



White Earth Nation Population Projections

In 2012-2013, Minnesota Chippewa Tribe (MCT) contracted with Wilder Research to conduct a study and produce population projections for MCT as a whole as well as for the six member Bands: Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, Grand Portage, Leech Lake, Mille Lacs, and White Earth. In 2013-2014, MCT again contracted with Wilder Research to update the existing projections and to add an additional alternative enrollment criteria scenario to the study.

The purpose of this study was to help MCT and its member Bands better understand population trends, and specifically understand the tribe's population trajectory under: the current tribal membership criteria (1/4 blood quantum of MCT blood, scenario 1) and proposed alternative criteria used to determine tribal membership eligibility. The alternative criteria under consideration are:

- to allow other Chippewa/ Ojibwe blood from non-MCT federally recognized tribes and Canadian First Nations to count toward the requirement of 1/4 MCT blood quantum (scenario 2),
- to allow blood from any federally recognized American Indian tribes and Canadian First Nation to count toward the requirement of 1/4 MCT blood quantum (scenario 3),
- to reduce the blood quantum criteria to 1/8 MCT blood (scenario 4), or
- to use lineal descent from the 1941 MCT base roll (instead of blood quantum) to determine enrollment eligibility.

Population projections through the end of this century were completed for each of these scenarios for MCT and for each Band.

This report summarizes the findings of this study for White Earth Nation, which was developed under a separate contract directly between White Earth and Wilder Research. More detailed information about the study methodology and results for the other five MCT Bands is available in the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe Population Projections Methodology Report and Minnesota Chippewa Tribe Population Projections Summary Report, which can be found at www.wilderresearch.org.

Key findings

- The overall population of White Earth will decline steeply by the year 2098 under the current enrollment criteria (1/4 MCT blood quantum, scenario 1).
- This population decline will also be accompanied by a substantial aging of the population. Over 40% of MCT members will be age 65+ by the later part of this century (under scenario 1), compared with just over 20% in 2013. This significant aging of the population will have an impact on the characteristics and operations (i.e., member programming and service needs) of MCT and White Earth Nation. (Just over 10% of the White Earth population would be age 65+ by 2098 under scenario 5, which uses lineal descent as the enrollment criteria.).
- All of the scenarios using 1/4 MCT blood quantum (scenarios 1, 2, and 3) will result in population declines over the remainder of this century.
- The adjusted fertility rate for the population is low (1.235 children per woman's lifetime) under the current enrollment criteria. A fertility rate of approximately 2.1 or higher (or other changes to the enrollment criteria) is needed to maintain or increase population size.
- The scenario using 1/8 blood quantum (scenario 4) results in a reduction in population by about 40 percent by the year 2098.
- The scenario using lineal descent (scenario 5) results in a significant initial increase in population size and projections that the population could range anywhere from 75,000 to over 130,000 by the end of the century.

Study methods

As a part of this study, Wilder Research conducted a MCT member survey that included a random (representative) sample of Band members from each of the six Bands. One hundred and forty-one surveys were completed with White Earth members (along with 100+ surveys from members of each of the other 5 MCT Bands), which were used to understand the extent to which members have non-MCT American Indian and Canadian First Nations blood, in themselves and in their children.

Wilder Research worked with Gillaspay Demographics (Tom Gillaspay, independent consultant and former Minnesota State Demographer) to obtain information from publicly available sources such as the U.S. Census Bureau and Minnesota Department of Health to establish fertility and mortality rates in this population in order to produce reliable and valid population projections. We also worked with MCT to obtain and update the 1941 Base Roll to be used for the projections based on lineal descent.

Since the population for each of the six Bands was projected using the same survival and fertility rates, differences in projected population depend on the starting (2013) age and gender profile of the enrolled membership.

Scenarios 1, 2, and 3

Scenario 1: 1/4 MCT blood (status quo)

This scenario, which is the current criteria, is also the most restrictive scenario. Leaving the tribal enrollment criteria as is, the **projected enrolled population declines from just under 19,000 in 2013 to just over 2,200 in 2098**. This represents a decline of approximately 88 percent, which is much greater than even the loss of population for MCT overall (which is projected to be about a 78% decrease).

Scenario 2: 1/4 MCT + other Chippewa/Ojibwe blood

In terms of population size, this scenario is slightly less restrictive than the current tribal enrollment criteria (illustrated in scenario 1), because it allows Ojibwe/ Chippewa blood from federally recognized American Indian tribes and Canadian First Nations to be added to MCT blood, resulting in a combined blood quantum of at least 1/4.

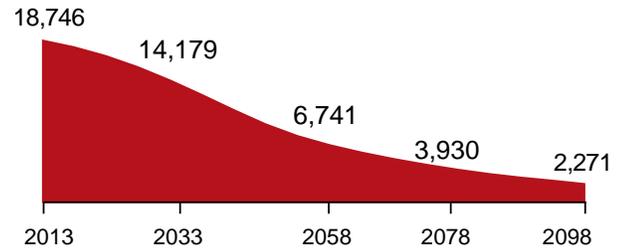
The lower end projection under this scenario results in a total White Earth population of 2,691 in the year 2098, which is only slightly higher than the projection of population size if the enrollment criteria is left as is. (The lower end projection assumes that starting in 2013 new births would be eligible for enrollment under the new criteria.) **The higher end projection, which assumes that individuals who are currently alive who meet this criteria would also be eligible to enroll, estimates a total White Earth population of 5,048 in the year 2098.**

