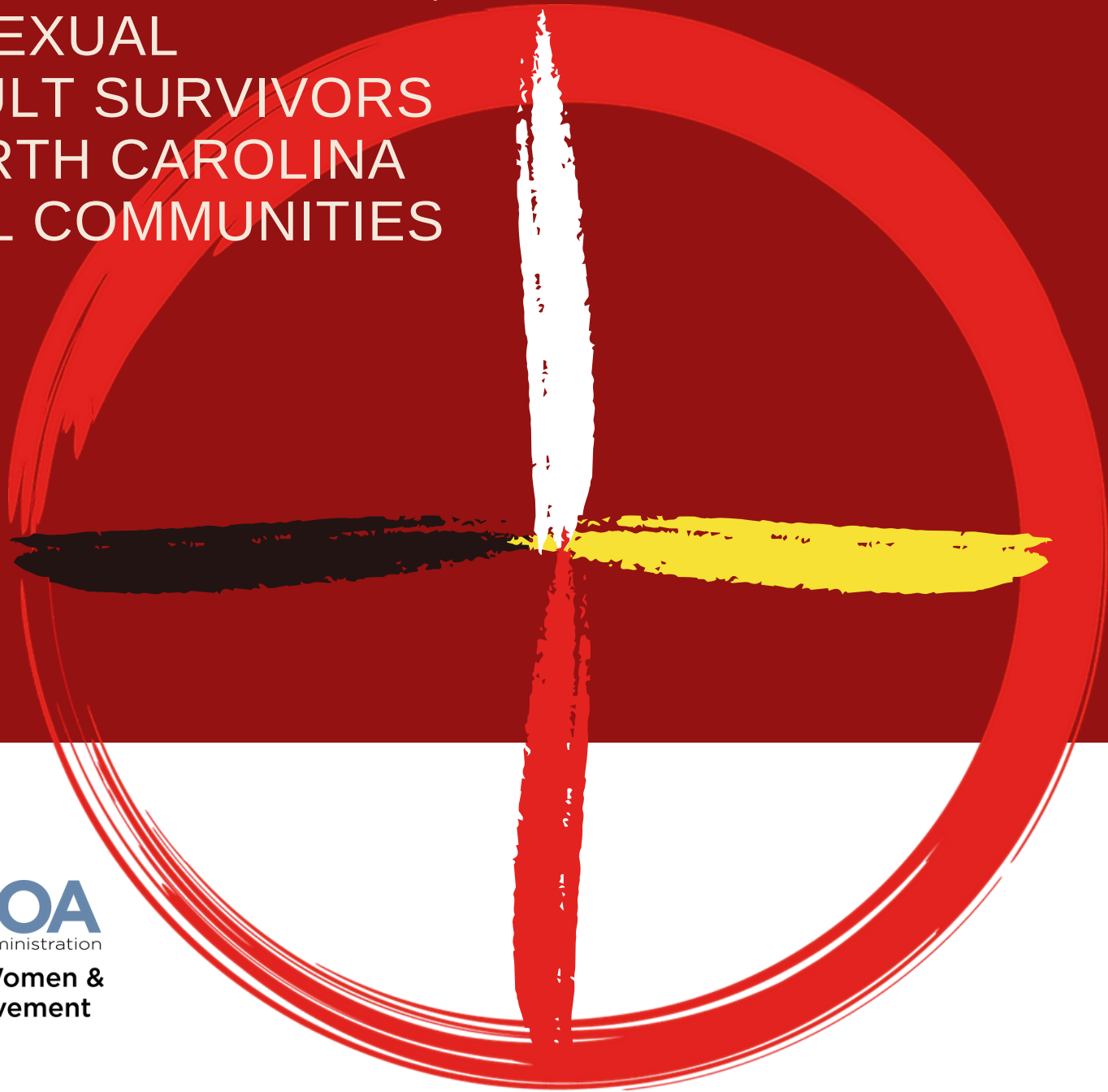


PROVIDING
SERVICES TO HUMAN
TRAFFICKING,
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE,
AND SEXUAL
ASSAULT SURVIVORS
IN NORTH CAROLINA
TRIBAL COMMUNITIES



NC DOA
Department of Administration
**Council for Women &
Youth Involvement**



North Carolina
Commission of
Indian Affairs

Executive Summary

The North Carolina Department of Administration's Council for Women and Youth Involvement (CFWYI) collects demographic and service provision information from domestic violence (DV) and sexual assault (SA) agencies throughout the state including services provided to those experiencing human trafficking (HT). This report examines services provided to American Indians across the state within the last 10 fiscal years, while taking a closer look at percentages of American Indian clients served in selected North Carolina counties within the last five fiscal years. Findings indicate that services provided to American Indians vary greatly by county and are not always correlated with the county population of American Indians. Qualitative interviews were conducted with selected agencies to explore why certain patterns exist in the data. These interviews illustrate some misconceptions surrounding the needs of American Indian clients and access to resources for American Indian survivors of DV and SA. The report also explores the need for culturally specific outreach to American Indian communities.

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Introduction

American Indians are known to experience higher rates of violence in comparison with other racial and ethnic groups (Rosay, 2016; Bachman, et al., 2008). We hypothesize that American Indians are experiencing high rates of human trafficking (HT) as well, although there is no data that details the prevalence of this issue within Native communities. To gain a better understanding of rates of victimization in North Carolina's tribal communities, this report examines demographic and service provision data collected by the NC Council for Women and Youth Involvement (CFWYI) from domestic violence (DV) and sexual assault (SA) agencies across North Carolina that receive CFWYI funding. In addition, this report examines the overall number of clients who received services from a SA agency due to HT, although this information does not include specifics about the demographics of these clients. Reporting data from these agencies is helpful to look at due to the intersections between HT, DV, and SA, as well as an increased vulnerability to HT among individuals who have experienced other forms of violence. We use this data to determine if, at a county-level, American Indians are considered adequately served, underserved, or unserved by these victim service agencies. Service provision across the state and in several counties demonstrates that this population is often underserved, although there is variance among different counties that is a reminder of the importance of community-specific approaches to improve North Carolina's response to survivors of HT and other forms of violence. Qualitative interviews were conducted with service agencies in selected counties to examine why service provision can vary so greatly between counties. These interviews illustrate some misconceptions surrounding the needs of American Indian clients and access to resources for American Indian survivors of DV, SA, and HT. Also, these interviews highlight the need for culturally specific outreach and service provision for American Indians. Several recommendations are made to both DV and SA service providers, as well as state government agencies working in tribal communities or with survivors of HT, DV or SA.

The CFWYI, an advocacy agency under the North Carolina Department of Administration (DOA), advises the Governor, the state legislature, and other state agencies on issues impacting women, youth, and their families in North Carolina. In partnership with DOA's Commission of Indian Affairs, CFWYI is developing strategies to strengthen the response and increase services and education to HT survivors in Native communities. Commission of Indian Affairs seeks to improve and expand services and outreach to victims of DV, SA, and HT, while providing insight on the intersections between these forms of violence. Commission of Indian Affairs accomplishes this through outreach in tribal communities and by connecting Native survivors of violence to additional resources in the wider community, including the local DV and SA agencies that provide many of the resources that Commission of Indian Affairs advocates do not, such as shelter or counseling. Although many service agencies believe that American Indians can access support through their tribal communities, most tribes in North Carolina do not have a tribal DV or SA agency, except for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, which is the only tribe in North Carolina to receive funding for such services as a federally recognized tribe.

Human Trafficking and Missing and Murdered Indigenous People Crisis

Studies in the United States have recognized that American Indians are vulnerable to HT, both sex and labor trafficking (U.S. Office of Trafficking in Person, 2021; Farley et. al., 2016; Pierce, 2012). Throughout this report, we will refer to individuals experiencing HT as victims because they were recognized as experiencing trafficking by a victim service agency who is providing them with assistance.

Studies indicate that HT contributes to the disappearance and murder of Indigenous women (Bachman, et al., 2008). There is little data available concerning the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous people due to gaps in data collection largely caused by complicated jurisdictional boundaries and failure to honor tribal sovereignty (National Institute of Justice, 2008). Recent federal legislation such as the Not Invisible Act and Savanna's Act may enhance law enforcement coordination efforts and improve data-collection efforts related to this missing-persons crisis (Not Invisible Act of 2019, 2020) (Savanna's Act, 2020). While little data exists, a national study found that in some counties Indigenous women are reported to have been murdered at a rate 10 times higher than the national average (Bachman, et al., 2008). In North Carolina, this high rate has been demonstrated specifically in Bladen, Graham and Harnett counties (National Congress of American Indians, 2021). The connection between missing and murdered Indigenous people and HT is difficult to demonstrate because of the gaps in data collection. American Indians are sometimes misidentified as another race or ethnicity in data collection, further obscuring how American Indians are represented in studies of crime (Lucchesi & Echo-Hawk, 2018). One study looking at cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women throughout the United States showed a number of these cases were also connected to HT, DV, or SA (Lucchesi & Echo-Hawk, 2018).

Intersectionality between Human Trafficking, Domestic Violence, and Sexual Violence

Human Trafficking, Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault are interrelated. First, the same dynamics of power and control that are used in DV and SA situations are often used in HT. For example, traffickers may use or threaten to use physical or sexual violence as well as emotional manipulation and isolation to keep the victim in the trafficking situation (Malangone & Crank, 2015). Similarly, intimidation, coercion, threats, emotional abuse, and isolation are often used in addition to physical or sexual violence by perpetrators of DV (Polaris). Therefore, HT victims have many of the same needs as DV and SA victims, and many of the same victim services are provided to survivors of HT, DV, and SA. HT survivors may also have been victims of DV and/or SA, such as being trafficked by an intimate partner or family member or being assaulted by the trafficker or a sex-buyer.

Additionally, individuals who have experienced DV or SA are often more vulnerable to being trafficked, thus heightening the intersection between these issues. Histories of trauma, such as

DV, SA, child abuse, or other adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), leave survivors psychologically vulnerable to trafficking (Reid et al., 2017). ACEs can include obvious traumatic experiences such as DV and SA (ACE Response) but also include community-level traumas such as neighborhood violence, racism, and intergenerational trauma (Cronholm et al., 2015). One study found that in a group of women and adolescent girls who had been trafficked, over half (59%) said they experienced physical or sexual violence before being trafficked, and nearly all (95%) experienced physical or sexual violence while in their trafficking situation (Zimmerman et al., 2008).

The figure below details various abuses and circumstances that contribute to trafficking vulnerabilities. The chart is not comprehensive but provides a broader perspective of intersectionality of HT with other issues that are likely to require victim services including counseling, safety planning, housing, and more. These vulnerabilities are applicable to both sex and labor trafficking. There may well be multiple traumas to address that require a variety of services from multiple providers.

Figure 1. Intersections of Human Trafficking with Vulnerabilities and Potential Concurrent Situations of Abuse Requiring Overlapping Services



Finally, many trafficking victims seek assistance and support through DV and SA agencies rather than trafficking agencies. This may be because some trafficking victims do not recognize that they are being trafficked but do recognize that DV or SA is playing a part in their situation. They

may also be more familiar with the DV and SA services in their community than with the HT services, and because the DV and SA agencies that CFWYI funds must have 24-hour crisis hotlines these agencies may be more accessible when trafficking victims need support.

Since the data on American Indian trafficking victims are limited, this report relies on numbers provided by DV and SA agencies to indicate how the American Indian community is being served for gender-based crimes more broadly, including HT. Although the DV and SA statistics cannot be presumed to be equal to possible instances of trafficking in these counties, instances of trafficking may be higher in areas where more clients are served for DV and SA due to the factors listed above.

Violence in Tribal Communities Across the Nation

While little data is available about cases of HT, specifically of American Indians, there is more information about violence, particularly DV and SA, experienced by this population. A national survey determined that 49% of American Indian and Alaska Native women and nearly 20% of American Indian and Alaska Native men need services due to their experience of violence (Rosay, 2016). Native women are almost three times more likely than any other racial group in the United States to experience violent crimes and at least twice as likely to experience rape or SA with approximately 84% experiencing sexual violence in their lifetime (Rosay, 2016).

There are many factors that contribute to the rate of violence against American Indian women in the United States including the high rates of poverty in American Indian communities that exceed any other racial groups in the country, and poverty has been associated with higher rates of DV (Raphael, 2003). Based on 2018 U.S. Census Bureau data, 25.4% of American Indians experience poverty, which is the highest rate of any community (National Community Reinvestment Coalition). Another contributing factor to the high rates of violence against American Indian women is the colonial influences on today's institutions and systems that contribute to the marginalization of Native communities (Lucchesi & Echo-Hawk, 2018). This is illustrated in the Indian boarding school system created with federal support that perpetuated mental, physical, and sexual abuse over multiple generations of American Indian children (U.S. Department of the Interior, 2022).

The rate of violence that American Indians experience is high, but it is also underreported. Other communities of color, such as Black/African Americans, face barriers to reporting due to racist stereotypes influenced by sociohistorical context (Tillman etc., 2010) similar to those faced by American Indians (Lucchesi & Echo-Hawk, 2018). This furthers distrust of law enforcement and government institutions, creating a perception that reporting to law enforcement will not lead to meaningful assistance (Lichtenstein & Johnson, 2009). Limited understanding of other cultures and racism also contributes to service providers being more susceptible to biases and prejudices against ethnic minorities that affect assessment, treatment, and service provision (Sue, 2001). Many Native communities are in rural areas,

which often struggle with accessibility issues related to transportation and internet access. There is also a stigma associated with reporting domestic or sexual violence (Tillman etc., 2010).

Violence in North Carolina Tribal Communities

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there are over 120,272 people in North Carolina who report American Indian or Alaska Native as their only race, equivalent to 1.2% of the state's population (2022). Many American Indians identify as more than one race. North Carolina is home to an estimated 208,642 individuals who identify as American Indian and Alaska Native alone or in combination with other races, totaling 2% of the total population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). Nationally, 55.5% of American Indian and Alaska Native women who have experienced sexual violence report that the violence was committed by an intimate partner (Rosay, 2016). Due to the high rates of domestic and sexual violence among American Indians, CFWYI—a state agency division that funds DV and SA agencies throughout North Carolina—is assessing how state-funded DV and SA agencies have served American Indians over time.

