In 1990, President George H.W. Bush designated November “National American Indian Heritage Month.” It is also referred to as American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage month. The month gives the general public the opportunity to learn more about the diverse cultures, traditions and histories of Native people.

The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) is an intertribal political organization that works to educate the public on Native culture, stimulate Native political activism and protect treaty rights. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) are other government organizations that work to better the lives of Indian Tribe and Alaska Natives.

DID YOU KNOW?

American Indians and Alaska Natives make up about 2 percent of the total population. The states with the highest populations are Alaska, Oklahoma, New Mexico, South Dakota and Montana (in descending order).

56.2 million acres are held in trust by the United States for Indian tribes and individuals. The largest reservation is the 16 million-acre Navajo Nation Reservation. Only three presidents have visited reservations in U.S. history, the most recent being Barrack Obama with the Standing Rock tribe in 2014.

84.4 percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives, twenty-five and older have at least a high school diploma or GED certificate. 39.7 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher in science and engineering, or science and engineering-related fields.

The Census also reported that 26.3 percent work in management, business, science and arts occupations, 25.6 percent in service occupations and 22.3 percent in sales and office occupations.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

There are more than 500 federally recognized American Indian or Alaska Native nations. Pew Research Center reports more citizens in the U.S. are identifying as American Indian, but a declining share specify a tribe.

Anthropologists and geographers have divided North America into 10 culture areas of Natives that share similar habits and characteristics.

Diversity Best Practices WOW! Fact One Pager provides questions for discussion and figures on the current status of Native Americans.

If you have any questions about Native American Heritage Month, please contact us HERE.