

Sexual Violence Against American Indians & Alaska Natives

Maryland is home to three state-recognized Indigenous tribes: Piscataway Indian Nation; the Piscataway Conoy Tribe; and the Accohannock Indian Tribe. In 2020, American Indian and Native Alaskan individuals made up **0.5%** of Maryland's population.¹

American Indian and Alaska Native populations are **twice** as likely to experience rape or sexual assault, compared to all other races.² Despite the high rates of physical and sexual violence perpetrated against this community, there is a lack of awareness and action to protect these survivors. American Indians and Alaska Natives are very unlikely to report sexual violence because of limited resources and general mistrust in the police.³

Statistics

The indigenous population includes **6.8 million** people who make up hundreds of different communities.⁴

- **41%** of sexual assaults against American Indians are committed by a stranger, **34%** are committed by an acquaintance, and **25%** are committed by an intimate partner or family member.⁵
- **96%** of Native survivors experience the violence from non-native perpetrators.⁶
- On average, **5,900** sexual assaults per year are committed against American Indians ages 12 and older.⁷
- **4 out of 5** American Indian and Alaska Native women have experienced violence and **1 in 2** have experienced sexual violence.⁸
- Native American and Alaska Native women are more than **2.5x** more likely to be raped or sexually assaulted than other women in the U.S.⁹

Two-Spirit Individuals

Being two-spirit means having both the male and female spirit within the individual. In many tribes, being two-spirit is considered a third gender. In other tribes, being a two-spirit female is considered its own distinct gender.¹⁰

- **85%** of two-spirit women and **45%** of two-spirit men have been sexually assaulted, which is significantly greater than the general American Indian population.¹¹

Resources for Survivors

- StrongHearts Native Helpline: **1-844-7NATIVE (762-8483)**
- Native American Lifelines (Baltimore-based): **410-837-2258**
- The Tribal Resource Tool connects Native survivors with local services: <https://tribalresourcetool.org>

Additional Local Resources

- The Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs: <https://goci.maryland.gov/maryland-commission-on-indian-affairs>
- Baltimore American Indian Center: <https://baltimoreamericanindiancenter.org>
- The Piscataway Conoy tribe: <https://www.piscatawaytribe.org>

¹ "Maryland: 2020 Census." United States Census Bureau, <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/state-by-state/maryland-population-change-between-census-decade.html>

² Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, American Indians and Crime, 1992-2002 (2004).

³ "Barriers to Reporting in Indigenous Communities." *RAINN*, 1 Nov. 2019, www.rainn.org/news/barriers-reporting-indigenous-communities.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Amnesty International. (n.d.). Maze of Injustice. Retrieved December 9, 2019, from <https://www.amnestyusa.org/reports/maze-of-injustice/>.

⁷ Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, American Indians and Crime, 1992-2002 (2004).

⁸ "Ending Violence Against Native Women." *Ending Violence Against Native Women | Indian Law Resource Center*, indianlaw.org/issue/ending-violence-against-native-women.

⁹ "The Facts on Violence Against American Indian/Alaskan Native Women" Futures without Violence, <https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/userfiles/file/Violence%20Against%20AI%20AN%20Women%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>.

¹⁰ "Two Spirit: Health Resources." *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Health*, www.ihs.gov/lgbt/health/twospirit/.

¹¹ "Walking in Two Worlds: Supporting the Two Spirit and Native LGBTQ Community." *National Resource Center on Domestic Violence*, Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition, tribalinformationexchange.org/files/resources/twospiritbrochure.pdf.