



Findings from the National Needs Assessment of American Indian/Alaska Native Child Welfare Programs

National Child Welfare Resource Center for Tribes
July 2011



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

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This publication represents a collaborative effort by the partners of the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Tribes (NRC4Tribes) – the Tribal Law and Policy Institute (TLPI), the Indian Child and Family Resource Center (ICAFRC), the Native American Training Institute (NATI), and the Butler Institute for Families at the University of Denver’s Graduate School of Social Work. We gratefully acknowledge the assistance and support of the Administration for Children and Families, Children’s Bureau. We also would like to acknowledge the valuable assistance of the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Tribes (NRC4Tribes) Advisory Council, NRC4Tribes consultants, and the Butler Institute for Families staff who provided guidance and review in the preparation of this report. Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to the participants who entrusted us with their stories and provided the information presented in these findings that will help guide the future direction of the NRC4Tribes.

The NRC4Tribes is funded through a Cooperative Agreement with U.S. DHHS, Administration for Children and Families, Children’s Bureau, Award No. 90CZOO22. Special thanks to Roshanda Shoulders, Children’s Bureau Project Officer, for her support.

Primary Authors:

Robin Leake, PhD
University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work
Robin.Leake@du.edu

Nancy Lucero, PhD, LCSW
University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work
Nancy.Lucero@du.edu

Joe Walker, MA
Native American Training Institute
joew@nativeinstitute.org

Julie McCrae, MSW, PhD
University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work
Julie.McCrae@du.edu

Recommended citation:

National Child Welfare Resource Center for Tribes. (2011). *Findings from the National Needs Assessment of American Indian/Alaska Native Child Welfare Programs*. West Hollywood, CA: Author.

For more information: Please visit the NRC4Tribes website at www.nrc4tribes.org

This document may be reproduced in whole or part without restriction as long as the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Tribes is credited for the work. Upon request, the contents of this document will be made available in alternate formats to serve accessibility needs of persons with disabilities. Please contact Robin Leake, NRC4Tribes Evaluator, at Robin.Leake@du.edu.

The contents of this document are solely the responsibility of the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Tribes and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Children’s Bureau.

NRC4Tribes Partners

National Child Welfare Resource Center for Tribes (NRC4Tribes)

Jerry Gardner (*Cherokee*), Director

Kathy Deserly, Associate Director

Tribal Law and Policy Institute

Jerry Gardner (*Cherokee*), Executive Director

Heather Valdez Singleton, Deputy Director

Jessica Allen (*San Carlos Apache*), Administrative Manager

Maria Alidio, Administrative Assistant/Logistics Coordinator

Lou Sgroi, Webmaster

Terrilena Dodson (*Navajo*), Program Assistant

Indian Child and Family Resource Center

Kathy Deserly, Executive Director
NRC4Tribes, Associate Director

Elizabeth Deserly (*Descendant, Kickapoo Tribe of Texas*), Logistics Coordinator

Native American Training Institute (NATI)

Deb Painte (*Arikara*), Project Director

Joe Walker (*Delaware Tribe of Western Oklahoma*), Evaluator

Camille King (*Hidatsa, Arikara*), Child Welfare Development Specialist/ Trainer

Monique Pleets (*Standing Rock Sioux Tribe*), Business Manager

Butler Institute for Families, Graduate School of Social Work, University of Denver

Cathryn Potter, Executive Director

Robin Leake, Research Manager

Nancy Lucero (*Mississippi Choctaw*), Senior Research Associate

Julie McCrae, Senior Research Associate

Anna de Guzman, Research Assistant

Ashley Hanna, Graduate Research Assistant

NRC4Tribes Needs Assessment Consultants

Mary Ann Akers - Montana

Connie Bear King (*Standing Rock Sioux*) - Oregon

Miriam Bearse (*Wampanoag descendant*) - Washington

Russ Conti - South Dakota

Carrie Garrow (*St. Regis Mohawk*) - New York

Emily Iron Cloud – Koenen (*Oglala Sioux*) - South Dakota

Ethleen Iron Cloud – Two Dogs (*Oglala Sioux*) - South Dakota

Tom Lidot (*Tlingit and Haida/Chilkat*) - California

Mary McNevens (*Muskogee Creek*) - Oregon

Rose-Margaret Orrantia (*Yaqui*) - California

Carlette Randall (*Oglala Sioux*) - Colorado

Sandy White Hawk (*Sicangu Lakota*) - Minnesota

NRC4Tribes National Advisory Council

Abby Abinanti (*Yurok*)
Dependency and Delinquency Judge, San Francisco Superior Court/Chief Judge, Yurok Tribal Court - California

Denise Altvater (*Passamaquoddy*)
Tribal Council, Passamaquoddy Tribe - Maine

Ella Anagick (*Inupiaq*)
General Legal Practitioner - Alaska

Delores Subia BigFoot (*Caddo*)
Associate Professor of Research, Department of Pediatrics and Director, Project Making Medicine, OUHSC - Oklahoma

Elsie Boudreau (*Yupik*)
Victim Advocate - Alaska

Roman Duran (*Pueblo of Tesuque and Hopi Tribe*)
President, National American Indian Court Judges Association - New Mexico

Lucille Echohawk (*Pawnee*)
Strategic Advisor, Casey Family Programs - Colorado

Carrie Garrow (*St. Regis Mohawk*)
Director, Center for Indigenous Law, Governance and Citizenship, Syracuse University College of Law New York

Barbara Jones (*Eastern Cherokee*)
Program Manager, Eastern Cherokee Tribe - North Carolina

Tracy King (*Assiniboine*)
President, Fort Belknap Indian Community - Montana

Art Martinez (*Chumash*)
Clinical Psychologist - California

Renee Mayer (*Three Affiliated Tribes*)
Director, Social Services, Fort Berthold Indian Reservation -North Dakota

Mary McNeVins (*Muskogee Creek*)
Indian Child Welfare Manager/Tribal Liaison, State of Oregon Department of Human Services - Oregon

Rose-Margaret Orrantia (*Yaqui*)
Tribal STAR, San Diego State University - California

Cora Max Phillips (*Navajo*)
Director Social Services, Navajo Nation - Arizona

Ed Reina (*Pima/Maricopa*)
Director, Public Safety, Tohono O'Odham - Arizona

Louise Reyes (*Minnesota Chippewa*)
B.I.A. Department of Social Services – Montana

Pat Riggs (*Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo*)
Director, Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo (YDSP) Department of Economic Development - Texas

Sue Settles (*Cherokee*)
B.I.A. Department of Social Services
Washington, DC

Evelyn Stevenson (*Salish and Kootenai*)
Attorney, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Montana

Virginia Thomas (*Muskogee Creek*)
President, National Johnson O'Malley Association - Oklahoma

William Thorne (*Pomo*)
Judge, Utah Court of Appeals - Utah

Theresa Two Bulls (*Oglala Sioux*)
President, Oglala Sioux Tribe - South Dakota

Hope White Bear (*Cheyenne River Sioux Nation*)
Wellness and Healthy Living Instructor
North Dakota

Findings from the National Needs Assessment of American Indian/Alaska Native Child Welfare Programs

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	ii
Introduction	1
Background of the NRC4Tribes	4
Overview of Tribal Child Welfare	5
Overview of Funding for Tribal Child Welfare	6
Background about Tribal Communities	10
Needs Assessment Methods	13
Design	13
Consultant Selection, Preparation, and Support.....	13
Participant Selection and Outreach.....	14
Measures	15
Data Management and Analysis.....	16
Participant Demographics	17
Findings	21
Tribal Child Welfare Practice	22
Approach to Working with Families.....	22
Culture-based Services.....	28

Family and Community Challenges and Strengths.....	30
Child Welfare Program Infrastructure.....	33
Workforce Issues.....	39
Foster Care and Adoption.....	44
Indian Child Welfare Act.....	51
Indian Child and Welfare Act Collaboration with States and Counties.....	53
Indian Child and Welfare Act in State and Tribal Courts.....	55
Legal and Judicial.....	57
Partnerships with Tribal Court.....	57
Partnerships with State/County Court.....	58
Children’s Code.....	59
Child Protection Team/Multidisciplinary Team.....	59
Tribal Child Welfare Operations.....	60
Title IV-E Tribal/State Agreements.....	60
Accessing Title IV-B and Title IV-E Funding.....	62
Discussion and Conclusions.....	68
Findings Supplement for the Children’s Bureau and the T/TA Network: Recommendations for Training and Technical Assistance.....	72
References.....	88
Appendix A: Shared Vision, Mission, Philosophy and Guiding Principles of the NRC4Tribes.....	91

Appendix B: General Survey Results	96
Appendix C: Needs Assessment Recruitment Materials.....	109
Appendix D: Needs Assessment Topic Domains.....	113
Appendix E: List of Needs Assessments Instruments	114
Appendix F: Needs Assessment General Survey.....	115
Appendix G: Needs Assessment Interview Protocols	119
Tribal Child Welfare Director Interview Protocol	119
Tribal Child Welfare Supervisor Interview Protocol	123
Tribal Child Welfare Worker Interview Protocol	125
Community Partner/Provider Interview Protocol	127
Tribal Judge, Attorney or Court Advocate Interview Protocol	129
Tribal Leader (Elected or Traditional Leader) Interview Protocol	131
Law Enforcement Interview Protocol.....	132
Tribal Child Welfare Family Interview Protocol.....	134
Tribal Foster Parent Interview Protocol	135
Tribal Child Welfare Youth Interview Protocol.....	136



INTRODUCTION

This document presents findings from a national needs assessment of tribal child welfare programs whose creation and completion was a key objective of the National Resource Center for Tribes (NRC4Tribes) during its first year.¹ This needs assessment sought to explore current practices in tribal child welfare and to review existing resources and tools in an effort to conceptualize better the unique challenges facing tribal child welfare programs; identify systemic and practice issues; and gain a clearer understanding of the strengths embodied and expressed by tribal child welfare systems.² The NRC4Tribes conducted this assessment in order to understand, and appropriately serve, tribal communities better as it readies itself to move into its training and technical assistance (T/TA) work in subsequent years.

The objective of the assessment was to use a variety of methods to elicit input from tribal child welfare program staff and stakeholders about program strengths, gaps, and challenges and to gather relevant information that could be distilled into a thorough and up-to-date profile of child welfare in Indian country. One specific focus of this effort was to assess the types of T/TA needed by tribal child welfare programs in areas such as practice and case management; services to children and families; administrative functions; data and information collection; program management; and reporting.

¹ The Request for Proposal (RFP) issued by the Children’s Bureau (CB) required that the NRC4Tribes “conduct and complete a thorough assessment of current Tribal child welfare needs, practices, and issues during Year One of the award and prepare a [needs assessment] for the CB based on its findings” (RFP: page 12) with more specific details (RFP: page 17) as follows:

Assessment of Tribal needs and child welfare practice

During the first year of the cooperative agreement, NRCT will explore current practices in Tribal child welfare and review existing resources and tools in an effort to better understand the challenges facing Tribes and to identify systemic and practice issues. The primary source for the information is expected to come from an assessment with the Tribes that would include onsite visits. CB expects the results of this thorough assessment to inform NRCT’s T/TA and to drive its future activities.

² This needs assessment focused on federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes. It did not include either Native Hawaiians or indigenous peoples from the American Territories since they are not federally recognized tribes. For a list of federally recognized tribes, please see Federal Register Notice Volume 75, Number 190: Indian Entities Recognized and Eligible to Receive Services from the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs (available at <http://www.bia.gov/idc/groups/xraca/documents/text/idc011463.pdf>) and its supplement, Federal Register Notice Volume 75, Number 207 (available at <http://www.bia.gov/idc/groups/xraca/documents/text/idc012025.pdf>).



The methodology employed to select the sample of tribes to participate in this needs assessment yielded a group that was strongly representative of all federally recognized tribes in regard to Region, size, and federal funding. Survey responses included individuals representing nearly a quarter of the 565 federally recognized tribes. However, it is recognized that despite this representativeness, there may still be individual tribal child welfare programs whose operations and experiences are different from those outlined in this report. Readers are also cautioned against generalizing the qualitative findings regarding a specific type of stakeholder, such as a foster parent, community provider, or child welfare staff person, as being representative of the entirety of such stakeholders.

