

Santa Cruz Indian Council Native American Community Profile And Educational Needs Assessment

The following assessment document was prepared as part of a Santa Cruz Indian Council grant proposal to establish an American Indian Educational Center in Santa Cruz County. While the proposal was not funded for this coming cycle, the needs of our young people remain; and the SCIC continues to work toward the development of recommendation goals, and the establishment of an American Indian Educational Center here.

Population and Education in Santa Cruz County

There are four incorporated cities in Santa Cruz County; the city of Santa Cruz is the largest and is the county seat. Watsonville is the second largest city, followed by Scotts Valley and Capitola. While the largest population resides in the city of Santa Cruz, the population is distributed throughout the county including the unincorporated areas. The American Indian population in the county is similarly distributed throughout the county, and roughly corresponds to the incorporated areas of Watsonville, the Capitola-Santa Cruz area, and the Scotts Valley-San Lorenzo Valley area.

Certain school districts in the county also contain relatively higher densities of American Indian students and they include the San Lorenzo Valley Unified, the Santa Cruz City Elementary and High School Districts, the Live Oak Elementary School District, and the Soquel Union Elementary School District. The Pajaro Valley Unified School District is so large that while it has not identified high American Indian student densities, the overall number of American Indian students enrolled is significant.

In addition to the K-12 school districts serving Santa Cruz County, Cabrillo College, a California Community College located in the county, had an enrollment of 15,277 students in the Spring of 2006, and an American Indian enrollment of 166. The University of California Santa Cruz is also located within Santa Cruz County boundaries and had a total Spring 2007 enrollment of more than 15,360 students, of which 131 were American Indian. While UCSC attracts students from all over the state and the nation, Cabrillo College predominantly serves permanent county residents. These institutions are significant not only because they represent post-secondary opportunities for the K-12 students in the county, they could be excellent sources of academic staff, mentors and role models for Native American students when a Native American Educational Center is established.

Comprehensive Needs Assessment

The following narrative describes key demographic and economic characteristics of the American Indian population living in Santa Cruz County. It also identifies those needs considered to be critical for serving the educational and cultural needs of the region's American Indian youth and their families.

Population Profile

In 2005 Santa Cruz County had a total population of 249,705 persons according to the U.S. Census. It is the 24th largest county population in California which means it is slightly above the median county population size in the state.

Of the Santa Cruz County population contacted during the 2005 interim census, 3,037 reported themselves to be solely American Indian and Alaska Native persons. This represents 1.2% of the county's population. This is also the same distribution as is present in the entire California state population for that year. In the 2000 Census 5,296 persons in Santa Cruz County identified themselves as American Indian and Alaska Native alone, or in combination with another race or ethnicity. This represents 2.1% of the county's population and is a significant factor in identifying the cultural needs of American Indian children and their families, since many of the children in this population live in multi-cultural home settings.

Tribal Affiliation Profile

The Monterey Bay region has a rich and ancient history of American Indian Indigenous settlement by the Rumsen, Mutsun, and Awaswas Divisions of the Coastanoan Ohlone people. Tragically many in this population were decimated during the Spanish Mission period. Although the remaining Coastanoan Ohlone population living in this area is relatively small, they are acknowledged and respected in the American Indian community living here as descendants of the regions original inhabitants.

Based on U.S. Census data most of this county's American Indian population is composed of an aggregate of isolated families and individuals with a great diversity of North American tribal origins. The origins of people in this population include tribes associated with traditional geographic regions throughout North America who have migrated to this area relatively recently. During the 2000 US Census when American Indian and Alaskan Natives were asked which tribes they identified with, 5,488 tribal affiliations were named. This included multiple tribal identifications for some individuals. Thirty-six specific tribes were identified, and more than 1,867 other responses were included in "Other tribes" or "not specified" categories. The most frequently identified tribes were Cherokee (945), Latin American Indians (781), Apache (237), Choctaw (162), Sioux (106), Navajo (100), Chippewa (75), Creek (60), Iroquois (59), Comanche (53), Pueblo (47), and Yaqui (46). Knowledgeable members of the American Indian community in Santa Cruz can also identify families living in the county with tribal affiliations that were not listed in the Census report. These statistics clearly indicate that Native Americans in Santa Cruz County are indeed a very tribally diverse population.