This report examines the percentage of American Indian clients served by DV and SA agencies in North Carolina over time and on a county-level basis to assess whether American Indians are being underserved or adequately served. For the purposes of this report, underserved is defined as the percentage of American Indian clients receiving DV or SA services being lower than the percentage of the American Indian population. Adequately served in this context means that the percentage of American Indians receiving DV or SA services is at least as high as the American Indian population percentage. We are unable to define exactly how many more experience DV or SA when compared to other races and ethnicities, especially within a specific location. Therefore, adequately served as defined in this report may still not account for the increased interpersonal violence American Indians are known to experience. This report also refers to American Indians being unserved by DV or SA agencies in counties that have not reported serving any American Indian clients in any of the years analyzed.

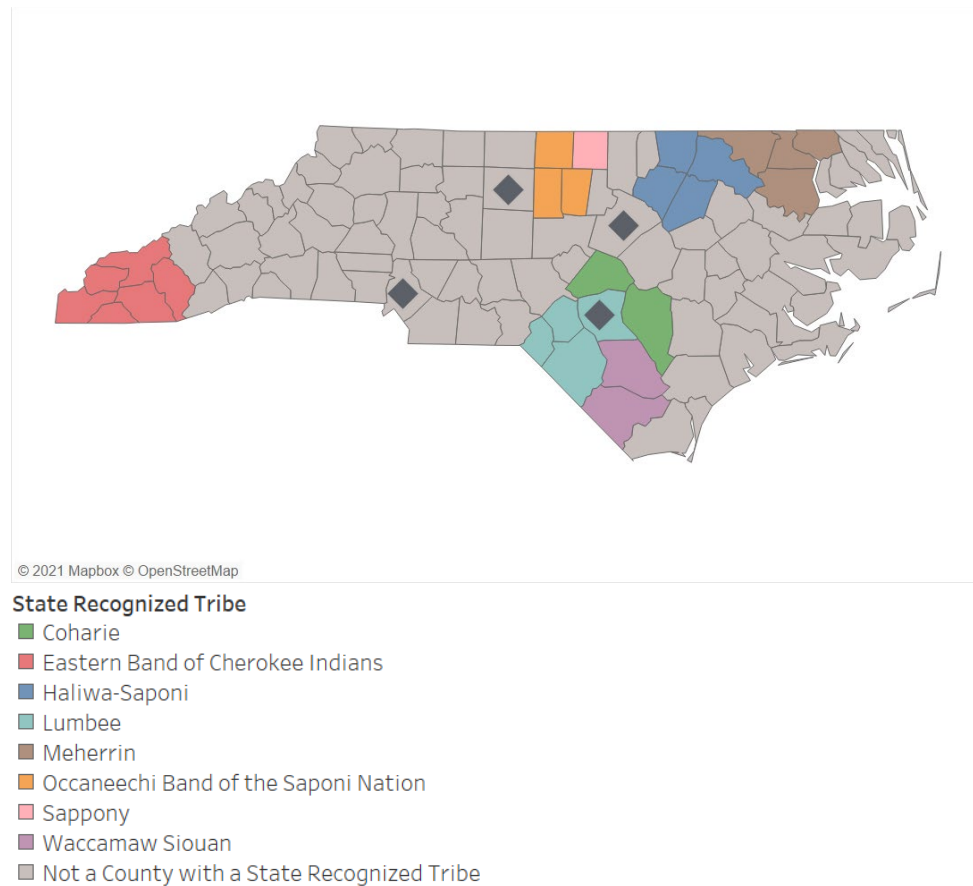
Although the information provided by DV and SA agencies is limited, it offers a standard for comparison and an evaluation tool for exploration of locations that are most in need of increased efforts to identify and serve American Indian clients. While North Carolina has a sizable population of American Indians, American Indian communities are not evenly distributed throughout the geography of the state and there are significant county-level demographic differences. CFWYI funds one DV and one SA agency in almost every county, providing enough county-level data to discuss service provision patterns in the majority of the state. Although American Indians make up 1.2% of North Carolina's population in terms of those reporting American Indian as their only race (US Census Bureau, 2020), American Indians have not consistently received DV and SA services at the same as or a higher percentage than the population on a statewide level according to the data tracked by CFWYI.

This research also seeks to understand *why* American Indians are served at the levels they are in counties across North Carolina. Information is presented that was collected from interviews with agencies in some of the counties that show unusual patterns of services to American Indian clients to better understand underlying reasons for these trends and to determine how services provided to American Indian clients may be improved around the state.

North Carolina’s Urban Indian Organizations and State Recognized Tribes

North Carolina is home to eight state-recognized American Indian tribes: the Coharie, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Haliwa Saponi, Lumbee, Meherrin, Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation, the Sappony, and Waccamaw Siouan. There are also four urban Indian organizations, which are marked with a black diamond in the map below. Urban Indian organizations are cultural centers for Natives in urban areas that also have statutory seats on the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs. Some urban Indian organizations provide childcare, job training, and other community resources.

Figure 2. Map of Urban Indian Organizations and State Recognized Indian Tribes in NC



The Coharie Tribe is concentrated in Harnett and Sampson counties. The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, a fully federally recognized tribe, has a reservation in the Qualla Boundary;

much of this land is between Swain and Jackson counties. Significant numbers of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians may also reside in Cherokee, Clay, Graham, and Macon counties. The Haliwa-Saponi live largely in Halifax and Warren counties but also extend into Nash and Franklin counties. The Lumbee Tribe, which is partially recognized at the federal level but does not receive any funding to provide tribal services, lives primarily in Cumberland, Hoke, Robeson, and Scotland counties. The Meherrin live largely in Bertie, Gates, Hertford, and Northampton counties. Members of the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation are primarily in Alamance, Caswell, and Orange counties. The Sappony are located along the North Carolina-Virginia border in counties such as Person. The Waccamaw Siouan Tribe is concentrated in Columbus and Bladen counties. The four urban Indian organizations are in Cumberland, Mecklenburg, Guilford, and Wake counties (North Carolina Department of Administration, Tribal Communities and Map of NC Tribal Communities).

Methodology

The CFWYI administers grant funding to DV and SA agencies. A condition of this grant funding is that grant recipients submit semi-annual statistical reports on services provided and client demographics such as race, gender, and age, which are reported in aggregate from all counties served. CFWYI currently tracks the total number of American Indians served by DV and SA agencies as well as total HT victims served by SA agencies but does not collect demographic data on the HT victims served; therefore, it is not known how many of the HT victims served identify as American Indian. These reports are compiled into annual reports based on the state fiscal year, which runs July through June of the following year, and are posted on the [NC DOA's website](#). Fiscal years will be reported as two hyphenated years to indicate July of one year through June of the following year (e.g., fiscal year 2019-2020, or FY 19-20). The agencies submitting statistical reports to CFWYI vary over time, as new agencies have come into existence and others have not been renewed for funding over time.

A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was used to address whether American Indian survivors of DV and SA are an adequately served or an underserved population in counties across North Carolina, why this is, and how services can be improved. To answer the first question—whether American Indian survivors of DV and SA are adequately served or underserved—statistical data from CFWYI was analyzed. To answer the latter question—why American Indians are adequately served or underserved and how services can be improved—email and virtual interviews with selected DV and SA agencies were conducted.

Sexual Assault agencies began reporting services provided to HT survivors in FY 16-17. This was originally requested as a write-in response, but some agencies did not respond. In FY 19-20, HT was added to SA agency reporting forms as an option to the question about the type of assault the client experienced. This question is not yet asked of DV agencies. In counties that have standalone HT service agencies nearby, law enforcement and other service providers may refer

HT victims they encounter to these agencies instead of the SA agencies that provide reports to CFWYI.

Sexual Assault agencies typically cannot serve the needs of labor trafficking victims unless the victim also experienced sexual assault. Therefore, although the distinction between labor and sex trafficking is not formally captured in data collection, there is reasonable certainty that most HT cases reported by SA agencies are related to sex trafficking. Although labor trafficking may not be represented in this data, we recognize that this form of human trafficking is present in North Carolina, affecting American Indians and further development of data collection methods is needed. These data collection limitations indicate that HT, as reported by SA agencies, is not an accurate reflection of the prevalence of HT in North Carolina or individual counties.

Both DV and SA agencies receiving funding from CFWYI are asked to report demographic information on the clients they serve including information on race and ethnicity. The statewide portions of this report focus on data related to the percentage race/ethnicity of clients based on the total number of clients between fiscal years 2012-2013 and 2021-2022. The county-specific sections of this report focus on the percentage of American Indian clients served between fiscal years 2017-2018 and 2021-2022. The timeframe is shorter in the county-specific observations so that interested parties can have a better view of recent data trends. When reporting race/ethnicity, agencies selected from the following options: American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African American, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, white, two or more races, some other race, or unknown. The analyses included in this report did not include clients who were identified as two or more races or some other race. The options Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander and two or more races were added in FY 19-20 to better align with the U.S. Census. Asian and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander were combined and categorized as Asian/Pacific Islander for this report.

Unless otherwise specified, all mentions of American Indians in this report also account for Alaska Natives, which reflects the U.S. Census Bureau and the CFWYI reporting forms that group these two Indigenous populations together. For the purpose of this report, “American Indian only” refers to population data about the percentage of individuals who reported American Indian as their only race to the U.S. Census Bureau as part of the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates (2016-2020). References to “American Indian total” are to those individuals who identified as American Indian in addition to another race as reported to the ACS. When discussing the percentage of American Indian clients served by a DV or SA agency, this data only includes clients who were solely identified as American Indian. This is because DV and SA agencies are only able to report one race for each client or select “two or more races” without specifying which ones. Therefore, a more direct comparison can be made between percentage of American Indian DV and SA clients served and the “American Indian only” population percentage. Since many American Indians identify as more than one race, this report includes population percentages for “American Indian total” to provide more context

about a county's American Indian population. Unless otherwise specified, descriptions of a county's American Indian population estimate by count or by percentage refer to "American Indian total."

In fiscal year 2015-2016, CFWYI changed the frequency in which agencies compile the number of clients they serve from every month to every six months, reports were still submitted on a six-month, semi-annual basis. This reporting change alleviates duplication in counting clients who received services in more than one month. However, this change also makes direct comparisons between data gathered between fiscal years 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 to fiscal years 2015-2016 and onward of limited value. The decreased likelihood of duplication in reporting means American Indians are now being counted more accurately, making it easier to find counties with underserved populations. In fiscal year 2020-2021, clients who received services by phone or online are accounted for in the total number of clients served in addition to those receiving services in person. Previously, only those receiving services in person were recorded. Because the COVID-19 pandemic greatly increased the number of clients receiving services remotely, this reporting change provides a more comprehensive overview of those receiving services.

Most counties have both a DV and SA agency; some have separate agencies and others have a dual agency that provides both DV and SA services. An exception to this is Forsyth County, which has one agency that provides both DV and SA services and a second agency that provides only DV services. Several agencies serve multiple counties and submit reports for each county they serve. This report focuses on the county where services were received, as opposed to analyzing services received from individual agencies. For example, the data on DV from both agencies in Forsyth County were combined to create county-wide data for the purposes of this report, while the data on SA services from one agency was analyzed separately.

This report seeks to determine whether DV and SA agencies are underserving the American Indian population in their county. This is determined by comparing the percentages of clients served who were identified as American Indian to the percentage of American Indians in the county population according to the ACS 5-Year Estimates (2016-2020) produced by the U.S. Census Bureau. If the "American Indian only" percentage is higher than the percentage of clients identified as American Indian, it is determined that the DV or SA agency is understanding the American Indian population in their county. If the DV or SA agency are not serving any American Indian clients, American Indians are considered an unserved population. If the percentage of clients who were identified as American Indian are equal or greater than the "American Indian only" percentage for a given county, then the American Indian population is adequately served for the purpose of this report.

Fifteen counties are highlighted in this report. These counties were chosen because they meet at least one of the following criteria: (1) a state-recognized urban Indian organization operates in that county; (2) a Commission of Indian Affairs advocate is based in that county; (3) the county borders a county where a Commission of Indian Affairs advocate is located; and/or (4)

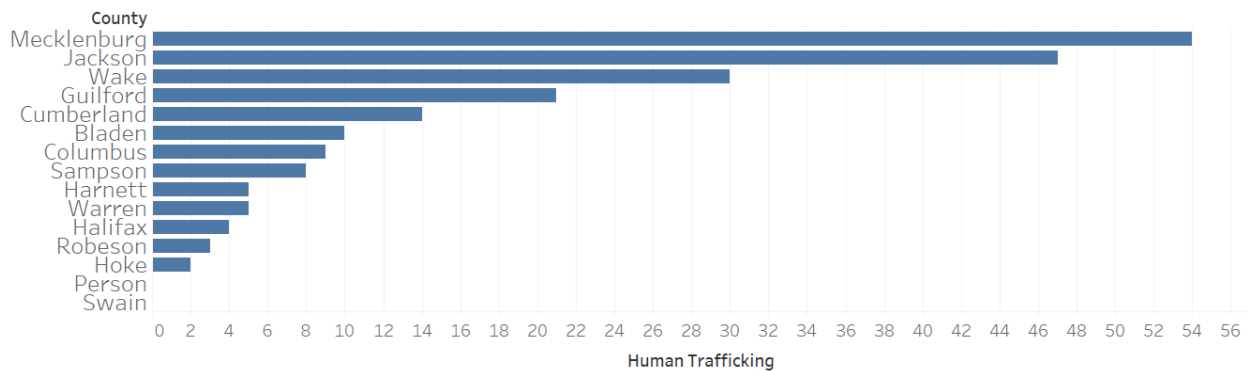
the Eastern Band of Cherokee are located in that county. Not all counties that meet the last two criteria are included as a spotlight. Using the first three criteria provides perspective on American Indians in urban areas and American Indians with access to a tribal advocate. The Eastern Band of Cherokee are a federally recognized tribe that is able to provide access to other DV and SA service resources to members of their tribe that are not accounted for in this data. Examining two of the counties associated with the Eastern Band of Cherokee allows for comparisons to counties that do not have such tribal resources. Percentages of American Indian clients, top counties providing DV and SA services to American Indian clients (by clients served and percentage of clients served), and more contextual information for all counties in North Carolina can be found in [online dashboards displayed on DOA's website](#).

A different methodology was used for the qualitative interview portion of the report. When selecting agencies to interview, five categories of agencies were created to gather more information including: (1) agencies in counties that ranked highest in the state in terms of population of American Indians and reported serving high percentages and numbers of American Indian clients; (2) agencies in counties that ranked highest in the state in terms of population of American Indians and reported serving a disproportionately low percentage of American Indian clients; (3) agencies in counties that did not rank among the highest in terms of population of American Indians and reported serving a disproportionately high percentage of American Indian clients; (4) statewide coalition agencies that provide guidance and support to all DV and SA agencies; and (5) agencies in any other outlier counties. Unfortunately, many agencies were not able to respond to questions during the time interviews were conducted. Of the 32 agencies that were sent interview requests, nine responded. From the responses gathered, potential barriers to services and means of outreach were explored.

