U.S. Census Bureau Tribal Information Session:
Statistical Products First program – Tribal Gross Domestic Product

Virtual Meeting with U.S. Census Bureau
Thursday, June 11, 2026
3:00 – 4:30 pm EST

Welcome and Introductions

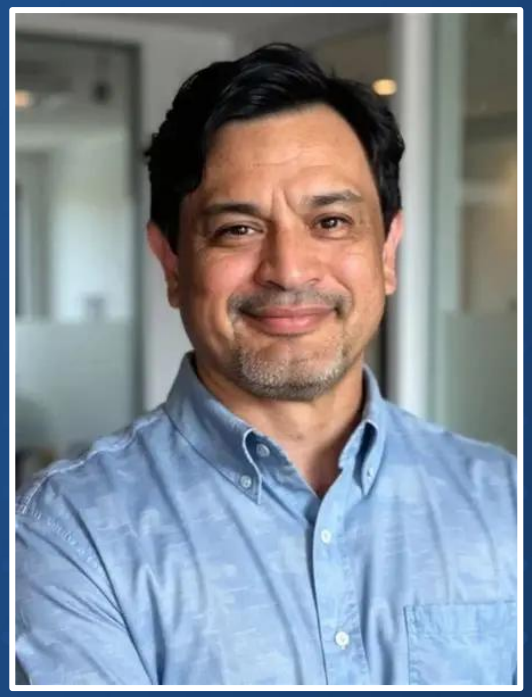
Dee Alexander (Cheyenne – Arapaho)
Tribal Affairs Coordinator
Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs
U.S. Census Bureau

Agenda

3:00-3:15 PM ET	Welcome and Introductions	**Dee Alexander**, Tribal Affairs Coordinator, Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs, U.S. Census Bureau (Moderator) **Rob McLeod**, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of the Secretary
3:15-4:00 AM ET	Presentation Statistical Product First: Tribal Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	**Sallie Ann Keller, Ph.D.**, Associate Director and Chief Scientist, Research and Methodology Directorate, U.S. Census Bureau **Randall Akee, Ph.D.**, Julie Johnson Kidd Professor of Indigenous Governance and Development, Harvard Kennedy School, Harvard University **Carla Medalia, Ph.D.**, Senior Technical Advisor, Research and Methodology Directorate, U.S. Census Bureau **Carl Sanders, Ph.D.**, Economist for the Social, Economic and Housing Statistics Division, U.S. Census Bureau **Cassandra Dorius, Ph.D.**, Senior Computational Social Scientist for Innovation Research and Methodology Directorate, U.S. Census Bureau
4:00-4:30 AM ET	Questions and Answers Closing Remarks	**Dee Alexander**, Tribal Affairs Coordinator, Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs, U.S. Census Bureau (Moderator)

United States® Census Bureau

Presenters



Randall Akee, Ph.D.
Julie Johnson Kidd Professor of Indigenous Governance and Development
Harvard Kennedy School
Harvard University

Carla Medalia, Ph.D.
Senior Technical Advisor
Research and Methodology Directorate
U.S. Census Bureau

Presenters

Carl Sanders, Ph.D.
Economist
Social, Economic, and Housing Statistics Division
U.S. Census Bureau

Cassandra Dorius, Ph.D.
Senior Computational Social Scientist for Innovation
Research and Methodology Directorate
U.S. Census Bureau

Welcome

Rob Mcleod
Director of Intergovernmental Affairs
U.S. Department of Commerce
Office of the Secretary

Presenter

Sallie Ann Keller, Ph.D.
Associate Director and Chief Scientist, Research and Methodology Directorate
U.S. Census Bureau

Statistical Product First: Tribal Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

2030 Census Update Information Session

June 10, 2026

Randall Akee[2] Carla Medalia[1]
Carl Sanders[1] Cass Dorius[1] Sallie Keller[1]

[1] U. S. Census Bureau [2] Harvard University and NBER

Any opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not reflect the views of the U.S. Census Bureau. The Census Bureau has reviewed this data product to ensure appropriate access, use, and disclosure avoidance protection of the confidential source data. Approved for release under DMS: P-7503840 (P-7535195) and DRB: CBDRB-FY25-SEHSD003-116 and CBDRB-FY26-SEHSD003-040.

