

# Red Lake Nation: Population Projections, Corrected

In 2022, Red Lake Nation contracted with Wilder Research to conduct a study and produce population projections for the tribe.

The purpose of this study is to help Red Lake Nation and its tribal citizens better understand population trends, and specifically understand the tribe's population trajectory under the current tribal membership criteria and alternative scenarios. Population projections through the year 2122 were completed under six different scenarios for tribal enrollment criteria. This report describes the study methods and detailed results of the population projections completed by Wilder Research. We addressed the following research questions:

- What size will the population of Red Lake Nation be now and through the next 100 years if the current tribal enrollment eligibility criteria (1/4 blood quantum of Red Lake Nation blood, Scenario 1) are maintained?
- What would the size of the Red Lake Nation population be from now through the next 100 years if the tribal enrollment eligibility criteria were changed to allow other Chippewa/Ojibwe blood from non-Red Lake federally recognized tribes and Canadian First Nations to count toward the requirement of 1/4 blood quantum (Scenario 2)?
- What would the size of the Red Lake Nation population be from now through the next 100 years if the tribal enrollment eligibility criteria were changed to allow blood from any federally recognized American Indian tribe or Canadian First Nation to count toward the requirement of 1/4 blood quantum (Scenario 3)?
- What would the size of the Red Lake Nation population be from now through the next 100 years if the tribal enrollment eligibility criteria were changed to allow 1/8 blood quantum from Red Lake (Scenario 4)?
- What would the size of the Red Lake Nation population be from now through the next 100 years if the tribal enrollment eligibility criteria were changed to allow membership for any lineal descendant from the original 1958 Red Lake base roll (**Scenario 5**)? We also considered what would happen if Red Lake Nation used a phased approach to changing from 1/4 blood quantum to lineal descent, either by reducing the enrollment criteria by 1/16 every three years until you get to lineal descent or by phasing in tribal descendants as members by age group (**Scenario 6**).

It is important to note that in 2019 Red Lake Nation changed the recorded blood quantum of all tribal members who are on the 1958 base roll to 4/4 Red Lake Nation blood quantum, and then the tribe also changed all of the blood quantum of these tribal members' children and grandchildren accordingly. We used the new blood quantum of all tribal members, as available in Red Lake Nation's current enrollment file, in this population projection.

This report summarizes the findings of this study. More detailed information is available in the Red Lake Nation Population Projections Corrected Methodology Report (May 2024).

## Key findings

- The overall population of Red Lake Nation is declining rapidly under the current enrollment criteria (1/4 Red Lake Nation blood quantum, Scenario 1).
- All of the scenarios using 1/4 blood quantum (scenarios 1, 2, and 3) will result in population declines over the remainder of this century and into the next one.
- The scenario using 1/8 blood quantum (Scenario 4) results in a slight initial increase in population size and projections that the population size will return to the current level near the end of this century and will start to decline around the beginning of the next century.
- The scenario using lineal descent (Scenario 5) results in a modest increase in population size and projections that the population could grow to 22,000 to 33,000 by early next century.
- The scenario using a phased approach (Scenario 6) results in the same ultimate outcome as Scenario 5 – a steep population increase. However, using a phased approach could help Red Lake Nation’s enrollment office and other tribal departments manage the influx of new members by phasing people in gradually over the next 10-15 years based on either blood quantum or age group.

## Study methods

As a part of this study, Wilder Research conducted a Red Lake Nation tribal citizen survey that included a random (representative) sample of 3,000 Red Lake Nation tribal citizens. Overall, 377 Red Lake Nation tribal citizens completed the survey.

Wilder Research worked with Professor Carolyn Liebler of Pika Insights (also from the University of Minnesota Sociology Department and Minnesota Population Center) to obtain information from publicly available sources such as the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to establish fertility and mortality rates in this population in order to produce reliable and valid population projections. We also worked with Red Lake Nation to obtain and update the 1958 base roll to be used for the projections based on lineal descent. More detailed information is available in the Red Lake Nation Population Projections Corrected Methodology Report (May 2024).

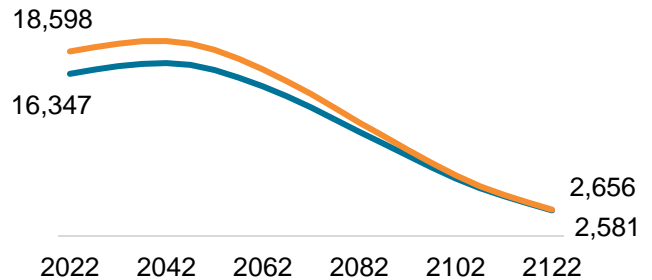
## Scenario 1

**Population projections for Red Lake Nation assuming no changes are made to the enrollment criteria, which is currently set at a threshold of 1/4 Red Lake Nation blood to be eligible for enrollment**

This is the most restrictive scenario since it limits enrollment to the current standard of at least 1/4 Red Lake Nation blood quantum to be eligible for tribal enrollment. Leaving the tribal enrollment criteria as is, the **projected enrolled population declines from just over 16,000 in 2022 to around 2,600 people in 2122**. This represents a very steep decline in the population.