Human Trafficking in Selected North Carolina Counties

While limitations in data collection restrain the informative capabilities of the available HT data, this information is shared so that communities can use it along with additional local context to inform their anti-trafficking efforts. Chart 1 displays the counties of focus in this report that identified serving individuals experiencing trafficking in the most recent five years. These are clients of any race as demographics of HT clients are not reported separately from the other clients receiving services from an SA agency.

Chart 1. Clients Identified as Human Trafficking Victims in Counties of Interest between FY 17-18 and FY 21-22



All but two of the counties of interest have identified clients as HT victims over the five-year period covered by this chart. Mecklenburg County identified 54 HT victims within this timeframe. Jackson, Guilford, and Wake counties all reported serving more than 20 HT victims but less than 50. Cumberland and Bladen counties reported serving at least 10 but less than 15 HT victims in this timeframe. Columbus and Sampson counties reported serving less than 10 but more than five HT victims. Harnett and Warren counties each served five HT victims. Halifax County identified four HT victims within the five-year period. Robeson County identified three HT victims in this timeframe. Hoke County served two HT victims within this timeframe. Person and Swain counties did not identify any HT victims within these five fiscal years.

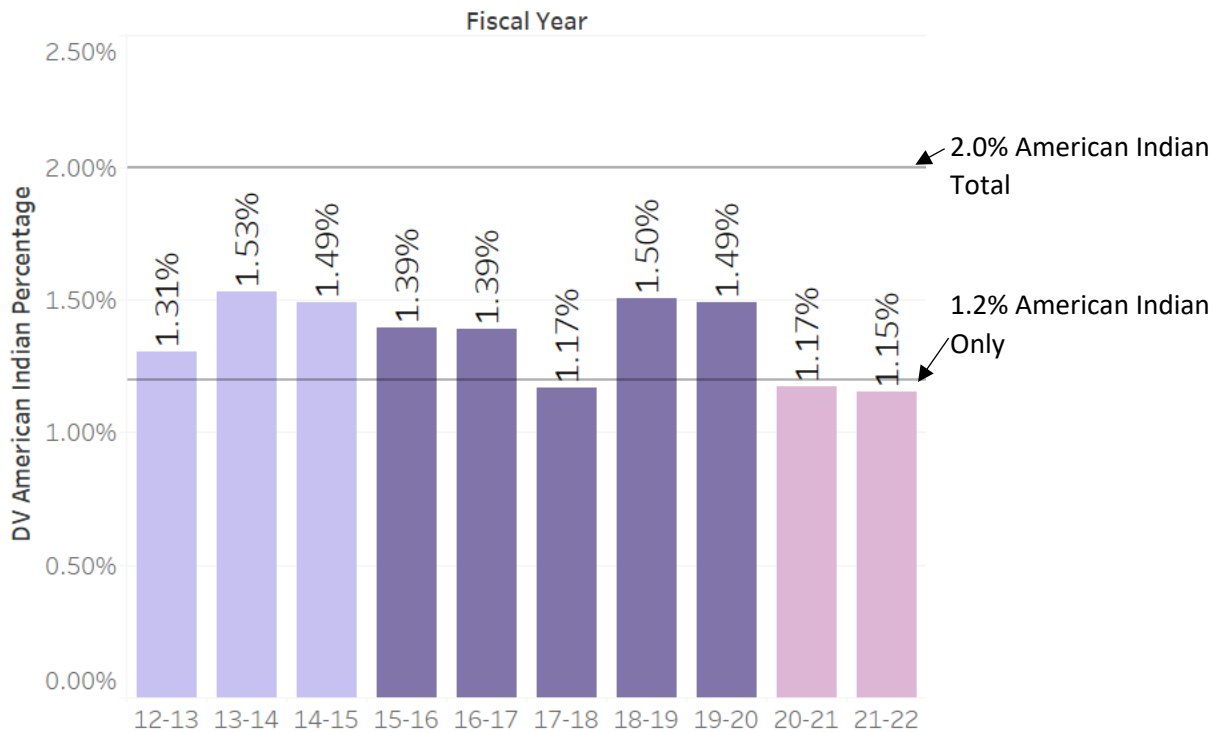
Statewide Trends of American Indians Receiving Domestic Violence Services

This section looks specifically at trends in how CFWYI-funded DV agencies are serving American Indians. Chart 2 looks at the percentage of American Indians served across the state over the last 10 fiscal years. These percentages are compared to the population size of American Indians

in North Carolina, which is 1.2% American Indian only and 2.0% American Indian total. Chart 3 looks at how DV services provided to American Indians compared to other racial and ethnic groups in North Carolina.

Chart 2. Statewide Percentages of American Indians Served by DV Agencies for Last 10 Fiscal Years

Reporting method changes were made in fiscal years 2015-2016 and 2020-2021. The bar graph is colored to reflect reporting periods using the same method.

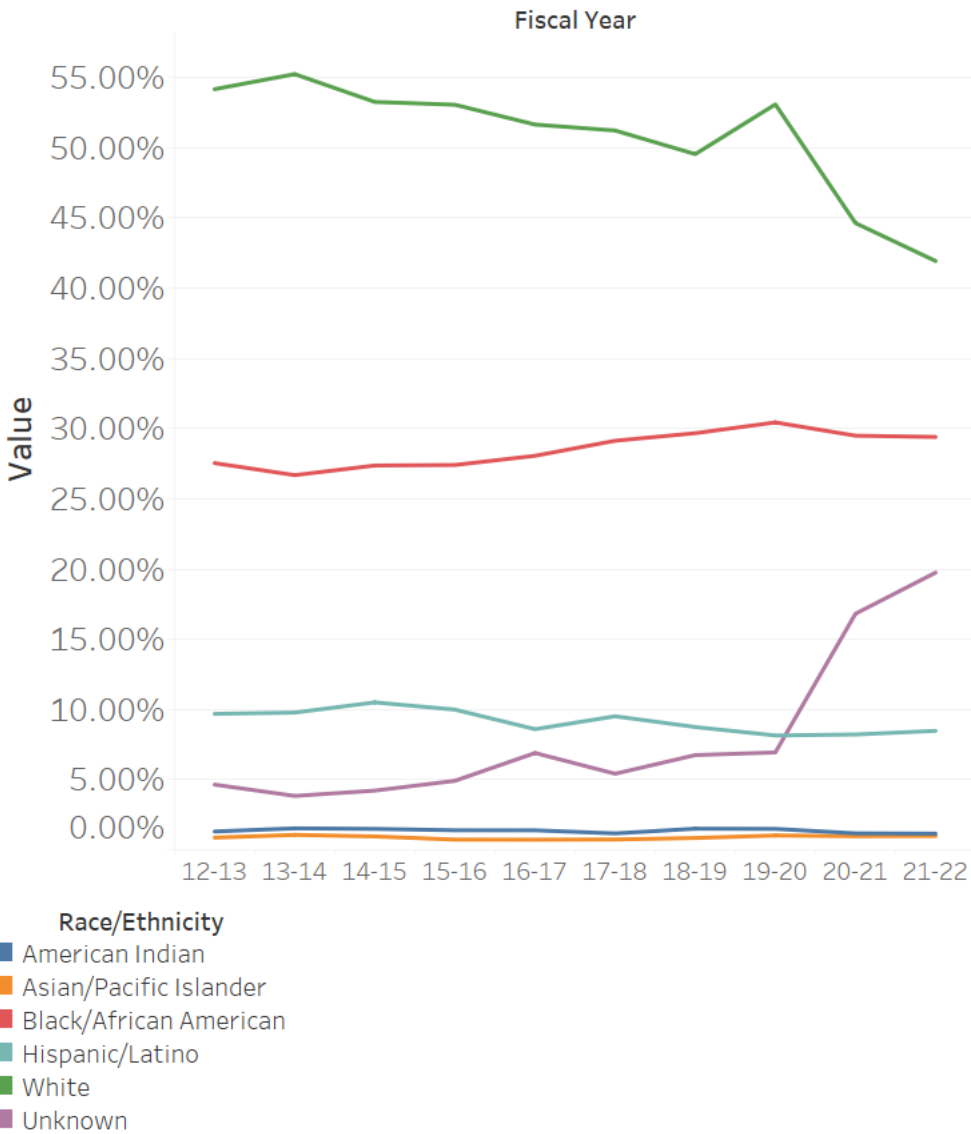


Data from CFWYI Annual Reports: FY 2012-2013 through 2021-2022.

In seven of the 10 years, a higher percentage of American Indian clients were served than North Carolina’s 1.2% American Indian only population. Since the reporting change in FY 15-16 that reduced duplication in reporting, the percentage of American Indian clients served was only slightly under this population percentage in three of the seven years. Fiscal year 13-14 has the highest percentage of American Indians served (1.53%). The highest percentage of American Indian clients served after the reporting method change in FY 15-16 occurred in FY 18-19 (1.50%), after which there was a slight decline in FY 19-20 (1.49%). This value decreased again in FY 20-21 (to 1.17%) when the reporting changed to include clients served remotely and has slightly fallen again in FY 21-22 (to 1.15%).

Chart 3. Statewide Percentage Race/Ethnicities of Clients Served by DV Agencies for Last 10 Fiscal Years

Reporting method changes were made in FY 15-16 and FY 20-21.



Data from CFWYI Annual Reports: FY 2012-2013 through 2021-2022.

The percentage of American Indians receiving DV services changed very little over the 10-year period of the study, from 1.31% in FY 12-13 to 1.15% in FY 21-22, although there were fluctuations in between. The percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander and Black/African American clients served grew over this period of observation, while the percentage of Hispanic/Latino and white clients decreased over this period. There was a sharp increase in individuals for

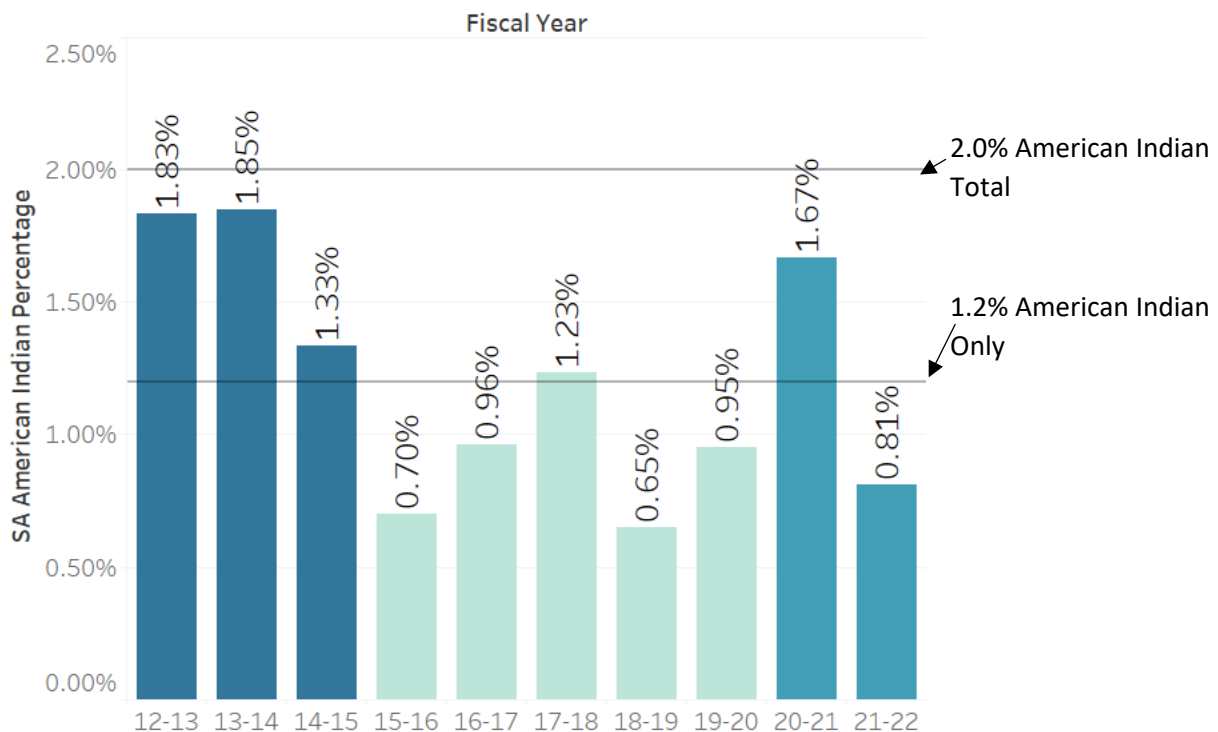
which their race/ethnicity was unknown in FY 20-21 when COVID-19 led to more services being offered virtually and that trend continued in FY 21-22.

Statewide Trends of American Indians Receiving Sexual Assault Services

This section looks specifically at trends in how SA agencies are serving American Indians. Chart 4 looks at the percentage of American Indians served across the state over the last 10 fiscal years in comparison to the state’s population percentage, which is 1.2% American Indian only and 2.0% American Indian total. Chart 5 looks at how SA agencies served American Indians compared to other races and ethnicities in North Carolina.

Chart 4. Statewide Percentages of American Indians Served by SA Agencies for Last 10 Fiscal Years

Reporting method changes were made in fiscal years 2015-2016 and 2020-2021. The bar graph is colored to reflect reporting periods using the same method.