The Tribal GDP Research Project

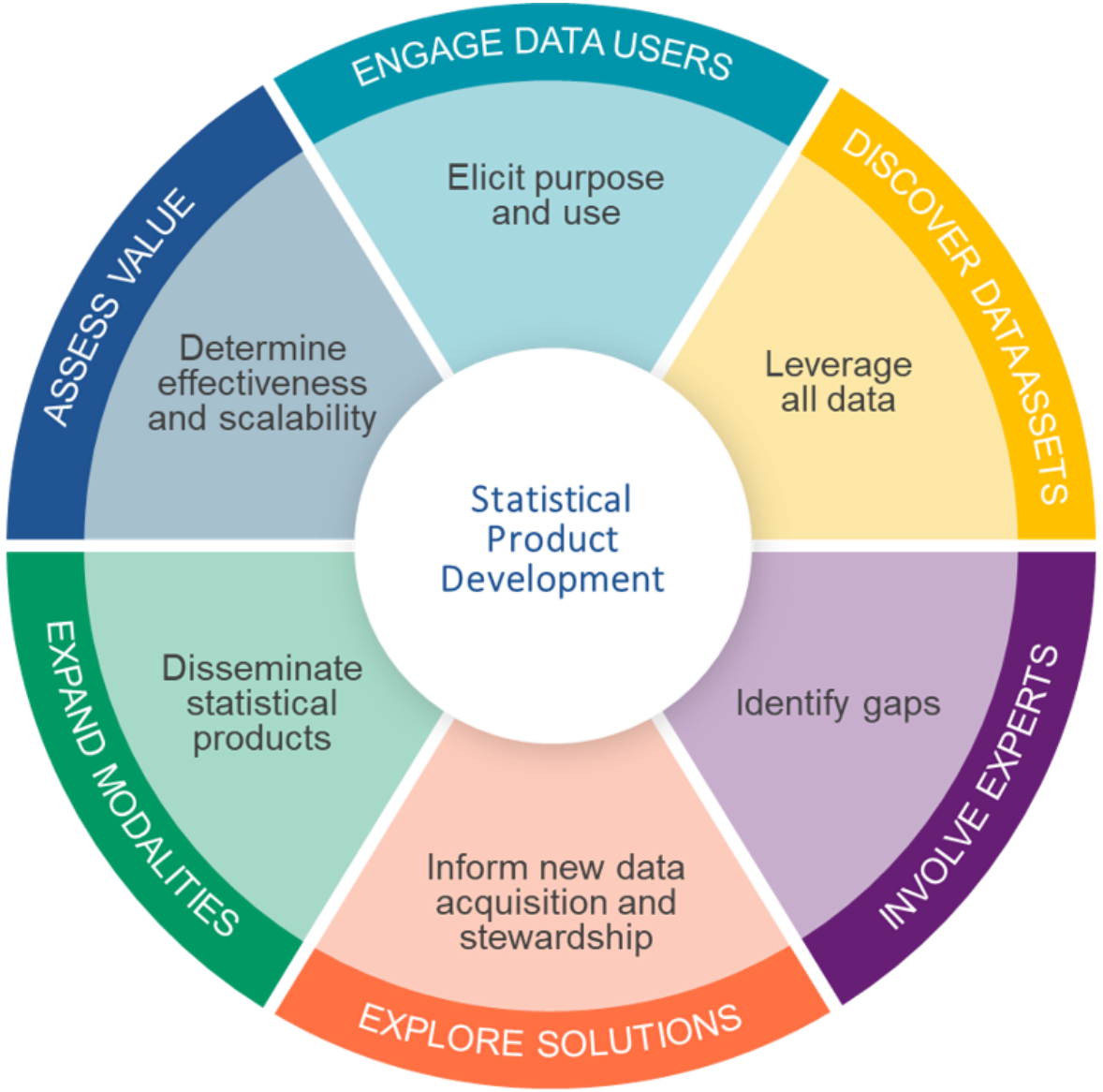
Adding the missing pieces of income to measure economic health

The Tribal GDP Research Project

1. Project was community-directed
2. Tribal GDP data are not currently available
3. Per Capita Income is often a substitute but may miss other sources of income flows
4. These data may allow for annual measures

The Tribal GDP Research Project

U.S. Census Bureau's Statistical Product First Cycle



Engage data users

Which **statistics do stakeholders need** and how will they use the information?

