

# Supporting Tribal Child Welfare Program Infrastructure to Improve Practice

NATIONAL  
CHILD WELFARE  
RESOURCE  
CENTER FOR TRIBES



*A Service of the Children's Bureau, a member of the National T/TA Network*

# **Presented By**

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# Purpose of Webinar

- ◆ Series of recommendations informed by the findings of the NRC4Tribes Needs Assessment
- ◆ Not less than one webinar per recommendation
- ◆ This webinar:
  - **Recommendation 1:** Support the strengthening of tribal child welfare program infrastructure to improve practice

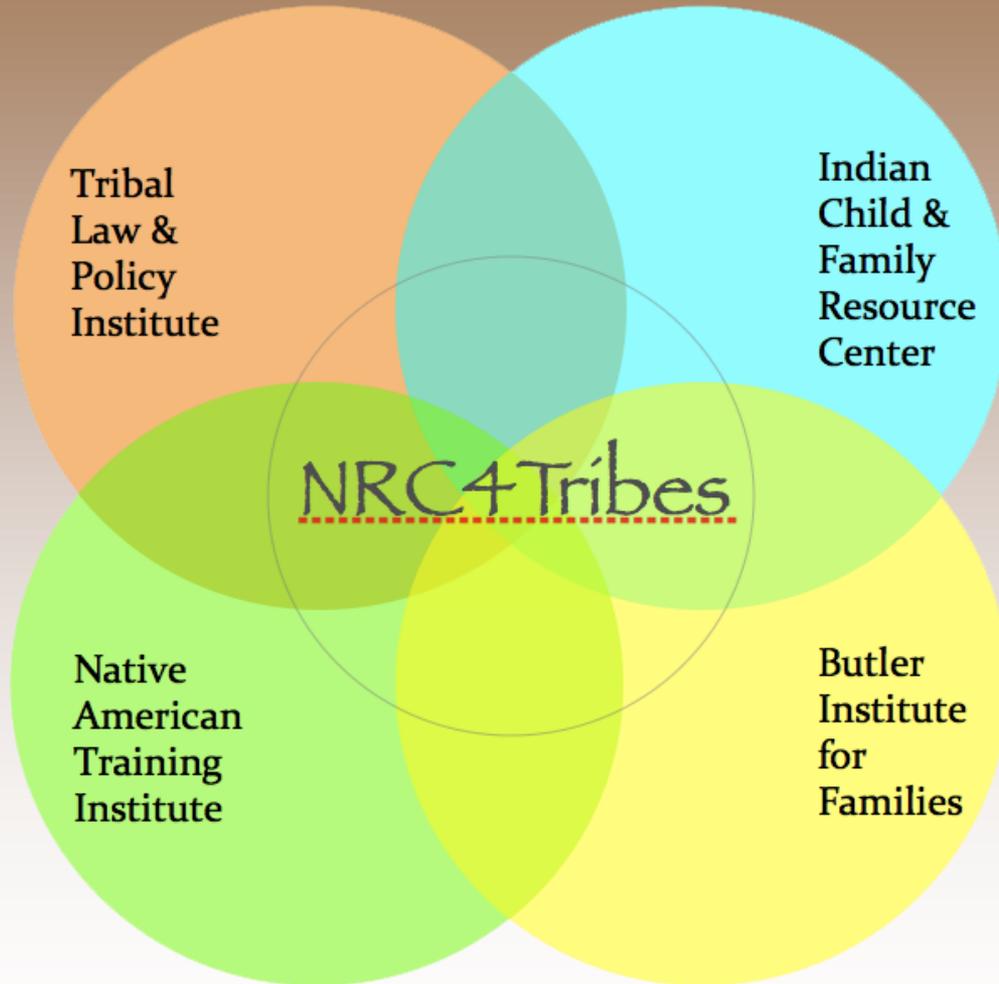
The National Resource Center for Tribes (NRC4Tribes) is part of the Children's Bureau Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) Network and provides training and technical assistance to support the enhancement of Tribal child welfare systems.

