



# Bureau of Justice Statistics Fact Sheet

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## *Census of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies, 2000*

# Tribal Law Enforcement, 2000

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As of June 2000, American Indian tribes operated 171 law enforcement agencies that employed the equivalent of at least 1 full-time sworn officer with general arrest powers. In addition, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) operated 37 agencies providing law enforcement services in Indian country.

Tribally operated agencies employed 3,462 full-time personnel, including 2,303 sworn (67%) and 1,159 nonsworn (33%) (table 1). These agencies also employed 217 part-time personnel, including 88 sworn (41%) and 129 nonsworn (59%).

Tribally operated agencies had a combined service population of 1,016,188 residents in 1999.\* This corresponds to about 2.3 full-time sworn officers per 1,000 residents, across all agencies.

\*Based on the American Indian "service population" counts published in the BIA 1999 *Indian Labor Force Report*. The service population is the total number of enrolled tribal members and members from other tribes who live on or near the reservation and are eligible to use the tribe's BIA-funded services. The service population probably underestimates the population served by tribally operated law enforcement agencies because many agencies serve non-Indian residents and other persons using roads, stores, casinos, and other public places on tribal land.

Tribally operated agencies provided a broad range of public safety services and functions in 2000 (figure 1). Nearly all (94%) responded to calls for service, and a large majority engaged in crime prevention activities (88%), executed arrest warrants (88%), performed traffic law enforcement (84%), and served court papers (76%).

A majority of agencies provided court security (56%) and search and rescue operations (53%). About a fourth of agencies operated one or more jails. (For more information on jail operations, see *Jails in Indian Country, 2001*, BJS Bulletin, NCJ 193400.)

**Table 1. Tribally operated law enforcement agencies and employees, by size of agency, June 2000**

Full-time sworn personnel	Number of agencies	Type of employee					
		Full-time			Part-time		
		Total	Sworn	Nonsworn	Total	Sworn	Nonsworn
All sizes	171	3,462	2,303	1,159	217	88	129
50 or more	7	1,196	684	512	12	3	9
25-49	13	630	417	213	12	2	10
10-24	50	982	731	251	77	17	60
5-9	49	508	346	162	59	29	30
Under 5	52	146	125	21	57	37	20

**Selected services and functions of tribally operated law enforcement agencies, 2000**

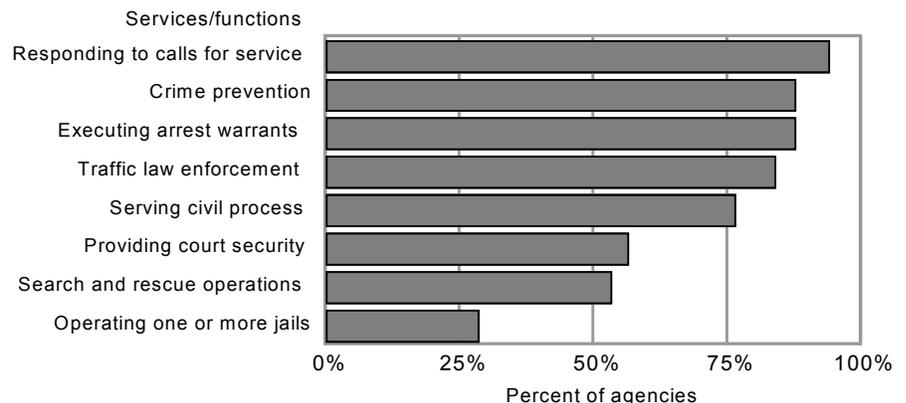


Figure 1

About three-quarters of tribally operated law enforcement agencies in 2000 had at least one full-time sworn officer serving in a community policing capacity (table 2). In some agencies, these officers may be known by a title indicative of their community policing approach, such as community resource officers and community relations officers. A total of 714 officers (or 31% of all full-time sworn officers) fulfilled a community policing role in 2000. Among agencies employing community policing officers, the average number of such officers ranged from 2 for the smallest tribally operated agencies to 21 for the largest.

Thirty-seven percent of tribally operated agencies had at least one full-time sworn school resource officer (table 3). These officers' duties are related to school safety and may include working closely with school staff to monitor and prevent crime and disorder problems. In 2000, 162 officers (or 7% of all full-time sworn officers) served as school resource officers. Among agencies employing school resource officers, there was an average of three such officers per agency.

While tribally operated agencies and other general purpose police agencies provide a similar range of services, a major difference between them is the land area served. For example, the Navajo Nation Department of Law Enforcement covers approximately 22,000 square miles in 3 States, whereas the comparably sized Reno, Nevada, Police Department (320 full-time sworn serving 180,462 residents) covers about 57.5 square miles. In terms of land area, some tribally operated agencies may be more like county or regional police departments.

Criminal jurisdiction is another major difference between tribally operated agencies and their State and local counterparts. Jurisdiction over offenses in Indian country may lie with Federal, State, or tribal agencies depending upon the particular offense, the offender, the victim, and the offense location. (For more information on tribal jurisdiction, see U.S. Department of Justice, *Indian Country Law Enforcement Review*, December 1999; see also *Jails in Indian Country*, 2001, NCJ 193400).