Native American Youth Profile

From an educational needs perspective, perhaps the most critical population to understand is the American Indian school age youth living here. While data specific to American Indian youth in Santa Cruz County is rare and sometimes inconsistent, the following information provides a glimpse into who they are and what they need. The age and gender distribution in the population, of American Indian children of school age identified during the 2000 Census was reported as follows:

Table 1: American Indian and Alaska Native Children of School Age and Gender (U.S. Census, 2000)

Age Range	Male	Female	Total
5-9	98	76	174
10-14	102	101	203
15-17	79	65	144
18-19	58	37	95
Total	337	279	616

Table 1 reflects a significant student age population in this community. The data also indicates that the population is relatively evenly distributed among the age groups and between the genders. A look at historical census data suggests that this population has remained consistently in these ranges.

A different view of this population is reflected in reports produced by the Santa Cruz County Office of Education. Their data on the enrollment of American Indian students for K-12 during 2005-06, indicates that there were 200 identified American Indian or Alaska Native students enrolled in their schools. These students are distributed among the grade levels in the following way:

Table 2: American Indian and Alaska Native Students by Grade Level and Gender (California Department of Education, 2005-06)

Grade Range	Male	Female	Total
K-3	17	31	48
4-6	23	27	50
7-8	13	19	32
9-12	41	29	70
Total	94	106	200

Once again the American Indian school age population in this region is relatively evenly distributed among the grade levels and between the genders.

District records indicate that there are six school districts in the county with noteworthy numbers of American Indian students. In the northern region of the county are San Lorenzo Valley Unified (56) and Scotts Valley Unified (13); in the southern region of the county is the Pajaro Valley Unified School District (39); and in the central region of the county are Santa Cruz Elementary/High School (41), Live Oak Elementary (20), and Soquel Union Elementary (22).

It is evident from differences in the numbers of American Indian children reported in these statistical tables that there are many American Indian students in the county who are “invisible” to the public educational system. Anecdotal information indicates that there are many families in the community who prefer not to identify themselves as American Indian to institutions, but privately indicate they are. The SCIC considers this a clear indication of the need for a center which promotes confidence in the American Indian identity of our youth and their families.

Native American Educator Profile

An investigation into the K-12 American Indian educational leaders in this area indicates that they are underrepresented and isolated. Among the 2,304 faculty, administrators, and staff employed by Santa Cruz County K-12 public schools in 2006-07, only 6 American Indian teachers were identified. This represents 0.3% of all public education employees in the county. This rate is below the reported American Indian student enrollment rate of 0.5%, and is also lower than the state public education employee level of 0.6% for the same year. With so few American Indian teachers spread throughout Santa Cruz County, very few American Indian students have the opportunity to be taught by an American Indian, or to know them as role models.

Economic Income Profile

Santa Cruz County's local economy is a diverse one anchored in high technology, agriculture, tourism, health, and education. This diverse economy creates a wide variety of seasonal as well as relatively low paying service industry jobs. The county's economy is geographically distinct with much of the agricultural sector concentrated in the southern and northern regions of the county. The natural beauty of the county has created a strong tourism industry as well; however most of the employment opportunities created by this industry are low paying service jobs. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, in 2005 the per capita personal income in the county was \$42,643 however the median income was \$53,998 which suggests that there is a wage gap among county residents.

While American Indian people can be found at nearly all income levels in the county, and many are respected professionals, there is strong evidence to suggest that the American Indian community is more likely to earn less than many other ethnic groups living here. In the Community Survey for 2005, the U.S. Census Bureau reported the following income levels:

**Table 3: 2005 Income for American Indian and Total County Population
(U.S. Census Bureau, Community Survey 2005)**

Income Group	American Indian	Total Population	Percent Difference
Median Household Income	\$49,658	\$58,640	-15.3%
Median Family Income	\$57,952	\$79,934	-27.5%
Per Capita Income	\$17,315	\$32,752	-47.1%

Even when taking into account the margins for error in this survey there are clearly significant differences between the income of the total county population and that of American Indian individuals and families.