Scenario 3: 1/4 MCT + other American Indian or Canadian First Nations blood

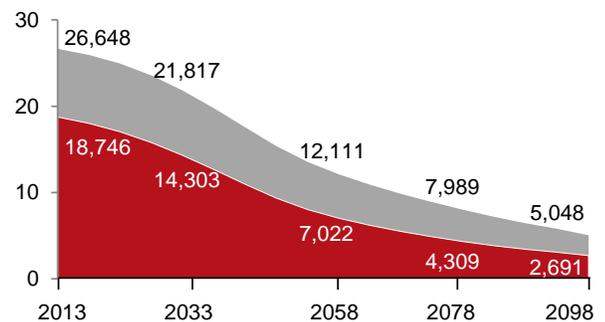
In terms of population size, this scenario is the least restrictive option of those that use the 1/4 blood quantum threshold, because it allows blood from any federally recognized American Indian tribes and Canadian First Nations to be added to MCT blood, resulting in a combined blood quantum of at least 1/4.

The lower end projection under this scenario results in a total White Earth population of 3,081 by the year 2098, which is just slightly higher than either scenario 1 or scenario 2. (The lower end projection assumes that starting in 2013 new births would be eligible for enrollment under the new criteria.) **The higher end projection, which assumes that individuals who are currently alive who meet this criteria would also be eligible to enroll, estimates a total White Earth population of 5,091 in the year 2098.**

Scenario 1: 1/4 MCT blood

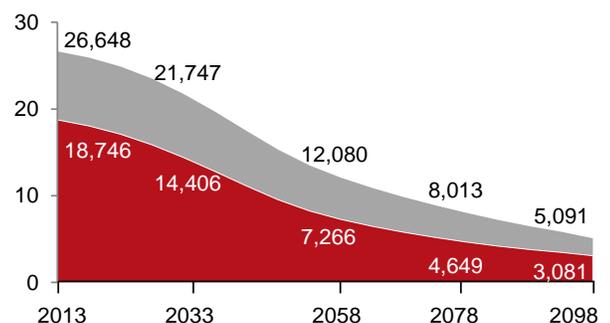


Scenario 2: 1/4 MCT + other Chippewa/Ojibwe blood¹



¹ The actual White Earth population if the enrollment criteria were to be changed to 1/4 MCT plus other Chippewa/ Ojibwe blood quantum is likely somewhere in between these two estimates.

Scenario 3: 1/4 MCT + any American Indian or Canadian First Nations blood²



² The actual White Earth population if the enrollment criteria were to be changed to 1/4 MCT plus other American Indian or Canadian First Nations blood quantum is likely somewhere in between these two estimates.

Scenarios 4 and 5

Scenario 4: 1/8 MCT blood

This is a much more liberal scenario than the first three scenarios under consideration, because it lowers the overall blood quantum requirement to 1/8 MCT blood. This change effectively increases the “adjusted fertility rate” of members (adjusted to reflect the proportion of children born to member mothers who are themselves eligible for enrollment), the **projected enrolled population will decrease by about half between 2013 and 2098, which is different than MCT overall, which is projected to have a stable population size between now and 2098 under this scenario.**

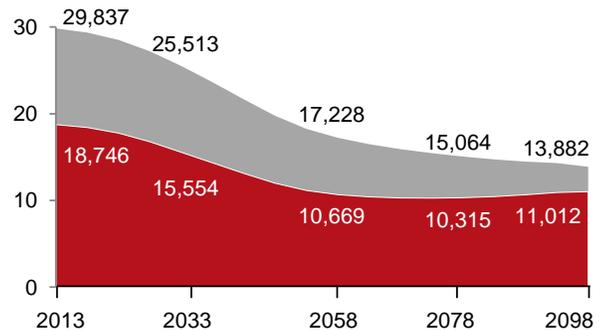
Scenario 5: lineal descent

This is the most liberal scenario than the others under consideration, because it does not use blood quantum, but instead would make anyone who is a lineal descendant from someone on the 1941 MCT White Earth Band Base Roll to be eligible for enrollment.

Under this scenario, the highest possible base population of White Earth as of 2015 would be just under 40,000. However, as with the other scenarios, not everyone who would become eligible to enroll if the enrollment criteria were changed would actually enroll, so the 2015 base population would likely be somewhere between the current population and this number.

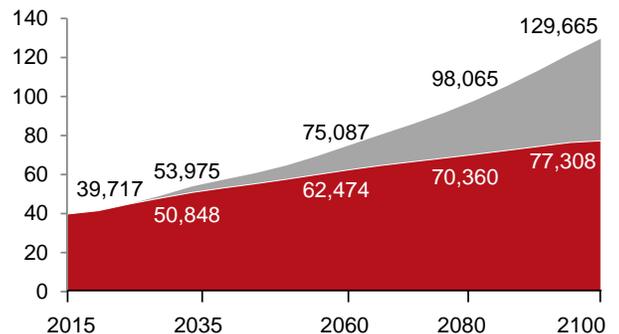
By the end of this century, the White Earth population under this scenario could range from a lower end estimate of just over 77,000 to a higher end estimate of nearly 130,000. This huge range is based on varying projections of fertility rates for this population over the next century.

Scenario 4: 1/8 blood quantum³



³ The lower end projection assumes that starting in 2013 new births would be eligible for enrollment under a 1/8 MCT blood quantum criteria. The higher end projection assumes that individuals who are currently alive who meet this criteria would also be eligible to enroll. The likely actual White Earth population if the enrollment criteria were to be changed to 1/8 MCT blood quantum is likely somewhere in between these two estimates.

Population projection: Lineal descent



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For more information

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