector

The impact of the education sector has a slightly different dynamic than other sectors included in this study. Education brings the direct economic impact of the tuition and fees paid by students to attend college within the State, as well as the jobs created within these institutions ranging from professors to support staff. As is noted above, data was collected for the 28 public colleges and universities from the Colorado State Department of Higher Education. No private institutions were

included in this data. For this study, the economic impact from these students is conservatively underestimated as only tuition and fees were used to estimate impact. The Educational Services multiplier was applied to the sum of the tuition paid for attending the colleges. This is a more conservative approach than applying the multipliers to the estimated total cost of attendance (which would include living expenses). This approach was taken to ensure that economic impact was not “double counted” as many students may live with their parents, hold jobs in the community that may be represented in other data, etc. The real economic impact of American Indian/Alaska Native students in Colorado is likely to be higher than what is calculated here. A summary of the economic impact from this sector appears below.

- Overall economic impact of \$31.9M
- Wage Impact of \$13.3M
- Student body of 2,599
 - 1,622 in-state students
 - 977 non-resident students
- Indirect job creation of 454



There are a number of important highlights from this data, including:

- There is significant impact from out-of-state students, reinforcing Colorado as a hub for Native American activity.
 - Today 1,089 Native American/Alaskan Native students from over 144 tribes attend Fort Lewis College (FLC). Fort Lewis College graduates more Native American students than any baccalaureate institution in the United States. FLC provides 13% of the baccalaureate Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) degrees to Native American students in the country. From 2000-2012, 287 federally recognized tribes, representing 46 states, have sent Native students to the Fort Lewis College. The significant number of out-of-state students that attend this institution is a significant boost to the education sector economic impact.
 - Non-resident Native American students were enrolled at 25 of the 28 schools.
 - Colorado State University, Pueblo Community College, and the University of Colorado-Boulder all attracted more than 30 non-resident Native Americans for the 2013 school year.
- Colorado resident Native American students are widely dispersed among the colleges and universities with schools along the Front Range attracting the highest number of in-state students.
 - All schools report Native American resident students with the counts ranging from 2 at Western State Colorado College in Gunnison to 162 at Front Range Community College campuses.

- Six of the 28 schools have enrollments of greater than 100 Native American in-state students. The six schools are: Community College of Denver, Fort Lewis College, Front Range Community College, Metro State University of Denver, Pikes Peak Community College and Pueblo Community College.

Colorado as a hub for Native American activity. While some of the larger events such as the Denver March Pow-Wow and the Denver Indian Art Market are well known, there are dozens of events every year ranging from technical and professional conferences to large meetings of non-profits to additional cultural and artistic events. Using data obtained from VisitDenver, a report by Longwoods International (Colorado Travel Year 2013) and the events themselves, attendance at these events was estimated at over 73,000 people.

More than 73,000 people visited Colorado for Native-focused events in 2013.

A study by Dean Runyan Associates prepared in June 2015 for the Colorado Tourism Office, Office of Economic Development and International Trade entitled “The Economic Impact of Travel on Colorado 1996-2014P” provided a breakdown of visitor spending by commodity purchased. Using that data, the following calculations were made to estimate the effect that attendees at Native American events have on the state of Colorado:

- Overall economic impact of \$44.0M
- Wage Impact of \$14.1M
- Indirect job creation of 453

Highlights noted from the events data include:

- The largest events are Pow Wows with 91.7% of the accounted for attendance.
- Another large event was the American Indian Science and Engineering Society Annual National Conference. The conference was held in the fall of 2013 in Denver with 1,800 students and professionals in attendance.
- Other smaller private events and meetings take place every week and are not counted in this study and the impact on the Colorado economy is unknown.

In-State	Out-of-State
Community College of Denver	Fort Lewis College
Fort Lewis College	Colorado State University
Front Range Community College	Pueblo Community College
Metro State Univ. of Denver	University of Colorado-Boulder
Pikes Peak Community College	
Pueblo Community College	

- The total counts of Native American students at the public colleges and universities range from 5 students at Morgan Community College in Fort Morgan to 873 at Fort Lewis College in Durango.
 - The median enrollment of Native Americans at the state public colleges and universities is 52.
 - Eight schools have greater than 100 Native American students. In addition to the six listed above are: the University of Colorado-Boulder and the University of Colorado-Denver.

Impact of Events

Colorado is a hub for Native American events. Conservative estimates would say that more than 73,000 people visited Colorado for Native-focused events in 2013. Large events bring in a significant number of out-of-state visitors, reinforcing

Implications and Future Directions

The results of this report have many implications for the future. It is intended that this report be refreshed periodically to continue to monitor the economic impact of American Indians and Alaska Natives and to continue to develop strategies and policies for enhancing this impact. In addition, the influence of this economic activity on the overall economic, social, and health status of the American Indian and Alaska Native population should be monitored in parallel to understand how economic impact is translating into broader impact. This has important policy implications at the State level.


One of the most important implications of the study is the potential to enhance what is already a significant economic impact from Native-owned and Native-focused organizations within the State of Colorado. While the economic impact today is strong, there are a number of opportunities to further promote and grow these organizations within the State. Policies aimed at entrepreneurial development, business growth, and creating additional opportunities for Native-owned firms would benefit not only the American Indian and Alaska Native population, but also the State overall. As shown in this study, the dollars that flow through Native-owned and Native-focused organizations created a positive economic multiplier for Colorado.