Family size is also a factor influencing the economic well-being of American Indian families. During the 2000 U.S. Census the average family size for all residents of Santa Cruz County was 2.71; however the average family size for American Indian residents was 3.32. This represents a significant difference in terms of the family's income, cost of living, and residential costs.

Residential Profile

Santa Cruz County is one of the most expensive areas in the nation to live. Affordable housing is also a significant issue for many county residents. The median value for owner-occupied housing in 2000 was \$377,500, but in 2006 the median price to purchase a home in Santa Cruz County reached \$720,709.

The type of residential tenure of American Indian residents during the 2000 Census differed from the Santa Cruz County population as a whole and again supports the fact that many American Indian families experience economic stress here. Among all county residents, 39.9% rented their residence. Among American Indian residents, 58.2% rented their dwelling. What this suggests is that American Indian residents are far more likely to be experiencing what is referred to as a wage-rent disparity. In their publication "*Out of Reach 2001: America's Growing Wage-Rent Disparity*", the National Low Income Housing Coalition described the wage-rent disparity in Santa Cruz County as follows:

- "In Santa Cruz-Watsonville, CA, an extremely low income household (earning 30% of the Area Median Income of \$67,500) can afford monthly rent of no more than \$506, while the Fair Market Rent for a two bedroom unit is \$1,175.
- In Santa Cruz-Watsonville, CA, a worker earning the Minimum Wage (\$6.25 per hour) must work 145 hours per week in order to afford a two-bedroom unit at the area's Fair Market rent.
- The Housing Wage in Santa Cruz-Watsonville, CA is \$22.60. This is the amount a worker would have to earn per hour in order to be able to work 40 hours per week and afford a two-bedroom unit at the area's Fair Market rent. This is 362% of the present Minimum wage (\$6.25 per hour). Between 2000 and 2001 the two bedroom housing wage increased by 7.70%.

Demographic Summary

The data presented in this overview suggests that there is a significant presence of American Indian people in Santa Cruz County, although many did not originate in this area. Significant discrepancies among various data sources indicate that past methods of identifying American Indian school aged children in this area are not reflective of the actual population. Furthermore the population density data indicates that the American Indian population is widely dispersed throughout the county making it difficult for them to interact socially, act politically, or share cultural activities. Finally, the data suggests that many American Indians in Santa Cruz County are under significant economic pressure as they are more likely to have lower income, larger families, and rent their residence in a community that is widely acknowledged for its high cost of living.

Academic Performance Profile

Academic performance measures often show inconsistent results when a population is small. This is the case for the Santa Cruz County American Indian students who are spread among many schools and grade levels. In spite of some gaps in test results due to insufficient American Indian test takers, a pattern of academic underperformance by American Indian students remains for specific tests. Test scores were tabulated for

those tests where sufficient American Indian students participated. If test performance indicators were significantly different for American Indian students than for all county students they are included in the following discussion.

The California STAR testing program includes a broad range of tests designed to measure student mastery of specific academic subjects. Test scores for 2006 identified some subject-specific deficits for Santa Cruz County American Indian students.

Table 4: Select STAR Test Scores Comparing American Indian Student Performance with the All Students in the County

Test	Grade Level	AI % "Below Basic" or "Far Below Basic"	County % "Below Basic" or "Far Below Basic"
CST English-Language Arts	11	53%	41%
CST Mathematics	7	50%	36%
CST Algebra 1	11	75%	53%
CST U.S. History	11	56%	26%

These test results were generally consistent over time. In addition, there is a pattern of poorer performance on these tests as the American Indian student grade level increases.

It is noteworthy that American Indian students seemed to have difficulty performing well on Mathematics tests from the middle school grades on. The performance difficulties for the CST U.S. History Test may reflect other factors and should be examined more closely before making specific student academic support recommendations in this subject area.