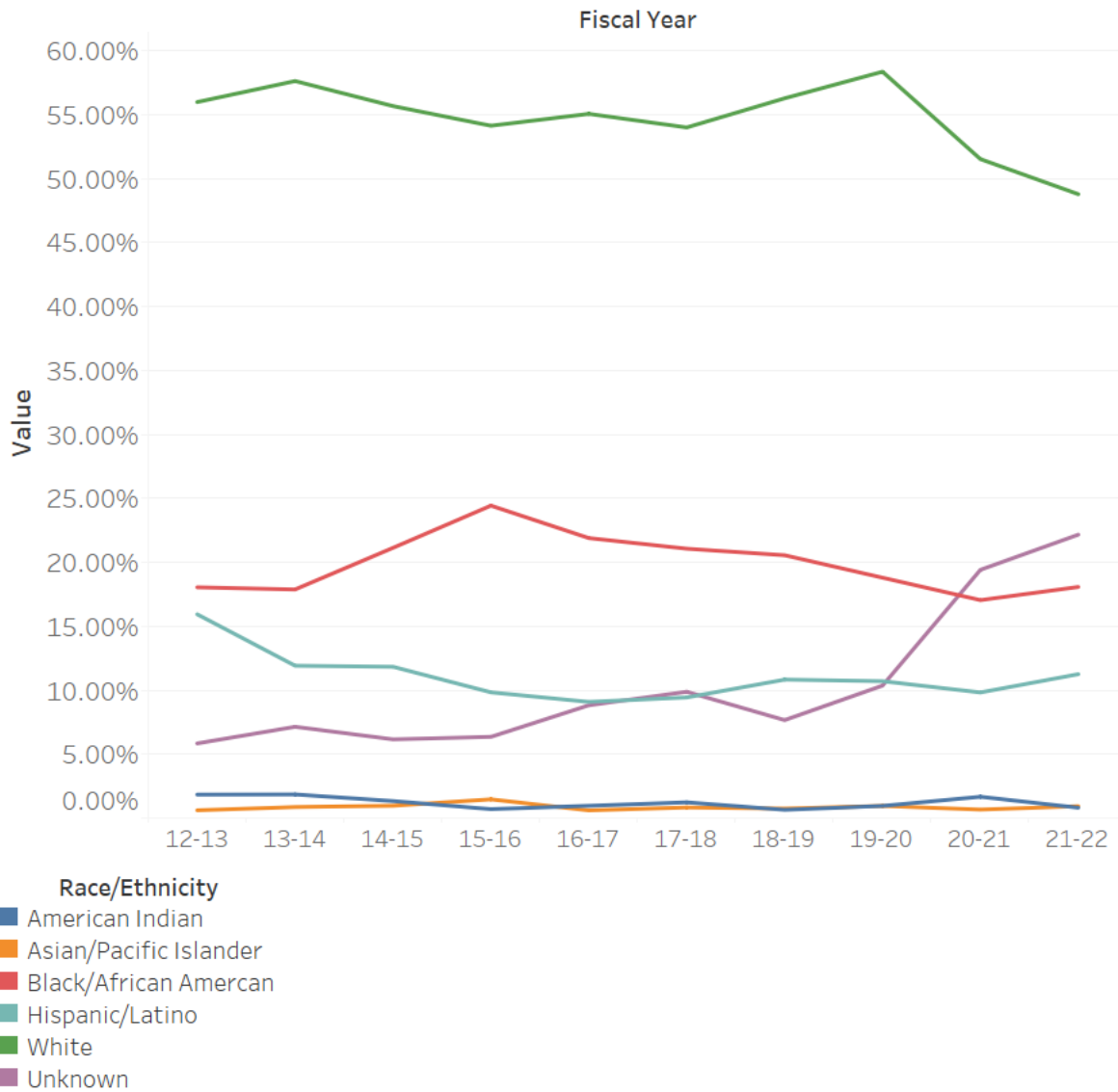
Data from CFWYI Annual Reports: FY 2012-2013 through 2021-2022.

In five of the 10 years, a higher percentage of American Indian clients were served than North Carolina’s 1.2% American Indian only population. Of the latter seven years after the first

reporting method change, two years are at least as high as the American Indian only population percentage. As previously mentioned, the reporting change in FY 15-16 demonstrates how the previous method likely overcounted some individuals. The highest recorded percentage of American Indian clients served was in FY 13-14 (1.85%), before the first reporting method change. In the FY 20-21 year, 1.67% of clients served were identified as American Indian, demonstrating a considerable increase in comparison to recent years. This is remarkable considering that there was an increase in the number of individuals for whom their race and ethnicity was not known in FY 20-21 when reporting changed to include provision of remote services, as seen in Chart 5. However, this value fell significantly in FY 21-22 to 0.81%. All these values fall short of the 2% American Indian total population.

Chart 5. Statewide Percentage Race/Ethnicities of Clients Served by SA Agencies for Last 10 Fiscal Years

Reporting method changes were made in FY 15-16 and FY 20-21.



Data from CFWYI Annual Reports: FY 2012-2013 through 2021-2022.

The change over time in percentage of clients who were identified as American Indian has fluctuated little, while other races/ethnicities have had more variance. As with DV services, FY 20-21 and FY 21-22 reflects an increase in individuals for which their race is unknown, likely due to the nature of remote services.

Counties of Interest

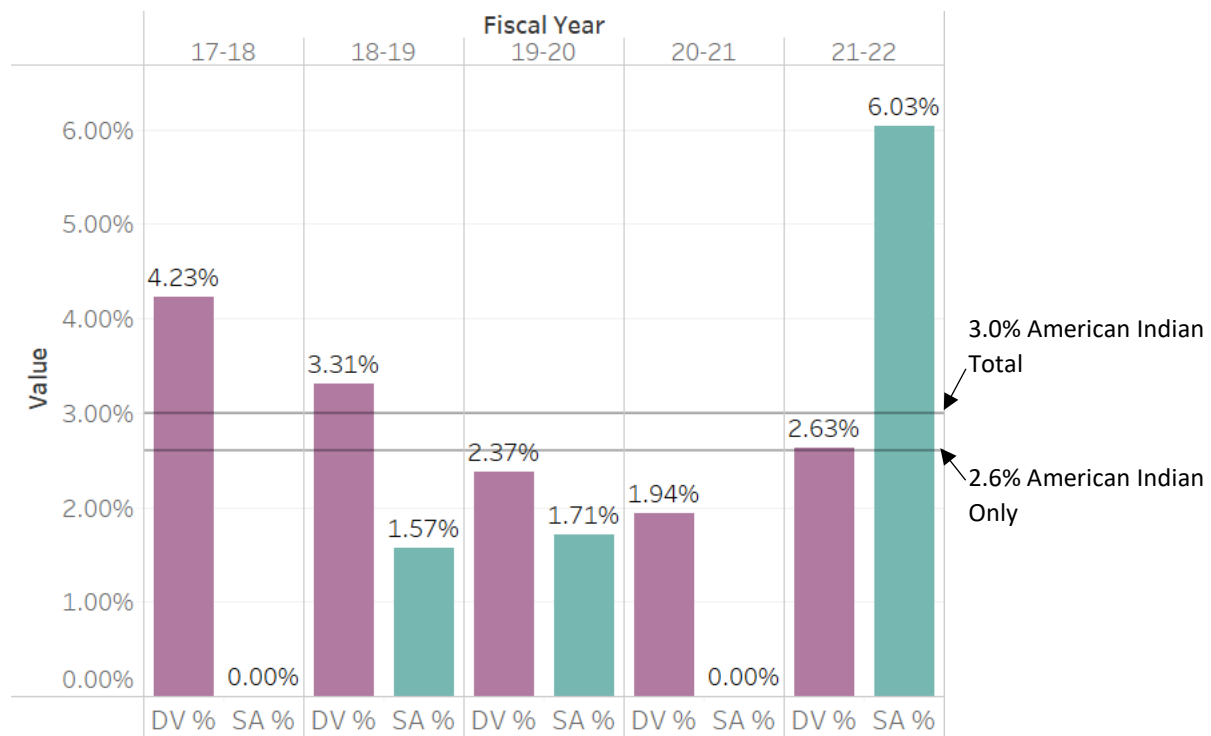
This section looks at county-level data so that individual counties and often specific agencies (most counties only have one DV or SA agency) can determine if they are underserving or adequately serving their American Indian population. The size of the local American Indian population is discussed as relevant context for these counties, but it was not part of the selection criteria for this review. If a county is one of the top counties providing DV or SA services to American Indians, either by count or by percentage of American Indian clients, this

also was not a criterion for inclusion in this section but the information is there to provide context. The following criteria were used to determine county selection in this quantitative review: (1) a state-recognized urban Indian organization operates in that county; (2) a Commission of Indian Affairs advocate is based in that county; (3) the county borders a county where a Commission of Indian Affairs advocate is located; and/or (4) the Eastern Band of Cherokee are located in that county. Not all counties that meet the last two criteria are highlighted. However, these criteria allow us to discuss counties with wide-ranging population sizes and resource access. Every North Carolina County is unique in its population and resources. For this reason, service provision and American Indian population data on all of North Carolina's 100 counties can be found on [dashboards on DOA's website](#).

Bladen County

Part of the Waccamaw Siouan Tribe resides in Bladen County, which has an American Indian population estimate of just over a thousand individuals (1,003). A Commission of Indian Affairs advocate works between Bladen and Columbus counties.

Of the 2,057 DV clients served between fiscal years 2017-2018 and 2021-2022, 57 of these clients were identified as American Indian (five-year observation of 2.77%). Two of the fiscal years showed that the percentage of American Indian clients receiving DV services was not proportionate to the percentage population of American Indians in the county, whether examined by the American Indian only or American Indian total population percentage. These observations indicate that American Indian DV clients are not being consistently served, particularly in recent fiscal years. American Indians in Bladen County are also being underserved for SA, as only 11 of the 582 SA clients served within the same timeframe were identified as American Indian (1.89%). Most of these clients (seven of the 11) were served in FY 21-22, represented here as a significant increase compared to years prior.

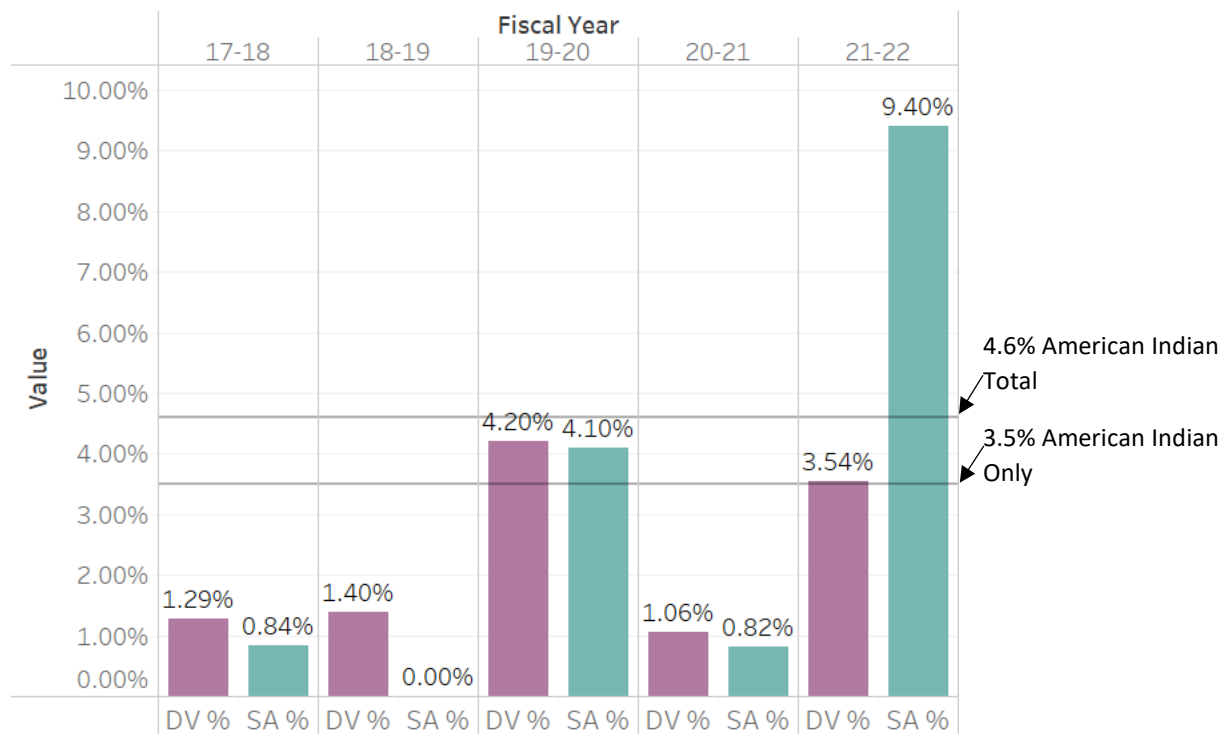


Columbus County

Columbus County is home to a portion of the Waccamaw Siouan Tribe; it has the ninth largest population of American Indians by percentage (4.6%), including 2,588 individuals. One of the Commission of Indian Affairs advocates serves both Columbus and Bladen counties.

American Indians accounted for 2.37% of DV clients over the five-year period, with 89 American Indian clients out of 3,758 total clients receiving DV services. Despite Columbus County ranking sixth of all counties for the number of American Indian DV clients receiving services, the percentage of American Indian clients receiving DV services is still lower than the county population percentage over the years observed. Of the clients who received SA services over the five-year period, 3.25%, or 21 out of 647, identified as American Indian.

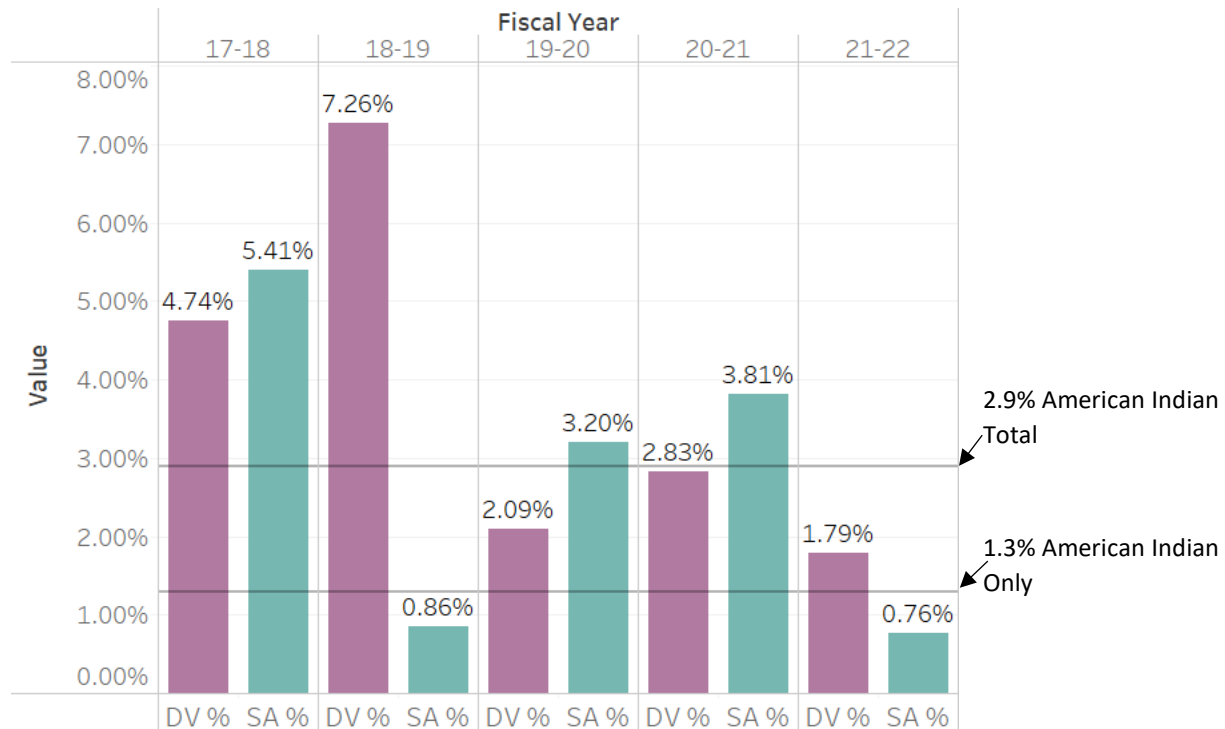
Fiscal years 19-20 and 21-22 were the only fiscal years in which the percentage of DV and SA services provided to American Indian clients was greater than the American Indian only population (3.5%). SA services provided in FY 21-22 was the only period observed in Columbus County where the percentage of services provided was greater than the American Indian total population. Since the percentage of American Indian DV or SA clients was notably below both the American Indian only and American Indian total population percentages for the county for the other three fiscal years, we conclude that the American Indian population in Columbus County is being underserved.