[www.NRC4Tribes.org](http://www.NRC4Tribes.org)



A Service of the Children's Bureau  
A Member of the T/TA Network

# The Partnership



# National Leadership

*A National Advisory Council*, comprised of twenty five tribal child welfare professionals, tribal leaders, and community stakeholders from around the country reviews plans and activities of the NRC4Tribes and the larger T/TA Network, provide recommendations regarding the Networks approach to serving Title IV-B funded tribal child welfare systems and improving practices with American Indians and Alaska Native children and families.

# The NRC4Tribes role in the T/TA Network

- The NRC4Tribes is not intended to be the *only* source of TA for Tribes.
- Tribes may access training and technical assistance through any of the national resources centers and implementation centers within the Children's Bureau national T/TA Network.
- The NRC4Tribes is the Network's focal point for coordinated and culturally competent child welfare training and technical assistance to Tribes.

# Needs Assessment Purpose

- **Listen** to tribal child welfare program staff, families and community stakeholders talk about program strengths, gaps and challenges.
- **Gather** relevant information, which can then be distilled into an accurate profile of the tribal child welfare system.
- **Inform Decisions** about types of services, administrative functions, data and information collection, program management and reporting.
- **Provide Information** about the training and technical assistance available to tribes.

# Needs Assessment Methods

## General Online Survey

- 85-items; checklists, multiple choice, open-ended
- 262 surveys completed by representatives of more than 100 tribes

## Tribal Director Telephone Interviews

- 31 tribal child welfare directors across 6 Children's Bureau regions (7 BIA regions)

## Tribal Stakeholder On-site Interviews

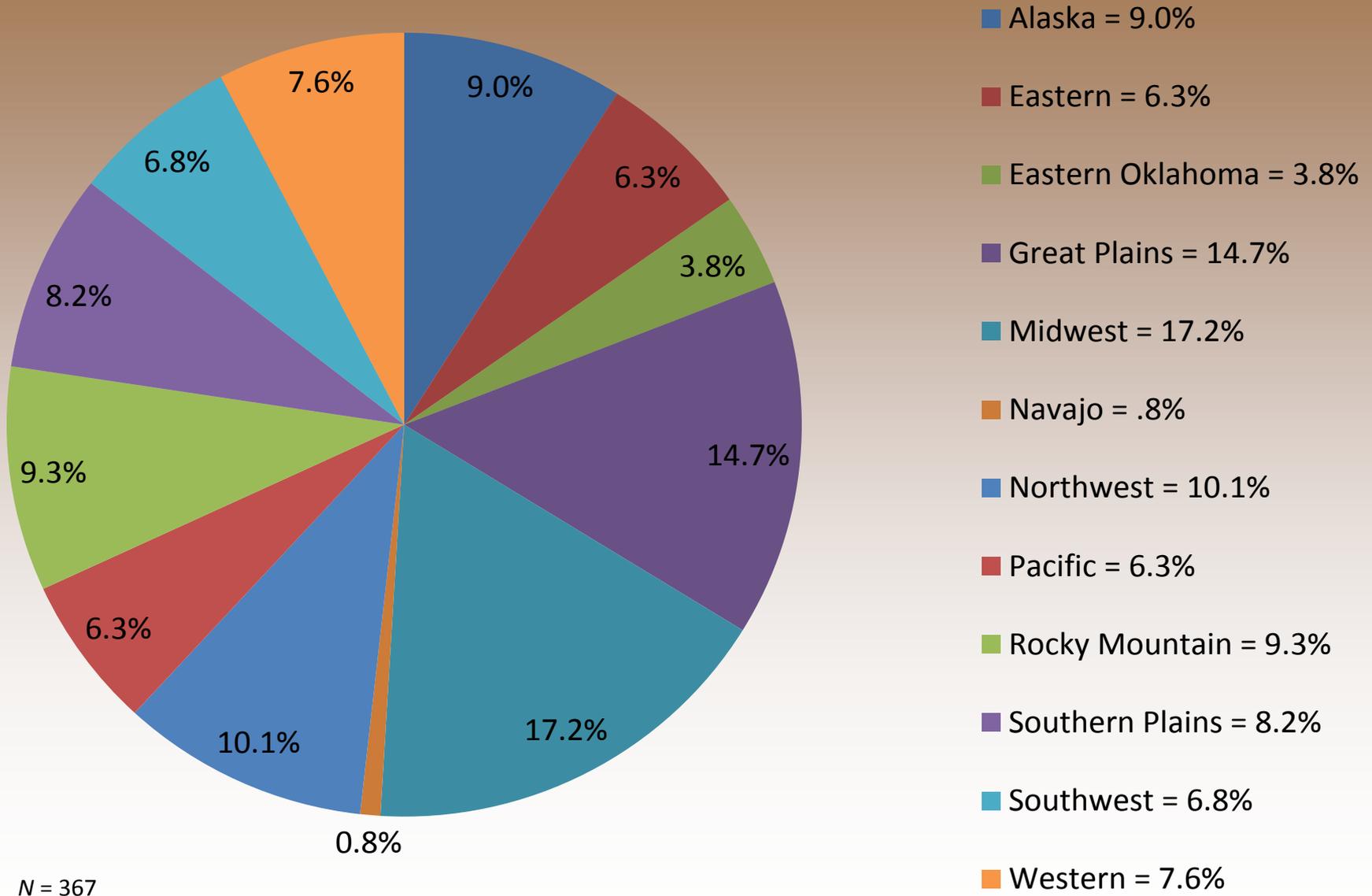
- 20 IV-B funded tribes were invited; 16 accepted
- 149 in-person interviews were conducted