Another measure which identifies students who are at risk is the percent of dropouts during the course of a High School career. The 2005-06 Four-Year Derived Dropout Rate for Santa Cruz County American Indian High School students was 34.5%. This was the single highest dropout rate in the county among identified ethnic groups for that period. It is nearly double the rate for all county enrollments (18.3%), and more than double the dropout rate for all High School seniors in the State (14.7%). While small, dispersed numbers of American Indian students make accurate trend analysis difficult, historical American Indian dropout rates have regularly been among the highest of any ethnic group in the county.

When the percent of students who passed the California High School Exit Exam were reviewed, American Indian students once again were among the poorest performing ethnic groups in the county. While American Indian High School student English Language Arts scores were comparable to other students in the county, on the Math test only 46% of the counties American Indian High School students passed the test. The entire senior class for the County passed this test at a 61% rate, and the statewide percentage was 59%. The statewide American Indian passing rate was 56%,

suggesting that American Indian students in Santa Cruz County would benefit from strategic support services in Math.

Community Concerns

In order to identify the needs and priorities of the services which the American Indian community believes are needed in Santa Cruz County, two methods of data collection were administered.

Focus Group

On August 19, 2007 the Santa Cruz Indian Council hosted an American Indian community focus group to discuss the goals, services, and curriculum priorities for a proposed American Indian Education Center. The modest group of participants representing SCIC council members and invited guests was first informed of the goals and structure of an American Indian Education Center. Participants were encouraged to express their concerns, and make their own personal recommendations. Each participant was encouraged to speak, and follow-up discussion was encouraged after each speaker. Although each participant expressed specific concerns and priorities, there was great consensus regarding the desirability and the nature of a proposed American Indian Educational Center. As a result of this open exchange the following core of concerns were expressed:

1. *American Indian youth in our community are isolated from each other and do not have the opportunity to know other American Indian people in this region.*
2. *American Indian youth in our community are not getting the opportunities to learn and experience their traditional culture in a consistent way.*
3. *The cultural identities of the American Indian youth in our community are being subjugated and ignored, discouraging them from pursuing excellence, and impairing their academic and personal success as Indian People.*
4. *American Indian youth in our community are being educated with materials that exclude or inaccurately portray American Indian people, their contributions, and their part in historical events; and deny them the opportunity to be educated about their American Indian heritage in a more unprejudiced and comprehensive way.*
5. *Culturally sensitive academic support services in the public schools are not directed at the specific needs of American Indian youth in our community.*

Focus Group American Indian Education Recommendations

1. *We wish to have culturally responsible services that will help to improve the academic achievement of all K-12 American Indian youth in our community. Services should be:*
 - a. *Age/grade appropriate and flexible enough to address individual needs when necessary.*
 - b. *Incorporating culturally responsive methods that build upon culture specific strengths and character.*
 - c. *Reinforcing learning so that mastery of skills and content are achieved.*
 - d. *Helping our students realize academic goals beyond High School.*

2. *We wish to have cultural enrichment programming which promotes core traditional American Indian values, knowledge and experiences. Services should be:*
 - a. *Age/grade appropriate.*
 - b. *Flexible enough to facilitate individual tribal traditions whenever possible.*
 - c. *Encouraging intergenerational interaction in a supportive way.*
 - d. *Providing a rich depth of experience with American Indian cultures, including age and culture appropriate ceremonies.*
3. *We believe that an educational center facility would be a valuable American Indian community resource. The facility should:*
 - a. *Be safe and suitable for youth, and facilitate educational achievement and cultural enrichment activities.*
 - b. *Provide a resource center which includes: a multimedia library, a computerized research and genealogy station dedicated to American Indian opportunities and services.*
 - c. *Serve as a resource for related community activities, and promote cooperation with other American Indian organizations in the area.*
4. *We wish to have a summer program which provides community service and cultural activity opportunities.*
 - a. *The annual SCIC Intertribal Gathering and Youth Powwow should be incorporated into the cultural enrichment programming of the center as a capstone event for students.*
 - b. *The center should provide summer cultural enrichment activities appropriate to the season; and offer opportunities that are not possible during the regular school year.*
 - c. *The center should provide summer academic support for those students who need remedial services, or wish to advance their academic achievement goals during that time.*
5. *We wish to have programs which complement or improve the educational experiences provided by the public school system. These programs should:*
 - a. *Create and offer coordinated programs with the public schools such as cultural demonstrations, directed activities, and guest speakers.*
 - b. *Acquire or develop American Indian educational resource materials for students, their parents, and the schools they attend; to insure that accurate information on tribal histories and cultures are available.*
 - c. *Support an educational advocacy service which constructively works with students, families, and educational agencies to resolve specific cultural and academic issues.*
 - d. *Provide a service referral program which directs American Indian students and families to other service agencies when necessary.*
 - e. *Promote student mentoring support so that role modeling is provided in a culturally sensitive and inspiring manner.*