The projection that includes individuals who are currently alive who meet this criterion but are not enrolled (based on the survey results, orange line) also results in a population of around 2600 people in 2122.

### 1. SCENARIO 1: 1/4 RED LAKE BLOOD QUANTUM



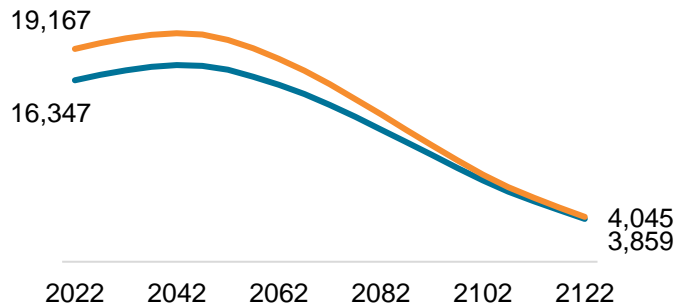
## Scenario 2

**Population projections for Red Lake Nation assuming changes are made to the enrollment criteria to allow all Chippewa/Ojibwe blood from a federally recognized American Indian tribe or Canadian First Nation (not just Red Lake Nation blood) to count toward the 1/4 threshold to be eligible for enrollment**

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 Red Lake Nation blood, resulting in a combined blood quantum of at least 1/4.

**The projection under this scenario (blue line) results in a total Red Lake Nation population of around 4,000 members in the year 2122**, which is only slightly higher than the projection of population size if the enrollment criteria is left as is. (The projection assumes that starting in 2023 new births would be eligible for enrollment under the new criteria.) **The projection that includes individuals who are currently alive who meet this criteria results in an additional 200 individuals in 2122 (orange line)**. The likely actual Red Lake Nation population if the enrollment criteria were changed to 1/4 Red Lake Nation plus other Chippewa/Ojibwe blood quantum is likely somewhere in between these two estimates.

### 2. SCENARIO 2: 1/4 RED LAKE + OTHER CHIPPEWA/OJIBWE BLOOD QUANTUM

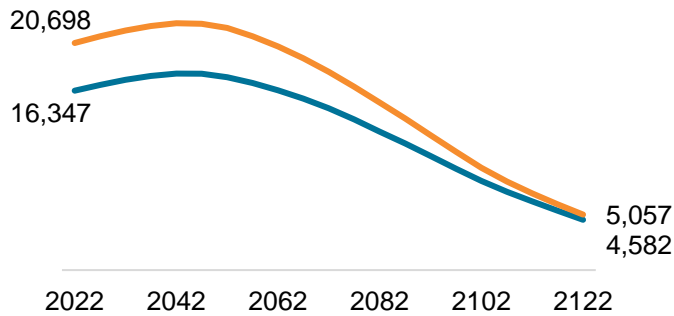


## Scenario 3

Population projections for Red Lake Nation assuming changes are made to the enrollment criteria to allow blood from any federally recognized American Indian tribe or Canadian First Nations (not just Red Lake Nation blood) to count toward the 1/4 threshold to be eligible for enrollment.

The projection under this scenario (blue line) results in a total Red Lake Nation population of nearly 5,000 people by the year 2122, which is slightly higher than either Scenario 1 or Scenario 2. (This assumes that starting in 2023 new births would be eligible for enrollment under the new criteria.) The projection that assumes that individuals who are currently alive who meet this criteria would also be eligible to enroll (orange line), adds an additional 475 people by 2122. The likely actual Red Lake Nation population if the enrollment criteria were to be changed to 1/4 Red Lake Nation plus other American Indian or Canadian First Nations blood quantum is likely somewhere in between these two estimates.