Cumberland County

Portions of the Lumbee Tribe reside in Cumberland County, and this county also contains an urban Indian organization—the Cumberland County Association for Indian People. Cumberland County has the fourth largest population of American Indians (9,828). Over the five-year period, 3.95% of clients served by the DV agency were identified as being American Indian, accounting for 81 of the 2,052 total clients served. As a result, Cumberland County ranks eighth among North Carolina counties in terms of providing the most DV services by number and ranks seventh by percentage of total clients. The SA agency in Cumberland County identified 2.91% of clients served as being American Indian over the five-year period, or 58 of the 1,994 clients who received SA services. This county ranks second in number of American Indian clients receiving SA services and eighth in percentage of total clients who were identified as American Indian.

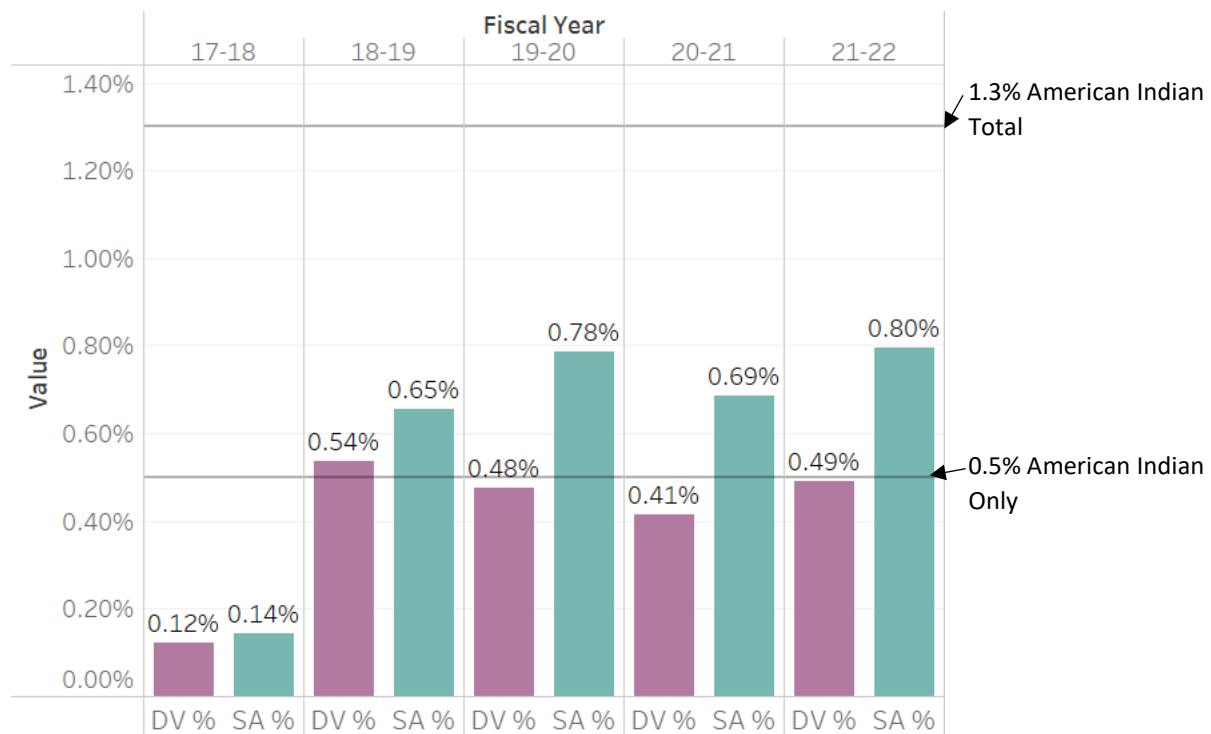
When looking at Cumberland County’s American Indian only population as a comparison point, the proportion of American Indian individuals who were served by DV agencies exceeded the proportion of the county population that identifies as American Indian almost every year for the last five fiscal years. In FY 18-19 and FY 21-22, SA services were not provided to American Indians in proportion to the American Indian only population but this value was exceeded during the other three observed years, indicating an opportunity to more consistently serve American Indians adequately and in proportion to the county’s American Indian population.



Guilford County

Home to the Guilford Native American Association, Guilford County has the fifth largest American Indian population in North Carolina by number (6,744), represents 1.3% of the county population. Guilford County is also one of the counties providing the most DV and SA services to American Indian clients. However, the percentage of clients who were identified as American Indian by the DV agency over the last five fiscal years is less than the county's population, resulting in 0.45% of total clients served, or 225 American Indians out of 49,468 total clients. In comparison, 0.61% of clients served by the SA agency funded by CFWYI were identified as American Indian, accounting for 20 of the 3,270 clients who received SA services during this timeframe.

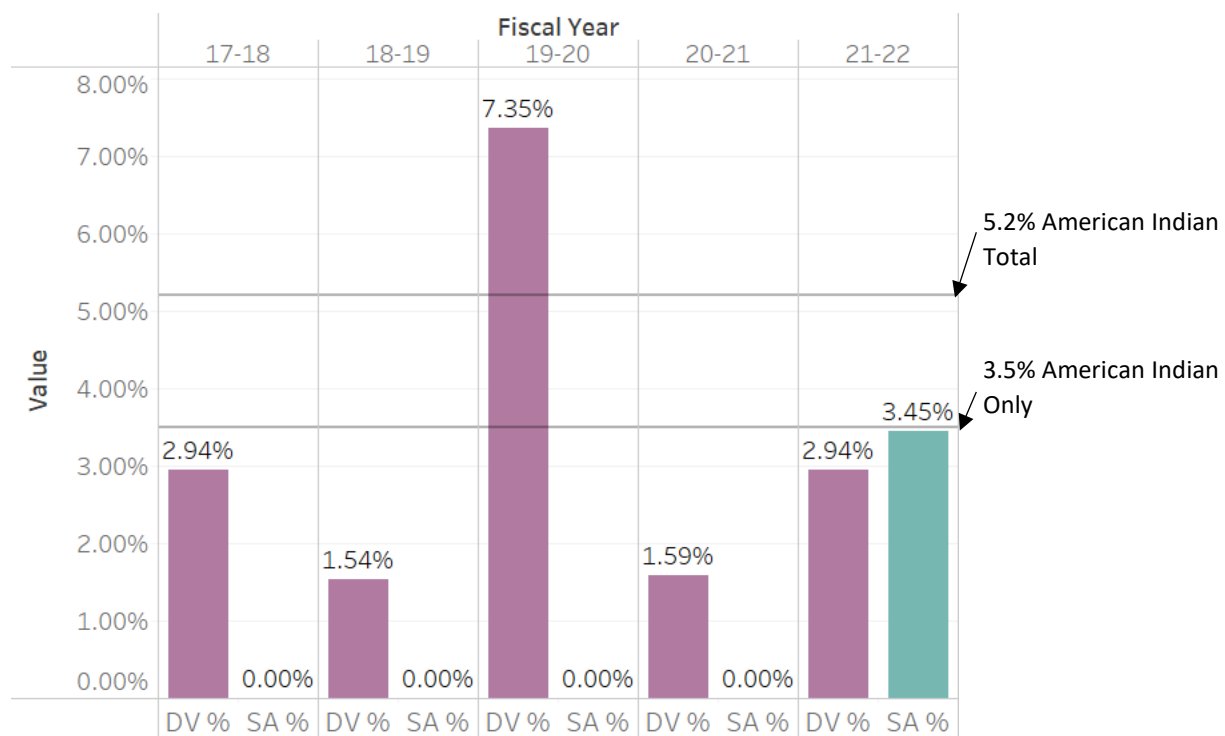
Fiscal year 18-19 is the only period for which the percentage of American Indian clients receiving DV services (0.54%) was greater than the percentage of the people in the county who identify as American Indian only. This indicates that American Indians are an underserved population for DV services. In the first fiscal year observed, the percentage of American Indian clients receiving SA services was lower than the American Indian only population, while in the latter four fiscal years, the percentage of American Indian clients receiving SA services was higher than that of the American Indian only population. This indicates that over the last five years, American Indians are receiving SA services in proportion to the American Indian only population but still not receiving services proportionally to the American Indian total population.



Halifax County

The Haliwa-Saponi Tribe is the third largest American Indian tribe in the state and resides in rural Halifax County. The Commission of Indian Affairs has an advocate who serves both Halifax and Warren counties. Halifax County has the eighth largest population of American Indians by percentage (5.2%). Over the last five fiscal years, 3.33% of clients receiving DV services were identified as American Indian, or 21 of 630 total clients; this results in a ranking of ninth of all counties for providing DV services to American Indians by percentage. Fiscal year 21-22 is the only year in which American Indian SA clients were served over the last five fiscal years, resulting in 0.79% American Indian clients served, or just one client out of the 126 clients receiving SA services between FY 17-18 and FY 21-22.

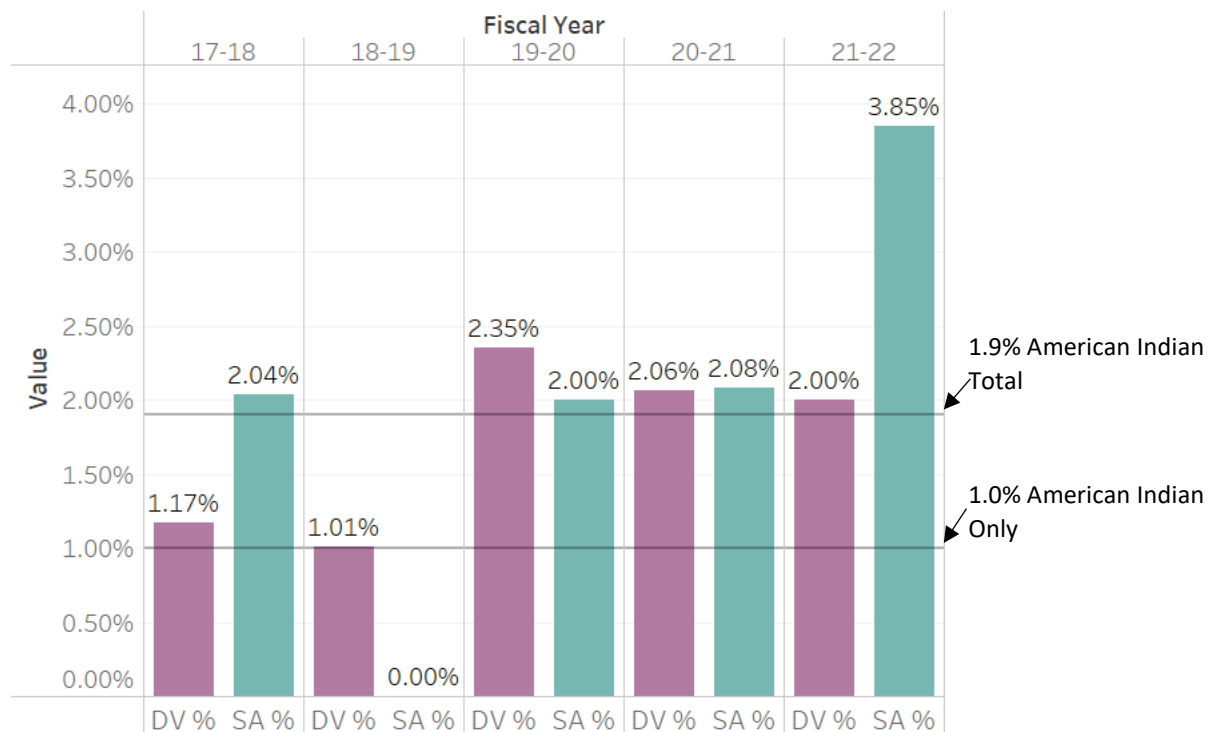
Fiscal year 19-20 is the only period in which the percentage of American Indian clients receiving DV services (7.35%) exceeded the American Indian only or American Indian total population of Halifax County (3.5% and 5.2%, respectively). This indicates that, in most recent years, the DV agency in Halifax County has not been serving the American Indian community in proportion to the size of the population within the county. In four of the fiscal years observed, no American Indian clients received SA services, which is a clear indication that American Indians are underserved for SA.



Harnett County

As one of the counties where the Coharie Tribe resides, Harnett is the home of approximately 2,502 American Indians making up an estimated 1.9% of the county’s population. Over the years observed, of 1.65% of DV clients served in the county were American Indian, which accounts for 19 of 1,151 clients who received services between FY 17-18 and FY 21-22. Within this timeframe, 1.68% of clients receiving SA services were identified as American Indian, or four of the 238 total clients.

