



DECOLONIZING DATA



Urban Indian
Health Institute

A Division of the Seattle Indian Health Board

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES HAVE ALWAYS BEEN DATA STEWARDS.

We gathered, analyzed, and shared data to ensure the well-being of our people. These data practices were grounded in cultural values, including reciprocity, relationship, responsibility, and accountability. Our culturally-based methodologies sustained thriving communities for thousands of years until interrupted by colonialism.

HARMFUL COLONIAL PRACTICES ARE EMBEDDED IN WESTERN DATA SYSTEMS.

Data is often gathered to show how badly off Native people are, perpetuating a deficit narrative that is widespread. Western research practices have routinely misidentified or undercounted us, making us invisible in the data UIHI defines this as data genocide. These data issues have allowed the U.S. federal government to avoid fulfilling treaty obligations, which include providing adequate healthcare.

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WITHOUT ACCURATE DATA, OUR COMMUNITIES HAVE STRUGGLED TO APPROPRIATELY REPRESENT OUR STRENGTHS

and colonially created disparities in addition to limiting access to resources. Decades of systemic oppression and exclusion have also led many tribal communities and members to avoid participating in data collection.

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DECOLONIZING DATA:

- 1) Reclaiming the Indigenous value of data collection, analysis, and research.
- 2) Data for Native people, by Native people.
- 3) Recognizes the inherent strength of Indigenous people.

Review our Urban Indian Dictionary to learn more.

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NATIVE MOVEMENTS HAVE LONG CALLED FOR ACCURATE AND FAIR REPRESENTATION.

Now we are demanding **Indigenous Data Sovereignty**—the right of Indigenous Peoples and nations to govern data about their peoples, lands, and resources (Carroll SR, Rodriguez-Lonebear D, Akee R, Lucchesi A, Richards JR. *Indigenous Data in the Covid-19 Pandemic: Straddling Erasure, Terrorism, and Sovereignty*. Published June 11, 2020.)



WE ARE THE ORIGINAL SCIENTISTS OF THIS LAND AND WE ARE RECLAIMING OUR DATA PRACTICES.

- ▶ **If you are a Native data collector, turn to page 8** for culturally based principles to facilitate data sovereignty.
- ▶ **If you are non-Native, flip to page 12!** We have a section just for you.

168

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901803

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152

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1768

**ARE THEY
GONE YET?**

Now that it's just us NDNs, let's begin.

344

12

184

**NO?
WE'LL WAIT.**

**IF YOU'RE
NDN AF**

591

428

322

2530

OKAY.

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**THESE ARE THE PRINCIPLES
OF DECOLONIZING DATA, AS
DEFINED BY UIHI, AND SPECIFIC
TO AMERICAN INDIANS AND
ALASKA NATIVES:**

We have a legal right to data governance through treaty and trust responsibility.

We are accountable to past, present, and future generations.

We are restoring cultural and spiritual practices that include belief systems that are contrary to western religious practices. This includes but is not limited to spiritual connections to land and animals that inform data practices, beliefs in ancestors guiding data, and other cultural practices that vary by tribe and region.

We have a responsibility to sustain and build forward tribal strength and vitality.

Tribal affiliation and/or tribal enrollment data collection is specific to criteria outlined by each unique tribal nation.



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FOR OUR ALLIES, AKA THE DECOLONIZING DATA HOMIES

While colonial institutions cannot be decolonized, non-Indigenous organizations and people can work to achieve data equity and justice.

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**IN THE CONTEXT OF
DECOLONIZING DATA, OUR VISION
FOR THE FUTURE OF ALL NATIVE
DATA METHODOLOGIES INCLUDES:**

Acknowledgement of harmful data practices coupled with healing, restoration, and reparations.

Strengths-based data collection, analysis, and dissemination.

Protective community and cultural factors measured and weighted against disparities and gaps.

Community governance every step of the way (collection, analysis, dissemination).

Accurate data reporting of race and ethnicity.

Embedded accountability of entities for collection of race and ethnicity.

Disaggregation of data by race, ethnicity, and multiple races.

Undoing STEM education disparities.

Exploring and refining small populations methodologies.

Acknowledging community knowledge and investing in data capacity as informed by the community.

Warrants Outstanding Contingent Fund

Month	Description	Amount	Balance
April	1 Warrants Paid	119	51,837.50
	3001 So. Balance Permitted		9,697.74
May	31-07 Warrants Outstanding	372	52,210.24
	31-07 Warrants Outstanding	8,603.29	60,813.53
	Warrants Paid	129	59,684.24
June	30-07 Warrants Outstanding		59,684.24
July	31-07 Warrants Outstanding		59,684.24
Aug	31-07 Warrants Outstanding	41,383.75	101,068.00
Sept	30-07 Warrants Outstanding	41,383.75	142,451.75
	Warrants Outstanding	51,231.33	193,683.08

BEFORE YOU GO...

Check out our Best Practices for American Indian and Alaska Native Data Collection guide at UIHI.org.

Authors: Magee, J., Gurule, S., Echo-Hawk, A.
Urban Indian Health Institute, Seattle Indian
Health Board (2023).

Artwork by John Isaiah Pepion (Blackfeet)



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