The mission of the NCAI Policy Research Center is to provide tribal leaders with the best available knowledge to make strategic and proactive policy decisions that employ a framework of Native wisdom and positively impact the future of Native peoples. This update provides information on recent studies emerging from Indian Country, opportunities for training & research funding, and other tools and initiatives. To suggest a topic, please email Sarah Pytalski at spytalski@ncai.org. An electronic copy of this Research Update is available on our website: www.ncai.org/PRC

Featured Research

**Elder Care** is a priority for many tribal nations as our people age and families work to identify ways to support a healthy quality of life for our older members. The Administration on Aging and Administration for Community Living recently hosted a Title VI Conference featuring training and technical assistance for tribes developing Elder care policy. The agenda is available at [http://www.olderindians.org/file/ACL%20AoA%202014%20Conference%20Program%20FINAL%208-14-2014.pdf](http://www.olderindians.org/file/ACL%20AoA%202014%20Conference%20Program%20FINAL%208-14-2014.pdf) and presentations will be posted in November 2014. In addition, there have been a range of studies released recently that shed light on the experiences and needs of American Indian and Alaska Native elders, including:

- **Unmet Assistance Need Among Older American Indians: The Native Elder Care Study** (The Gerontologist, January 2014, Schure, et al.). Includes information collected from American Indians living in their tribal communities aged 55+ about their mental and physical health and functioning, assistance needs, and psychosocial resources. Nearly 50 percent of those surveyed indicated an unmet need with their daily living activities.


- **Assessment of Elder Mistreatment in Two American Indian Samples: Psychometric Characteristics of the HS-EAST and the Native Elder Life-Financial Exploitation and – Neglect Measures** (Journal of Applied Gerontology, April 2014, Jervis, et al.). This article describes work within the Shielding American Indian Elders Project to understand and measure culturally important aspects of mistreatment in American Indian elder contexts, and is the first of its kind. Explores the high rate of employment for many in the sample, as well as the impact of multigenerational living arrangements and coercive care of grandchildren for Native elders.

- **Needs and Concerns of Family Caregivers of Persons With Type 2 Diabetes: An Integrated Review of Cross-cultural Literature With Implications for the American Indian Population** (The Diabetes Educator, April 2014, Scarton, et al.). Identifies the need for more research on the work of caregivers with American Indian elders with diabetes – there were only two studies identified in this review (one from 1984 and one from 1999).
Current Research Topics

**Native Children’s Research.** Tribal leaders and Native organizations have set a priority on generating more meaningful work to support the healthy development of Native children. There is a need for research with Native children on early education and development, on education and advocacy for children with disabilities (as well as the high prevalence of Native children designated as having special needs), on the school-to-prison pipeline, and on the needs of Native children in foster care. In addition, there is a need to improve data and evaluation methods, and research ethics used with Native children.

**Role of Language & Culture in Achievement and Wellness.** Tribal leaders have consistently emphasized the importance of Native languages and culture in supporting healthy citizens and communities (see NCAI Resolution #ABQ-10-021). A new article, “A Protective Factors Model for Alcohol Abuse and Suicide Prevention Among Alaska Native Youth” (American Journal of Community Psychology, September 2014) highlights a culturally-based model for supporting such wellness.


**Collateral Consequences of Criminal Conviction.** In 2011, there were 78,700 American Indians and Alaska Natives under correctional supervision—with 49,000 (62%) on probation or parole.¹ There is interest in understanding more about what is happening in the lives of these men and women as they re-enter communities. The “collateral consequences” of a criminal conviction can manifest as severely diminished employment opportunities, ineligibility for student loans, jury service, eviction from public housing, suspension of one’s drivers’ license, and/or the loss of voting rights.² Across the nation, “Ban the Box” fair hiring policies are taking root as 13 states, 59 cities and counties and the District of Columbia have passed laws to remove prior criminal history questions on job applications—allowing people to be judged first on their qualifications ([www.bantheboxcampaign.org](http://www.bantheboxcampaign.org)).

**Research with Urban Indian communities.** Our country has witnessed significant growth in the size of our urban-based American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) relatives since the 1950s termination era, yet little research has been conducted to this end. A September 2014 article by Hartmann, et al., titled, “Advancing Community-Based Research with Urban American Indian Populations: Multidisciplinary Perspectives” in the American Journal of Community Psychology highlights the need to explore implications of intertribal diversity, community geography, and how people move from community to community. For further resources, please visit the sites of the National Council of Urban Indian Health ([www.ncuih.org/](http://www.ncuih.org/)), the National Urban Indian Family Coalition ([www.nuifc.org](http://www.nuifc.org)), or the Urban Indian Health Institute ([www.uihi.org/](http://www.uihi.org/)).

**New Data Tools & Policy Resources**

**Latest Statistics on Drug Use & Health.** In September, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) released statistics regarding AI/AN illicit drug use, binge alcohol use, and tobacco use from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. The report can be accessed at [http://beta.samhsa.gov/data/](http://beta.samhsa.gov/data/) and the data analyzed at [http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/SAMHDA/](http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/SAMHDA/).

---


An Inside Look at AI/AN Demographic, Socioeconomic, and Housing Conditions. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recently partnered with NCAI, the Native Nations Institute, Native Hawaiian Traditional Healing Center, Tanana Chiefs Conference, Inc., among others to produce an assessment of the geography, governance, cultural context, land use, and housing needs among AI/ANs. Report: [http://www.huduser.org/portal//publications/pdf/housing_conditions.pdf](http://www.huduser.org/portal//publications/pdf/housing_conditions.pdf).

