

Foster Care Program Development – Recruitment and Retention of Native Resource Families

The Indian Child Welfare Act mandates the placement of American Indian/Alaska Native children in the homes of extended family or in Native foster homes if the child must be placed in out-of-home care. Few states have an adequate number of Native foster families to be in compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act. In addition, few states have a system in place to search and identify extended family members for Native children.

At the same time, although tribal child welfare programs are not mandated to follow the Indian Child Welfare Act, most tribes make every effort to place children with extended family members or other Native families in tribal communities. Some Native children are placed with non-Native families living on the reservation if the tribal child welfare program staff believes the family meets their criteria as a culturally competent family who will work collaboratively with the tribe as well as support reunification efforts with birth families.

But few resources exist for state or tribal child welfare agencies which outline steps, strategies, policies and procedures towards the recruitment of Native families to care for Native children. This consultation is designed to respond to requests from both state and tribal systems who may request technical assistance toward the development recruitment and retention plans for Native resource families.

For More Information:

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