Needs Assessment Survey

During the last two weeks of August, 2007, an American Indian Needs Assessment Survey was distributed to members of the American Indian community in Santa Cruz

County. The survey was designed to solicit community concerns related to the education of American Indian youth in this community, and their suggestions for how an AIEC could work most effectively with the public schools to address these concerns. The respondents represented a cross-section of socioeconomic and educational levels. When respondents were asked to prioritize those services which they felt an American Indian Educational Center should provide; the results were very consistent with those that emerged from the focus group session:

Table 5: Top Ten Needs Assessment AIEC Service Ranking, August 2007

Rank	Service	Mean Rating Score
1	Native Classroom Materials	4.2
2	Drug & Alcohol Prevention	5.2
3	Cultural Classes	5.9
4	Tutoring Services	7.1
5	Reading Assistance	9.1
6	Math Assistance	9.4
7	Drop Out Prevention	9.5
8	Native Language Instruction	9.7
9	Academic/Career Training	9.8
10	Teacher Training	10.1

These particular items reflect a combination of resources, academic support, cultural enrichment, social support, and community outreach services that are culturally responsive to the American Indian community.

In addition to the prioritization item on the survey, the open-ended items provided a rich and heartfelt set of concerns, goals, and suggestions which substantiated the service rankings provided in Table 5.

The respondents identified other organizations in this area that provide services to the American Indian community and in particular to youth. The list not only reflected their awareness of the existing service organizations, it clearly indicated that they believed the educational support and cultural enrichment needs of the county's American Indian youth are not presently being met in a comprehensive and culturally responsive way.

Community Service Inventory

The service area being assessed consists of all of Santa Cruz County, and the part of North Monterey County that is included in the Pajaro Valley School District. This area corresponds to the boundaries served by the Santa Cruz County Office of Education.

Within this service area there are a limited number of public service organizations who specifically serve American Indian students and families. The following programs specifically serve American Indian residents of Santa Cruz County:

Santa Cruz Indian Council: An Intertribal Non-profit organization; its history and purpose focus on promoting community development, youth advocacy, and cultural enrichment.

Four Directions Circle White Bison Group: White Bison is an organization that teaches American Indians that addicts must find sobriety from addictions to alcohol and other drugs and recover from the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol on individuals, families and whole communities, committing to a life of wellness and healing everyday.

Native TANF: A branch of Native TANF was opened in Santa Cruz County in 2006-07 and is still in the process of getting established. The Four Purposes of TANF are: to provide assistance to needy families; promote job preparation, work and marriage; prevent and reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and encourage the healthy formation and maintenance of two-parent families.” SCIC Board Members have met regularly with Native TANF staff; provided cultural support to the TANF center; and Tribal TANF staff and many of their clients have participated in SCIC sponsored events.

UCSC American Indian Resource Center: “The Mission of the [UCSC] American Indian Resource Center (AIRC) is to play a leadership role in creating and maintaining a positive climate for racial/ethnic diversity at the University.

Indian Canyon: Indian Canyon is a ceremonial and education center established by Coastanoan Ohlone Tribe members in Hollister, California. Although it is outside of the educational region, it serves Santa Cruz county community members on a regular basis, and provides educational and ceremonial opportunities for young and old alike.