Throughout Indian country, tribes are exercising their sovereignty and self-determination in order to address the challenges that affect their children, the most vulnerable members of their communities. Through examples such as Peacemaking Courts, Healing to Wellness Courts, family group decision making, culturally based mental health and substance abuse services, or tribal coalitions focused on systems change, tribal staff and partners are implementing community-based strategies in order to find solutions to their unique needs.

Despite initiatives to improve child welfare services for tribal families through efforts such as the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), many tribal children remain at risk for poor case outcomes compared with their nontribal counterparts. Research has found that American Indian/Alaska Native children are placed in out-of-home care more frequently than other children, often for reasons associated with parental substance abuse and mental health, despite similar or even higher levels of these problems reported among Caucasian caregivers (Carter 2010). A 2009 study of reunification among 1,778 children in a nationally representative sample found that American Indian children were the least likely to return home; just 39% of American Indian children placed in out-of-home care were reunified within two years, as compared to 62% of Caucasian non-Hispanic, 53% of African-American, and 65% of Hispanic children (Farmer, Southerland, Mustillo, and Burns 2009). Moreover, American Indian/Alaska Native children fare more poorly in academics and employment compared with other children when leaving foster care (O'Brien et al. 2010). Although many efforts have been made to improve services for American Indian/Alaska Native children and families, these brief examples clearly indicate that more work is needed in order to keep these children safely with their families and communities.

Tribal social service systems face many challenges, given the daunting national statistics regarding many American Indian/Alaska Native children. In addition to addressing the needs of tribal members within



the reservation, tribal community, or village boundary, under ICWA, tribes also often assume responsibility for their tribal members who become involved with state or county child protective services (CPS). Despite limited funding, particularly for off-reservation child welfare cases, tribal child welfare programs frequently work with the state and county CPS systems in the multitude of jurisdictions across the United States in which their tribal members are located. A number of studies have focused on the benefits and challenges of ICWA (Jones, Gillette, Painte, and Paulson 2000; Limb, Chance, and Brown 2004), yet tribal systems often continue to find that those outside of tribal systems can misunderstand ICWA, the capacity of tribal services, and how tribes and nontribal ICWA programs must interface with tribal, county, state, and/or federal systems in order to meet the needs of tribal children and families.

The Children's Bureau (CB) has acknowledged that tribal child welfare programs are faced by challenges that are represented in statistics and research findings such as those presented above, and that tribes and American Indian/Alaska Native people have inherent strengths and culture-based strategies that can and do help them address these challenges. However, many of these strengths and strategies are underfunded, not integrated into tribal child welfare systems, often need specialist assistance in order to bring these into code and practice, and not frequently supported by key partners. The critical role that tribes play in child welfare service delivery points to the fact that they are an important audience for T/TA. Although the national T/TA Network has been responsive to tribal T/TA requests in the past, the creation of the NRC4Tribes is an exciting addition to the Network that can support and assist tribes in strengthening tribal child welfare knowledge, practices, and values. It can also assist the national T/TA Network in encouraging the use of culturally integrated tools to assist tribal communities, in partnering effectively with tribes, and in understanding the unique needs tribal systems have as they move toward implementing program improvements.

The NRC4Tribes gathered a wealth of information from the interviews and surveys conducted for this needs assessment, and the current report presents aggregate findings across all participants in order to help inform future directions for T/TA. This report begins with a brief background on the NRC4Tribes followed by an overview of tribal child welfare and the context in which tribal programs operate. Following this overview, needs assessment findings are presented in topical areas including tribal child welfare practice; foster care and adoption; ICWA; legal and judicial systems; and tribal/state agreements and program funding. These findings were compiled from an analysis of survey responses and



interviews, and they represent the experiences and perspectives of individuals who occupy a variety of tribal child welfare program roles. Numerous appendices complete the report and provide specific details that may be of interest to particular readers.

BACKGROUND OF THE NRC4TRIBES

The NRC4Tribes was established in October 2009 as part of the T/TA Network of the CB, an agency of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The mission of the NRC4Tribes is to collaborate with American Indian/Alaska Native nations and T/TA Network partners to identify and implement culturally based community strategies and resources that strengthen tribal child and family services. As such, the organization will work collaboratively with tribes and the T/TA Network to assist in the enhancement of tribal child welfare services and the promotion of safety, permanency, and well-being for American Indian/Alaska Native children and families.

The NRC4Tribes is guided by a philosophy consistent with the traditional belief systems of tribes. Children are sacred and entitled to be cherished in a safe and nurturing environment with strong family, community, and cultural connections. Their happiness and well-being includes nourishment of mind, body, and spirit in order to fulfill their dreams throughout their journey toward becoming a healthy elder. NRC4Tribes also supports the inherent sovereign right and ability of American Indian/Alaska Native nations to create, control, and improve their own local child and family service systems. Empowerment and solutions come from within tribal communities as they build upon their inherent strengths and the cultural knowledge that comes from elders, leaders, and culture bearers. In addition to this guiding philosophy, the work of the NRC4Tribes is also guided and shaped by the incorporation and modeling of a systems-of-care values and approach. Please see Appendix A for background on the NRC4Tribes, and shared vision, mission, philosophy, guiding principles, and systems-of-care values that drive the work of the NRC4Tribes, including this needs assessment process.

The NRC4Tribes is led by the Tribal Law and Policy Institute (TLPI) in partnership with the Indian Child and Family Resource Center (ICFRC), the Native American Training Institute (NATI), and the Butler Institute for Families at the University of Denver's Graduate School of Social Work. Additional information on the NRC4Tribes and each of its partner organizations can be found in this document in Appendix A and on the NRC4Tribes website: www.NRC4Tribes.org.



OVERVIEW OF TRIBAL CHILD WELFARE

To conceptualize and understand better the context of the findings that will be presented in this report, this section provides an overview of how tribal child welfare programs are structured and operated. First, all federally recognized tribes operate as independent nations, and, as sovereign nations, tribes have the right to self-governance and to protect the health, safety, and well-being of tribal citizens. Almost every federally recognized tribe provides child protection services to children and families in its community and most tribes operate their own tribal child welfare program. Some tribes also have their own tribal courts. Multiple agencies, tribal and nontribal, may be involved in the provision of child welfare services for American Indian/Alaska Native children and families; often several agencies may be providing services at the same time. For example, through a memorandum of understanding or other mechanism, tribes may collaborate with county and/or state workers to respond to allegations of maltreatment and, when warranted, provide case management services. In some tribal communities, the Department of the Interior's (DOI) Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) is responsible for providing child welfare services.

Tribal child welfare service provision consists of a number of discrete, yet interconnected, functions that can include child protection, case management, foster care, foster home recruitment, adoption, court hearings, ICWA coordination or collaboration, and referrals to other services. Some tribal child welfare agencies also provide additional services such as child support enforcement, qualified expert witnesses for child welfare hearings, and criminal background checks. Many tribes utilize a Child Protection Team (CPT) or Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) in order to provide assessment and consultation in maltreatment cases, as described within the social services child abuse protocol of the Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act (Public Law 101-630).

In addition, some tribes provide child welfare services under ICWA (Public Law 95-608), when an ICWA case is in state or county court and the tribe has intervened or will transfer jurisdiction to the tribe. ICWA was passed by Congress in 1978 to address the disproportionate number of American Indian/Alaska Native children being removed from their homes and placed in non-Indian homes. This law gives tribes sole jurisdiction over American Indian/Alaska Native children residing within tribal boundaries and shared jurisdiction with the state for children in child protection and child welfare custody proceedings who reside outside of tribal land. ICWA sets minimum standards for child removal, foster care placement, adoption, and termination of parental rights. Tribal child welfare programs that



have court and case management control over children within their jurisdiction are not required to implement ICWA. However, the intent of ICWA, which includes preservation of the safety of the child within their family and culture, is a priority of tribal child welfare systems.

The provision of child welfare services by a tribe is dependent on many factors, including federal policy; state and federal jurisdiction over tribal affairs; tribal/state agreements and relationships; tribal council priorities; tribal code; and the availability of funding. Although tribes have sovereign nation status and the right to self-governance, funding and resources for the basic welfare and the protection of American Indian/Alaska Native families is provided by the federal government (Pevar 2004). Tribal child welfare programs, like those of states and counties, are dependent on federal funding for CPS, yet tribes have less access to federal funds than do their state or county counterparts (Child Welfare Information Gateway 2005).

Tribal child welfare agencies also function within Public Law 83-280 states (also referred to herein as PL 280 and PL 280 states), where state or county child welfare agencies have concurrent jurisdiction with tribes. Passed in 1953, under PL 280 Congress transferred federal criminal and some limited civil jurisdiction in Indian country to six states and allowed other states to “opt in” to the jurisdictional arrangement. As the findings in this report suggest, this amplified state role often results in a reduction in funding for tribal court operations because the state retains jurisdiction in these matters. This increased state role necessitates a high level of collaboration and cooperation among tribal and state agencies.

Overview of Funding for Tribal Child Welfare

This section provides some background for how tribal child welfare programs are funded in order to understand the historical context in which these programs operate. The findings from the needs assessment regarding funding are described in the Findings section below.

The federal government is responsible for assisting tribes in meeting the service needs of citizens, through what is called “federal trust responsibility.” Funding for tribal child welfare programs comes from a variety of federal, state, and local sources, including the BIA through the ICWA and Services to Children and Elderly Families, grants to tribal courts, and HHS-administered funding through Title IV-B (Subpart 1, Child Welfare Services and Subpart 2, Promoting Safe and Stable Families) and Title IV-E



Foster Care.³ A 2004 study of selected tribal child welfare programs found that the majority of funding for fiscal year 2000 came from BIA-administered funding (just under 70%) while HHS-administered funding only accounted for 25%, with 2% from Title IV-E and 7% from Title IV-B.⁴ Figure 1 below shows the complete funding distribution from this study.

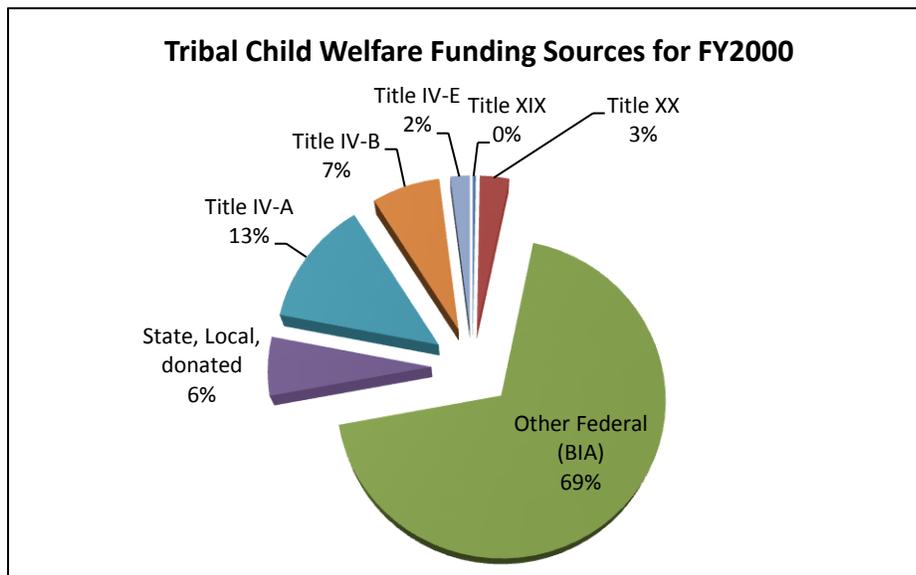


Figure 1. FY2000 distribution of tribal child welfare funding sources ($n = 38$).

Although this study focused on a relatively small sample, anecdotal evidence from field practitioners supports the conclusion that the BIA provides the majority of funding for tribal child welfare programs, with some indications of a growth in funding through tribally generated revenue. The BIA administers several different funding sources for tribal child welfare programs. Table 1 shows these various sources, and is from page 6 of the same report (see n. 3).

³ From "Implementation of Promoting Safe and Stable Families by American Indian Tribes: Final Report–Volume 1," by James Bell Associates, February 27, 2004. Available at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/abuse_neglect/imple_prom/reports/imp_of_pro/imp_of_pro_title.html.

⁴ From "Analysis of Funding Resources and Strategies among American Indian Tribes: Findings from the Study of Implementation of the Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) Program by American Indian Tribes," by James Bell Associates, March 31, 2004, p. 5. Available at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/abuse_neglect/imple_prom/reports/fund_res/fund_res_title.html.