**Table 2. Full-time community policing officers in tribally operated law enforcement agencies, by size of agency, 2000**

Full-time sworn personnel	Community policing officers		
	Percent of agencies using	Total number of officers	Average number of full-time sworn*
All sizes	73%	714	6
50 or more	57%	83	21
25-49	92	110	9
10-24	72	289	8
5-9	74	159	4
Under 5	69	73	2

\*Excludes agencies that did not employ any full-time community policing officers.

**Table 3. Full-time school resource officers in tribally operated law enforcement agencies, by size of agency, 2000**

Full-time sworn personnel	School resource officers		
	Percent of agencies using	Total number of officers	Average number of full-time sworn*
All sizes	37%	162	3
50 or more	57%	4	1
25-49	62	49	6
10-24	46	40	2
5-9	35	46	3
Under 5	23	23	2

\*Excludes agencies that did not employ any full-time school resource officers.

**Table 4. The 20 largest tribally operated law enforcement agencies, by the number of full-time sworn personnel, the service population, reservation land area, and the number of full-time sworn officers per 1,000 residents and per 100 square miles, 2000**

Agency name and location of administrative headquarters	Full-time sworn personnel	BIA service population, 1999	Reservation land area (square miles)	Full-time sworn per 1,000 residents	Full-time sworn per 100 square miles
Navajo Nation Department of Law Enforcement (AZ)	321	169,617	22,174	2	1
Tohono O'Odham Tribal Police Department (AZ)	76	16,981	4,453	4	2
Seminole Department of Law Enforcement (FL)	67	2,626	--	26	--
Gila River Indian Community Law Enforcement (AZ)	58	15,084	584	4	10
Oglala Sioux Tribal Police Department (SD) <sup>a</sup>	58	40,873	3,159	1	2
Cheyenne River Tribal Police Department (SD)	53	10,589	4,260	5	1
Salt River Tribal Police Department (AZ)	51	6,655	81	8	63
Choctaw Law Enforcement Services (MS)	38	6,949	25	5	152
Saginaw Chippewa Tribal Police Department (MI)	37	1,026	218	36	17
White Mountain Apache Tribal Police Department (AZ)	36	13,161	2,628	3	1
Rosebud Sioux Tribal Law Enforcement (SD)	35	19,440	1,388	2	3
Oneida Indian Nation Police (NY)	33	1,893	--	17	--
Warm Springs Tribal Police Department (OR)	33	3,837	1,011	9	3
Colorado River Tribal Police Department (AZ)	32	1,942	361	16	9
Assiniboine & Sioux (Ft. Peck) Tribal Police (MT)	31	6,933	3,289	4	1
Yakima Tribal Police Department (WA) <sup>b</sup>	31	15,968	2,153	2	1
Cherokee Police Department (NC)	30	7,456	83	4	36
Miccosukee Tribal Police Department (FL)	30	589	128	51	23
Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians Police Department (ND)	26	11,116	68	2	38
San Carlos Tribal Police Department (AZ)	25	10,834	2,911	2	1

Note: Land area data are extracted from the U.S. Census Bureau 2000 Census, and include reservation land only.

--Reservation land consists of less than 1 square mile.

<sup>a</sup>Personnel data for this agency are from the 1996 Census of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies.

<sup>b</sup>Personnel data for this agency are from the 1999 Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) survey.

**Crime in Indian country**

Law enforcement agencies in Indian country handle a wide range of offenses. BIA, through its Law Enforcement Services program, compiles annual statistics submitted by tribally operated and BIA agencies. The percentage of those agencies reporting has increased in recent years, with 175 of 208 agencies, or 84%, reporting in 2000.

**Crime rates**

Agencies in 2000 reported over 9,000 violent crimes, including 8,391 aggravated assaults. Over 15,000 property crimes were also reported.

These offenses represented less than 1% of all violent and property crimes in the Nation in 2000. In terms of the number of crimes per 100,000 residents, American Indians and Alaska Natives experienced violence at a higher rate, compared to the country as a whole (656.5 per 100,000 versus 506.1 per 100,000), and property crime at a lower rate (1,082.8 per 100,000 versus 3,617.9 per 100,000).

In particular, the rate of aggravated assault among American Indians and Alaska Natives in 2000 was roughly twice that of the country as a whole (600.2 per 100,000 versus 323.6 per 100,000). Victimization statistics indicate similar findings (see *American Indians and Crime*, NCJ 173386, and *Violent Victimization and Race, 1993-98*, NCJ 176354).

**Defining "crime"**

The FBI specifies in its Uniform Crime Reporting Program eight Part I Index crimes: murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, and arson. However, data about these eight offenses do not completely capture the nature of crime in Indian country for a variety of reasons.