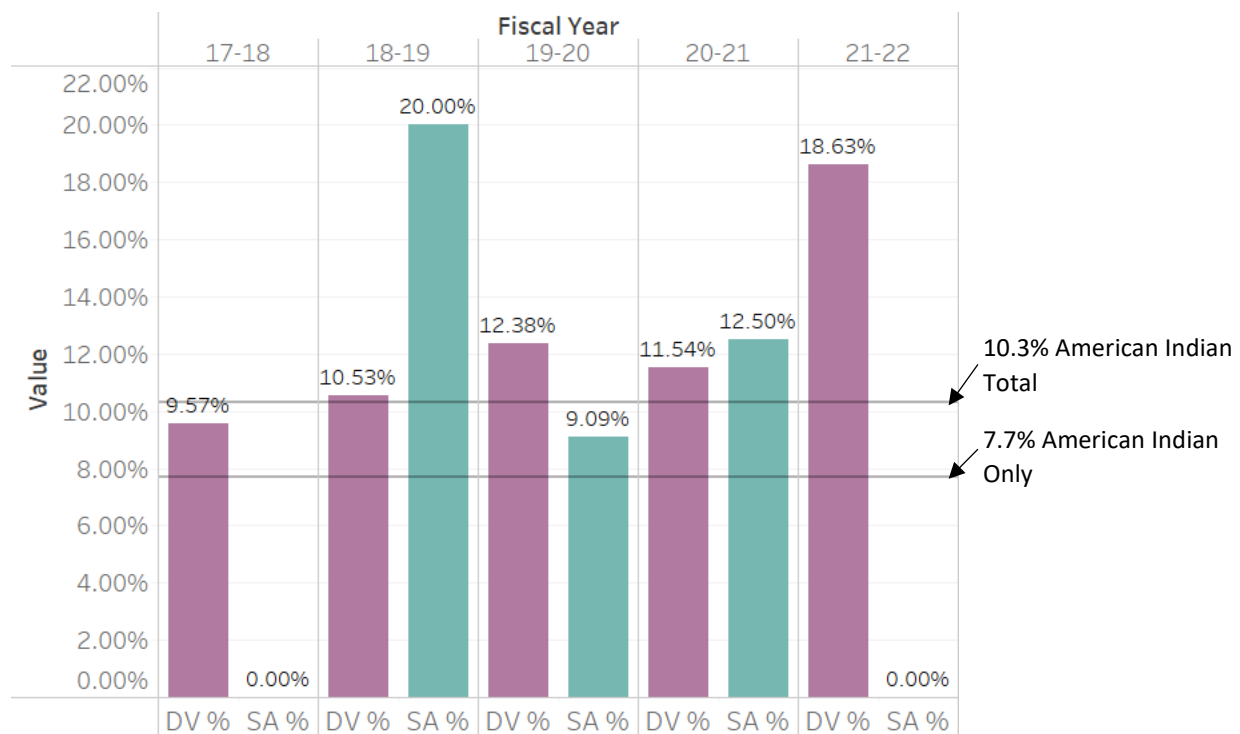
In the first two fiscal years observed, the percentage of American Indian clients receiving DV services was slightly above (0.18% or less margin for each year) the American Indian only population size by percent (1.0%). In the more recent three years, the percentage of American Indian clients receiving DV services was higher than both the percentage of American Indian only and the American Indian total population in the county. For SA services, American Indian clients were reported at percentages higher than their only or total population percentage for all fiscal years in this report except for FY 18-19, when no American Indian clients were identified as receiving SA services. While on average American Indians received DV and SA services in proportion to their population when looking at the American Indian only population percentage, they may still be considered underserved for SA because of the FY 18-19 in which no American Indian clients were served.



Hoke County

Hoke County is home to a portion of the Lumbee Tribe. This county has the sixth largest population of American Indians in North Carolina (5,631), and the fourth largest population of American Indians by percentage (10.3%). Over the past five fiscal years, 13.25% of clients receiving DV services were identified as American Indian, accounting for 112 of 845 clients. Hoke County ranks fifth among North Carolina counties for providing the most DV services to American Indians by number and ranks fourth in providing DV services to the most American Indians by percentage of total clients. For SA services, 7.69% of clients served were American Indian over this five-year period, or four of 52 total clients served. Hoke County ranks fourth of all North Carolina counties for the percentage of American Indian clients who were provided SA services.

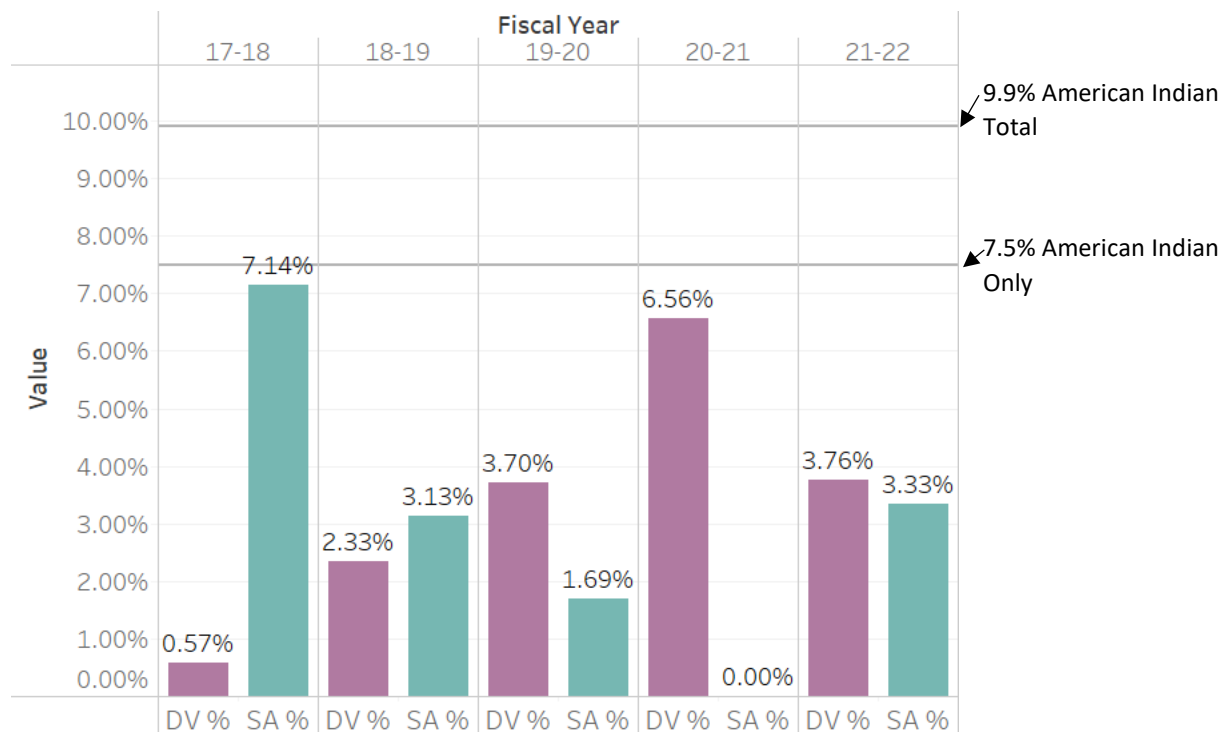
The percentage of Hoke County's DV clients who were American Indian exceeded the county's American Indian only population percentage in each of the five years and exceeded the American Indian total population percentage in four of the five years (all but FY 17-18). When compared to the five-year percentage of American Indian clients served, the American Indian population in Hoke County was provided DV services in proportion to their respective population. Between FY 18-19 and FY 20-21, the percentage of American Indian SA clients was higher than the American Indian only population. In the other two years (FY 17-18 and FY 21-22), no American Indians received SA services. While in some years American Indians were unserved and in other years they were adequately served for SA, on average, American Indians in Hoke County are underserved for SA services.



Jackson County

Portions of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians reside in Jackson County. Their territory, the Qualla Boundary, lies between Jackson and Swain counties. It is important to acknowledge that as a federally recognized tribe, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians have access to tribal DV and SA resources. The data below may underestimate the number of American Indians receiving DV and SA services in Jackson County, as American Indians who seek DV and SA services in the Qualla Boundary rather than from state-funded victim service agencies are not included. This county has the 10th largest population of American Indians (4,321) in North Carolina and the fifth largest population of American Indians by percentage (9.9%). Only 3.85% of clients receiving DV services over the last five fiscal years were reported as American Indian, accounting for 55 out of 1,428 total clients. Over the same period, 2.95% of clients receiving SA services were American Indian, representing eight of 271 total clients.

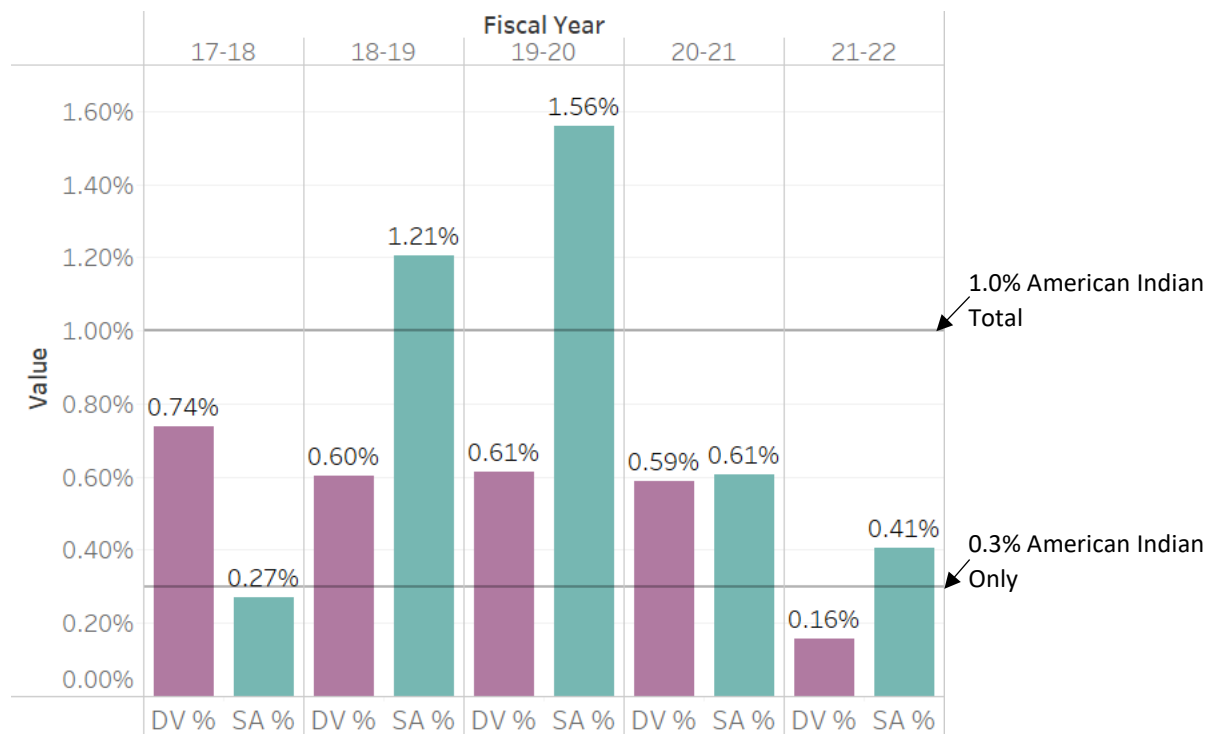
For each of the five fiscal years observed, American Indians were underserved by the DV and SA agencies in Jackson County. There was only one year for DV and one year for SA in which the percentage of clients served who were American Indian was within one percent of the American Indian only percentage (7.5%), at 7.14% of SA clients served in FY 17-18 and 6.56% of DV clients served in FY 20-21, respectively. The percentage of American Indians served each year fell well below the American Indian total population.



Mecklenburg County

Mecklenburg County contains the largest city in the state, Charlotte, and the Metrolina Native American Association, an urban Indian organization. Mecklenburg County has the third largest estimated population of American Indians in the state at 11,449, accounting for 1.0% of the county's overall population. It is in the top counties for the number of American Indians served by a DV and SA agency over the five-year period, serving 66 and 20 American Indian clients, respectively.

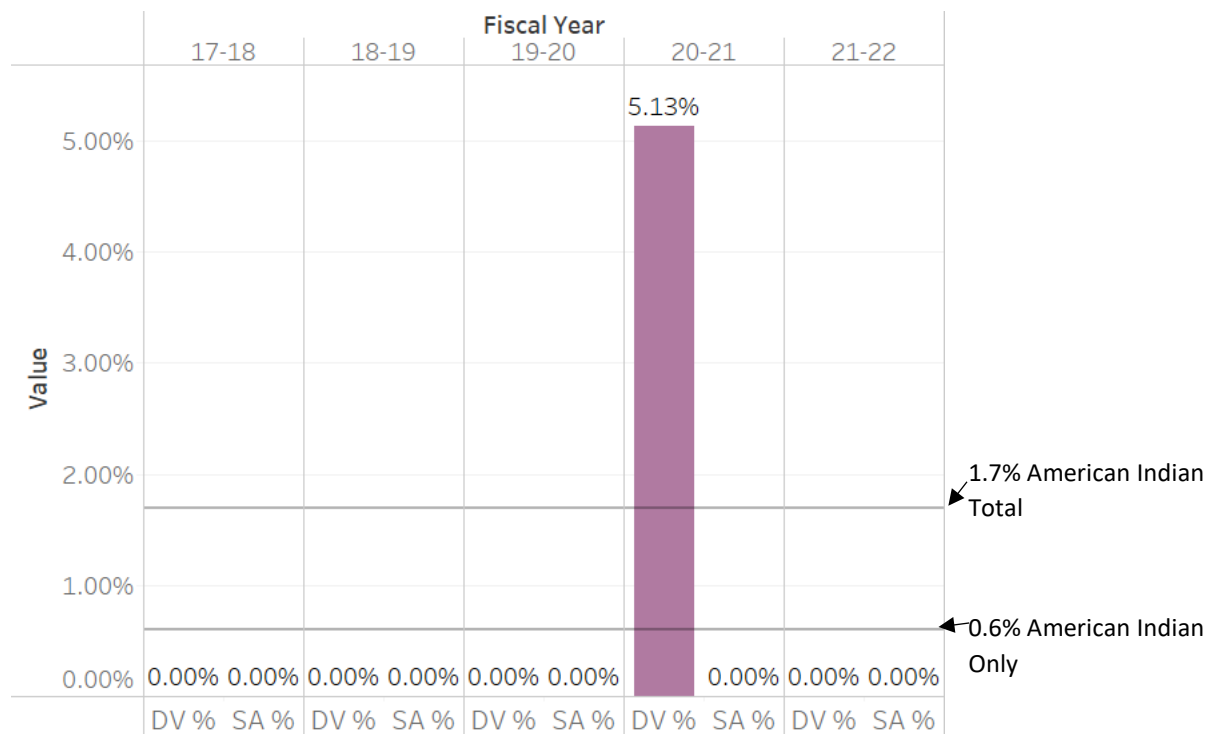
Over the five years observed, 0.51% of DV clients were identified as American Indian. From FY 17-18 to FY 20-21, the percentage of DV clients who identified as American Indian was consistently above the county's American Indian only population percentage but never exceeded the total percentage of American Indians. In FY 21-22, the percentage of American Indian DV clients served was only 0.16%. This indicates that over time the DV agency in Mecklenburg County is typically providing adequate servicing to the American Indian community that identifies as American Indian only. There has been some fluctuation in how the SA agency has served American Indians over the five-year period. In FY 17-18 American Indians were underserved. During the later four fiscal years of this report, however, the SA agency served a higher percentage of American Indian clients among their overall clientele than the county's American Indian only population. Over the five years observed, 0.77% of SA clients were identified as American Indian, which indicates that the American Indian only population was adequately served while the American Indian total population was underserved.