A stratified random sampling process based on geographic region and size was used to select tribes to participate in on-site and telephone interviews.

# Needs Assessment Respondents

- 400+ individuals representing 127 federally-recognized tribes
- General Online Survey respondents: 42.8% involved with the tribal child welfare agency
- Interviewees:
  - 45.6% tribal child welfare staff
  - 17.4% foster parents and youth
  - 37% were other stakeholders

# Needs Assessment Participants by BIA Regions



# Tribal Child Welfare Program Strengths

- Approach to working with families

*“I would say just our knowledge of the local people is a strength. That would be a prevention in itself. And being able to find relatives in a timely manner.”*

- Characteristics of child welfare staff

*“We have a well educated and well trained staff who interact very well with the target population.”*



# Tribal Child Welfare Program Strengths

- **Available tribal services or resources**

*“We work collaboratively with state agencies and services agencies to ensure appropriate culturally based services.”*

- **Cultural understanding**

*“Obviously, child welfare is very important no matter what walk of life you are, but for the Native American folks, it’s about us re-establishing traditions and language and the family togetherness. It’s more about trying to stop genocide, if you will, and I think that’s the greatest strength of all the tribal programs, is what we’re actually trying to accomplish. That is what we fight for every day.”*

# Tribal Child Welfare Program Challenges

- **Lack of funding for operations and services**

*“I think money is a downfall and staffing and resources. Those are all of our bad areas. Foster care payments are hard, and our funds are limited so we can’t offer a lot of things that we want to make this a better program.”*

- **Lack of staff**

*“You might hear a lot of times, ‘we’ve only got one person.’ You have no idea what that is like, the impact of what that is like. I think it’s a barrier toward a better communication and any child welfare procedure, whether it’s strengthening from the beginning and working on a prevention road or if it’s working with a family that has children in custody. If you don’t have the staff then you’re limited.”*

# Tribal Child Welfare Program Challenges

- **Lack of prevention services**
- **Technology for data tracking and case management**
- **Collaborating with state or county child welfare departments**

*“Well, we try to work with the state but they seem to have their own agenda and it’s hard, it’s really hard to work with them because, I mean for various reasons, but it’s kind of a contentious relationship.”*

