



Suicide in American Indian and Alaska Native Communities

In 2022, non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) people had the highest suicide rates in Washington among all ethnic and racial groups: 22.0 deaths by suicide per 100,000 people.

In 2022, deaths by suicide in Washington numbered:

- 21 among AI/AN people (a 23% increase from 2010)
- 1,234 among all racial and ethnic groups (a 30% increase from 2010)

Suicide rates in Washington are higher than rates in the U.S. as a whole.

- In 2022, there were 14.7 deaths per 100,000 people in Washington, compared to 14.3 deaths per 100,000 people in the U.S.

In both Washington and the U.S., AI/AN people have the [highest suicide rates](#) among all racial and ethnic groups.



Rates

AI/AN communities have higher suicide rates than any other racial or ethnic group.



Support

Crisis support that centers cultural healing practices can reduce suicide rates.



Prevention

Suicide is preventable. Dial 988, option 4, to reach the Native and Strong Lifeline.

Who's most at risk?

From 2018-2022, Suicide was the fourth leading cause of death for AI/AN people of all ages and the third leading cause for youth ages 10 to 24.

Rates are highest for AI/AN adults ages 25 to 34 (42.4 per 100,000) and 35 to 44 (43.1 per 100,000). From 2018 to 2022, 84 AI/AN men died by suicide, compared to 33 AI/AN women.

Other risk factors include:

- A history of mental health concerns (40%)
- Previous thoughts of suicide or suicide plans (29%)
- Problems with a current or former intimate partner (28%)
- Depression at the time of the injury (21%)
- Substance use (21%)
- At least one previous suicide attempt (17%)

Methods

Between 2018 and 2022, a firearm was the most common suicide method among Washington residents (50.6%).

- Among AI/AN men, the most common methods are hanging, strangling, or suffocation (35.7%) and firearms (41.7%).
- Among AI/AN women, the most common method is suffocation (45.5%).

Across AI/AN communities, suffocation was the most common suicide method (38.5%).

Lowering Suicide Rates

Factors that [help protect against suicide](#) include:

- A sense of cultural belonging
- Tribal, spiritual, and family ties
- Awareness of mental health concerns
- Awareness of suicide warning signs and how to seek help
- [Increased training in crisis response](#)
- A chance to discuss problems with friends and family

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email civil.rights@doh.wa.gov.



Native and Strong

If you or someone you know has thoughts of suicide, free and confidential support is available.

Using a phone with a Washington area code, dial 988 and choose option 4 to reach the [Native and Strong Lifeline](#). These calls are answered by Native counselors trained in crisis interventions that center traditional and cultural healing.



Contact Name

Gerry Rainingbird

Suicide Prevention

Washington State Department of Health

Gerry.rainingbird@doh.wa.gov

360-831-2511