Person County

The Sappony Tribe resides in Person County as well as other areas along the North Carolina-Virginia border. This county's American Indian population is estimated to be 692 individuals or 1.7% of the total population. It does not rank among the top counties in terms of number or percentage of American Indian DV or SA clients served. There is a Commission of Indian Affairs advocate based in Person County, therefore it is included as a county of interest. Of clients receiving DV services within the last five fiscal years 0.39% were identified as American Indian, or two of 512 clients. American Indians were unserved by the SA agency, which has not reported serving any American Indian clients within the last five fiscal years.

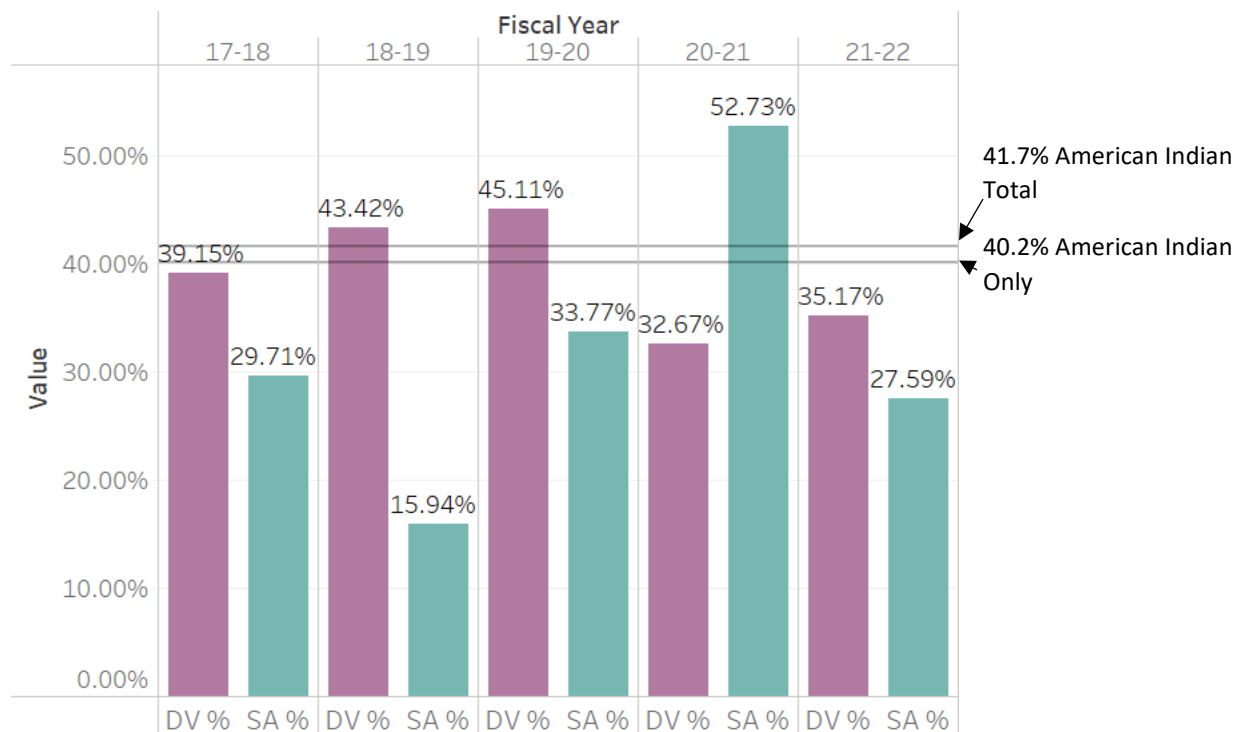
There was only one fiscal year (FY 20-21) when American Indians received DV services at a percentage (5.13%) that exceeded the American Indian only population in Person County (0.6%) and the American Indian total population (1.7%). In all other fiscal years of this report, American Indians were an unserved population for DV. Overall, this indicates that this population was underserved for both DV and SA services.



Robeson County

Robeson County is home to the Lumbee Tribe and has the largest population of American Indians in the state, both by number (54,906) as well as by percentage of the American Indian total population (41.7%), and the American Indian only population (40.2%). A Commission of Indian Affairs advocate is also based in Robeson. It is the top-ranking county for all categories in this analysis, with the most American Indian and the highest percentage of American Indian clients served by both its DV and SA agency. During the five-year period, the percentage of American Indian clients receiving DV services (39.08%) is slightly lower than the American Indian only population (40.2%), while for SA services it is a few points lower than the American Indian only population (36.46%).

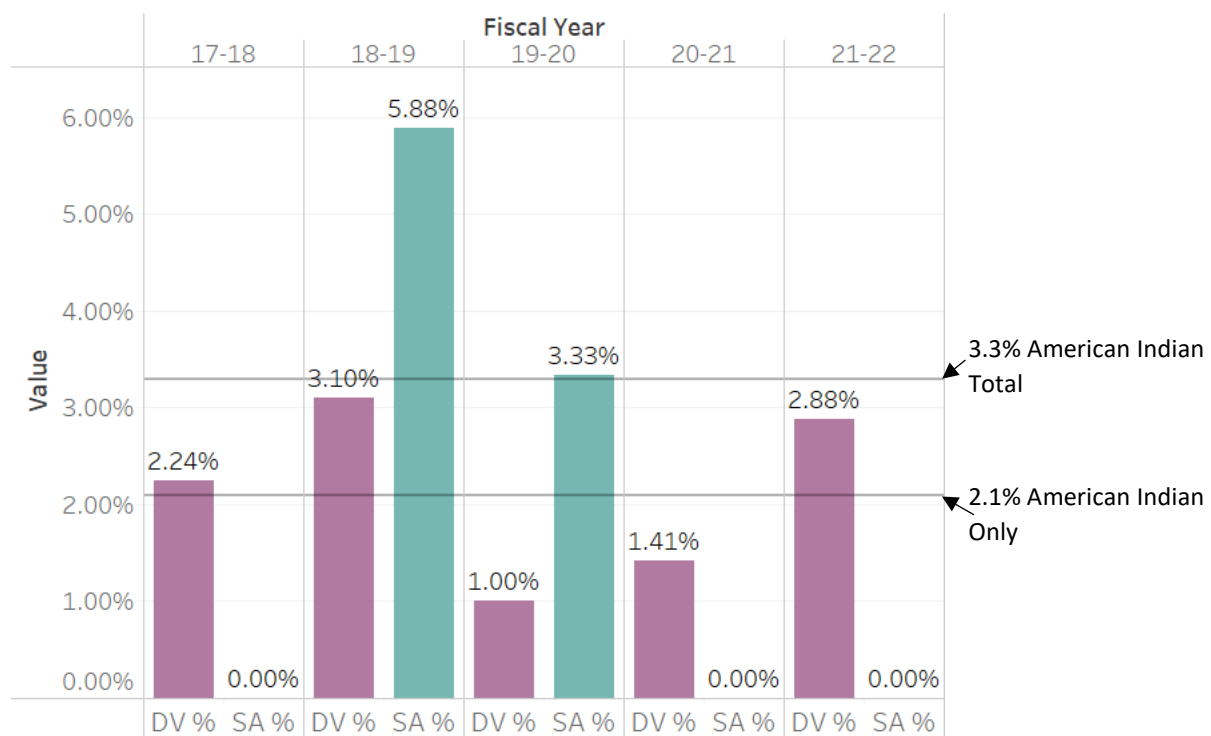
From FY 17-18 through FY 19-20, the percentage of American Indians served by the DV agency ranged from slightly below to slightly above the American Indian only (40.2%) and American Indian total (41.7%) population percentage. In FY 20-21 it dropped to more than 5% below the American Indian only population and slightly rose again in FY 21-22 (35.17%). In contrast, from FY 17-18 to 19-20, and in FY 21-22, the percentage of American Indians served by the SA agency was consistently lower than the county's population. Fiscal year 20-21 was the only period in which the percentage of American Indian clients served by the SA agency was higher than the county's American Indian only or total population percentage (52.73%). This indicates that American Indian SA victims tend to be underserved in Robeson County.



Sampson County

The Coharie Tribe partially resides in Sampson County, which has an American Indian population estimate of 2,107 and percentage estimate of 3.3%. Over a five-year period, 2.09% of clients receiving DV services were identified as being American Indian, accounting for 46 of the 2,200 clients served. During the same timeframe, 2.47% of SA clients were American Indian, or four of the 162 clients served.

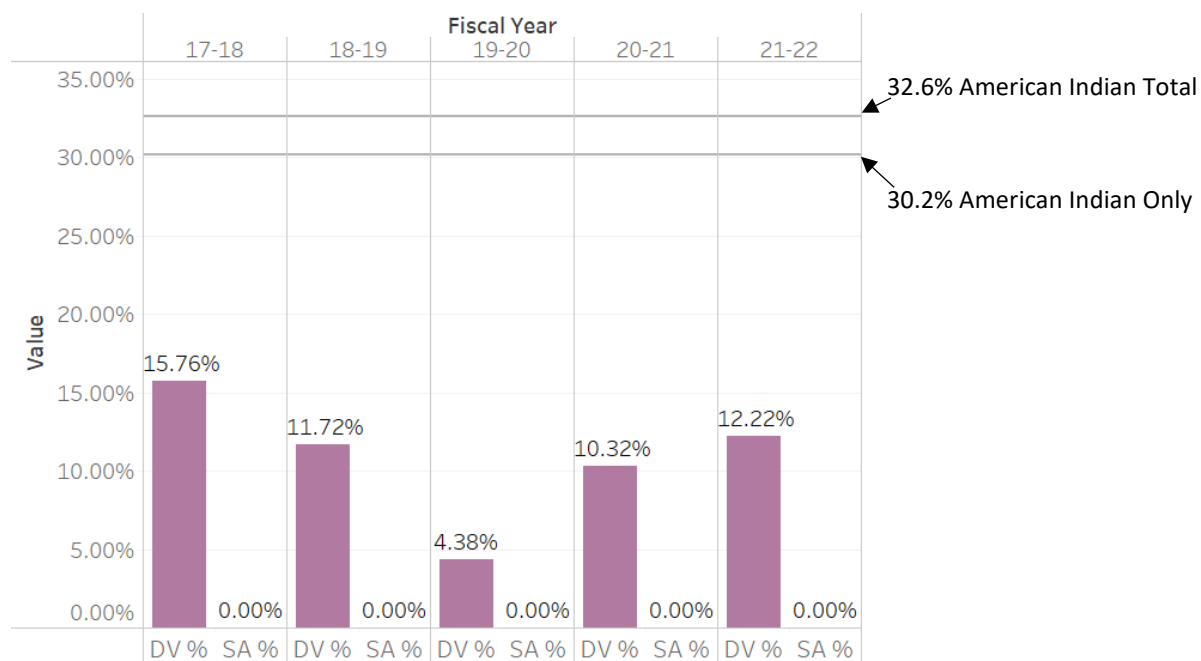
In FY 17-18, FY 18-19, and FY 21-22 the percentage of American Indian clients receiving DV services was greater than the American Indian only population, while in the other years this percentage of American Indian clients is disproportionately lower. This indicates that, in some reported years, American Indians were not adequately receiving DV services. The percentage of American Indians receiving DV services consistently fell below the county’s American Indian total population for all five years. In three of the five years of this report period (FY 17-18, FY 20-21, and FY 21-22), American Indians were an unserved population for SA services in Sampson County. In the other years observed, the percentage of American Indian clients receiving SA services was well above the county’s American Indian only population as well as above the American Indian total population. This indicates that American Indians have not been adequately receiving SA services on a consistent basis.



Swain County

Portions of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians reside in Swain County as an area bordering the Qualla Boundary. It is important to acknowledge that as a federally recognized tribe the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians have access to other DV and SA resources specifically for tribe members and works closely with the Swain County DV and SA agency. The data presented here only accounts for what was reported by the state-funded DV and SA agency, not resources provided within the Qualla Boundary. Swain County has the ninth largest population of American Indians (4,637) in North Carolina and the second largest population of American Indians by percentage (32.6%). Between FY 17-18 and FY 21-22, 11.09% of DV clients were identified as American Indian, the fifth highest of all counties by percentage of American Indian DV clients served. Swain County ranks fourth highest for providing DV services to the most American Indian clients by number, with 148 American Indian clients reported out of the 1,355 total clients served in this five-year period. However, no American Indians were reported to receive SA services in any of the last five fiscal years out of 22 total clients served.

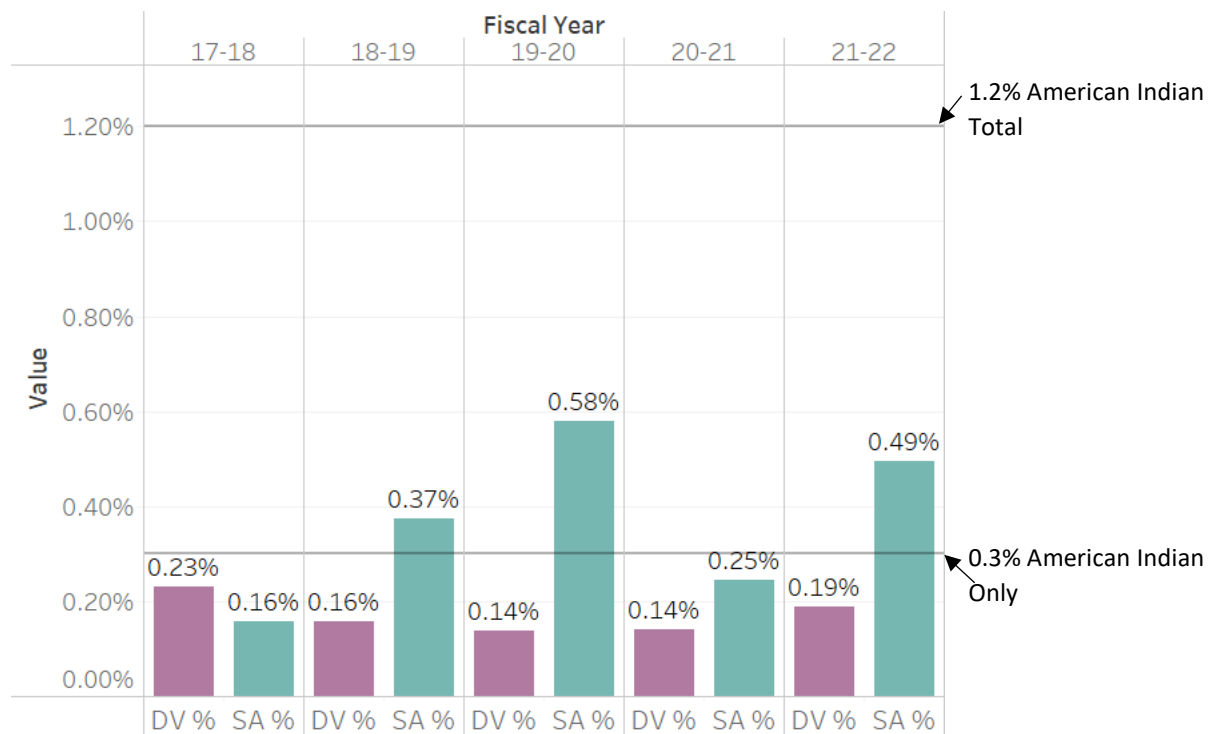
For all five of the fiscal years observed, the DV and SA agencies in Swain County did not provide services to the American Indian population in proportion to the American Indian only or total population percentages. The percentage of American Indian DV clients served ranged from over 14 (FY 17-18) to nearly 26 (FY 19-20) percentage points lower than the American Indian only population percentage, indicating a considerable gap in services to this community. There was an even larger gap in SA services, given that no American Indians were provided with SA services, making them an unserved population. While American Indians living in Swain County may access other services, the DV and SA agencies that reported data are underserving the county's American Indian population.