Table 1. Child Welfare Funding Sources Administered by the Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs

Source	Purpose	Funding/Disbursement	FY01 Funding
Indian Child Welfare Act	Operate tribal programs in order to determine and provide placement for tribal children. Funds may be used for staff support and administration.	Funds provided annually to federally recognized tribes. Funding determined through a joint tribal/federal process that takes into account need and historical funding levels.	\$26,449 to \$750,000. Average of \$60,000 per tribe.
Services to Children, Elderly, and Families	Administer social services programs for adults and children, and support caseworkers and counselors. Support tribal substance abuse prevention and treatment programs.	Funds provided annually to federally recognized tribes. Funding determined through a joint tribal/federal process that takes into account need and historical funding levels.	\$10,000 to \$4,800,000. Average of \$100,000 per tribe.
Indian Social Services Welfare Assistance	Financial assistance for the basic needs of eligible Indians living on or near reservations. Also reimburses cost of foster home/institutional care for dependent, abused/neglected, and disabled Indian children.	Funds provided directly to income-eligible Indian members living on or near reservations and to federally recognized tribes for the care of children in need of protection. Funding determined through a joint federal/tribal process based on need.	Few hundred to several hundred dollars monthly per individual.
Grants to Tribal Courts	Operate judicial branches of government.	Funds provided annually to federally recognized tribes with the demonstrated capacity to administer a tribal court. Funding determined through a joint tribal/federal process that takes into account need and historical funding levels.	Information not available.

Title IV-B and Title IV-E Funding

The HHS administers funding through the Title IV-B and Title IV-E grants, which represent a small but very significant portion of funding for tribal child abuse and neglect activities. This section presents a brief overview of Title IV-B and Title IV-E funding that supports programs and provides important context to understanding the findings related to tribal child welfare programming needs learned through this assessment.

Prior to the passage of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-351), tribes were not eligible to access funds from the Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance Program in order to provide services to American Indian/Alaska Native children,



except through a cooperative agreement with their state. Therefore, “tribes [had to] depend on the states’ willingness to pass along federal funding, and that willingness varies from state to state” (North American Council on Adoptable Children 2007). The newly enacted Fostering Connections Act now allows tribes to choose to access Title IV-E funds directly from the federal government in order to administer their own foster care programs, as well as the option of administering kinship guardianship assistance and adoption assistance programs, and provides additional impetus to states to negotiate tribal/state IV-E agreements, for those tribes that may prefer this option.

Federal Title IV-B has two subparts. Subpart 1 is a discretionary grant program available to states and tribes for programs that promote the safety, permanency, and well-being of children in foster care and adoptive families. As of 2009, 148 of the 565 federally recognized tribes were accessing Title IV-B funding (26%). Tribes must be federally recognized in order to be eligible to receive Title IV-B funding. Title IV-B funded tribes and Title IV-E developmental grantees can receive T/TA and Title IV-E planning grants (described below) from the CB.

Subpart 2 funds can be used to support services for family preservation, family support, time-limited reunification, and adoption promotion and support. In order to receive T/TA, tribes must be eligible for and receiving Title IV-B funding; in order to receive funding, tribes must have an approved Title IV-B plan. Title IV-B funds are allotted to tribes based on the number of children under the age of 21 as reflected in U.S. Census Bureau data, unless a tribe has certified an alternative number that has been approved by the ACF.

Title IV-E is an open-ended entitlement program that requires a federally approved Title IV-E plan for participating states and tribes. It provides partial federal reimbursement for foster care payments, adoption assistance payments, kinship guardianship payments, and related administration and training costs. Title IV-E funding requires the state or tribe to provide matching funds for Title IV-E–eligible services.

Title IV-E funding has been available directly to states since the early 1980s but only available indirectly to tribes through tribal/state agreements. As of 2008, there were approximately 90 tribes with tribal/state agreements, and 70 of these allowed for either one of a combination of maintenance, administrative, or training activities funded by Title IV-E. Title IV-B and Title IV-E have an



interrelatedness that requires Title IV-B, Subpart 1, funding access prior to directly accessing Title IV-E funding.

The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (PL 110-351) allows for direct Title IV-E funding to eligible tribes for foster care, adoption assistance, guardianship placements, and independent living services. Currently, tribes may apply for a one-time grant in order to assist in the development of an approved tribal IV-E plan. Seven tribes received the initial federal planning grants to develop a direct Title IV-E plan in the fall of 2009. Four more tribes received these grants in the fall of 2010.

Title IV-E is a program funded to cover a limited scope. However, the various provisions of Title IV-B, Subpart 1, and Title IV-E require that the Title IV-E agency (state or tribe) provides a continuum of child welfare services that ranges from helping to prevent child abuse and neglect; responding to and investigating allegations of abuse/neglect; providing intervention and treatment services to prevent a child's removal from home or providing temporary foster care if removal is necessary; helping families reunite or helping children and youth achieve other permanency goals such as adoption, guardianship, and living with a relative; and providing post-permanency support (U.S. DHHS, ACF, CB, 2009a).

In Title IV-E, there are numerous provisions that require a state or tribe to consider how children can be kept safe. Background check requirements for prospective foster and adoptive parents or guardians are one means. Several additional requirements for ensuring child safety with which a state or tribal child welfare program must comply include

- Checking any child abuse and neglect registry maintained by a State/Indian Tribe in which the adults living in the home of a prospective foster or adoptive parent have resided in the preceding five years;
- Developing case plans, with parental involvement, within 60 days of a child entering foster care;
- Operating an information system from which can be readily determined the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is, or within the preceding 12 months was, in foster care;
- Reporting semi-annually to ACF information about each child in foster care as well as each child adopted during the reporting period, through the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS); and
- Establishing a tribal authority responsible for developing and maintaining tribal licensing or approval standards for tribal foster family homes and child care institutions (U.S. DHHS, ACF, CB, 2009a).



Background about Tribal Communities

This section provides background information about how tribal communities are structured so that the needs assessment findings (presented in the Findings section below) can be understood in the context of tribal program organization.

According to the BIA Web site, as of December 2010 there were 565 federally recognized tribes in the United States with a population of about 1.9 million American Indians and Alaskan Natives. This tribal population is spread throughout the United States in communities varying in geographic size, location, values, traditions, and cultural norms.

Tribal governmental structures vary from tribe to tribe; many were established by the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. A common hallmark of tribal governmental structures is a parliamentary style of decision making that is often quite different from most tribes' traditional leadership style prior to contact. The following are several examples of common tribal governance structures:

- An elected 9 member tribal council whose membership includes a chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, and treasurer. Tribal programs include social services, environment, education, and health.
- A 12 member tribal council, plus 5 tribal administrative officers who are appointed through a traditional, cultural leadership process. Tribal programs include, among others, behavioral health, ICWA, housing, and education.
- External matters are governed by a chairman, vice-president, and 4 council members. Villages remain quasi-independent. One village adopted a Western form of government, while the remaining villages adhere to a traditional form of government. Through the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (Public Law 638), the tribe contracts with the BIA to administer key programs and services.
- An 8 member tribal council whose membership includes a chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, and treasurer. Government branches include social services, education, health center, parks and wildlife, credit and finance, transportation, land management, law enforcement, and a tribal court. The tribe also has a PL 638 contract with the BIA and the Indian Health Service for various governmental programs.

Although some of the challenges confronting tribal communities in rural and urban areas are similar to those found in other communities across the United States, tribes may also face unique challenges related to geography and climate difficulties in accessing resources because of lack of transportation; jurisdictional uncertainties; historically strained relations with the surrounding counties; and/or social,



health, and economic challenges, including high unemployment rates and high rates of health conditions (i.e., diabetes and alcoholism). Many tribes are located in areas where a tribal child welfare case manager must drive an hour or more just to reach a family's home. Families, too, must travel great distances to access needed services such as mental health care, substance abuse treatment, or medical services for a child with special needs. Tribes and tribal people must also contend with cultural differences and non-Indians' unfamiliarity with cultural practices.

Climate and housing also impact the lives of members of some tribal communities. For tribes located in the northern regions of the United States and Alaska, roads are often closed or impassable for days at a time due to inclement weather, and ready access to the community is possible only during certain seasons. Severe housing shortages also provide their own unique challenges in the provision of child welfare services in tribal communities. It is not uncommon to find members of several related families living in a 2 or 3 bedroom home. Often these dwellings are clustered together in a housing area with 75-100 inhabitants, who together may own only 3 or 4 vehicles that are in working condition. Community members rely on these automobiles in order to obtain basic survival items such as groceries, clothing, and water. In turn, someone with a car may not be readily available to transport another person to a meeting with a child welfare worker or to an appointment in a town a considerable distance away. Multifamily housing environments also impact the ability of tribal child welfare programs to license foster and kinship families to provide care for children. Because household members over the age of 18 must pass a criminal background check, the failure of any person living in the home to meet this requirement typically prevents a child from being placed in the home.

Some of the strengths exhibited by tribal communities include cohesive and supportive extended-family systems; intricate social and ceremonial systems that rely on and value community members; strong spiritual and religious institutions; versatility in adapting to changing circumstances; and strong ethical expectations including respect for elders and children.



NEEDS ASSESSMENT METHODS

Design

The NRC4Tribes needs assessment utilized a multiple-methods design in order to gather qualitative and quantitative data. The following data-collection approaches were employed:

1. The **general survey** was a Web-based or paper/pencil anonymous questionnaire that consisted of 85 multiple-choice, checklist, and open-ended items about general tribal child welfare needs across a variety of areas. This included domains such as child welfare service provision, ICWA, legal and judicial issues, and organizational effectiveness. This survey was designed to be completed by tribal child welfare staff at all levels; community partners and providers; families; foster families; and other interested and invested stakeholders. A total of 262 individuals from more than 100 tribes completed the general survey.
2. **Telephone interviews** that focused on specific program strengths and T/TA needs were conducted with 31 tribal child welfare program directors across six CB Regions (seven BIA Regions) and ten states.
3. **Onsite assessments** were conducted with 16 tribes in eight CB Regions (nine BIA Regions). Consultants traveled onsite to interview tribal directors, workers, and supervisors; tribal court judges and/or attorneys; community partners and providers; client families; and foster parents in order to get a holistic and in-depth portrait of the strengths and needs of tribal child welfare programs in selected tribes. During the onsite assessments, tribal child welfare staff also completed a brief paper/pencil staff survey. A total of 118 interviews were conducted through this onsite process.

Consultant Selection, Preparation, and Support

A team of tribal child welfare consultants was identified by NRC4Tribes to conduct the telephone interviews and collect onsite assessment data. All consultants had extensive prior experience working in tribal child welfare programs and communities, and most were tribal members, although not members of the tribes they were interviewing and assessing. Consultants were invited to an orientation meeting in Detroit, Michigan, in March 2010 to review the assessment methods and tools, as well as to provide feedback. Consultants also participated in a training Webinar in May 2010 in which they were oriented



to all protocols, tools, processes, and methods. Each consultant was offered individual consultation and support throughout the assessment and the opportunity to participate in weekly calls with the NRC4Tribes in order to discuss successes and challenges and to troubleshoot issues. The consultants signed a confidentiality agreement prior to gathering any needs assessment data.

Participant Selection and Outreach

General Survey

The general survey was administered online through Qualtrics survey software and was made available to any interested tribal child welfare stakeholder (e.g., community members, tribal leaders, agency staff, and families). The online general survey was launched on July 1, 2010, and remained open until October 15, 2010. The general survey was also distributed electronically in Portable Document Format (PDF) and in paper/pencil form. An aggressive marketing campaign was used to promote the survey that included a variety of strategies (see Appendix C for examples of recruitment materials):

- A NRC4Tribes postcard with a brief project description and URL address was mailed to 564 tribal leaders, 564 tribal child welfare directors and tribal courts, and 60 regional and agency offices of the BIA.
- A NRC4Tribes e-newsletter announcing the details of the online assessment was sent using bulk e-mail to 245 tribal child welfare contacts, 60 state ICWA liaisons, and 40 ACF regional tribal liaisons.
- A NRC4Tribes flyer was designed, printed, and distributed to attendees at the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) and distributed to participants at the National Resource Center for Youth Services Conference in August 2010 in Chicago, Illinois.
- A newspaper advertisement promoting the online assessment was printed in *Indian Country Today*, which reports that its site attracts 26,000 unique visitors a week.
- NRC4Tribes requested that national T/TA Network members send out information about the survey to their contacts. Survey information was distributed by The Child Welfare Information Gateway, the National Resource Center for Youth Services, and ACF Regions VI and X.
- Other organizations forwarded e-mails with the URL link to the general survey, including the NRC4Tribes partners (TLPI, ICFRC, and NATI), NCAI, and Native Wellness Institute.
- Paper/pencil copies of the survey were mailed to more than 150 tribal child welfare directors with postage-paid return envelopes.
- The survey flyer was distributed to 170 tribal and nontribal Indian education staff at the Okmulgee, Oklahoma, in-service training on Johnson O'Malley and the ACF Region VII Tribal Independent Living meeting in Kansas City, Kansas.