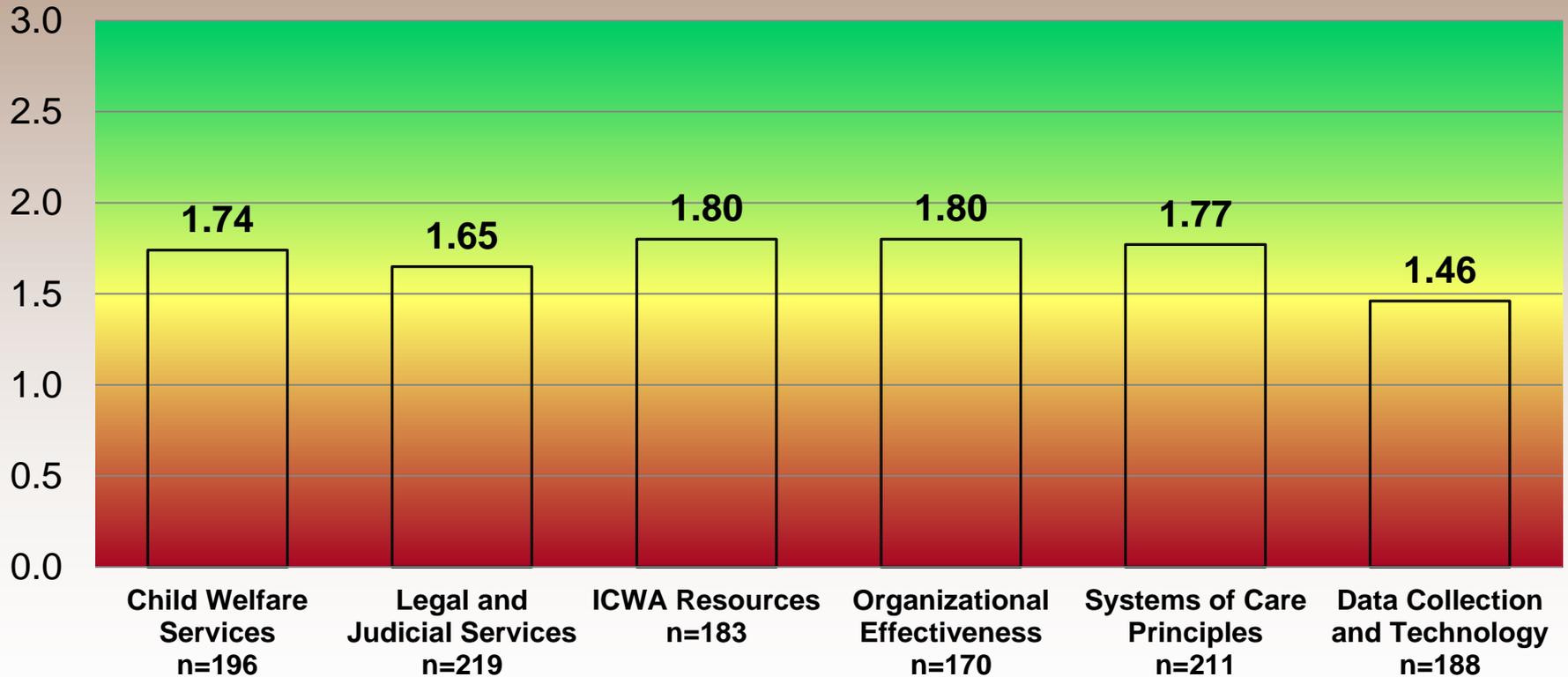
- **Accessing services and working with service providers**

*“We do live in a very rural area so I think that transportation is a huge barrier for us as far as our families having access to those services.”*

# TA Need Areas from Survey Respondents

1	2	3
Critical T/TA Needs Area	Moderate T/TA Needs Area	Strength Area (little need for T/TA)

Overall Mean Scores for T/TA Areas



# **A little about accessing T&TA through the T&TA Network**

- No wrong door
- The Training and Technical Assistance Network 2011 Directory is your friend
  - Downloadable at:  
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/tta/index.htm>