Stakeholders

Initial conversations:

United South and Eastern Tribes (USET)

National Congress of American Indians (NCAI)

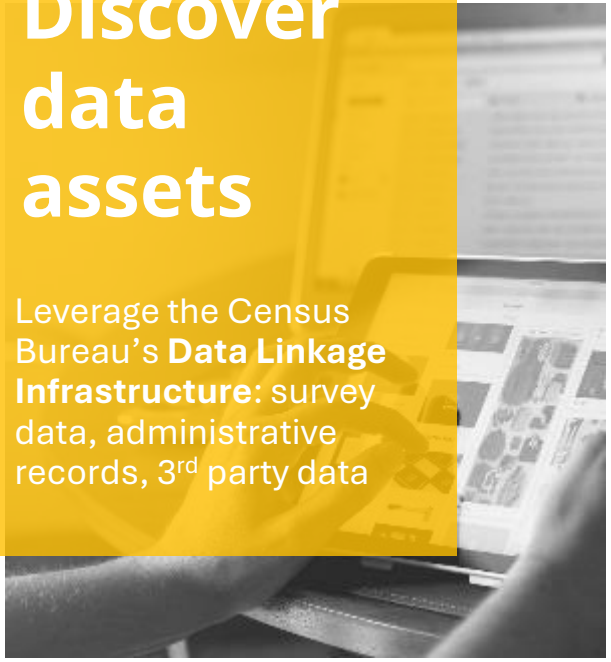
Geographies

Federally-recognized American Indian Reservations and Off-Reservation Trust Lands in the lower 48 states.

Data needs

Tribal nations need GDP-like information for effective planning and administration of programs.

Discover data assets



Leverage the Census Bureau's **Data Linkage Infrastructure**: survey data, administrative records, 3rd party data

Visit census.gov/datalinkage to learn more

U.S. Census Bureau Data Sources

Data Source	Data type	Puzzle piece
American Community Survey (ACS)	Survey	Large survey, granular stats, numerous topics including individual income
Internal Revenue Service (IRS) tax records	Administrative records	Wages, income
Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS)	Geographic	Geographic data on Tribal reservations
Longitudinal Business Database (LBD)	Administrative records	Business income

Involve experts

What are best practices in measuring GDP?

Census Bureau experts

Tribal Info Sessions

Professional conferences

Harvard Indigenous Data Sovereignty Symposium

What level of geographic granularity?

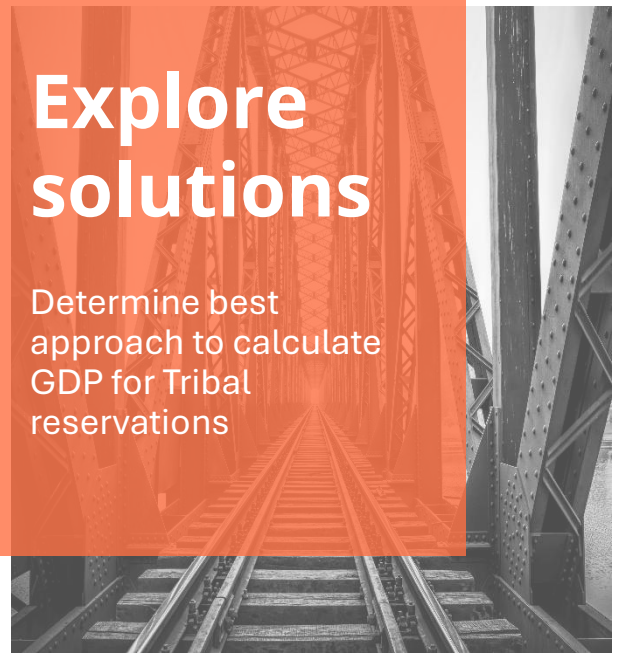
What is missing?

What is the required frequency?

Which GDP methodology?