Tribal Child Welfare Director Telephone Interviews

Tribes were selected for participation in the telephone interviews in three ways. First, a stratified random sample of 30 Title IV-B tribes was selected based on size and region in order to ensure a representative sample. Second, 10 non-Title IV-B–funded tribes were selected (based on geography and size) in order to gather input from smaller tribes. Third, the seven Title IV-E–funded tribes were invited to participate, for a total of 47 tribes. A letter of invitation was mailed to the tribal chairperson and the tribal child welfare director from each of the 47 selected tribes inviting each to participate in a 1-2 hour telephone interview. Consultants conducted telephone interviews with the 31 tribes that agreed to participate. The 16 tribes that declined to participate in the telephone interviews were invited to complete the general survey.

Onsite Assessments

Twenty tribes were randomly selected based on a stratification of Regions (as defined by the CB) and of tribal population under the age of 21 (U.S. DHHS, ACF, CB 2009b). The initial list was modified slightly to ensure geographic representation by state as well as Region. NRC4Tribes sent an initial e-mail alert about the assessment and then mailed invitation letters to tribal child welfare directors and tribal leaders from each of the selected tribes. All tribes received a follow-up phone call within one week after the invitation letter was mailed. Of the 20 tribes selected, 16 agreed to participate in the onsite assessment. NRC4Tribes and the assigned consultant(s) worked with each site prior to the onsite visit in order to coordinate interviews with the child welfare director and 6-8 key stakeholders and to administer the paper/pencil survey to child welfare staff. Each participant in the onsite assessments received an NRC4Tribes t-shirt and pen, and each family or youth interview participant received a \$25 gift card to thank him or her for participating.

Measures

The NRC4Tribes evaluation team worked collaboratively with the project partners to develop the topic domains for the needs assessment (see Appendix D) and the draft measurement tools. Tools included the general survey; customized interview protocols for child welfare supervisors, workers, directors, families, foster parents, youth, judges, attorneys, and community partners and providers; the director telephone interview; and the demographic information form (see Appendix F and Appendix G for the needs assessment tools).



These instruments were finalized through an iterative review process with the CB, the NRC4Tribes Advisory Committee, project consultants, and other National Resource Centers. The final list of instruments can be found in Appendix E. The needs assessment methods and tools were submitted to the University of Denver's Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects. Approval for the project was obtained in June 2010. Data collection occurred between July 2010 and October 2010.

Data Management and Analysis

Data-collection efforts yielded 262 general surveys, 42 tribal child welfare staff surveys from onsite assessments, 31 tribal child welfare director telephone interviews, and 118 stakeholder onsite assessment interviews. Access to the online general survey data on the Qualtrics server was limited to the evaluation team. Regular backups of survey data were downloaded into a secure, password-protected network folder at the University of Denver. In order to protect participants' confidentiality, all data from telephone interviews and onsite assessments, such as notes, interviews, and paper/pencil surveys, were mailed or sent electronically directly to the Butler Institute for data management and analysis. Consultants mailed all flash drives and audio-recorders with data to the Butler Institute and were provided with instructions for deleting data from their personal computers. The Butler Institute stored all data it received in a secure, password-protected electronic network file at the University of Denver.

Quantitative data from the general online and staff surveys were entered into Microsoft Excel and/or SPSS 18.0 databases for analysis. Complete results from the general survey are included in Appendix B, and specific results are referred to throughout these findings. Telephone and face-to-face interviews were audio-recorded (with permission from the interviewee). Evaluators used ATLAS.ti 6.2, a qualitative data-analysis program, in order to open code interview data for analysis. Qualitative data consisted of 45 tribal child welfare director interviews (31 telephone interviews and 14 onsite interviews) and 104 interviews with tribal child welfare supervisors, staff, and tribal stakeholders in child welfare, including tribal leaders (both elected council members and tribal elders), families, foster parents, youth, community partners and providers, judges, attorneys, and advocates.

It is important for the reader to note that the findings presented in the following sections are a description of responses from those stakeholders who participated in the needs assessment and cannot be generalized to all tribes or similar stakeholder groups.



Participant Demographics

More than 400 individuals participated in the NRC4Tribes needs assessment through either a survey or an interview. Survey respondents represented 95 federally recognized tribes; 13 additional respondents indicated general affiliation with a nation or band (e.g., Cherokee or Apache but not a specific tribe) or indicated their clan membership rather than tribe. Interview participants selected for a telephone interview or an onsite assessment represented 47 tribes. Figures 2 and 3 below show the distribution of participants in the needs assessment by BIA Regions and by CB Regions, respectively.

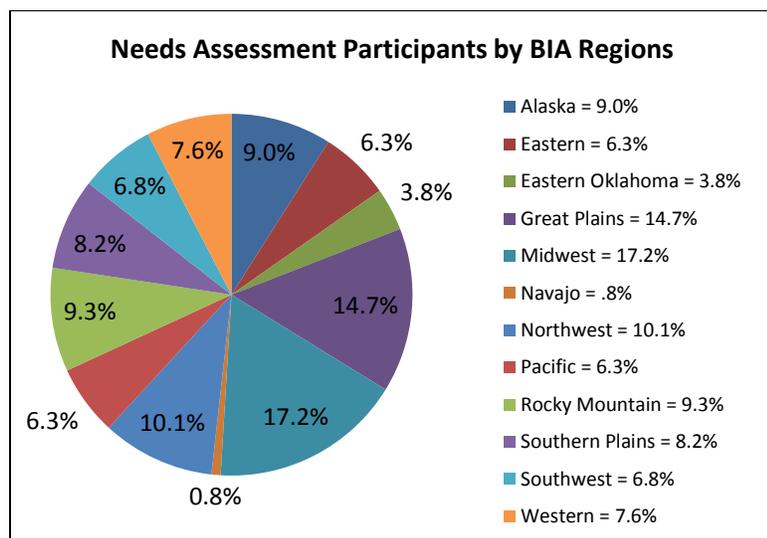


Figure 2. Distribution of needs assessment participants by BIA Regions ($n = 367$).

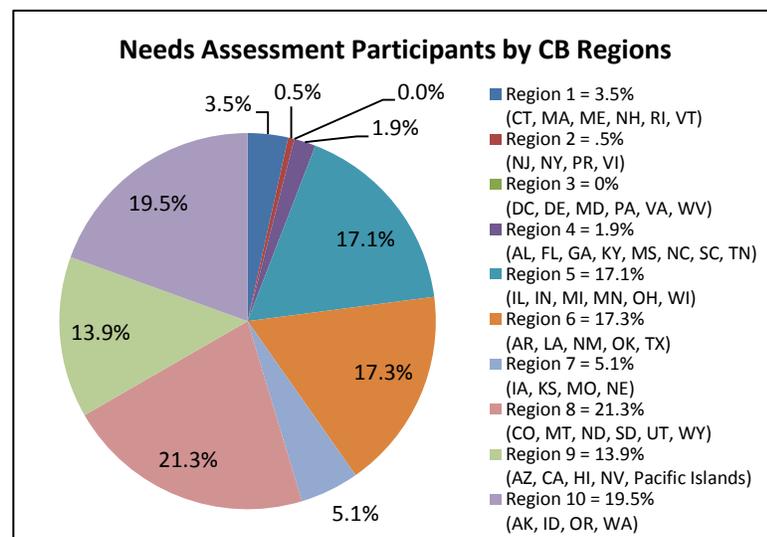


Figure 3. Distribution of needs assessment participants by CB Regions ($n = 375$). Please note that during data collection for this needs assessment (July–October 2010), there were no federally recognized tribes in Region 3.



These findings represent 127 federally recognized tribes that participated in the needs assessment through a general survey response, a telephone interview, an onsite assessment, or some combination thereof. Tribal enrollment size and federal funding varied. More than half of the tribes (78 tribes, or 61.4%) receive Title IV-B funding. Of the 49 tribes that do not receive Title IV-B funding, nearly half (46.9%, or 23 tribes) have tribal enrollment sizes of 1,000 or less (U.S. DOI, Indian Affairs, BIA 2005). Figure 4 shows the distribution of tribes that participated in the needs assessment by their funding source (whether they receive Title IV-B) and by their tribal enrollment size (please see the legend on the right of the graph to identify how enrollment populations were divided). Figure 5 further shows the distribution of the Title IV-B tribes by the enrollment size of their youth population (U.S. DHHS, ACF, CB, 2009c).

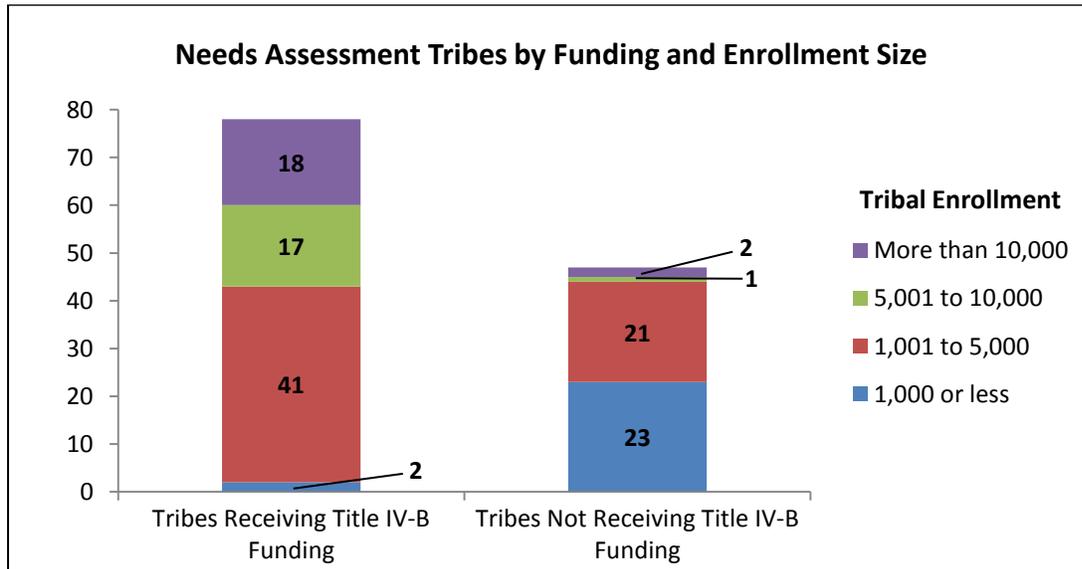


Figure 4. Distribution of needs assessment tribes by federal funding and tribal enrollment size ($n = 125$). Please note that two tribes did not have enrollment size reported.

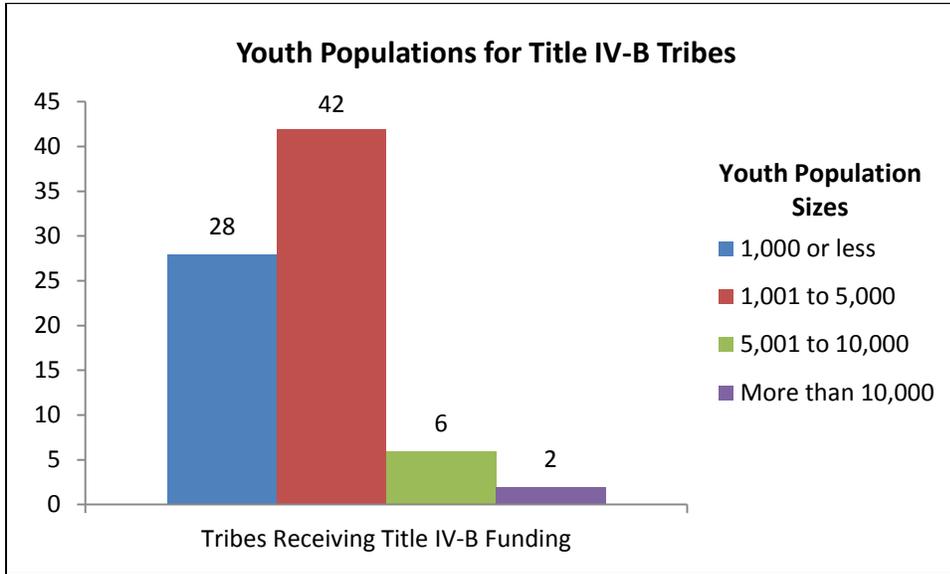


Figure 5. Distribution of needs assessment tribes with Title-IV-B funding by tribal youth (under 21 years old) population ($n = 78$).

