



Breast Cancer Programs for Native Communities in Washington’s Peer States

The 2023 Legislature directed WSIPP to study breast cancer-related programming for Native American women in Washington’s peer states. This programming includes breast cancer prevention and education programs and post-diagnosis resource and support programs, led by states, tribes, or collaborations between states and tribes. In addition, the legislature directed WSIPP to review the evidence for the identified programs.

Background

Breast cancer mortality rates for American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) women in Washington are high relative to most other racial/ethnic groups despite comparable incidence rates. Limited access to screening and treatment, as well as mistrust and cultural barriers, may discourage preventive care and follow-up treatment.

Findings

- Most tribal clinics are not able to offer in-house screening or cancer treatment, requiring AIAN women to access these services from non-tribal providers.
- **All states and some tribes or indigenous-led organizations receive federal grants for breast cancer outreach, education, and screening** for low-income, uninsured women. State programs vary in how grants are used to reach AIAN communities.
- **We identified few state- or tribal-led organizations with post-diagnosis supports or resources** for AIAN women. Some organizations offer treatment navigation, access to traditional native health practices, or programs to honor breast cancer survivors.

Limitations

This report may not be a comprehensive account of programs. Our summary is based on information from contacts in peer states or documented online. WSIPP’s assignment allowed limited time for trust-building, likely impacting response rates from tribal health organizations.

Peer State Prevention Activities (focusing on AIAN women)



Note:
Counts reflect number of organizations reporting each activity type. (+) indicates research evidence supports use of activity. (*) indicates more evidence is needed.

Assignment Details

Assigned in 2024 Legislative Session
[ESSB 5950](#), Operating Budget
[Full report available on WSIPP’s website](#)
Project lead: Rebecca Goodvin
Rebecca.Goodvin@wsipp.wa.gov
360.664.9077