Wake County

In addition to housing North Carolina’s capital (Raleigh), Wake County also is home of the Triangle Native American Society urban Indian organization. Wake County has the second largest American Indian population (12,636) in North Carolina, accounting for 1.2% of county residents.

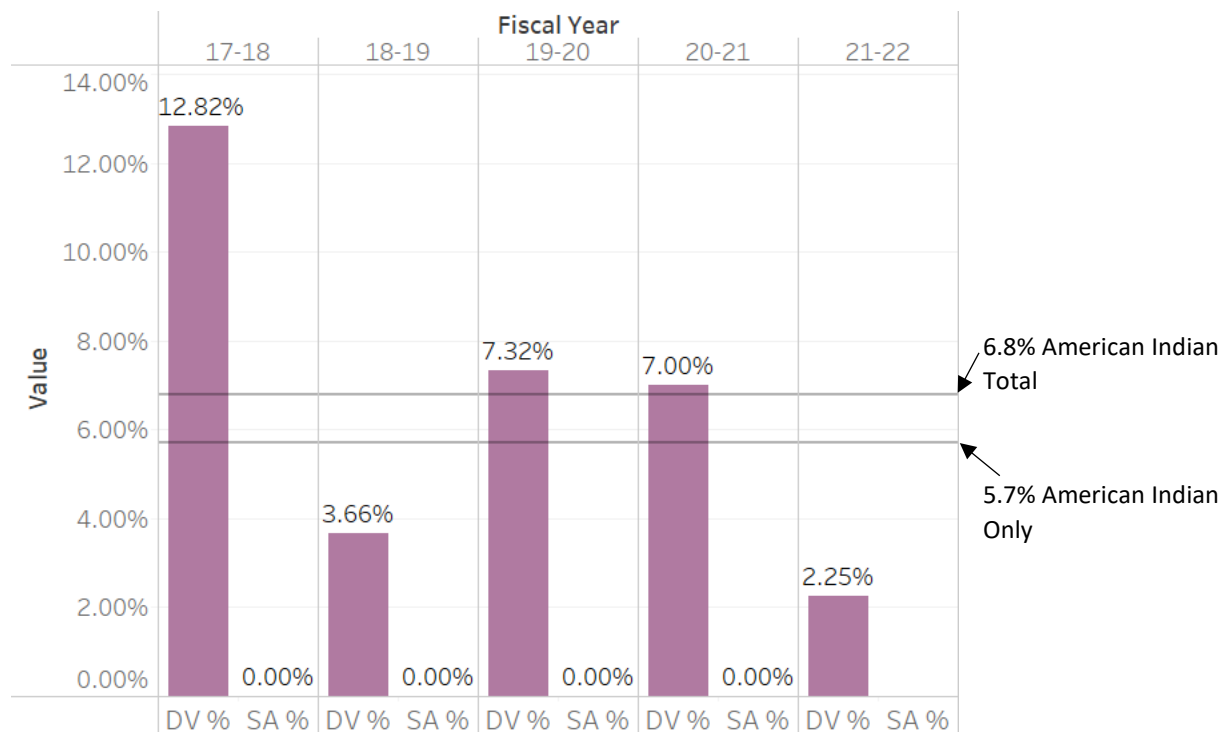
Within this observed five-year period 0.17% of clients receiving DV services were identified as American Indian, or 37 of the 21,722 total clients. When comparing either the American Indian only or the total population percentage to each fiscal year by itself or the five-year percentage, American Indians were an underserved population for DV services in Wake County. The percentage of American Indian clients receiving SA services nearly matches the county’s American Indian only population percentage at 0.33% or nine of the 2,702 total clients receiving SA services within this observed five-year period. In FY 18-19, FY 19-20, and FY 21-22, the percentage of American Indian SA clients was above the county’s American Indian only population percentage. This indicates that American Indian clients received SA services proportionate to the American Indian only population in some years but not others, suggesting this is still an area of underservice. The percentage of American Indian SA clients served does not match the American Indian total population in any of the years observed.



Warren County

The Haliwa-Saponi Tribe resides in rural parts of Warren County. The Commission of Indian Affairs advocate serves both Warren and Halifax counties. Warren County has the seventh largest population of American Indians by percentage (6.8%) in North Carolina, encompassing 1,339 individuals. From the five-year observation, 6.50% of clients receiving DV services were American Indian (28 of 431 total clients). Warren County ranks sixth among North Carolina counties providing the most DV services to American Indians by percentage. In contrast, none of the nine total clients receiving SA services within this observed period were identified as American Indian (0%).

There are two years (FY 18-19 and FY 21-22) in which the percentage of American Indians receiving DV services was below the county's American Indian only or total population percentage. This indicates that the DV agency in Warren County is sometimes underserving American Indians in proportion to the local population, although the five-year observation indicates that American Indians are receiving DV services (6.50%) in proportion to the American Indian only population (5.7%). As no American Indians received SA services in Warren County within this timeframe, American Indians were an unserved population for SA.



Discussion with DV and SA Service Agencies

Since American Indian women experience violence at higher rates than other racial and ethnic groups, ideally, American Indian women would receive services at a disproportionately high rate. This appears to be happening in some counties in North Carolina where the percentage of American Indian clients served is greater than the population percentage in the county. However, this is not the case in all counties. In fact, in some of the counties with a high percentage of American Indians, agencies have reported serving a disproportionately small percentage of this population. This may be partly attributable to DV and SA being generally underreported in North Carolina and around the country (RAINN, 2021; Gracia, 2004), and/or to racial and ethnic minorities, such as American Indians, being even less likely to seek out services due to distrust of institutions.

Various DV and SA agencies across the state were interviewed to gain a better understanding of these discrepancies. Of the 32 agencies that were sent interview requests, nine responded. Of these agencies, several gave similar responses. The selection criteria for agencies chosen to be interviewed were different from the criteria to select the 15 counties of interest discussed in the previous section. The selection criteria for interviews included: (1) agencies in counties that ranked highest in the state in terms of population of American Indians and reported serving high percentages and numbers of American Indian clients; (2) agencies in counties that ranked highest in the state in terms of population of American Indians and reported serving a disproportionately low percentage of American Indian clients; (3) agencies in counties that did not rank among the highest in terms of population of American Indians and reported serving a disproportionately high percentage of American Indian clients; (4) statewide coalition agencies that provide guidance and support to all DV and SA agencies; and (5) agencies in any other outlier counties.

The interviews inquired about agency relationships with Native communities and tribal governments, agency outreach to Native communities, and any culturally specific services they provide for American Indians. Specific questions were asked depending on which category the agency fell under that aimed at addressing the “why” behind each county’s service provision to American Indians. Overall, most agencies that responded to the interview request could not identify any specific relationship with or outreach to American Indian communities in their county. Several agencies reported working with tribal communities in their county, but nearly all agencies indicated that guidance on how to conduct outreach and provide services to American Indians would be helpful to their agency.

Based on the information gathered from these interviews, there appear to be several reasons why agencies may be serving American Indian clients at a lower percentage than the county population. Some of these reasons include misconceptions about the resources available to tribal communities, or a lack of knowledge about the presence of American Indians in counties that do not have a state or federally recognized tribe. One reason identified by the agencies is their belief that there are other resources available within tribal governments or communities.

This is a problematic assumption because only the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians provides specific resources for survivors of DV and SA within their tribe. These resources are available to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians as a federally recognized tribe. For other American Indians throughout the state, local DV and SA agencies are equipped to provide the specific resources necessary to victims of these crimes but may lack the cultural competency to do this most effectively for American Indians. Another reason why American Indians may be underserved is that they are not seen as a target population by DV and SA agencies. Most of the interviewed agencies indicated that they did not have any culturally specific resources or services for American Indian clients.

The North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCCADV) surveyed service agencies for a needs assessment between winter 2019 and spring 2020 and found that the agencies ranked serving American Indian clients as the service area for which they needed the *least* amount of support. This result suggests that most agencies do not see American Indians as a priority population. For example, during our interviews, one agency indicated that “because there are no state or federally recognized tribes located in [our] county, there are no identified communities of American Indians we can target for outreach.” However, this agency did report serving American Indian clients. Agencies may not understand why culturally specific services are necessary for American Indian clients, and/or they may not know what those services would look like in practice. Regardless, most agencies that were interviewed did not indicate prioritizing services for, outreach to, or relationships with American Indian communities.

Despite this, several agencies that were interviewed are doing significant work with the tribal communities in their area. Some agencies indicated that they have active relationships with tribal governments and community-based organizations. One agency described their outreach to American Indians within their county as “we distribute brochures, posting on Facebook, contact with the Tribal Center. We recently started the Healing Circle for those that have been abused and this is once a month.” Furthermore, NCCADV noted their ongoing relationship with the Commission of Indian Affairs, and that they have contracted a racial equity consulting group to identify how they can better serve American Indian clients. Several of the agencies discussed their culturally specific programs for American Indians with a focus on youth. For example, one agency is collaborating with a Native agency to create a curriculum for local schools to address teen dating violence in American Indian communities. The curriculum acknowledges potential cultural differences within family dynamics. These efforts provide good examples on how other agencies can engage in building meaningful relationships with American Indian communities.

Unfortunately, agencies with culturally specific programs for American Indians are in the minority of those funded by CFWYI. Many agencies have culturally specific programs addressing other racial or ethnic groups, such as Latinx/Hispanic clients or Black/African American clients. Therefore, it is possible that, while agencies understand the importance of providing culturally relevant programs, they either do not see American Indians as a group that is in need of this type of program, or they do not have the capacity for implementing such a program.

Conclusion

Gathering specific data on HT cases remains challenging, especially when many trafficking victims do not self-identify. However, in light of the intersection of HT with DV and SA, examining reported data from DV and SA agencies can help build a more complete picture of vulnerabilities that need to be addressed. Transient populations such as migrant workers, military professionals, or college students may not be fully captured within the data, or these individuals may not receive services in the same county where they reside. The implications of this data are also limited by the fact that survivors of HT, DV, and SA underreport their experiences, and this may be even more likely in American Indian communities. It is important for service agencies and other stakeholders to consider these report findings in context with other local information.

There are opportunities for CFWYI to improve its reporting and data collection processes to offset some limitations to this report, such as:

- Asking DV agencies to report if they are serving HT survivors, in addition to the question that is already asked of SA agencies;
- Asking for demographic information specific to clients who experienced HT; and
- Asking agencies to report all races/ethnicities of a client to better understand if someone identified as “two or more races” is American Indian.

Looking at statewide trends of American Indians receiving DV and SA services, the percentage of American Indian clients served is often lower than the statewide population. This trend was stronger after the data collection changes that reduced duplication in reporting clients. This is a compelling signal that American Indians are being underserved by DV and SA agencies at the state level. Some counties report serving American Indian DV and SA clients in proportion to the local population but agencies in many counties could look for evidence-based best practices to improve service provision in their area. While the percentage of American Indian clients receiving DV and SA services in many counties falls short of the American Indian total percentage of the county, this comparison provided additional context for whether American Indians are adequately served and can help shape future services and outreach.

Considering that the race/ethnicity of American Indians is sometimes misidentified in data collection (Lucchesi & Echo-Hawk, 2018), it may also be necessary for agencies to review their practices in how they determine the race/ethnicity of their clients. Clients should be given the opportunity to self-identify the entirety of their race/ethnicity. Increased identification of American Indian clients can also address some inconsistencies in reporting from year to year and between counties.

Important next steps for connecting American Indians with DV and SA resources include:

- Correcting misconceptions about resources available to American Indians;
- Increasing availability of culturally specific services;

- Enhancing outreach to American Indian communities; and
- Asking clients to self-determine their race/ethnicity.

Cultural competency has been cited as an effective method of providing effective social services to American Indians (Weaver, 1999) and treating ACEs (Freeman & Amerman, 2021). Agencies can also seek an increase in education to better understand vulnerabilities toward exploitation in Native communities, increase culturally informed local resources, develop peer mentors, and increase training for service providers to enhance the services they provide to American Indians (Stumblingbear-Riddle et al., 2019). When implementing a culturally specific program or supportive service to American Indians, it is important that agencies collaborate with an American Indian agency. Services are even more effective when American Indian staff provides them.

In the future, CFWYI will continue to observe the data gathered from state funded DV and SA agencies to determine if the number of American Indians served by these agencies is representative of the American Indian population in their respective county. While American Indian women are more likely to experience sexual violence in comparison to white or African American women (Bachman et al., 2008), this population data can still provide a reference point to determine if agencies are at least reaching populations that are representative of their community. Agencies are encouraged to consider the American Indian population in their county along with what resources they have available to find the most effective strategies to provide services and outreach to American Indians. Based on conversations with agencies, statewide guidance that is broad enough to consider local context should be created—with input from CFWYI, the Commission of Indian Affairs, tribal communities, DV and SA service agencies, and other stakeholders—on identification, outreach, and services to American Indians that can be shared with victim service agencies to help best serve their communities.

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