Explore solutions

Determine best approach to calculate GDP for Tribal reservations

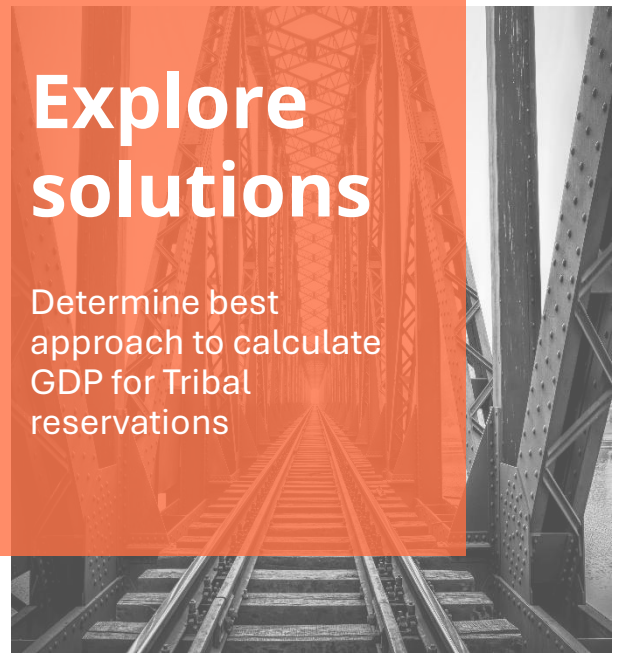


Gross Domestic Product (GDP) measured through Gross Domestic Income

1 Individual income flows + 2 Business income flows + Government income flows = 3 GDP estimate

Explore solutions

Determine best approach to calculate GDP for Tribal reservations



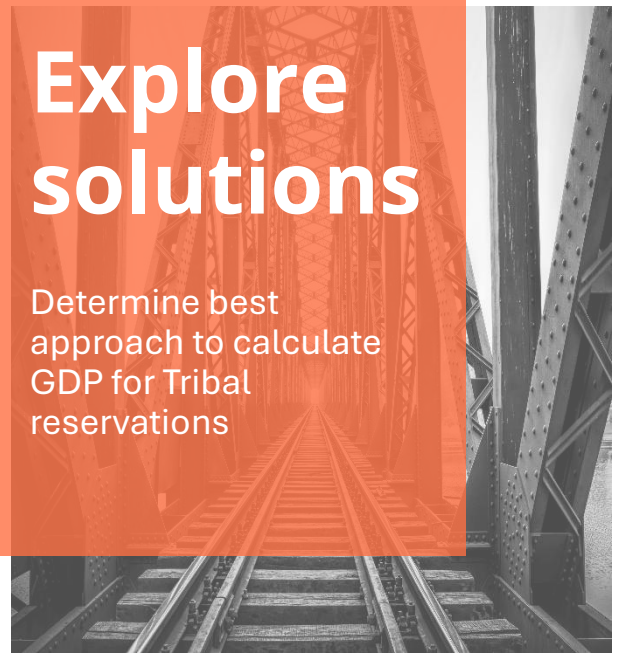
Begin by looking at individual income.

Connect information from surveys with information from tax forms.

Compare what we find for Tribal reservations to the rest of the United States.

Explore solutions

Determine best approach to calculate GDP for Tribal reservations



Outcomes of interest

Look at what share of people receive or file different tax forms, like W-2s.

Compare how much people say they earn in surveys with what their tax forms show.

Expand modalities

Produce statistics to meet stakeholder needs

On reservations, survey data and tax records often disagree.

Accounting for people's character-istics reduces mismatch.

Recommend combining survey data and tax records in Tribal areas.