**Violent and property offenses reported by law enforcement agencies in Indian country, 1998-2000**

	1998	1999	2000
Percent of agencies reporting	71%	79%	84%
<b>Total violent and property offenses</b>	20,676	24,830	24,315
<b>Violent offenses</b>	7,347	9,578	9,178
Murder and non-negligent manslaughter	93	118	94
Rape	523	603	550
Robbery	260	196	143
Aggravated assault	6,471	8,661	8,391
<b>Property offenses</b>	13,329	15,252	15,137
Burglary	4,558	5,477	4,201
Larceny/theft	6685	7,157	8,048
Motor vehicle theft	1,666	2,097	2,465
Arson	420	521	423

Note: Data in this table were extracted from the BIA 1998, 1999, and 2000 *Annual Law Enforcement Program Reports*. These data include reports from BIA law enforcement offices.

- Many offenses other than Part I offenses can help describe crime problems.

For example, tribal agencies reported 13,546 simple assaults and 25,486 incidents of disorderly conduct in 2000. Alcohol-related offenses were among the most common, including 17,931 liquor law violations, 19,092 DWI offenses, and 53,297 incidents of drunkenness.

Selected offenses (other than Part I offenses) reported by tribal law enforcement agencies, 2000

Drunkenness	53,297
Disorderly conduct	25,486
Driving while intoxicated	19,092
Liquor law violations	17,931
Simple assaults	13,546
Vandalism	11,507
Drug violations (sale, use, possession)	5,288
Weapons (carrying, possessing)	2,776
Stolen property (buying, receiving, possessing)	2,072

Note: Data in this table were extracted from the BIA 2000 *Annual Law Enforcement Program Report*. These data include reports from BIA law enforcement offices.

- Problems in classifying Part I offenses in Indian country can occur if these offenses are declined for Federal prosecution. These cases are returned to tribal justice systems to be treated as lesser offenses (tribal

courts only handle misdemeanors) and may be recorded as such.

- Other offenses for which data are not typically collected through the FBI may hold equal or greater importance for tribal communities. Tribes may be concerned with particular types of wrongdoing not captured in Part I offenses.

**Improving justice statistics**

Many tribal agencies are working to determine what kinds of data need to be collected, how to collect them, and how to analyze them. Agencies are seeking tribal personnel with the requisite skills and training.

BJS and the Tribal Justice Statistics Assistance Center (TJSAC), a project of the Justice Research and Statistics Association (JRSA) with funding from BJS, provide training and technical assistance to American Indian and Alaska Native tribes to improve the quality and use of justice statistics.

The TJSAC does not collect data from tribal justice systems. Rather, it provides information and training to help tribes collect and use statistics more effectively. More information on TJSAC can be found at the TJSAC website <[www.tjsac.org](http://www.tjsac.org)>.

**Sources of additional information**

Additional information on tribal crime and justice is available in *Jails in Indian Country, 2001*, BJS Bulletin, NCJ 193400; *Violent Victimization and Race, 1993-98*, BJS Special Report, NCJ 176354; and *American Indians and Crime*, BJS report, NCJ 173386.

Related publications and programs of other Office of Justice Programs (OJP) components are compiled by the OJP American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) Affairs Desk. The AI/AN Affairs Desk enhances access to information by Federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes regarding funding opportunities, training and technical assistance, and other relevant information.

More information about the AI/AN Affairs Desk can be found at <[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/americanative/Whats\\_new.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/americanative/Whats_new.htm)>.

Since 1995 the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), U.S. Department of Justice, has awarded more than \$198 million to improve law enforcement capabilities in Indian country. COPS administers several funding programs targeted to tribal law enforcement agencies, including the Tribal Resource Grant Program, Comprehensive Indian Resources for Community and Law Enforcement (CIRCLE) project, Mental Health and Community Safety Initiative for American Indian/Alaskan Native Children, Youth and Families (MHCSI), Tribal Hiring Renewal Grant Program (THRGP), and various training and technical assistance initiatives including the 3 Tribes Integrated Justice Pilot Project and Indian Youth Academy. These initiatives have included funding for new law enforcement officers, equipment, training, technology, law enforcement assessments, and youth development.

More information about COPS can be found at <[www.cops.usdoj.gov](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov)>, or by calling the DOJ Response Center at 1-800-421-6770.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics is the statistical agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. Lawrence A. Greenfeld is director.

Matthew Hickman, BJS statistician, prepared this report. The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) provided partial funding for the 2000 Census. Debra Cohen and Matthew Scheider of COPS assisted with questionnaire development. Norena-Ann Henry, Director, OJP American Indian and Alaska Native Affairs Desk; Craig Jones of the Bureau of Indian Affairs; and Edward Reina, Jr., Director, Yavapai-Prescott Tribal Police, reviewed this report.

Data were collected and processed by the U.S. Census Bureau, with assistance from BJS. Census Bureau staff, under the supervision of Latrice Brogsdale-Davis and Charlene Sebold, included Theresa Reitz, Martha Greene, Patricia Torreyson, and Paula Kinard.

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