



Research & Data



With regard to research and data, the Commission received evidence about the importance of collaborative research in Native communities that accurately enumerates and addresses Native children and youth, recognizes issues of data sovereignty in Native communities, and is directly responsive to Native aspirations for their children and youth.

Create a Federal Office of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Data, Evaluation, and Research

Congress shall create an Office of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Data, Evaluation, and Research (Office) that shall be the information hub for all data collected and research funded by the U.S. government that is relevant to American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian people and communities and provide funding appropriate to this mission. Within the framework of Indigenous data sovereignty, and with regard to any data collected from Tribes and Tribal organizations or on Native people by the Federal government (and any outside stakeholders collaborating on Federally funded projects), the Office will:

- Work across executive branch agencies to build Tribal research and evaluation capacity, especially through training and technical assistance (TTA) funding decisions, to help ensure that Native community members are able to collect their own data on early childhood development, education, health, justice, food, poverty, family economic health, physical infrastructure, and other relevant community concerns
- Ensure that numeric and anecdotal data collected by the Federal government are appropriately recorded, compiled, made available to, and owned by relevant Native communities, Tribes, and Tribal organizations
- Promote the collection and measurement of data that are useful to Tribes, Tribal organizations, and Native Hawaiians
- Create standard definitions and compatible systems platforms to allow for greater linkage of datasets across Federal agencies
- Support opportunities to link national data that address early childhood development, education, health, justice, food, poverty/economic health, physical infrastructure, and other concerns that affect Native communities
- Assess the appropriateness of existing data categories for comparative purposes
- Promote the inclusion of Native children and youth, families, and adults in longitudinal studies
- Report regularly on the quality of data and measures used by Federal, state, and Tribal programs, such as noting sample sizes and frequency of sampling, and provide advice about how to improve data quality
- Expand the definition of “evidence-based practice” to include practice-based evidence that acknowledges culturally based and community-based solutions
- Ensure that assessments and evaluations of programs that primarily serve Native clients incorporate Indigenous perspectives and Indigenous methodologies
- Provide information about evaluation and assessment methods that have proven useful in measuring outcomes in Native communities
- Disseminate evaluation and assessment results concerning programs and policies that have proven useful for strengthening Native communities, with the intent of identifying “what works” to funding agencies and Native communities
- Fund analyses, generate summary reports, and disseminate findings on key topics that affect the wellbeing of American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian children and youth, including diabetes and other health risk factors, juvenile justice issues, child protection, behavioral health strategies, etc.
- Work to ensure that the efforts of the Office apply not only to future data collection but to data that already has been collected by agencies and departments of the U.S. government.

Data collection and data analysis regarding American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children and youth are common and extensive activities across multiple Federal departments and agencies. Even within the Department of Health and Human Services, multiple operating units gather data and conduct research on similar topics related to Native children and youth, such as trauma and resilience. Rarely do these various agencies communicate or collaborate regarding data collection and research affecting Native individuals and communities, and valuable opportunities to leverage and scale data and findings are lost. It is little wonder, given this context, that the Native population is often left as an “asterisk” population in key data series. In addition, there is no central repository of data and relevant information regarding American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children and youth, nor is there a simple means to disseminate this important information back to Tribes and Tribal organizations for their use and application. Finally, data systems do not coordinate, which therefore impedes effective sharing of information across Federal and Tribal systems. This recommendation remedies data gaps and recognizes the importance of Indigenous data sovereignty by creating a high-level office for the consolidation and expansion of data and research efforts.

“ All of our state systems have to understand that data is proving that their ‘best-practices’ are not working and that their structures are not working.”




DR. KALEHUA KRUG

Native Hawaiian

**Principal, Ka Waihona o Ka Na'auao Public
Charter School**

Hawai'i Regional Hearing, Commission on
Native Children

“ Native Hawaiian children still disproportionately suffer from poverty, child abuse, sex trafficking, and violence. I am reminded of the Hawaiian proverb, “Unfolded by the water are the faces of the flowers.” These flowers represent our children, and the fact that flowers thrive where there is water. As a Native Hawaiian mother and grandmother, I can assure you that our children represent our greatest and most precious resources and there is nothing more worthy than examining and improving the conditions of our keiki.”

 **CARMEN HULU LINDSEY**
Native Hawaiian
Chair, Board of Trustees, Office of Hawaiian Affairs
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