## How do I access T&TA?

- Call or email any of the contact numbers found in the Directory
  - Go to [www.ttaccportal.org](http://www.ttaccportal.org) and download the On-site T/TA Network Standard Request Initiation form
- you only have to complete **the first 3 pages** -



# National Child Welfare Resource Center for Tribes

*NRC4Tribes*

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# Lakota Oyate Wakanyeja Owicakiyapi: Lakota People Caring for Our Children

Request for Technical Assistance thru the  
Children's Bureau T/TA Network: Webinar  
Presentation on Feb. 6, 2012

# Background – The beginnings of LOWO's Child Welfare System

- ▶ LOWO is our tribal community's dream to exercise sovereignty over the lives of our most vulnerable children – abused and neglected.
  - ▶ A community planning group, Oglala Oyate Iwicakiyapi Okolakiciye (OOIO) envisioned the LOWO mission and vision beginning in 1998.
  - ▶ LOWO will serve children and families through a culturally based integrated service delivery system.
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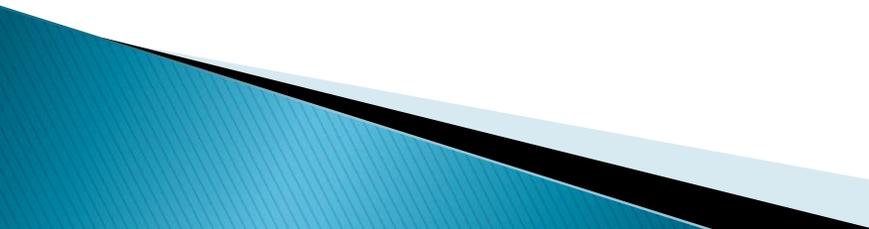
# Transforming to a Tribal-based Child Welfare Services System

- ▶ 2000: Casey Family Programs provided initial funding to convene tribal, state, federal and private child welfare service providers.
  - ▶ 2000 – 2003: Community planning meetings, Needs Assessment, infrastructure development, charter approved by tribal council and board of directors seated
  - ▶ 2006: LOWO assumes first caseload from CFP
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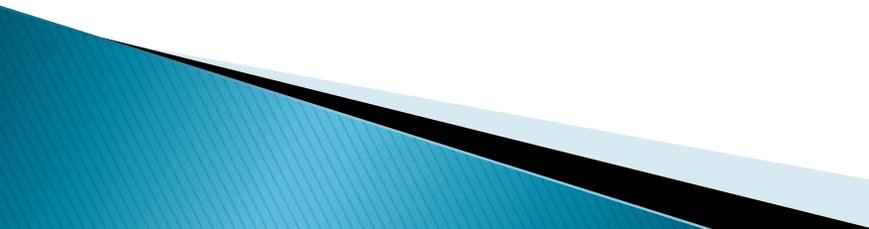
# Transforming to a Tribal-based Child Welfare Services System

- ▶ 2007: Tribal/State Agreement with South Dakota DSS/CPS for Title IV-E pass through funding is finalized
  - ▶ 2008: LOWO becomes a comprehensive child protection agency as it assumes caseload of SD-DSS/CPS when it closes its office. 15 full time positions are advertised.
  - ▶ 2008: PL 93-638 Child Welfare Assistance and Start-up Contracts are finalized.
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# Capacity Building – 2001 to 2012

- ▶ Board of Directors Governance policies and first board is seated.
  - ▶ Business Process Mapping for Integrated Services Plan – BIA, SD–DSS, ICWA, Tribal Court, CASA, CFP and Tribal Leaders
  - ▶ Practice Standards
  - ▶ Case Management Protocols
  - ▶ Oglala Lakota Practice Model
  - ▶ Technology Plan – data system
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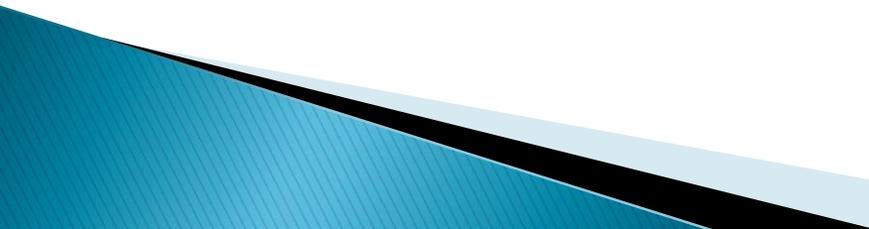
# Capacity Building continued...

