

## Native Americans

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Washington's labor force is changing, reflecting demographic shifts as well as changes in labor force participation.<sup>1</sup> Forecasts show that the state workforce will become increasingly more diverse because of the growing numbers of African, Asian, and other nonwhite Americans entering the labor force—considerably higher than the number of whites.<sup>2</sup>

### Report Highlights<sup>3</sup>

- Native Americans are less likely than whites to be in the labor force—that is, working or looking for work. However, Native Americans and whites who are in the labor force are equally likely to be working.
- Native Americans in urban areas are more likely than those in rural areas to be in the labor force; however, those in urban areas are less likely to be working.
- Younger Native Americans are more likely than their elders to be in the labor force, but less likely to be working. The same pattern holds for whites.
- Native Americans are as likely as whites to be working full time.
- In general, Native Americans earn much less than whites.

- Native Americans participate in workforce development programs in the same or greater proportion than their representation in the state's population. However, they are less likely than white participants to be working after leaving their programs.
- In general, Native Americans who participate in workforce development programs have median hourly wages similar to that of white participants, with the exception of those who participated in community and technical college (CTC) job preparatory programs, where wages are lower, and apprenticeships, where they are higher.

### Native Americans in Washington<sup>4</sup>

**Working-age Native Americans, 20-64 years old, represent 63 percent of our state's population of Native Americans,** only marginally less than the percentage of working-age whites (62 percent).

**Half of working-age Native Americans have some postsecondary education:** 17 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher; 17 percent have an associate's degree or a vocational certificate; 16 percent have some college, but no degree; and 50



percent have a high school diploma or less. The education levels of whites are substantially higher: 37 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher; 15 percent have an associate's degree or a vocational certificate; 19 percent have some college, but no degree; and 30 percent have a high school diploma or less.

**About 9 percent of working-age Native Americans are in school,** either full time (2 percent) or part time (7 percent). Eleven percent of whites are in school: seven percent full time and three percent part time.

**A smaller percentage of Native Americans (74 percent) than whites (81 percent) are in the labor force.** Of those in the labor force, however, 94 percent of both Native Americans and whites are working.

**Seventy-six percent of both Native Americans and whites with a high school diploma or less are in the labor force.** Of those in the labor force, a similar number of Native Americans and whites are working: 90 and 91 percent respectively.<sup>5</sup>

**Native Americans in urban areas are more likely to be in the labor force than those in rural areas:** 76 percent compared to 71 percent.<sup>6</sup> Contrast this with 82 percent of whites in urban areas in the labor force and 77 percent of whites in rural areas. However, Native Americans in urban areas are less likely to be working: 91 percent in urban areas and 97 percent in rural areas compared with a similar 94 percent of whites in urban and rural areas working.

**Younger Native Americans are more likely to be in the labor force than their elders:** 81 percent of those 20-34, 75 percent of those 35-49, 64 percent of those 50-64. Contrast this with the white population in the labor force: 86 percent of those 20-34, 85 percent of those 35-49, and 72 percent of those 50-64. Native Americans between the ages of 35-49 are also more likely to be working than those 20-34: 98 percent compared with 91 percent.<sup>7</sup> In comparison, a smaller percentage of 35-49 year old whites are working and a similar percentage of whites 20-34 are working: 94 and 91 percent respectively.

**If all working hours are combined, 86 percent of Native Americans and 84 percent of whites work full time** (35 hours or more per week).

**Just under 6 percent of Native Americans and 9 percent of whites hold more than one job.**

**Native Americans work mostly in the private sector:** 49 percent work for a private company, 32 percent work in the government sector, 11 percent work for a nonprofit organization, 4 percent work for a family business, and 3 percent are self-employed. The percentages are somewhat different for whites: 59 percent work for a private company, 21 percent work in the government sector, 11 percent are self-employed, 8 percent work for a nonprofit organization, and 2 percent work for the family business.

FIGURE 1

**Employment in Non-Government Sector: Ages 20-64,  
Not Enrolled in School**

*By Industry*

	NATIVE AMERICANS	WHITES
Services	53	46
Manufacturing	23	11
Construction & Mining	12	10
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting	6	2
Wholesale & Retail Trade	5	10
Transportation, Communication, Utilities	2	13
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	1	8

*By Occupation*

	NATIVE AMERICANS	WHITES
Construction, Maintenance, Production, Transportation	31	22
Business & Professional	29	35
Sales & Admin. Support	18	23
Service	18	12
Farming, Fishing, Forestry	3	1
Military-Specific	0	0
Management	0	7

The services industries are the largest employers of both Native Americans and whites: 53 percent and 46 percent respectively. See Figure 1.

The largest percentage of Native Americans work in construction, maintenance, production, and transportation occupations. Whites are most likely to be in business and professional occupations. See Figure 1.

In general, Native Americans earn less than whites. The median hourly wage for Native Americans in their primary job is \$15.38. For whites, it is \$19.23.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, on an hourly basis, Native Americans earn about 80 percent of what whites earn.

