

## **ABSTRACT SUBMISSION**

### **Presentation Name:**

Native American Women in the Workforce: Understanding Their Experiences and Challenges

### **Presenter:**

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### **Abstract:**

For the past decade, McKinsey & Company has released an annual “Women in the Workplace” report, exploring the workplace experiences of women in the United States. Recent reports have included women of color but excluded Native American women in the disaggregated data by racial/ethnic identity. This omission creates the misleading impression that Native American women are not engaged in professional employment. However, nearly 70% of single- and multi-racial Native American women aged 25-54 are actively employed, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The pervasive lack of effort in collecting and reporting relevant data on Native American women contributes to their ongoing erasure and marginalization.

To address the lack of data representation, a 2025 survey was conducted to examine the workforce experiences of Native American women. The survey was part of a mixed-methods approach informed by Indigenous methodologies and guided by the CARE Principles for ethically handling Indigenous data. The theoretical frameworks of settler colonialism and Indigenous feminism were used to analyze factors influencing the workplace experiences of Native American women.

The survey inquired about programs they participated in to develop job skills, such as Career and Technical Education courses in high school, and cultural practices like coming-of-age ceremonies to strengthen their identity to overcome challenges in the workplace. The survey also highlighted Native American women’s motivations and desires to work, their experiences with microaggressions and discrimination, and the importance of building relationships with allies and mentors.