There is also an opportunity for the State of Colorado to cooperate more directly with the tribes in terms of economic development and business development. The unique legal and tax status of the reservations can provide a significant economic advantage to businesses hoping to relocate to the State of Colorado, and the existing workforce and business infrastructure from Native-owned firms can help further support this. A recent trend for tribes is attracting businesses that are seeking to relocate functions that were

previously outsourced offshore back to the US. A recent Forbes survey showed that the number of Chief Financial Officers who were examining the “re-shoring” of operations had nearly doubled in a year. Other tribes have had success in attracting these businesses to the reservation and this creates an opportunity for both the tribes and the State. This is but one example of how increased cooperation could benefit all of Colorado.

Further analysis can also be conducted to determine strategies to increase the economic multiplier within the State and further enhance the economic impact of Native-owned and Native-focused firms. For example, an Economic Leakage study can illustrate where dollars are flowing out of the State that could be recaptured. For example, Native-owned businesses who are currently buying from suppliers out-of-state could be encouraged to “buy local”. Similarly, non-Native businesses could be encouraged to “Buy Native” and keep dollars flowing within the Colorado economy. These types of studies generally find numerous opportunities to not only increase economic impact, but also have other positive implications such as increasing resilience, food security, energy security, and a number of other areas.

Looking at broader impacts, additional analysis can be done on economic and social indicators for American Indian and Alaska Native populations in Colorado. This study illustrated that much of this data can be difficult to obtain. But it is important to understand the broader impacts that economic activity is having within these communities and where there are opportunities to enhance this effect. Fundamentally the question of whether increased economic activity is translating to broader economic and health impact must be answered. Further study should be undertaken to understand the social services consumed by American Indian and Alaska Natives in Colorado and how this changes over time as policies to enhance economic impact are enacted. As refer-



enced above, this study looked at gross economic impact. By studying the costs of services, more of a net economic impact can be calculated.

One of the important discoveries of this study was the number of organizations in both the public and private sector who have a strong interest in understanding and enhancing the economic impact from American Indians and Alaska Natives in the State. This study creates a platform for the initiation of an Economic Impact Policy Summit that can take the results and recommendations of this study and translate them into concrete policy actions and recommendations. This summit should include government (Federal, State, and Local), the Tribes, Native-owned businesses, non-profits, and representatives from Native-focused events. Such a gathering can create a policy agenda that can guide action today and future research.

As noted previously, this study is the first of its kind in Colorado. As such, there are a number of opportunities for improvement in the methods associated with the study, especially in terms of data collection. Some of these improvements have already been implemented. For example, the Rocky Mountain Indian Chamber of Commerce will now be collecting data on its members consistently to feed future studies, which should significantly enhance the Native-owned business data and address some of the smaller firms that may not have been captured by the methods used in this study. Additional potential improvements to data collection include:

- Adding the impact of federal employees in Colorado in agencies focused on serving Native America – Colorado is a regional and national hub for a number of these agencies and previous studies of the economic impact of federal workers conducted by the Federal Executive Board shows that they have a strong economic impact

- Conducting consistent surveys of major events to better understand the economic impact generated
- Expanding the non-profits included in the survey to understand the economic impact associated with serving Native American populations, even when this is not their sole focus
- Assess the economic activity and associated economic impact associated with tribes in adjacent states who frequently spend money within the State of Colorado
- Looking at the contributions of Native-owned businesses to addressing the income inequality and other issues still present in the American Indian and Alaska Native community in Colorado
- Understanding Native American student enrollment at private institutions within Colorado and its resulting economic impact
- Gathering estimates of informal economic activity and its impact – this is an important part of the economy for Native Americans living on and off the reservation and further increases economic impact

Overall, this study provides an important baseline measurement of economic impact from American Indians and Alaska Native in the State of Colorado. Even with the conservative approach to calculating impact and lack of data in some sectors, the economic impact illustrated by this report is strong and there are numerous opportunities to enhance this impact. Just as important, there are opportunities to improve the overall economic and health status of the American Indian and Alaska Native population in Colorado by enhancing economic impact.

Conclusion

At \$1.5 Billion dollars, the economic impact to the state of Colorado's economy is strong. More importantly, it's diverse; ranging from tribal governments and non-profit agencies providing much needed social services to large, financially stable businesses that provide goods and services not just to Native Americans but to all citizens of Colorado. As important players in the Colorado economy, the Native Americans need to be considered in policy decisions.

There is a potential to grow impact through closer relationships among Tribes, government, businesses and schools. These entities can recognize that Native American businesses do exist and may be able to provide the goods and services that they need, fostering future growth and economic stability and independence in the Native American community. As important as the knowledge provided by this study is, there remains work to be done to advance the economic status of the Native American population in Colorado at large.



“You thrive...
I thrive...
We thrive.”

— Stronghold Society

An aerial photograph of a coastline, showing a mix of blue water, green land, and white sandy beaches. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. At the bottom of the page, there is a solid red horizontal bar.

Colorado American Indian and Alaska Native Economic Impact Report