Assess value

Start with phase 1, solicit feedback, and to continue to iterate

Pilot

- Individual income on Tribal reservations
- Research statistics: 2026

Evaluate

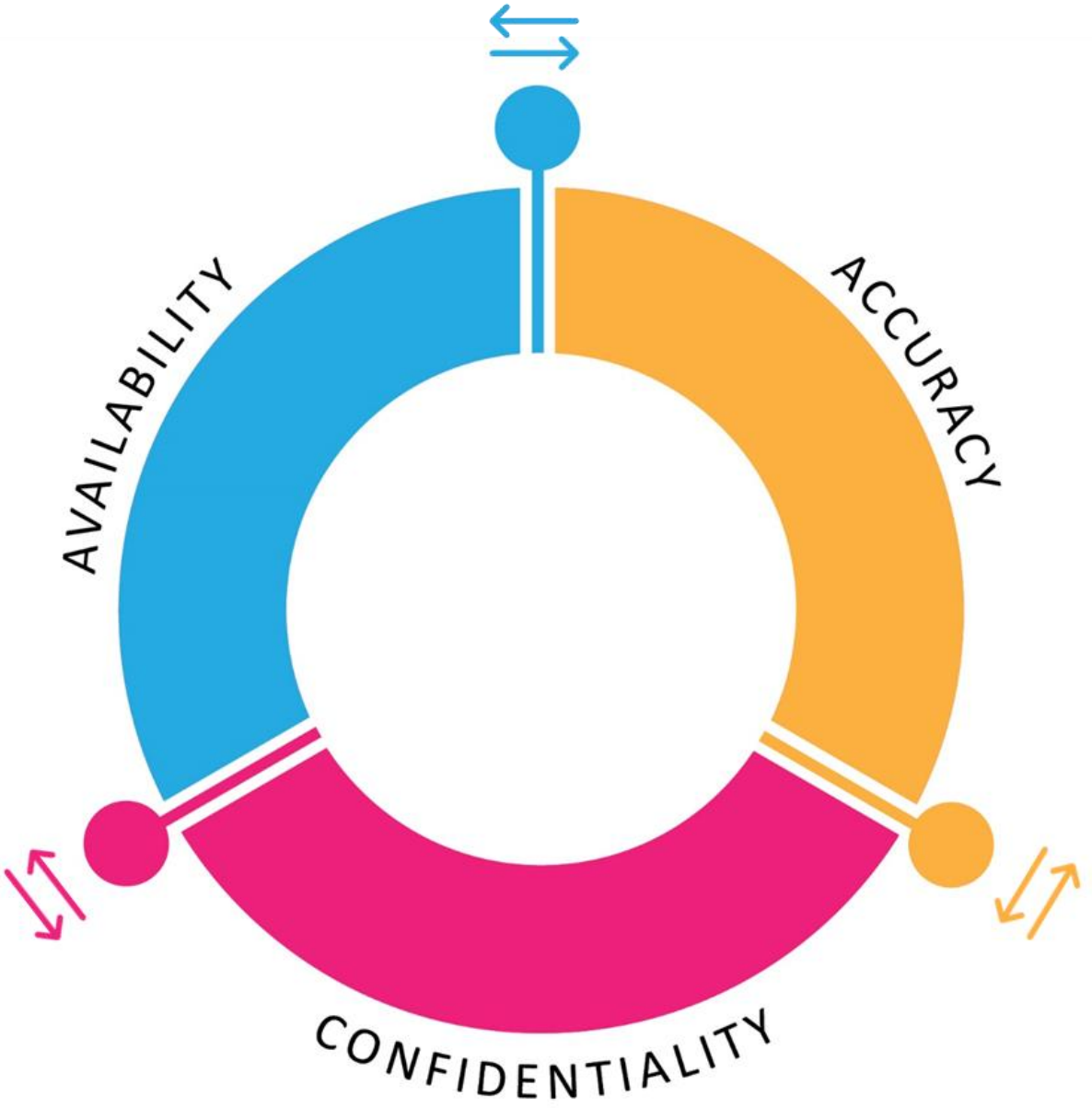
- Solicit feedback from stakeholders
- Explore new data sources and ways to improve measurement