- ▶ Child and Family Code development among key stakeholders such as LOWO, CASA, Cangleska, Tribal Law and Policy Institute, OOIO and Lakota cultural expert group.
  - ▶ Leadership training for key stakeholder managers
  - ▶ Community training opportunities in “Undoing Racism” and “Historical Trauma” to provide an understanding of power structures and historical events contributing to social ills of Lakota people.
  - ▶ Personnel Policies and Procedures, Financial Manual, Staff Training
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# Capacity Building continued...

- ▶ Funding opportunities through federal resources are sought. Compassion Capital Grant provides infrastructure development support (2006)
- ▶ Bush Foundation Grant provides support to create a Child Welfare Institute. We learned that we need to develop our core staff training curriculum materials before embarking on the CWI. Consultants hired to develop specific pieces of the training manuals, UM-Duluth. MN provides evaluation and assessment tools, cultural materials are developed by Richard Moves Camp, a respected healer. Work in progress (2009–2012)

# LOWO Request for Organizational Health Assessment

- ▶ LOWO Board of Directors approved a request from Director to seek TA through the Children's Bureau T/TA Network and National Resource Centers for Tribes
  - ▶ An initial request was submitted and approved through Kathy Deserly, NRC4Tribes and Steve Preister, NRC for Organizational Improvement
  - ▶ Steve and Kathy held an initial meeting with the LOWO Board of Directors
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# Organizational Challenges & TA Needs

- ▶ LOWO has experienced organizational “growing pains”
  - ▶ LOWO wants to improve its practice and service delivery through access to best practice information.
  - ▶ LOWO wants to improve organizational infrastructure in specific areas such as staff professional development, case management, board governance, resource development, financial management, sustainability and community outreach.
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# Organizational Challenges & TA Needs

## continued...

- ▶ LOWO wishes to improve its image in the community.
  - ▶ LOWO wants to assess its current practices and protocols in a comprehensive manner with staff, stakeholder agencies, schools, families, youth and tribal leadership
  - ▶ LOWO wants to plan for long term sustainability!
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# Organizational Assessment Planning Process

- ▶ LOWO management staff participated in several conference calls with NRC principals to discuss preparation tasks.
  - ▶ Stakeholders were identified for focus groups and individual interviews.
  - ▶ LOWO provided stipends for youth, foster families and kinship resource families for their participation. Meals provided at meetings.
  - ▶ NRC principals met with LOWO staff and key stakeholder participants to dialogue on needs during two on-site visits.
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# Work in Progress

- ▶ An initial draft report was shared with the LOWO Board of Directors.
  - ▶ Another on-site visit will occur in late February to meet with staff, board and all interested focus group and interview participants to share draft report.
  - ▶ A strategic plan will be completed with year by year technical assistance activities.
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# Hopes for the Future

- ▶ LOWO's organizational infrastructure will be improved to meet the challenges of the future.
  - ▶ LOWO staff will be empowered through increased in-put in refining case management practice.
  - ▶ LOWO Board of Directors will be empowered through increased awareness of board member roles and responsibilities.
  - ▶ The Oglala Lakota tribal reservation community will respond in a positive manner to improved service delivery.
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# Hopes for the Future continued...

- ▶ LOWO will serve Lakota families in a manner reflecting culture and professionalism.
  - ▶ LOWO will begin to see increased family reunification and preservation activities which ultimately impacts reduced numbers of children in care.
  - ▶ LOWO will serve as a technical resource for other tribal communities who may want to create their own child welfare agencies.
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# Our thoughts about the TA process..