## Native Americans in Washington's Workforce Development Programs<sup>9</sup>

The percentage of Native Americans in workforce development programs is the same or greater than their percentage in the state's general population. Native Americans are most highly represented in Workforce Investment Act (WIA) adult and WIA youth programs. See Figure 2.<sup>10</sup>

With the exception of apprenticeship programs, Native Americans are less likely than whites to complete workforce development programs. See Figure 3.

FIGURE 2  
Native Americans in Workforce Development Programs

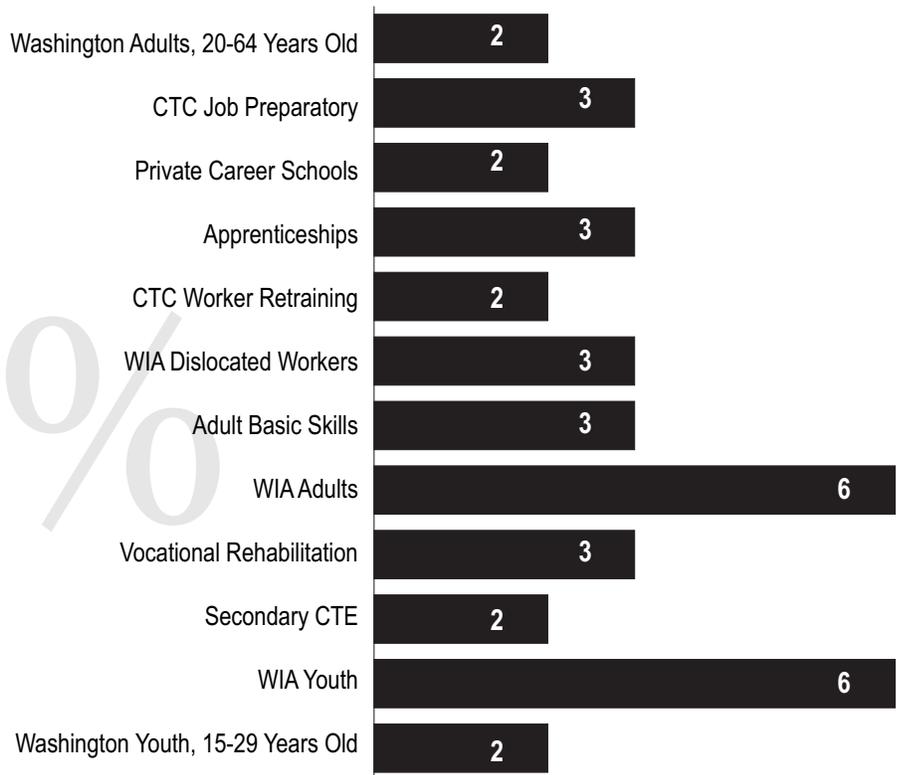


FIGURE 3  
Native Americans and Whites Completing Workforce Development Programs

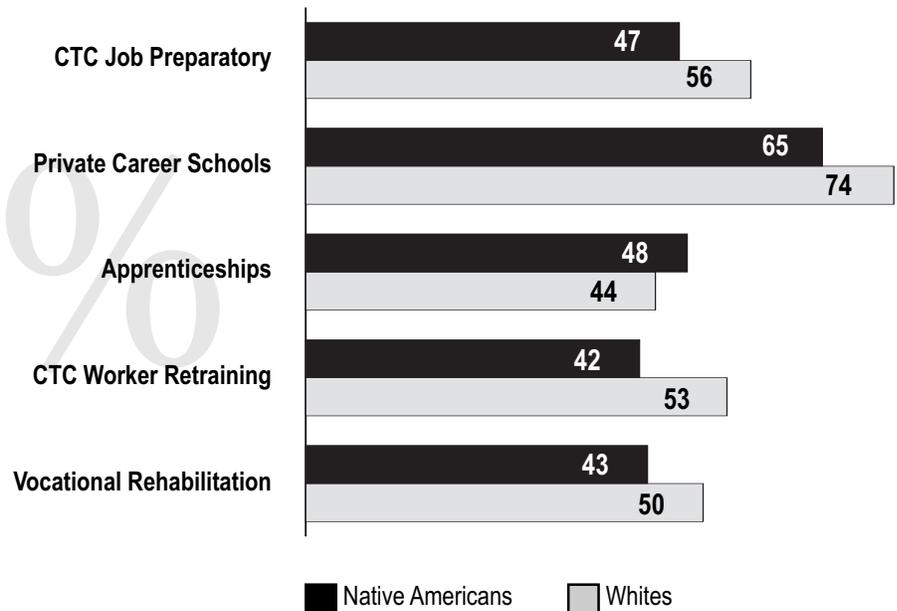


FIGURE 4

**Employment Rates of Native Americans and Whites After Workforce Development Programs**

*(employed during the third quarter after leaving the program)*

	NATIVE AMERICANS	WHITES
CTC Job Preparatory	65	72
Private Career Schools	56	65
Apprenticeships	70	73
CTC Worker Retraining	63	68
WIA Dislocated Workers	73	76
Adult Basic Skills	42	53
WIA Adults	50	68
Vocational Rehabilitation	43	45
Secondary CTE	52	60
WIA Youth	50	54

Native Americans are less, or as likely, to be working after leaving their programs as white participants from the same programs.<sup>11</sup> See Figure 4.