Scale

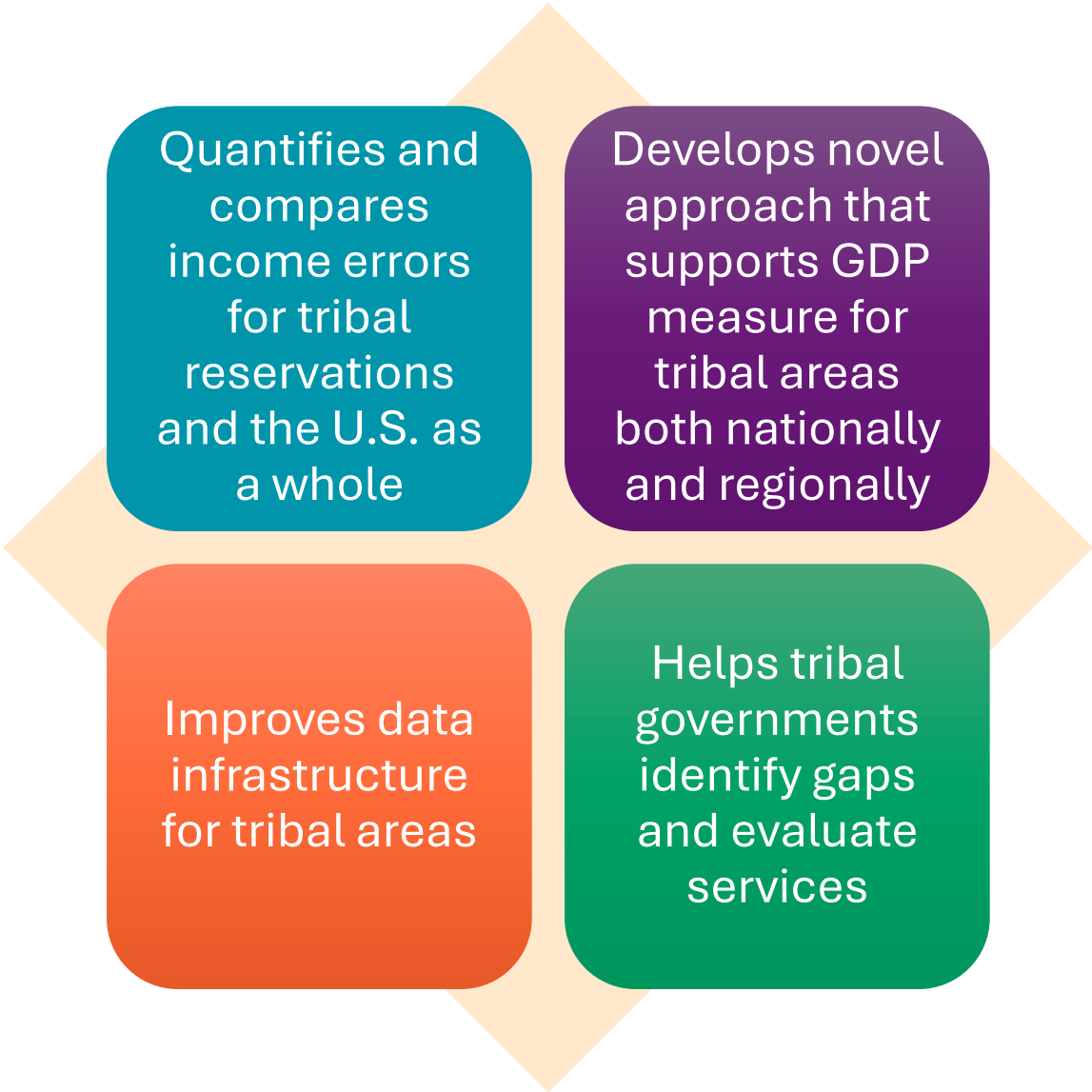
- Business income on Tribal reservations
- Tribal GDP-like measure
- Research statistics: 2027+

Assess value

Start with phase 1, solicit feedback, and to continue to iterate



How does this project advance the literature and support tribes?



Feedback?

- How would you use statistics on Tribal reservation
  1. individual income,
  2. business income,
  3. and GDP?
- What level of geographic granularity would be most useful?
- How can we disseminate the statistical products in the best way?

Contact Us:

OCIA.Tao@census.gov

Past and Upcoming Events:

Tribal Affairs Events

Resources

- **Data Sources**
  - 2021-2023 American Community Survey
    - https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs.html
  - Tax Year 2021-2023 IRS Tax Data
    - https://www.census.gov/topics/research/guidance/restricted-use-microdata/administrative-data.html
  - Boundry and Annexation Survey
    - https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/bas.html
    - Federally-recognized American Indian Reservations and Off-Reservation Trust Lands in the lower 48 states
- **Related Census Projects and Research**
  - Income Measurement
    - https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/income.html
    - https://www.census.gov/data/experimental-data-products/national-experimental-wellbeing-statistics.html
  - My Tribal Area
    - https://www.census.gov/tribal/
- **More Information**
  - Gross Domestic Income
    - https://www.bea.gov/data/income-saving/gross-domestic-income