

Conference Summary

Britnee Johnston

2025 Freedom and Justice Conference

San Juan, Puerto Rico

July 31-August 2, 2025



It was a pleasure to participate in the 2025 Freedom and Justice Conference held in San Juan, Puerto Rico. This annual conference is hosted by the National Economic Association, American Society of Hispanic Economists, and the Association for Economic Research of Indigenous Peoples. I appreciate receiving the Carter Travel Award to help provide this opportunity to learn from a group of scholars and professionals who are dedicated to economic and policy research of underrepresented groups.

For my presentation, I shared preliminary data results from my original survey on Indigenous women in the workforce. I was the only presenter who shared original data collection through a survey as most presenters shared statistical analyses from established datasets. I was able to receive helpful feedback from conference attendees, such as considering using Income Distributions and Dynamics in America (IDAA) to help with my income analysis by state, gender, and race. I was validated by other attendees about the high number of responses I have received and that it was okay if my overall sample did not exactly match my general population as long as I fully disclose upfront the differences. For example, my sample is highly educated compared to the general population.

I received feedback about thinking more about the financial stress and debt answers I received in my survey and determine the specific stressors. I also received some ideas of other organizations for more respondent outreach such as ONABEN, a Native American Business Network. I also met an Indigenous woman who was one of the lunch keynote speakers. She runs an organization that had conducted a large widespread Native

American survey. It was nice to chat with her and learn about her experiences and connect afterwards about my survey.

A part of my presentation was about the work history of Native American women in the U.S. This included sharing how Indigenous women owned and worked in the lands, while leading their community's economy before settler colonialism. Settlers dismantled the status and roles of Indigenous women and girls because they were an economic threat to them. I could tell that sharing this historical information helped better inform about Native Americans to conference attendees. I also shared how there are over nine million Native Americans today. I also showed examples of the various job roles that Indigenous women are in based on the survey respondents' answers, including being a Scientific Operations Manager, Pediatrician, Data Manager, Big Game Biologist, Corrections Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Museum Director, and so on. It was fulfilling to feel like I was helping break down stereotypes with conference attendees.

Many of the other sessions were informative and I enjoyed hearing presentations about the Tribal self-governance of healthcare systems, the methodological problem of measuring racial disparities using suppressed data from Wonder and WISQARS, the gender and racial bias reduction in transcripts when a PSAT score is included, and the economic status of third-generation Asian Americans. There were also several Puerto Rican presenters discussing economic issues in Puerto Rico that were interesting to learn about since I did not know much about the area beforehand.

Overall, it was a meaningful conference experience to meet interesting people from all over the country who are interested in similar economic topics as me, to be able to practice sharing about my research findings, and receiving insightful feedback.