Needs assessment interview participants and survey respondents were involved in a variety of areas in tribal communities, not just in child welfare. At an onsite assessment, consultants asked interviewees for their primary role in the tribal community and selected the appropriate needs assessment interview protocol. Of the 149 interviews done onsite or by telephone, tribal child welfare staff, including directors, accounted for 45.6% of all interviews. Twenty-six interviews were with families involved with child welfare services, foster parents, or youth (17.4%), while the remaining interviews were with other community members (see Figure 6).

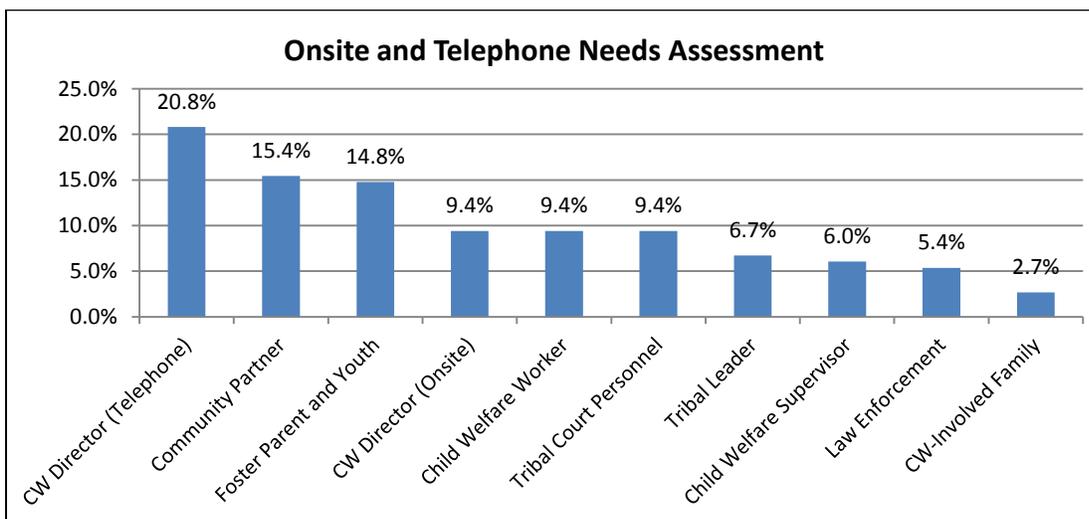


Figure 6. Needs assessment instrument used for onsite and telephone interviews based upon job title and/or tribal community position ($n = 149$).



When asked about job title and/or tribal community role on the general survey, respondents were allowed to choose more than one answer from a list and were allowed to write in a response if the list did not include an answer that pertained to them. The distribution of responses is provided in Figure 7. “Tribal Child Welfare Agency” received the most responses (42.8 %). Of respondents indicating that they worked for the tribal child welfare agency, 16% identified their position as senior management staff, 14.5% identified as direct service staff, and 12.6% identified as mid-level management staff. Nearly half (48%, or 126 respondents) of general survey respondents were members of the tribe in which they were employed.

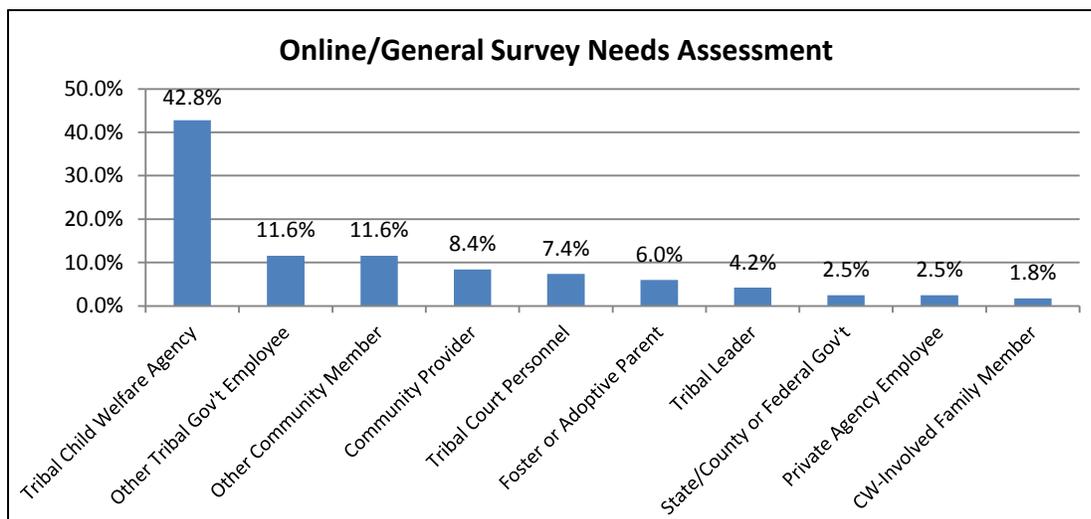


Figure 7. Online/general survey responses to job title and/or tribal community position question ($n = 285$).

In the following section, findings that emerged from a qualitative analysis of in-person interviews, telephone interviews, and open-ended questions from the general survey are presented in a narrative and descriptive form.



FINDINGS

These findings are organized by five overarching themes or topic areas that were identified through the qualitative analysis and were further supported by quantitative responses to general survey questions. Five overarching themes or topic areas were identified from needs assessment data. Highlights of findings and recommendations in each of these areas are presented below.

Needs Assessment Topic Areas

Tribal Child Welfare Practice addresses programs' approaches to practice; the inclusion of culture-based services; challenges to working with tribal families and communities; issues related to the infrastructure needed to support programs; and workforce issues that include the areas of staffing, capacity, training, and development.

Foster Care and Adoption describes the needs of tribal foster care and adoption programs and funding, recruitment, licensing, and training matters.

Indian Child Welfare Act addresses collaborations with state and county child welfare programs and courts.

Legal and Judicial discusses tribal Children's Codes, participants' experiences working with state/county and tribal courts and child protection/multidisciplinary teams.

Tribal Child Welfare Program Operations discusses participants' experiences with tribal/state agreements and funding to operate programs.

The aggregate findings presented herein provide details of experiences, situations, or conditions as conveyed by the tribal child welfare stakeholders who participated in this needs assessment. Although some of these themes and experiences are further illustrated by quotations from participants, all findings presented below were reflected in the qualitative data collected. It is important to note that in presenting qualitative findings, it is often necessary to weave into the narrative some background and contextual information that situates the particular theme or description and adds essential elements that increase the reader's understanding of participants' perspectives or experiences. Thus the textual and descriptive nature of qualitative findings have a different "feel" than do those that present and interpret quantitative and numerical data; this presentation, however, imparts valuable information gathered directly from participants.

The information presented in this *NRC4Tribes Needs Assessment Findings* report suggests many opportunities for the ACF/CB T/TA Network to partner with tribes, at their invitation, in strengthening



the capacity of their child welfare programs in order to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of American Indian and Alaskan Native children and families.

Tribal Child Welfare Practice

This section discusses tribal-specific approaches to working with families, including traditional or culturally based practices. Also included are participants' views about working in the community and meeting the unique challenges of American Indian/Alaska Native families, as well as needs about program infrastructure and child welfare workforce issues.

Approach to Working with Families

The majority of tribal child welfare programs that participated in the NRC4Tribes needs assessment reported that their programs' approach was in alignment with the strong emphasis on relationships that has been identified in many tribes' traditional values, practices, and worldview (Cross 1986). Lucero (2007) explains that American Indian/Alaska Native cultures and communities are relationship based in that each individual exists within an intricate web of familial, kinship, tribal, and community relationships. Furthermore, behaviors and interpersonal interactions occur in response to, and are mediated by, the interplay of the individual's relational connections. When working from a relational and holistic world view, tribal workers typically conceptualize family struggles as resulting from a lack of balance in critical areas of individuals' relationships, not only those with other people, but with the environment, self (mental and emotional functioning), and the spiritual world. Services are aimed, then, at restoring balance across all domains of functioning (Cross 1997). From a relational perspective, tribal child welfare staff aim to serve children and families in a way that recognizes that these individuals are integral members of the tribal community who should be respected, helped to regain balance, and supported in order to heal from the life circumstances that have challenged their well-being.

What's important is showing the compassion that we bring to the table, that we don't ever look down on them, that we hear them, we respect for what they have to say. No matter what is going on, we treat everybody as if they are an individual. I'm a community member that wants change in our community and for the healing process to begin in our community.

– Tribal Child Welfare Director



Moreover, tribal child welfare programs are community based and built upon a foundation of important cultural values held by the tribal community. Honoring and respecting the relationships between tribal members and the cultural knowledge that resides with members of the tribal community, as well as exhibiting personal behavior and actions that are in alignment with cultural norms, were critical aspects that tribal child welfare workers felt they must incorporate into their practice. Cultural values exhibited by many tribal child welfare programs and workers included

- Always showing respect;
- Listening deeply and thoughtfully;
- Striving to understand others' situations;
- Honoring and maintaining tribal relationships;
- Helping others whenever you can and to the fullest extent possible; and
- Recognizing individuals for who they are, that is, problems or struggles don't make an individual a bad person; it is not one's place to judge another, and that challenging life circumstances reflect bad decisions or circumstances beyond one's control; and these poor decisions do not reflect on the individual's inherent worth.

Tribal child welfare program staff reported being deeply committed to keeping children with their families and in their tribal communities, as well as to maintaining children's cultural connections. A sense of obligation to make sure that everything possible was done to prevent the severing of children's connections to their extended families and the tribal communities of which they were a part drove programs and individual workers. Programs and workers sustained their commitment despite serious challenges that included a lack of adequate funding and insufficient staff. Commonly, many tribal child welfare workers saw their work as an investment in the future of their tribes.

For example, although few programs had funding specifically for family preservation or prevention services, most programs incorporated prevention into their day-to-day operations. The close-knit structure of many tribal communities made it possible for workers to informally track families that might be experiencing stressors or risk factors that could lead children to becoming unsafe. Tribal workers' embedded place in the community and their status as fellow community members also permitted them to check in on these families regularly and provide informal support without stigmatizing them as having problems or being involved with "social services."

Tribal child welfare programs' relational emphasis is also a holistic approach that includes an understanding of the importance of providing for the material well-being of children and families. Tribal



child welfare programs frequently provided clothing, food, furniture, appliances, and school supplies to not only families currently involved with the program but also to those who might be at risk for involvement if they did not receive the needed items. Although often not specifically designed as such, many tribal child welfare programs were seen by community members as a “one-stop shop” for a collective range of services that included propane or heating assistance; transportation to medical appointments or work; counseling and substance abuse treatment; and links to cultural activities such as language classes, ceremonies, and tribal community events. One person described how their program negotiates gas costs with a local business in order to ensure that families have adequate heating in the winter.

In other tribes, the child welfare program was a part of a larger social services department. However, regardless of formal structure, most tribal child welfare programs strove to meet as many needs of

Many times we have parents that want to go to treatment but there's no place to go. We have to wait. They want to get some, whether it's for alcohol or drugs or whatever, there's no place for them to go and get that.

– Tribal Child Welfare Supervisor

families and community members as possible, either within the program or by having workers directly connect families with services. Accessing needed services again reflected the relational foundation upon which tribal child welfare programs were built insofar as many workers typically engaged personally with family members to link them with resources rather than simply providing a phone number and expecting the individuals to call or handing

out a list with possible sources of resources.

One common difference that needs assessment participants identified between tribal child welfare practice and that of state or county programs is that tribal workers understand that families typically need more time than is allowed by state/county regulations to change problem behaviors, such as an addiction to drugs, or to stabilize their housing or employment situation. Thus tribal workers, many of whom had at some time in their careers worked for state or county child protection departments, found that the extended timeframes possible when a case was under the jurisdiction of the tribal court and in the hands of the tribal child welfare program provided families with a greater chance to be successful and to reunify with their children.

