

# Tribal Affiliation Data Collection

## Local Educational Agency Guidance and FAQ

March 2025

As part of the requirements under sections 19(7) and 94a(4)(h)(ii), all Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) will be required to submit tribal affiliation data identifying the self-reported tribal affiliation of students. The submission of tribal affiliation data to the state will begin with the Michigan Student Data System (MSDS) Fall 2025 General Collection.

For the purposes of this data collection, “tribal affiliation” shall refer to an individual with ties to one or more Indigenous Nations through citizenship, membership, enrollment, or descendency.

To support this collection, LEAs are encouraged to ensure all students have an opportunity to report their tribal affiliation information during the enrollment period leading up to the Fall general collection. The mandated collection will consist of responses to two questions:

**Question A:** Is this student tribally affiliated?

Responding to this question is optional, with blank as the default value.

The response options are “yes” or “no”.

**Question B:** If the student is tribally affiliated, what is their primary tribal affiliation?

Responding to this question is optional, with blank as the default value.

The option set includes the twelve federally recognized tribes that share geography with the state of Michigan and an additional option of “Not listed” (see sample tribal affiliation questionnaire)

Respondents select a single option from the option set. Depending on the capabilities of the data collection tool used by the LEA, a respondent who did not select “yes” on Question A would not be permitted to respond to Question B, or response values would be ignored.

LEAs should refrain from adding to or altering self-reported responses provided by students or their families outside of ignoring responses to Question B if the response to Question A was not “yes.”

LEAs should ensure that students and their families are provided an opportunity to update the information they provide about a student’s tribal affiliation on at least an annual basis to support possible changes in a student’s primary affiliation or desire to report.

# Tribal Affiliation Data Collection

## Sample Tribal Affiliation Questionnaire

*NOTE: Responding to this questionnaire is optional. The information collected will support coordination and communication with Tribal Nations and help the district determine its eligibility to apply for additional funding to support Indigenous learners.*

Student Full Legal Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*For this data collection, tribal affiliation refers to an individual with ties to one or more Indigenous Nations through citizenship, membership, enrollment, or descendency.*

**Question A: Is this student tribally affiliated?**

- Yes, the student is tribally affiliated**
- No, the student is not tribally affiliated**

**Question B: If the student is tribally affiliated, what is their primary tribal affiliation?**

*(Choose only one)*

- Bay Mills Indian Community**
- Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians**
- Hannahville Indian Community**
- Keweenaw Bay Indian Community**
- Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians of Michigan**
- Little River Band of Ottawa Indians**
- Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians**
- Match-e-be-nash-she-wish Band of Pottawatomi Indians of Michigan**
- Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi**
- Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians**
- Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan**
- Sault Ste Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians**
- Not Listed**

# **Tribal Affiliation Data Collection**

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### **IS THIS NEW DATA COLLECTION FOR NEW STUDENTS ONLY OR FOR ALL STUDENTS?**

The tribal affiliation data collection is an added demographic value for all students. Returning students, as well as newly enrolled students must be given an opportunity to report their primary tribal affiliation. Reported values must be submitted to the state as part of the Michigan Student Data System General Collections.

### **WHAT IF THE STUDENT OR FAMILY DOES NOT PROVIDE THE INFORMATION?**

There are multiple reasons why a student or family may decide not to provide their tribal affiliation and are not required to do so. LEAs should not pressure students and families to share their affiliations. They also should not fill out a student's tribal affiliation on the student's behalf if the actual student or family chooses not to provide the information.

### **CAN WE USE INFORMATION FROM THE TITLE VI 506 FORM INSTEAD?**

LEAs with Title VI Indian Education programs should refrain from using data provided by families as part of the Title VI program enrollment for this data collection. In many cases, the tribe the student affiliates with listed on the Title VI 506 form may be the same tribe the student identifies as their primary affiliation for this data collection; however, there are times when that may not be true.

Additionally, some students may be affiliated with one or more tribes but still not meet the eligibility criteria for Title VI programs. Therefore, LEAs must ensure that all students have an opportunity to report their tribal affiliation separate from any specific program enrollment.

### **CAN STUDENTS CHANGE OR UPDATE THEIR TRIBAL AFFILIATION INFORMATION?**

LEAs should allow students to report or update their tribal affiliation at least once each school year. Many factors impact a student's or a family's willingness to share their tribal affiliation, and the specific tribe to which a student might identify as their primary affiliation can also change. Therefore, LEAs should allow tribal affiliation data to be updated at least annually.

## **DO STUDENTS NEED TO PROVIDE DOCUMENTATION TO SUPPORT THEIR SELF-REPORTED TRIBAL AFFILIATION?**

No. For this data collection, LEAs should not require additional documentation from students or families to prove their self-reported tribal affiliations. While some programs, such as Title VI Indian Education programs or Johnson-O'Malley programs, may require students and families to provide additional documentation supporting their reported tribal affiliations, such documentation is not required for this data collection.

## **DOES A STUDENT NEED TO IDENTIFY AS NATIVE AMERICAN OR ALASKAN NATIVE FOR THEIR RACE TO REPORT A TRIBAL AFFILIATION?**

No. Students do not need to identify as Native American or Alaskan Native to report a tribal affiliation. Tribal affiliation and race or ethnicity are different components of an individual's identity. Tribal affiliation is a distinct identifier reflecting a connection to a sovereign Indigenous Nation, not a specific race or ethnicity. As a result, there may be instances where an individual might identify as tribally affiliated but not Native American or Alaskan Native.

## **CAN LEAS PROVIDE ADDITIONAL TRIBAL AFFILIATION VALUES FOR STUDENTS TO SELECT BEYOND THOSE IDENTIFIED FOR USE BY THE STATE?**

Based on local circumstances and the capacity of data systems used by a district, additional tribal affiliation values can be provided for students to select from. Vendors may already configure some student information systems to collect additional values supporting all 574 federally recognized tribes and numerous other state-recognized or terminated tribes.

If districts elect to collect additional tribal affiliation values, they will need to translate them to align with the current list of values available in the Michigan Student Data System when they submit their data. The Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) and the Michigan Department of Education will monitor the data submitted by districts and work collaboratively with Indigenous Nations to determine if additional values need to be added to the list used by MSDS in future years.

## **WHAT ADDITIONAL FUNDING MIGHT DISTRICTS BE ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR BASED ON THEIR TRIBAL AFFILIATION DATA?**

Please see the [Funding](#) page of the [MDE Indigenous Education website](#) for a listing of some of the funding sources available for Indigenous learners. Individual funding sources may have specific eligibility requirements in addition to self-reported tribal affiliation data. Districts are encouraged to check out these resources and contact the Tribal Nations to which their students affiliate, to explore additional opportunities to support Indigenous learners in their buildings.