A New Site for Women’s Health and Solidarity. In an effort to ignite new conversations about reproductive health, sexuality, and social justice, the Sovereign Bodies project features interviews with prominent female Native leaders and resources on [http://www.sovereignbodies.com/](http://www.sovereignbodies.com/).

**Upcoming Research Forums & Funding Opportunities**

**Research Forums**
- **Protecting the Generations: A Lifespan Approach to Preventing Diabetes**, a conference hosted by the University of Oklahoma’s American Indian Institute, will be hosted January 25-28, 2015, in Mesa, AZ. Register and view the latest agendas at [http://aii.ou.edu/nativediabetes/](http://aii.ou.edu/nativediabetes/).
- **Native American and Indigenous Studies Association** (NAISA) is hosting its 7th Annual Meeting from June 4-6, 2015, in Washington, DC. The deadline for the Call for Papers is November 3rd. As a co-sponsor of this event, we hope to see you there! [http://2015.naisaconference.org/](http://2015.naisaconference.org/).
- **Educating Native Youth for Success: Many Nations, One Vision** is the Native American Student Advocacy Institute’s upcoming conference on June 4-5, 2015, at Washington State University in Pullman, WA. Early bird registration ends November 11th: [http://nasai.collegeboard.org/](http://nasai.collegeboard.org/).
- **He Manawa Whenua Indigenous Research Conference** is taking place June 29-July 1, 2015 in Hamilton, New Zealand. To register, please visit: [https://wired.ivvy.com/event/HMW15/speaker](https://wired.ivvy.com/event/HMW15/speaker).

**Funding & Fellowships for Native Scholars**
- National Science Foundation (NSF) grant to the American Indian Science and Engineering Society, “Lighting the Pathway to Faculty Careers for Natives in STEM.” Selected full-time college undergraduates and graduates will receive $2,250 each year for 2 years. For further information see: [http://www.aises.org/content/national-science-foundation-grant-information](http://www.aises.org/content/national-science-foundation-grant-information).
• The deadline for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Postdoctoral Program is November 1st. Details are at: http://nasa.orau.org/postdoc/application/index.htm.

• Undergraduate and graduate scholarships are available to AI/AN students studying nutrition, physical education or the culinary arts in California. Applications are accepted between January 1st—March 31st each year. For more information, visit: http://canfit.org/scholarships/.

• The Gates Millennium Scholars Program is accepting applications from (first-time) college-bound students until January 14, 2015. Please view the details online: https://www.gmsp.org/.

Tools & Initiatives of the NCAI Policy Research Center

NOW LIVE! Tribal Public Health Law Database. With the support of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the National Indian Health Board, we have launched a national database that features laws, policies, and codes that tribes have established to address public health issues (e.g. pollution, water quality, food safety, animal control, etc.). We have collected several hundred codes and secured tribal permissions to post them on http://www.ncai.org/policy-research-center/initiatives/projects/tribal-public-health-law. If your tribe would be willing to participate in this project, please contact spytalski@ncai.org.

Latest Policy Brief: Tribal Transportation Insights: Preventing Unintentional Injury and Death. In a continuing effort to draw attention to matters of public health in tribal communities, this Policy Insights Brief serves as an addendum our Summer 2013 brief, Reservation Road Safety: Reducing Unintentional Injury through Tribal Public Health Law, and focuses on the complex transportation safety challenges and opportunities facing tribal communities. The brief may be found online at http://www.ncai.org/policy-research-center/research-data/prc-publications.

A Bridge Across: Developing a Toolkit for Research Partnerships that Build Native Health and Culture. As a Native American Research Center for Health (NARCH) grantee, we have partnered with the University of New Mexico to undertake the creation of toolkit focused on the core functions of governance, culture, and trust in research with AI/AN communities. There are technical assistance opportunities available to tribes, and if your tribe is interested in piloting the toolkit in the future, please contact Sarah Pytalski at spytalski@ncai.org or Karee Yabeny at kyabeny@salud.unm.edu.

Inroads to Health: Supporting Innovative Diabetes Research in Native Contexts. In partnership with Washington University in St. Louis, we are working to eliminate disparities in Type 2 diabetes by translating evidence-based interventions. On July 23, we co-hosted the Getting Behind the Numbers: A Data & Policy Institute with the University of Colorado’s Centers for American Indian and Alaska Native Health to review the data and published results from the Special Diabetes Program for Indians. Please visit cdtr.wustl.edu for more information.

Creating Conversation: Ethics, Policy & Practice in Genetics Research. On June 23rd, at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC, the NCAI Policy Research Center and the NIH National Human Genome Research Institute hosted a symposium titled, “A Spectrum of Perspectives: Native Peoples & Genetics Research.” To view a live recording of the event, please visit: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLS6nSmuURFjC6iy2IWMFwvYjXDHfC6AwC.

Moving Policy Innovation through Research: 9th Annual Tribal Leader/Scholar Forum Proceedings. With topics ranging from water use to telemedicine, from traditional foods to economic diversification, more than 35 presentations were shared at this year’s TLSF in Anchorage, AK at NCAI’s Mid Year Conference. Please contact the PRC for the proceedings document, where we have compiled the abstracts, PowerPoint slides, and posters presented. Please also keep in mind our upcoming Call for Papers to be released in November 2014!