Furthermore, tribal child welfare workers conveyed that they typically interacted with the families they served more frequently and with less emotional/psychological distance than non-Native state/county



workers. Families spoke about high trust in their tribal worker despite being involved with the tribal child welfare program. Families felt that tribal workers understand them and can appropriately judge the contextual challenges they face (such as poverty, high tribal unemployment, and a different standard of housing adequacy) in a way that state/county workers cannot. In turn, tribal child welfare workers related that they felt trusted by the families they served, and that they could more accurately access safety and risk factors in families based upon their knowledge of prevailing community standards and cultural norms.

Strengthening and maintaining their working relationships with families, rather than simply overseeing case-plan compliance, was also a focus of many tribal workers. Tribal child welfare workers were seen by families as taking an approach that involved doing whatever it takes to help families succeed. Workers also expressed this commitment to children and families and frequently referred to it as working “hands on.” The aspects presented above are examples that are again congruent with the relational perspective upon which much of tribal child welfare programs’ practice is based.

The strengths are, for a small reservation, we provide a lot of services. We do a lot of . . . family based, family strengths work with the families. We try to keep the children in the homes as much as possible. We've got a family we're working with right now where we really help them, and they don't understand that anywhere else, they probably would have lost their children already. But we take them by the hand, and we say you've got to do this, you've got to do this, you've got to do this. We help them out with clothing . . . child care, whatever the needs are that they have. We help them walk through and try to make their lives better for themselves and their children . . .

– Tribal Child Welfare Director

Although tribal child welfare programs’ practice approach may appear less formal than that found in many mainstream child welfare departments, tribal child welfare programs can be seen to be integrating the central practice principles of empowerment theory and incorporating a family centered, strengths-based, and holistic perspective in their work. Central to the tribal approach is an emphasis on partnering with families both in case planning and throughout the duration of a case; incorporating extended family and community members in planning and service provision; and collaborating as a team with other tribal departments and community providers.

Tribal child welfare programs frequently did not call their practice interventions by terms commonly used in state/county child welfare departments, such as family group conferencing or team decision-making meetings. However, the tribal processes were found to be similar to these mainstream child



welfare interventions in that their intention was to listen to families; match families with services to meet their expressed needs; engage community and extended-family supports in order to ensure child safety; aid parents to take steps needed to care for their children properly; and mutually agree upon culturally appropriate placements for children when out-of-home care was needed. Interestingly, tribal program staff members typically did not see these actions as being anything they implemented specially, as they are at times in mainstream child welfare programs, but rather as the natural way the program worked with families that needed help.

Moreover, as reported by workers and families, family engagement appeared to be heightened in tribal worker/family relationships. This may, in large part, reflect a perception on the part of both parties that there is less racial, cultural, and socioeconomic distance between them, and because they understand that they share a common foundation in their tribal culture and community membership. However, even in cases in which the tribal worker was non-Native or from another tribe, families still reported that, in most cases, the tribal worker was more understanding and better versed in the family's situation than a state/county worker would be.

Although stakeholder interviews clearly identified family engagement as a strength, 40% of interview participants identified engaging families and youth as a critical need area for T/TA, and 37% identified

So we have a lot of tribal members who work in this department and that's good. There's supposed to be tribal members who work in a department. The trouble is, of course, when your sister's kids get taken because your sister's been doing drugs, then it makes it a real challenge . . . they can't interfere. They know it, but they also love their family and they want to interfere.

– Tribal Child Welfare Director

family decision-making processes as a critical T/TA need area.

Another characteristic of tribal child welfare practice that is unique to tribal child welfare programs is the number of workers who may be related by blood or clan membership to a number of the families served. Or workers might have additional information about caseload families' circumstances that had not come formally through their work, but rather from extended-family members or through other tribal social or community sources. This closeness presented

opportunities and challenges to workers and programs. At times, it facilitated case planning, kinship foster care placements, and linkages with needed services. At other times, this closeness presented barriers, as when community relationships brought with them certain expectations regarding how cases



would be handled or when powerful and/or politically connected families exerted pressure on workers to ignore risks to children or to make special accommodations for members of their families.

In review, tribal child welfare programs’ approach to working with families is committed to:

- Keeping children in their homes and tribal communities;
- Seeing families succeed;
- Doing “whatever it takes” in order to provide needed services;
- Incorporating an understanding of the family’s context or situation;
- Involving extended families and kin;
- Maintaining children’s connections to birth parents, wherever possible;
- Respecting cultural values and norms; and
- Developing and maintaining strong worker/family relationships.

Table 2. Attitudes, Behaviors, and Practices of Tribal Child Welfare Programs and Workers

Tribal Child Welfare Programs	Tribal Child Welfare Workers
Community, cultural, and family relationships provide the foundation of approach to practice. Goal is to keep children with their families, tribes, and communities.	See their work as an investment in the future of their tribes. Have a strong commitment to helping families and seeing them succeed—a “do whatever it takes” attitude.
Believe that helping is more than just supporting the family’s child welfare case compliance, and instead is about being a part of family healing.	Build engagement with families upon a foundation of shared tribal and community membership that creates less distance between family and worker than is typically found in state/county systems.
Reflect cultural values in their service philosophy and practice approach.	Are open to including cultural traditions and practices as a natural and expected part of services.
Take a hands-on, family centered, strengths-based, and empowering approach.	Must respect cultural norms and negotiate community expectations as they provide child welfare services.
Understand tribal families’ context and incorporate that understanding into practice.	Feel an obligation to listen to and respect families’ wishes and perspectives, to the greatest extent possible, while still maintaining child safety.
Incorporate extended-family and community involvement as a natural and expected aspect of providing services.	Find it appropriate to give birth parents or other family members the additional time to make needed changes and complete service-plan requirements.
See themselves as “tribal members helping other tribal members.”	
Provide services that are community based to the greatest extent possible.	



Culture-based Services

The infusion of culture into tribal child welfare programs is intricate and multifaceted. Importantly, it involves much more than common child welfare cultural competency recommendations have typically called for, such as accepting that some families may wish to incorporate traditional practices in their service plans or being comfortable with and seeing value in referring children or families to cultural activities such as powwows or tribal-specific gatherings. Instead, culture in tribal child welfare programs creates a common bond among families, children, workers, and communities and lies at the heart of programs' and workers' commitments to serve. As such, the majority of tribal child welfare programs operate from a foundation of cultural and tribal values (of which non-Natives are typically unfamiliar) that are reflected in the overall program philosophy and that shape the attitudes and approaches that workers take in delivering services.

Of note is that within every tribe, members can be found along a continuum of spiritual beliefs and practices ranging from those who are very traditional to those who are Christian or of other faiths. As a result, when speaking about spiritual and cultural values, there is no "one-size-fits-all" belief system among tribal communities. Although, frequently interviewees appeared to consider tribal cultural values to be those in close alignment with the tribe's traditions.

In addition to being structured upon a foundation of cultural values, culture-based child welfare services frequently are provided by a worker who is a member of the tribe, or at a minimum, a member of another tribe. Cultural values, traditions, and practices are thought by many programs to be incorporated naturally when provided by a worker who shares the same tribal heritage. There appears to be a generally held belief by tribal members that child welfare services provided by a tribal person provides an inherent infusion of cultural knowledge and sensitivity that would not be possible with a non-Native worker. Tribal child welfare staff also bring with them personal cultural attributes, such as language fluency or knowledge of particular traditional practices that contribute to the cultural foundation of the tribal child welfare program. These workers are also felt to be more likely to act in ways that are congruent with cultural norms that are expected by families and community members in areas such as behavior, communication, and relational styles.

A number of participants related that, due to historical events and processes, their tribes have experienced a level of cultural loss or cultural erosion that has limited the number of tribal members



who have retained knowledge of tribal traditions and practices. Their tribal child welfare programs may be attempting to incorporate services based on specific cultural elements at the same time that staff members, as well as the wider tribal community, may be engaged in relearning and re-embracing these traditions and practices. Thus learning about, teaching about, and practicing culture are in a continual dynamic interplay within many tribal child welfare program. Almost 40% of survey respondents identified maintaining cultural values as being a critical need area for T/TA. Despite these types of challenges, representatives of many tribal child welfare programs expressed a deeply held desire to help the families and children they serve to learn about their tribal culture and incorporate cultural and spiritual elements as a means to facilitate healing and well-being, for the family and the tribal community.

Tribal child welfare programs identified the following services and practices as exemplifying the incorporation of and respect for tribal culture:

- Offering families the choice to incorporate cultural practices or participate in cultural activities as part of their involvement with the tribal child welfare program;
- Supporting families that want to incorporate ceremonies and traditional cultural practices by connecting them with traditional healers, spiritual persons, or crafts persons;
- Referring children, youth, and families to cultural activities and cultural programs in the tribal community that will assist them in strengthening their cultural knowledge and understanding;
- Incorporating Native-specific curricula such as the Fatherhood Is Sacred and Positive Indian Parenting programs;
- Involving elders and community members in programming and in the provision of culture-based services to children, youth, and families;
- Making cultural adaptations to non-Native interventions and programs;
- Encouraging and facilitating the participation of children, youth, families, and foster care providers (including non-Native foster parents) in community events;
- Using language, history, and cultural programs to build identity and resiliency in children and youth and as a form of prevention programming; and
- Collaborating closely with the cultural programs of other tribal departments and community organizations so that cultural activities connect to tribal child welfare services.

Many tribal child welfare program staff members viewed culture-based services and interventions as being an integral part of the healing of families and communities, and a number of program staff sought recognition of these services as equivalent to Western or mainstream services. However, a good number of directors and workers felt that, in many instances, state/county child welfare departments are



unwilling to accept this equivalency, and instead denigrated culture-based services or saw them as novel and unproven approaches that should be adjunct to mainstream child welfare interventions. Increasing understanding on the part of state/county departments regarding the benefits and efficacy of cultural interventions was seen by tribal child welfare programs as critical.

Family and Community Challenges and Strengths

This section summarizes several challenges faced by the families and communities served by tribal child

I can't say 100%, but close to 100%, we have some form of substance abuse involved in our families. I would say at least 40% of our families have some form of domestic violence, whether it's between Mom and Dad or an older child and a parent.

– Tribal Child Welfare Director

welfare programs that were repeatedly cited by needs assessment participants from across the range of tribes represented. As discussed above, participants recognized that strengths can be found in each family that becomes involved with a program and that tribal child welfare workers are able to identify these strengths and incorporate them into their efforts with each case. However,

substance abuse, mental health concerns, poverty, historical trauma, and barriers to services were reported to be prevalent and seen as the most serious challenges faced by tribal families and communities. As such, the following four subsections present additional details that were shared by participants in regard to these challenges.

Substance Abuse

Participants report that tribal communities continue to struggle with high rates of substance abuse. This was often considered to be an effect of historical trauma and/or attributed to contextual factors such as the isolation associated with living in remote areas. A large number of survey and interview comments mentioned the impact that substance abuse has had and continues to have on tribal child welfare practice. According to many child welfare workers, directors, and supervisors who took part in this needs assessment, a large percentage of child welfare cases in tribal communities involve substance abuse-related problems. Further, substance abuse was seen by participants as directly contributing to many of the difficulties some families have reunifying with their children, creating challenges finding suitable foster homes, and often playing a part in criminal involvement and behavioral difficulties for



youth. When substance abuse was mentioned, participants frequently also mentioned that it co-occurs with mental health problems, domestic violence, and child neglect.

A strong theme that emerged was that tribal child welfare programs addressed the impact of substance abuse by looking at the issue developmentally and working to connect family members with services that spanned the range of developmental stages, including infants with prenatal substance exposure, children with fetal alcohol syndrome, juveniles, and adults. Services that incorporated family centered and culturally relevant approaches that address the effects of substance exposure on the family unit were also seen to be critical.

Mental Health

Typically, participants stressed mental health problems as a critical family issue, directly followed by “there are not enough services” to meet the need. However, in some communities, mental health services are available but are considered ineffective or not the right type of service. Foster parents also expressed the need for training and counseling to help children with severe mental health, trauma, and behavioral problems, noting the link between behavior problems and placement changes.

We've got a lot of the mental health issues that it kind of seems like our counselors are overwhelmed with the number of clients and the number of issues each client has. I know that we've had several suicide attempts, adult and child, and that the needs kind of go unmet there.