**With the exception of those who participate in CTC job preparatory and apprenticeship programs, Native Americans tend to have median hourly wages that are similar to those of whites.** For CTC job preparatory programs, the median hourly wage for Native Americans is lower than that of whites, while for apprenticeships, the median hourly wage for Native Americans is higher. See Figure 5.<sup>11</sup>

**With the exception of secondary CTE and WIA youth programs, Native Americans have lower median annual earnings than whites.** See Figure 5.<sup>12</sup>

**FIGURE 5**  
**Earnings of Native Americans and Whites After Workforce Development Programs**  
*(median based on the third quarter after leaving the program)*

*Hourly*

	NATIVE AMERICANS	WHITES
CTC Job Preparatory	10.98	12.66
Private Career Schools	11.29	11.83
Apprenticeships	25.28	21.19
CTC Worker Retraining	12.40	12.99
WIA Dislocated Workers	14.51	13.99
Adult Basic Skills	9.04	8.73
WIA Adults	10.30	10.45
Secondary CTE	8.22	8.28
WIA Youth	7.89	7.98

*Annually*

	NATIVE AMERICANS	WHITES
CTC Job Preparatory	17,056	21,700
Private Career Schools	15,532	19,560
Apprenticeships	30,963	32,154
CTC Worker Retraining	19,413	22,153
WIA Dislocated Workers	24,367	26,878
Adult Basic Skills	10,592	12,591
WIA Adults	16,544	17,140
Secondary CTE	11,822	10,264
WIA Youth	10,015	7,662

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup>In this paper, the term “labor force” refers to those who are currently working (either full time or part time) or who are actively looking for work. It is further defined as civilian noninstitutional and therefore excludes those who live in nursing homes, prison, or military barracks.

<sup>2</sup>“2004 Long-Term Economic and Labor Force Forecast for Washington,” Washington State Office of Financial Management and Washington State Employment Security Department, June 2004.

<sup>3</sup>In this paper, the racial group Native Americans includes all those who indicated they were of non-Hispanic ethnicity and of American Indian/Alaska Native racial background only. The comparisons in this report are made to individuals of white, non-Hispanic background.

<sup>4</sup>The information on Native Americans and white, non-Hispanics in Washington is based on data from the 2004 State Population Survey (SPS). Unless otherwise indicated, all of the employment and education information references a point in time—spring 2004. Further, the employment and earnings data are based on those who are ages 20-64 and who indicated they were not in school at the time of the survey.

<sup>5</sup>The sample sizes for Native Americans at higher education levels—some college, no degree; associate degree or vocational certificate; and bachelor’s degree or higher—are too small on which to base reliable estimates.

<sup>6</sup>Urban and rural areas are defined using the SPS regions. Urban areas include the following regions: King County, Other Puget Metro, Clark County, and Spokane County. Rural areas include the following regions: North Sound, West Balance, Yakima-Tri Cities, and East Balance.

<sup>7</sup>The sample size of Native Americans in the labor force ages 50-64 is too small on which to base a reliable estimate.

<sup>8</sup>The sample sizes for Native Americans by occupation, industry, education level, and age categories are too small on which to base reliable wage estimates.

<sup>9</sup>Based on participants exiting programs between July 1, 2001 and June 30, 2002. For data sources, methodology, and program descriptions see *Workforce Training Results 2004* from the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. We caution against making comparisons among the programs or with the state’s population-at-large: the populations served, the types of services provided, and lengths of training vary substantially from program to program.

<sup>10</sup>Information on the state’s population is based on the state’s Office of Financial Management’s 2004 population estimates.

<sup>11</sup>The number of working participants from vocational rehabilitation programs with wage information is too small on which to base reliable earnings estimates.

<sup>12</sup>The number of working participants from vocational rehabilitation programs with wage information is too small on which to base reliable earnings estimates.

## **Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board**

### **Our Vision**

Washington's Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board is an active and effective partnership of labor, business, and government leaders guiding the best workforce development system in the world.

### **Our Mission**

We shape strategies to create and sustain a high-skill, high-wage economy.

To fulfill this Mission, the Board will:

- Advise the Governor, Legislature, and other policymakers on workforce development policy and innovative practice.
- Promote a seamless workforce development system that anticipates and meets the lifelong learning and employment needs of our current and future workforce.
- Advocate for the training and education needed for success in the 75–80 percent of jobs that do not require a baccalaureate degree.
- Ensure quality and accountability by evaluating results, and supporting high standards and continuous improvement.

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*Secretary, State Department of  
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**Vacant**  
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*Executive Director*

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