

Common Cultural Beliefs

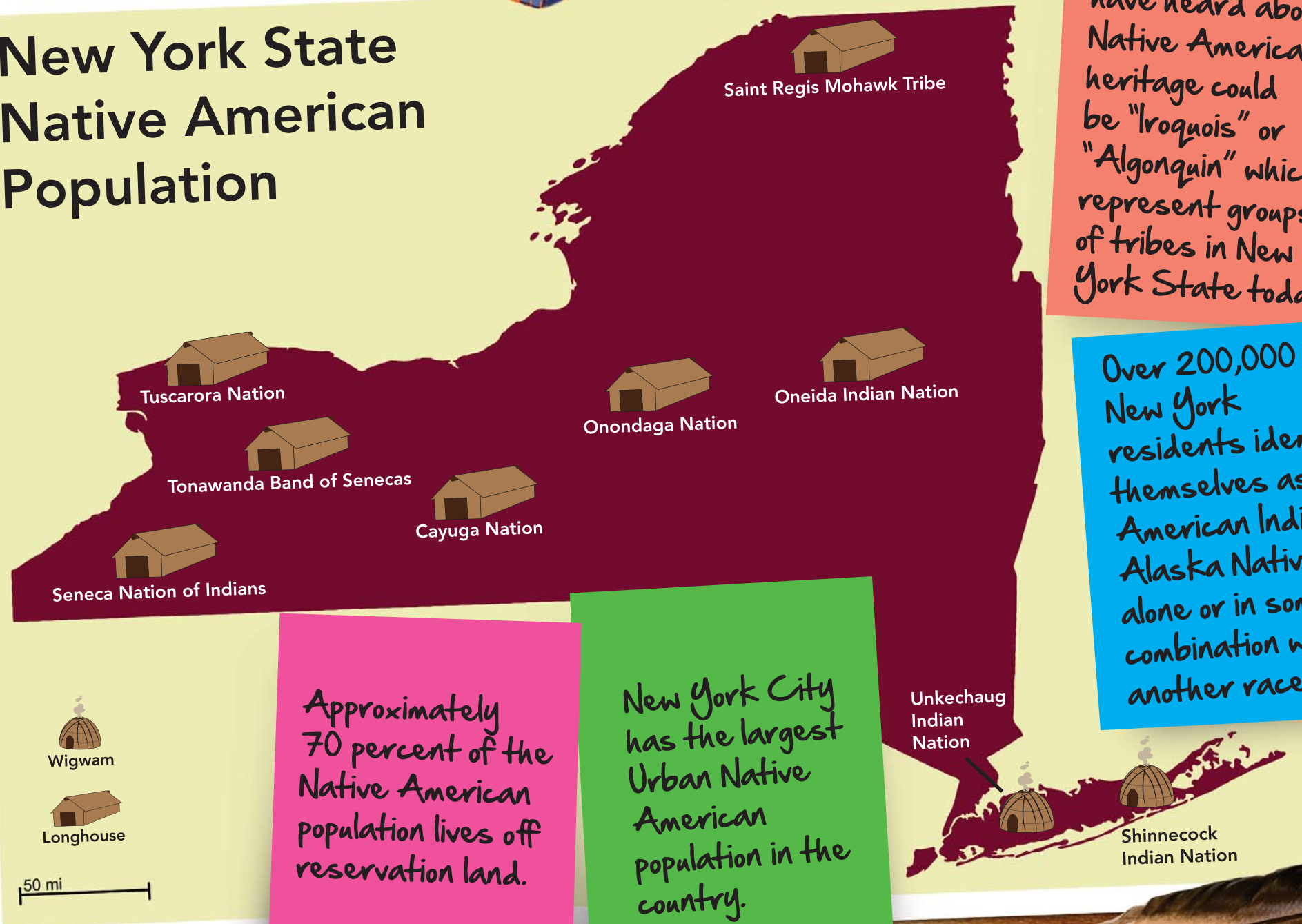
Many Native American beliefs are deeply rooted in their cultures with the belief that everything is sacred. A lesson can be found in all things and experiences and everything has a purpose. Love, honor and respect create the foundation of Native spirituality. Not only do Native Americans love, honor, and respect the Creator and Mother Earth, but also every living thing. Native American culture is about being in touch with oneself and everything around one. They are taught that every person has a role in the tribal community. In Native American culture it is common to believe that elders hold the answers and keep Native American culture alive. Many Native Americans believe that they have much to learn from their elders who are often honored and revered in Native American culture.

Facts

- ✱ There are nine Tribal Nations in New York State.
- ✱ Native Americans live throughout New York State in cities, towns, and villages.
- ✱ Native Americans have strong cultural ties to their nation/tribes.
- ✱ Native American tribes or Indian Nation governments determine who can be members of the tribe/nation.
- ✱ The Iroquois nations/tribes (Cayuga, Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Seneca & Tuscarora) of New York State traditionally lived in longhouses.
- ✱ The Algonquin nations/tribes (Unkechaug & Shinnecock) of New York State traditionally lived in wigwams.
- ✱ Most of New York's Indian population does not live on reservations.

Source: <http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/publications/Pub4629ProudHeritage.pdf>

New York State Native American Population



Words you might have heard about Native American heritage could be "Iroquois" or "Algonquin" which represent groups of tribes in New York State today.

Over 200,000 New York residents identify themselves as American Indian/Alaska Native alone or in some combination with another race.

Approximately 70 percent of the Native American population lives off reservation land.

New York City has the largest Urban Native American population in the country.

Source: <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-10.pdf>

Who is an "Indian Child"?

For special protections under the Indian Child Welfare Act, an "Indian Child" shall mean any unmarried person who:

- (a) Is under the age of 18, or is under the age of 21, entered into foster care prior to his/her 18th birthday, who remains in foster care, and
- (b) Either
 - ✳ Is a member of an Indian nation/tribe; or
 - ✳ Is eligible for membership in an Indian nation/tribe; or
 - ✳ Is the biological child of a member of an Indian nation/tribe and is residing on, or is domiciled within, an Indian reservation.

* As defined by Section 2(36) of the Social Services Law

Each tribe determines who can be a member based on whether your parents or grandparents are, or were members of the tribe or nation.

For more information contact:

**New York State Office of Children & Family Services
Bureau of Native American Services**

295 Main Street, Suite 545
Buffalo New York 14203
Phone: 716-847-3123
Fax: 716-847-3812
<https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/nas>

United National Indian Tribal Youth
www.unityinc.org

Center for Native American Youth
www.cnay.org/Home.html

For more Youth in Care resources, visit: www.YouthInProgress.org

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 Need to Know series:

Are you a
**Native
American**
Youth in Care?

Who do you contact to find out?

How do you know if you are Native American?
If your parents or grandparents are, you might be too.

OCFS Native American Services (716-847-3123) can help you locate your tribe/nation so that you can determine if there are additional benefits available to you.

If you are Native American, you could be eligible for benefits like...

Education: You may be eligible for scholarships, grants, and financial support.

Health: You may be entitled to medical, dental, and vision care.

Other tribal benefits: Each tribe/nation has different benefits for its members.

Are you or do you know someone who is Native American?
Has a family member ever mentioned that they belong to a tribe or nation?
This pamphlet has been designed to help Native American youth in care. It may help you determine if you are Native American and why is it important that you know.