– Tribal Child Welfare Director

A specific mental health issue discussed by several interview participants was the increase in the number of suicides in tribal communities. Suicide is an important issue in tribal communities, with research showing that suicide rates are twice as high among tribal youth compared with other youth (Freedenthal and Stiffman 2004). The quote below illustrates this statistic in the actual experience of one tribal community.

We need to have support of a Social Service program . . . we need a case worker who's going to be working with the family on a regular basis. And seven completed suicides are just outrageous for a community. We had a little over 20 attempts last year.

– Community Partner



Historical Trauma

The term *historical trauma* is used to describe the collective impact that a group of individuals who share a common identity experience as a result of traumatic events inflicted over generations (Brave Heart and DeBruyn 1998; Evans-Campbell 2008). *Historical trauma* was first used to describe Jewish Holocaust survivors and their children and is now increasingly evident in Native American communities, in which losses have been profound, including genocide, loss of land, environmental damage to land, loss of children to child welfare systems, forced family relocation, and other traumatizing events.

Many participants discussed historical trauma and its impact on tribal families. Statements indicated that historical trauma affects families' abilities to stay connected with each other; feel positive and proud of tribal traditions and heritage; and establish working relationships with nontribal partners.

A number of interview participants talked about how historical trauma is often felt by individuals and through generations on an unconscious level, and that identifying and talking about it is one step toward healing. This healing process, however, is complex and needs to take into account cultural norms. For example, Evans-Campbell (2008) reminds us, as did some participants, that survivors of traumatic events

There are still things today that occur within the state system that I think are historical trauma all over again, that they still don't understand the needs of tribal children, they still don't understand the expectations, the values, the needs of tribal families.

– Tribal Child Welfare Worker

I'm really proud of the tribal volunteers who have stepped up to represent children in the court system. It's very hard here to get tribal volunteers because of our—we have a separation in our town. It's well-known that Green Bridge out there separates the Indians and the non-Indians. And the tribal people don't want to give back to this community that took so much.

– Community Partner

tend to avoid talking about the events, and that this may be compounded in tribal families and communities in which the norm may be to not speak directly about certain events or to talk only indirectly about personal and painful feelings. Additionally, more than 40% of survey respondents identified addressing historical trauma with families as a critical need area for T/TA, and another 44% identified it as a moderate need area for T/TA.



Service Barriers

Similar to the focus of comments around insufficient mental health services, interviewees discussed the severity of problems with families accessing services. These centered on

- Transportation,
- Childcare, and
- A lack of service providers, including challenges related to living in a rural community, such that if an individual burns one provider bridge, there aren't any others.

Participants emphasized that transportation issues can influence reunification (e.g., if services are only available off-reservation, children may be kept in state custody in order to access services), the ability of families to meet service goals, and the ability of youth to attend educational and other positive activities. When parents have to travel great distances to access services, childcare is needed to watch children for long periods of time. Participants reported challenging solutions to these issues, such as paying for a taxi to get to services or taking a bus. In some locations, difficult mountain passes make it impossible for families to receive services. Overall, service challenges centered predominantly on having too few providers to meet the need and on difficulties accessing services due to transportation.

Community Strengths

Participants reported multiple strengths in tribal communities and among tribal families, including relying on kin, neighbors, and other community members to care for children and drawing on scarce resources to address community needs. Participants were clear that having strong cultural bonds and traditions have powerful effects on families and in communities, but that cultural erosion and inconsistency in the level of interest in maintaining cultural traditions are concerns.

Child Welfare Program Infrastructure

Policies and Procedures/Practice Model

Tribal directors were asked in their interviews to describe their practice model, policies, and procedures for guiding child welfare practice. Survey respondents were also asked to rate their need for T/TA for child welfare policies, procedure, and practice model support. Thirty-seven percent of respondents identified the development of a practice model as a critical need area, 40% as a moderate need area, and 17% indicated no need for T/TA in this area. Of note is that, although this did not emerge as a higher



area of need in the general survey, interviews with the tribal directors suggest that many directors were unclear about the term *practice model* when the question was posed. Once interviewers clarified the question, the majority indicated that they did not have a formal practice model, and many do not even have their policies and procedures in a written document. Again, a good number of the tribal agencies were quite small, with very few staff. Often they have developed informal, yet more traditional, methods and do their jobs in collaboration with their colleagues and community members, on a case-by-case basis.

Some tribes that were interviewed did not see a need for a written practice model and felt that their program was functioning well without it. Further, they reported that the lack of a written practice model did not mean that their program necessarily lacked structure or contained gaps that would leave children at risk of harm. However, many tribes recognized a need for a more formal and documented practice model, and gave several reasons as to why this would benefit their tribe. First, as discussed in the previous section, having a written practice model is

helpful for ensuring effective and consistent practice. It is also very advantageous when establishing a tribal/state agreement and articulating the need for funding. It is helpful to have practices and procedures documented when hiring and training new program staff. Another advantage mentioned by tribes is that it helps determine the purpose and scope of a tribal child welfare program. Many tribes mentioned the challenge of trying to meet the needs of families under very stringent budget

I don't think we really have a formal model. If anything, it would be more family centered, in-home family centered. . . . I find here that when we work our people, formalities are lost anyway. So we just work with our people one-on-one as individuals and meet them where they are we have better success.

– Tribal Child Welfare Director

constraints. Smaller tribal child welfare programs do everything from welfare and housing assistance, to transportation, truancy, and all manner of prevention services. Having documented policies and procedures that establish the scope of the program would help directors negotiate with the tribal government and other community service providers and partner more effectively in order to serve families.

One reason some needs assessment participants identified for having a documented practice model was that it would help tribal child welfare programs better communicate their purpose and values to their tribal governments, families, and community partners. Other participants, whose tribes are structured



so that the tribal council makes final decisions and recommendations to the tribal court, felt that having a practice model would help inform decision makers about child welfare issues and family needs. For tribes such as these, council members with final decision-making authority sometimes do not have child welfare training or knowledge about policies and practice. Written practice models also help programs defend against political ramifications that result from making difficult decisions about families in the community. One interviewee described having had to defend a worker to the tribal council after the worker had removed the children from the home of a council member's family due to safety concerns. In the quote below, the benefits of having a written practice model is described.

So when we wrote our practice manual, we interviewed tribal elders, tribal council, people who have been foster parents, people who had been in out-of-home placement, people who had their children removed when they were little, all sorts of folks. . . . And so then we wrote a practice manual based on our values, not on anybody else's values. And when we try to hold to that, it seems to work better.

– Community Partner

Three of the tribes that were interviewed mentioned that they have gone through, or are engaged in, process mapping in order to formalize their child welfare practice and “map” what happens in a case from beginning to end. These tribes are all using a structured process coached by a consultant. One of these tribes is at the end of a five-year business process-mapping project, and two tribes are engaged in this process as part of an Implementation Center project. All of these tribes feel that the process has resulted in a clarification of the roles of the program in the community and of individual responsibilities and has led to improved, more effective practice.

Data and Technology

The need for improved management information systems (MIS) to track child welfare cases emerged as one of the most critical needs for T/TA, with more than half of survey respondents indicating a critical need for automated case management data systems, improved service monitoring, and outcomes tracking for families (see Table 3).



Table 3. Data and Technology Needs for Tribal Child Welfare Programs from General Survey

Data Collection and Technology	N	Mean	1	2	3	4
			Critical need area for T/TA	Moderate need area for T/TA	Strength area (little or no need for T/TA)	Don't know
Automated case management and data system	211	1.41	59.4% (139)	24.4% (57)	6.4% (15)	9.8% (23)
Computer equipment (hardware and software)	213	1.72	44.4% (104)	27.4% (64)	19.2% (45)	9.0% (21)
Improved service monitoring and outcomes tracking system	209	1.39	60.1% (140)	24.0% (56)	5.6% (13)	10.3% (24)
Data analysis	206	1.43	58.3% (133)	25.0% (57)	7.0% (16)	9.6% (22)
Cross-systems data sharing	205	1.40	59.4% (136)	24.0% (55)	6.1% (14)	10.5% (24)
Selecting data systems and/or data system vendors	198	1.45	54.6% (125)	24.5% (56)	7.4% (17)	13.5% (31)

According to the interviews, most of the tribes do not currently have an automated MIS. Some tribes use database software to track cases, and they update the file with their handwritten notes. However, these files are not generally on a network server with shared staff access. A few tribes with available

Well, I take notes, I keep folders of every family in my locked cabinet, and that's about it.

– Tribal Child Welfare Director

information technology expertise have been able to build a more customized database, and one tribe even sent one of their workers to training in order to learn how to build a database for the program. Several participants remarked in interviews that they do have an electronic system but must outsource the scanning of documents into the system. This

process often leaves them a few months behind in their documentation.

Some stakeholders feel that they do not need an MIS because their small program size allows them to easily track cases manually. The majority of tribes that were surveyed or interviewed, however, would like a more sophisticated system for tracking cases, so that they have more accurate and timely case management data. Among those tribes surveyed, it was acknowledged that data-management systems are helpful for sharing information with other agencies and tribal communities, as well as for identifying areas of need for the program and for families that are served. Finally, tribal participants from tribes that access Title IV-E funding viewed automated systems as helpful for tracking required federal data



elements for AFCARS and NCANDS and for generating data reports that help them access funding through other sources.

Most of the tribes that currently have a Title IV-E planning grant also have an MIS, although some still track data manually. One tribe with a Title IV-E planning grant and that does not have an MIS is working with the National Resource Center for Data and Technology in order to help track information it needs to meet AFCARS reporting requirements. This tribe hopes to build an automated system in the future. Another tribe with a development grant reported that the National Resource Center for Data and Technology provided valuable assistance in training staff to use their automated system more effectively.

We have been losing some of our statistics, because we don't have a real advanced system of keeping them all together. A lot of the programs, the requirements are different, so we have to come up with a program that's going to be comparable, that's going to assist for all of our programs.

– Tribal Child Welfare Director

Tribes that report stronger collaboration with state child welfare programs were more likely to have greater access to their Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) and are able to input data and run reports. One challenge with using the state SACWIS system is having the staff time necessary to input data. Another challenge is the inability of the state system to track ICWA and tribal program activities. Several tribes voiced frustration with their states and the lack of access to state SACWIS data. One director shared that they have had to resort to using their attorney to petition the state for information about American Indian/Alaska Native children in that system.

Tribal participants reported that the greatest barrier they face in updating their data-management systems is funding. Although some tribes lack the ability to purchase hardware and software, in some instances determining what software will meet their needs is also an obstacle. Stakeholders report being impressed with their state SACWIS system but feel like they need something smaller and more customized that meets their program needs and has the functionality necessary to track ICWA and tribal child welfare activities. Almost no tribes have the funds to develop their own automated system, access a state data system, or know who to ask in order to build or adapt a data system that meets their program needs.



Safety and Risk Assessment

The general survey asked respondents to rate whether the use of safety, risk, and needs assessment for decision making was an area of T/TA need for their tribes. Thirty-seven percent of survey respondents rated assessment as a critical need area, and 42% rated it as a moderate need area; few interview participants raised this as a primary concern area for T/TA. About half of the tribes from the onsite assessments reported that they used standardized assessment tools, and half did not. A good number of the tribal participants felt comfortable relying on experience, common sense, and most importantly, experience with the family to make decisions rather than relying on standardized tools. The quote below underscores this point about assessment tools and exemplifies how much staff relies upon their relationships with the families they serve in order to make good decisions on behalf of the family.

First of all, I use my education and knowledge from all the trainings that I participated in. And I work very closely with the family—not only the family, but the children regarding safety. I mean, I would like to hope that my clients are able to tell me.

– Tribal Child Welfare Director

The tribes that reported using safety and risk-assessment tools, used standardized assessments from their states, and one tribe reported using the North Carolina Family Assessment Scale as a measure of child/family well-being. Those tribes that are accessing training through their tribal/state contracts were more likely to adopt the statewide assessment tools because the tribal child welfare workers are being trained to conduct assessments by using state protocols.

Although some tribes are satisfied with using statewide assessment tools, others reported that they have modified these tools to meet the needs of families in their tribes better. Still other tribal respondents expressed the desire to customize assessment tools to reflect their cultures and values, but frequently they may not have the staff time or expertise to do so. One of the tribal programs shared that it had started from scratch and developed its own safety and risk assessments. This tribe uses risk-assessment scores as a basis for decision making for removal, and as the director put it, “It helps us keep our kids safer, having a tool that helps us determine removal.”