Barrios Unidos: Barrios Unidos provides services to youth from several cultural communities in Santa Cruz County; however they are sensitive and responsive to American Indian families who utilize their services. The mission of Santa Cruz Barrios Unidos is to prevent and curtail violence amongst youth within Santa Cruz County by providing them with programs that focus on building positive self-esteem and cultural pride through meaningful activities, education and job training.

There are also numerous mainstream programs which offer indirect services that would benefit American Indian students and their families, were American Indian student advocacy services established. Most notably these are:

Santa Cruz County Office of Education and local School Districts

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID): The Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Program prepares underachieving, under-served students for eligibility and success in four-year colleges and universities.

California Regional Environmental Education Community (CREEC): The CREEC network is designed to enhance the environmental literacy of county students. It maintains an on-line directory supporting environment-based education, field trips, curriculum, classes, and workshops aligned with state standards.

Santa Cruz County Office of Education Mathematics Department: This program supports improving the instructional program for all students by providing professional development to teachers and school leadership founded in research-based models, and coaching teachers for student academic success.

The XL Readers Program: This program is a reading intervention program for students who are below grade level in reading. It provides students with the

skills they need to recognize letters, their sounds, and their patterns in words; it helps them read faster; and better understand what they are reading.

Migrant Education Region XI

This organization works with the Pajaro Valley Unified School District to advocate for the community of Migrant children, young adults, and families who reside within the Pajaro Valley Unified School District.

Santa Cruz County Services

The Health Services Agency (HSA): This agency exists to protect and improve the health of the people in Santa Cruz County. The agency provides programs in Environmental Health, Public Health, Medical Care, Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment, and Mental Health.

Human Resources Agency: This Agency serves children, youth, families and individuals who may be job seekers, veterans, disabled, medically uninsured, abused or neglected, vulnerable or frail, or in need of support.

Department of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services: This department is responsible for providing safe, well-designed and maintained parks; and a wide variety of recreational and cultural opportunities for Santa Cruz County's diverse community.

Assessment Summary

This comprehensive needs assessment review confirms that the specific academic and cultural needs of American Indian students and their families in Santa Cruz County are not presently being addressed in a comprehensive way, if at all. This is true in spite of the fact that there are many social and educational services available to the residents of Santa Cruz County. What is missing in this community is an agency specifically dedicated to integrating the long term academic, cultural, and social needs of this community's American Indian children and their families. As a result of the needs assessment activities that have been described, it is the SCIC's recommendation that the following specific needs be addressed:

- I. In light of the tribal diversity, the decentralized residential and educational distribution, and the cultural isolation of the American Indian community in Santa Cruz County the SCIC recommends: **Establishment of a centrally located American Indian Education Center dedicated to providing Santa Cruz County's youth with culturally responsive complimentary academic services and cultural enrichment programming.**
- II. As a result of the lack of accessible resources in the county specifically devoted to American Indian culture, in a hospitable setting, the SCIC recommends: **Establishment of an educational resource library and research center that specifically addresses the academic and cultural needs of American Indian youth and their families.**
- III. As a result of the present public educational system failure to identify many American Indian students and recognize their unique learning needs the SCIC recommends: **Development of academic support services which identify and assist American Indian students in a culturally sensitive way to excel in their academic pursuits.**

- IV. As a result of cultural isolation and difficulty in consistently interacting with traditional culture bearers, the SCIC recommends: **That opportunities be developed which enable American Indian youth in Santa Cruz County to learn and experience their living traditional American Indian values, culture, history, and ceremonies in an atmosphere of dignity and respect.**
- V. As a result of the general population's lack of awareness of the extent of the American Indian community, and the public's insensitivity to the American Indian community's desire to celebrate and perpetuate their cultural heritage, the SCIC recommends: **That programs be developed to advance the general community's awareness and sensitivity to the American Indian people who live in Santa Cruz County (particularly among Primary and Secondary Educational Institutions).**

Data Sources

- U.S. Census Bureau: American FactFinder
 - 2000 Census
 - 2004 Community Survey
 - 2005 Community Survey
- California Department of Education: DataQuest
- *The National Low Income Housing Coalition: "Out of Reach 2001: America's Growing Wage-Rent Disparity"*