- ▶ The method of requesting technical assistance through the T/TA network is vastly improved.
  - ▶ The formal request is written in coordination with lead NRC facilitators and the requesting organization.
  - ▶ The information gathering process is carefully planned and implemented ensuring productive participation and results. A long term TA plan provides assurance that the organization will receive the help it needs.
  - ▶ The Tribal Council and community are aware that LOWO is making improvements through this work!
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# Acknowledgements

We express our sincere appreciation to Steve Preister, NRC for Organizational Improvement and Kathy Deserly, NRC for Tribes and the Region 8 Administration for Children (ACF) for their work !

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# Assessing and Strengthening Tribal Child Welfare Programs

Steven Preister, Associate Director  
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for Organizational Improvement  
A Service of the Children's Bureau, USDHHS  
A Member of the TTA Network

# Overview of the Process

- Request for Technical Assistance from the Oglala Sioux Tribe's Child Welfare Agency – Lakota Oyate Wakanyeya Owicakiyapi (LOWO).
- Request: a comprehensive assessment of LOWO, staff, programs, and Board of Directors.
- Technical assistance available for Tribes who receive IV-E funds from the Children's Bureau's Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) Network.

# Overview of the Process (continued)

- Request is made to the Federal Regional Office, Administration for Children and Families (ACF), in this instance, Region VIII (Denver).
- Two of the TTA Network's National Resource Centers (NRCs) were authorized to conduct an on-site assessment:
  - The National Resource Center for Tribes (NRC4Tribes)
  - The National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement (NRCOI)

# Overview of the Process (continued)

- With LOWO's leadership, the two NRCs completed a written needs assessment.
- Also with the leadership, we developed a written Work Plan that includes:
  - A comprehensive assessment of LOWO, staff, programs, and Board of Directors.
  - Based on this Assessment, drafting a multi-year Strategic Plan with LOWO's stakeholders that utilizes TTA as needed, addressing six challenges and building on six strengths.

# Overview of the Process (continued)

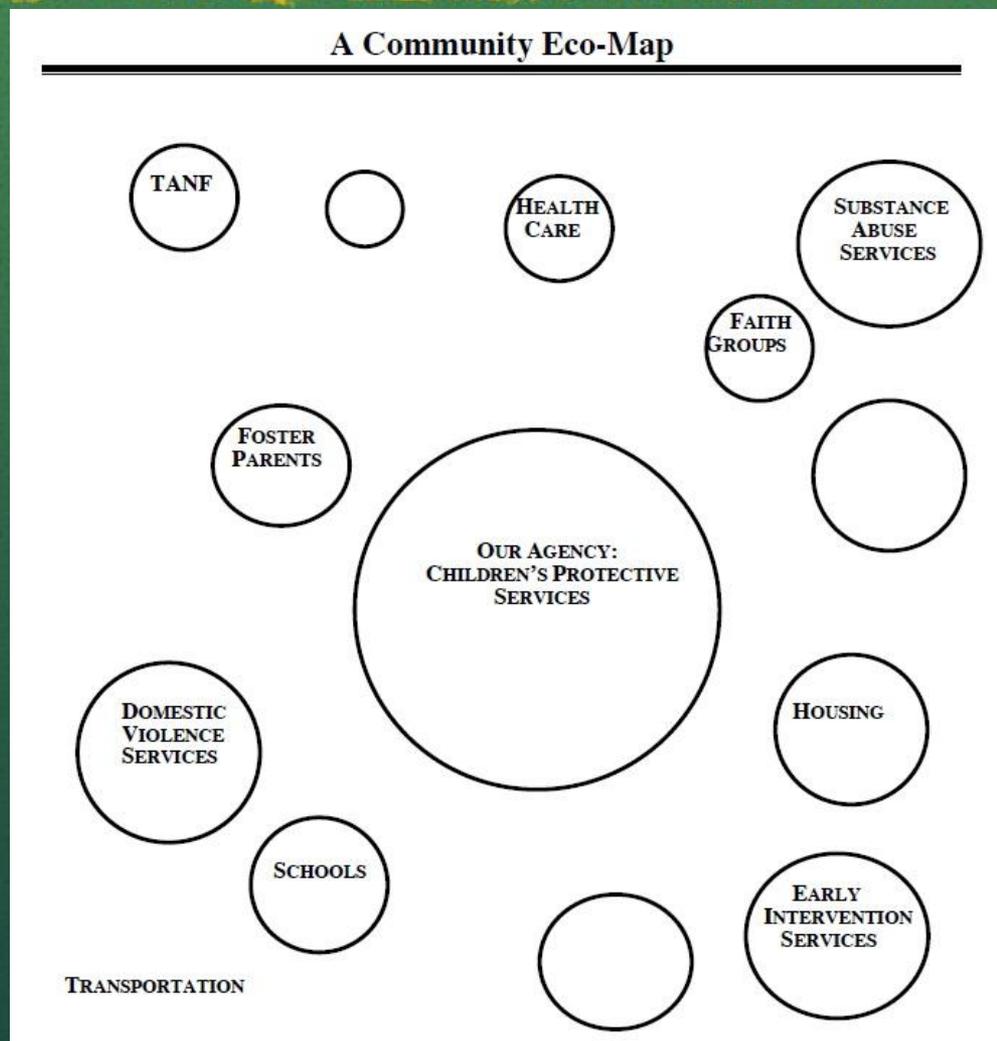
- The Work Plan, continued:
  - Prioritizing and sequencing of the goals of the Strategic Plan to define what LOWO will address in year one, year two, etc.
  - For year one goals, developing of detailed work plans.
- The Federal Regional Office approved the assessment, Work Plan, and technical assistance to be provided by the two NRCs.