### 3. SCENARIO 3: 1/4 RED LAKE + OTHER AMERICAN INDIAN OR CANADIAN FIRST NATIONS BLOOD QUANTUM



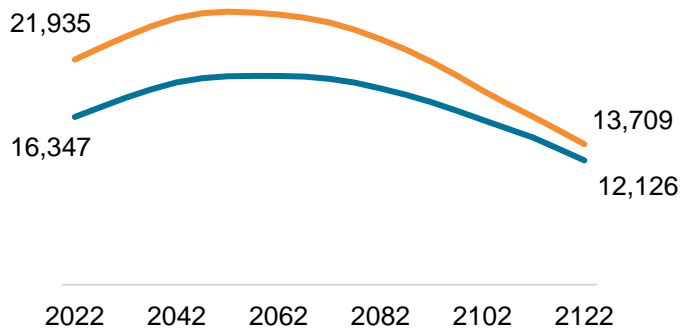
## Scenario 4

### Population projections for Red Lake Nation assuming the enrollment criteria is changed to 1/8 Red Lake Nation blood to be eligible for enrollment

This is a much more liberal scenario than the others under consideration because it lowers the overall blood quantum requirement to 1/8 Red Lake Nation blood. This change effectively increases the “adjusted fertility rate” of Red Lake Nation tribal citizens (adjusted to reflect the proportion of children born to member mothers who are themselves eligible for enrollment), the **projected enrolled population will have initial growth and then a decline after around 2060.**

The projection (blue line) assumes that starting in 2023 new births would be eligible for enrollment under a 1/8 Red Lake Nation blood quantum criteria and estimates a population of just over 12,000 in 2122. The projection that assumes that individuals who are currently alive who meet this criteria would also be eligible to enroll (orange line) estimates a population of about 13,700. The likely actual Red Lake Nation population if the enrollment criteria were to be changed to 1/8 Red Lake Nation blood quantum is likely somewhere in between these two estimates.

#### 4. SCENARIO 4: 1/8 RED LAKE BLOOD QUANTUM



## Scenarios 5 & 6

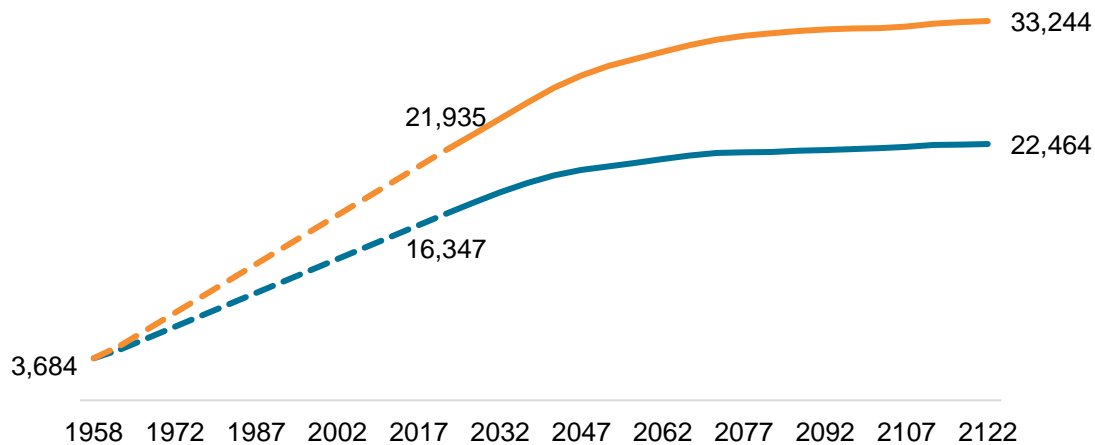
### Population projections for Red Lake Nation assuming the enrollment criteria is changed to allow any lineal descendant from the 1958 Red Lake base rolls to be eligible for enrollment.

Compared with the other scenarios under consideration, lineal descent would open enrollment to more individuals because it does not use blood quantum, but instead would make any individual who was born to someone on the 1958 Red Lake Nation base roll, as well as their children, grandchildren, and so on, eligible for enrollment.

Under this scenario, the highest possible base population of Red Lake Nation as of 2022 would be around 22,000. 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 2022 base population would likely be somewhere between the current Red Lake Nation population and this number. **By 2122, the Red Lake Nation population under this scenario could range from a lower end estimate (blue line) of just over 22,000 to a higher end estimate (orange line) of just over 33,000.** This range depends on whether currently unenrolled descendants, and their descendants, would choose to enroll.

If Red Lake Nation were to use a phased approach (Scenario 6) whereby the tribe moves from the current enrollment criteria (1/4 blood quantum) to lineal descent over a period of 10-15 years, the ultimate outcome will be the same in terms of population size. However, this phased approach may allow the tribe's enrollment office and other departments to more systematically manage the influx of new members.

#### 5. SCENARIO 5: LINEAL DESCENT FROM 1958 BASE ROLL



Note: The trajectory of population growth between 1958 and the present is unknown.

## Wilder Research

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#### For more information

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