# The Comprehensive Assessment

- Assessing Tribal child welfare Programs should always start by listening to critical internal and external stakeholders and asking many questions.
- In this way, the Assessment is really the assessment of the program's internal and external stakeholders, supported by the NRCs' expertise.
- An Eco-Map can be used to ensure you identify all key stakeholders and understand the program's current relationships with them.

# The Comprehensive Assessment (continued)

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# The Comprehensive Assessment (continued)

- If you want to begin with an Eco-Map, convene and use your internal stakeholders.
- Begin by identifying all the external stakeholders (a circle for each).
- Then define the Program's current relationship with the stakeholder by drawing one of four lines between the Program and the stakeholder.

# The Comprehensive Assessment (continued)

- These are the four kinds of lines:
  - A solid line between the Program and the stakeholder symbolizes a good, working relationship.
  - A dotted line means “so-so” – could be better, could be worse.
  - A crossed-out line (//) means not a good working relationship, even a conflicted one.
  - No line means there is no current relationship between the Program and the stakeholder.

# The Comprehensive Assessment (continued)

- The completed Community Eco-Map can be used to develop a Program Improvement Plan for improved collaboration between the Program and its stakeholders.
- Identify who in the Program has the best chance of reaching out successfully to the stakeholder.
- Make sure the person is able to articulate why it is in the stakeholder's best interest to collaborate with the Program.

# The Comprehensive Assessment (continued)

- These are the LOWO stakeholders who interviewed:
  - Group and individual interviews with the LOWO Board of Directors.
  - The outgoing and incoming LOWO executive directors.
  - Group and individual interviews with the LOWO staff.
  - LOWO birth parents, foster parents, and youth served by LOWO

# The Comprehensive Assessment (continued)

- Interviews (continued):
  - OST Schools.
  - OST Court.
  - OST Public Safety.
  - ONTRAC, Indian child welfare services.
  - Community providers (CASA, etc.).
  - The Children's Bureau's Federal Region VIII staff.
  - Others to be interviewed: OST Tribal Council HHS Committee, South Dakota regional State child welfare leadership and staff.

# The LOWO Strategic Plan

- The Assessment identified six LOWO strengths and six LOWO challenges.
- We are writing the Strategic Plan now with LOWO stakeholders.
- It will be a multi-year plan.
- The year one goals will have developed, detailed work plans.
- Technical assistance may be needed.

Questions?