Workforce Issues

When looking at the top 5 most critical T/TA needs that are not training specific within the Organizational Effectiveness section of the general survey, these five contain three workforce issues: burnout/vicarious trauma, workload issues, and workplace morale (see Table 4). In support of these quantitative findings, needs assessment participants, especially tribal child welfare staff members, spoke extensively in interviews and in response to the qualitative questions on the general survey about issues related to the workforce capacity of their programs and the development of worker skills. The following two subsections provide additional details related to staffing levels and turnover; burnout and vicarious trauma; and staff training and professional development.

Table 4. Organizational Effectiveness Needs for Tribal Child Welfare Programs from General Survey

Organizational Effectiveness Needs	N	Mean	Critical need area for T/TA	Moderate need area for T/TA	Strength area (little or no need for T/TA)	Don't know
Data-informed decision making	213	1.64	42.4% (98)	40.3% (93)	9.5% (22)	7.8% (18)
Burnout/Vicarious Trauma	214	1.68	42.4% (98)	37.7% (87)	12.6% (29)	7.4% (17)
Partnering with community members, tribal council, and tribal elders	221	1.71	44.4% (104)	32.5% (76)	17.5% (41)	5.6% (13)
Workload Issues	219	1.74	42.7% (100)	32.9% (77)	17.9% (42)	6.4% (15)
Workplace Morale	220	1.77	38.6% (90)	38.6% (90)	17.2% (40)	5.6% (13)

Staffing and Capacity

Adequate staffing of child welfare programs in order to meet service gaps was the greatest workforce challenge reported by the tribal child welfare programs survey in the needs assessment, and nearly every tribal child welfare director or staff person interviewed reported that their program needed more staff. Although lack of staff is also frequent complaint in state/county child welfare agencies, it is particularly challenging for tribal programs. Commonly, these programs are small, located in rural areas, and may have only one or two paid staff for the entire program.

The majority of programs that are short staffed do not have the funding to hire additional staff. However, even those with open and funded positions are challenged with recruiting qualified applicants



with social work education, experience, and licensing. Several directors mentioned low salary, rural location, and lack of housing in the community as obstacles to attracting staff. Programs vary widely in their hiring requirements, and some programs require staff to have a degree in social work and a social

[Our challenge is] lack of enough staff. Our social services department for two people, in effect, does all the same functions as the County or State Department of Children and Family Services do. We do the initial investigations. We do all of the court reports. So the major weakness is lack of staff to handle all of those functions.

– Tribal Child Welfare Director

work license. Programs also vary in their willingness to hire staff members that are either non-Native or nontribal members. The data also appear to indicate an increasing trend on the part of tribal child welfare programs toward implementing more stringent hiring requirements. Finally, the amount of staff turnover in the different programs varied considerably. Some interviewees complained of

high turnover in their programs, while others said that turnover was virtually nonexistent.

Staff Burnout and Vicarious Trauma

The high burnout rate among staff was also a common topic of discussion, and interviewees described how some tribal child welfare staff carry caseloads of 50-100 families on a regular basis, with many being state ICWA cases. In addition, most staff members have multiple roles, as described by one interviewee: “Due to limited funding the coordinator/director has picked up numerous duties, doing a lot of the actual case management, transporting, and the administration also.” Stemming from the sheer amount of work is also the frustration workers report of feeling not able to respond adequately to crises or family needs.

With child welfare being one worker and child protection, there’s a gap of services and being able to be proactive and do a lot of things out in the community rather than transport . . . There is still abuse and neglect reports that came in today that we weren’t able to address in a timely manner because other people’s assessments become a priority and the lack of staff. So we’re not able to really fully be proactive and offer educational information out there and just do preventive services rather than the reactive.

– Tribal Child Welfare Director

In addition to burnout, many interviewees reported that secondary, or vicarious, trauma was a significant issue among tribal child welfare staff. According to the literature, social workers on the front



lines day in and day out, with families that are traumatized and in pain and witnessing the maltreatment of children, will most likely experience secondary or vicarious traumatization due to frequent exposure

A lot of our staff went to boarding schools or they were sent outside of the state to be raised by non-Native families so they've been through it themselves. So I think that really is what drives them sometimes, helping the kids to be with family or to help families/parents that are struggling. So it does have an impact on our staff by personal experience.

– Tribal Child Welfare Director

to the trauma of others. Vicarious traumatization can lead to physical, emotional, and behavioral symptoms, and it will interfere with the worker's ability to connect emotionally with families (Baird and Jenkins 2003). A personal history of trauma, professional inexperience, and caseload intensity are all risk factors for vicarious traumatization (Martin unpublished manuscript; Meyers, Cornille, and Figley 2002) and are characteristics of many tribal child welfare workers.

Personal experiences similar to those experienced by the children and families being served can significantly impact tribal child welfare workers. This issue is especially salient for tribal child welfare workers who share community and kinship relationships with the families they serve. These workers, like families, may also be affected by historical and multigenerational trauma, and these elements may be triggered by the situations workers must continually address.

Workers are also often challenged when they have personal relationships with families involved with the program, and knowing how to negotiate those multiple roles while maintaining their own family ties and professional ethical responsibilities is crucial.

Despite the high levels of burnout and the risk of vicarious trauma, tribal child welfare programs have many formal and informal strategies for preventing and addressing trauma

in their staff. One director brought in a trainer to speak to staff about secondary trauma. Several other directors reported that they bring psychologists into the agency to help staff cope with particularly

It's my professional belief is that workers need to be healthy, addressing their own traumatic events in their life in order to be effective in their job. Some of the turnover I did have in my staff was because workers were not healthy enough to address their sexual abuse or healthy enough to address different things that went on in their life and later on become suicidal themselves because of the number of cases that we deal that are sexual abuse or seeing the trauma and how that weighs on them.

– Tribal Child Welfare Director



traumatic cases. Others encourage staff to take leave and spend time with family when they reach a breaking point and to spend time talking with staff, listening, and offering personal support.

Directors frequently spoke of the importance of self-care and health as well as the need for workers to find healing and balance. Many participants talked about cultural elements, such as traditional ceremonies and cultural practices, as ways they utilize to help them cope and restore balance.

Perhaps the greatest protective factor for burnout and secondary trauma that interviewees discussed was the support of supervisors and peers. Directors spoke highly of their staff, praising their experience, knowledge of child welfare, and commitment to families and to supporting each other. Several participants remarked about the cohesion among their staff members, such as, “We’ve developed our own really good support system in this department, and I think as a staff we’re pretty supportive of one another. That’s how you get through it.”

Despite the high risk among tribal child welfare workers for burnout and secondary or vicarious trauma, it appears that often the program climate and culture serve as protective factors that, in some programs, enable staff to stay in their jobs and practice child welfare in a family centered, strengths-based, and culturally appropriate way despite the challenges they face.

We utilize our culture. We go to sweat and we purify to keep mentally, emotionally, and physically strong so that we can better serve. Some of the other workers go to church, or after a traumatic event, we would sit down and debrief and sit and talk about the feelings, acknowledge them. Sometimes we would do other things culturally appropriate so that we would be able to help one another to better serve the families.

– Tribal Child Welfare Director

Training and Professional Development

The need for T/TA in the areas of training and professional development was clearly communicated by interviewees and survey respondents. Two different interview participants expressed the very basic nature of this need by exclaiming, “Any type of training helps!” and “ALL training would be beneficial.” More specifically, child welfare directors identified that staff could benefit from training that would improve knowledge and skills in delivering child welfare services, including working more effectively with the more serious issues seen in the families and children they serve; increase understanding of the legal and court system as it relates to child welfare; increase understanding of ICWA and tribal child



welfare workers' roles and responsibilities, as well as improve their collaboration efforts with state or county ICWA cases; and provide support to families and build resiliency through transmission of tribal-specific cultural values and practices.

Survey respondents rated their need for training in several different areas on a three-point scale, in which 1 = critical need, 2 = moderate need, and 3 = area of strength for their tribe. Training about ICWA and training for new workers emerged as the most critical need areas. Several survey respondents noted that there is a stronger need for ICWA training among state and county staff than for tribal child welfare workers, and others mentioned the need for training of tribal and state/county court personnel. Table 5 includes

We don't have the funding to hire more staff that can be on call. Staff are needing to update training skills each year, but the funding isn't there for staff to attend trainings, and to maybe even go to other Indian sites to see how they're doing things, and get contacts from there.

– Tribal Child Welfare Director

the specific ratings of the most critical training topics that emerged from the general survey, along with their average score and the frequency distribution of how respondents rated the training item.

Table 5. Critical Training Needs of Tribal Child Welfare Programs from General Survey

Training Needs	N	Mean	Critical need area for T/TA	Strength area		
				Moderate need area for T/TA	(little or no need for T/TA)	Don't know
ICWA training for state/county child welfare staff	221	1.60	50.8% (120)	29.2% (69)	13.6% (32)	6.4% (15)
New worker (core) trainings for workers	222	1.64	47.9% (112)	32.9% (77)	14.1% (33)	5.1% (12)
Qualified expert witness training	222	1.64	46.0% (110)	34.3% (82)	12.6% (30)	7.1% (17)
Supervisor training	217	1.72	43.7% (101)	32.9% (76)	17.3% (40)	6.1% (14)
Training and development for experienced staff	222	1.75	37.4% (88)	43.0% (101)	14.0% (33)	5.5% (13)

Like the survey participants, interview participants also mentioned the need for training regarding law enforcement, tribal and state/county courts, state/county child welfare workers, foster parents, community members, and tribal council members in order to increase their knowledge and understanding of child welfare issues, as well as of ICWA.



Several of the smaller tribal child welfare programs participating in the needs assessment disclosed that they did not have their own training programs and relied on contract trainers to come to their agencies. Some interviewees spoke about the benefits of having access to state-provided training, although access to this type of training might vary according to existing tribal/state agreements and relationships between the tribes and the state. Even tribes with access to state/county training often reported that they could not afford the travel expenses and staff time needed to attend these trainings.

Foster Care and Adoption

Tribal child welfare programs' models for providing foster care services were found to range across a wide spectrum. A number of programs provided a full array of services that included not only placement

There has to be a real pointed and concerted effort in going into the homes and being able to relate to these parents just what is good family practice; what is wholesome, healthy thinking, living. It's a continued, regular problem that a lot of the Native Americans have lost their sense of spirituality and connectedness to what, perhaps, once they did have and that has created a lot of havoc for children to have lost being in touch with their roots, being in touch with their practices or the way that they view their spirituality.

– Community Partner

but also foster home recruitment; licensing and training of foster parents; and oversight of foster children and foster homes. Other programs offered relative and kinship placement and arranged for guardianships but did not have a formal foster care program. The foster care services of some tribes consisted solely of collaboration with the states or counties in order to identify potential family placements, while others without a formal foster care program were still able to provide homes when emergency removals of children required overnight or short-term placements. Whatever their capacity to provide foster care services on-reservation or within the tribal community, the majority of tribal child

welfare programs were found to play an important role in collaborating with state and county child welfare departments in order to identify family and kinship placements for children entering these nontribal systems.

The foundational philosophy, attitude, and practice approach of tribal child welfare programs discussed in the previous section was infused into tribal foster care work. A strong commitment to do whatever it took to help tribal foster children and foster parents drove the work of program staff. Programs saw it as



vitality important to keep children close to family and tribal community and typically went to great lengths to place Native children with relatives or in Native foster homes. Underlying workers' efforts was a deeply held belief that children must not be lost to their families and tribes, and that they needed to be assisted in maintaining their connections to the tribal culture and its traditions. Supporting family members in caring for their relative children was seen as critical by programs. Tribal workers also made an effort to see that foster children remained connected to birth parents to the greatest extent possible and encouraged foster parents to play a part in this process.

Tribal foster care services were seen as vital by members of tribal communities (including tribal child welfare workers), who frequently related that the needs of tribal children and foster parents were not being met by states and counties. However, a number of tribal representatives perceived that the states or counties with which they worked did not trust that tribes could identify safe and appropriate placements, administer foster care programs, or properly manage foster care funding. In these cases, the states/counties were thought of as frequently not approving of or supporting foster care placements arranged by the tribe and/or as putting up barriers to tribes running their own programs.

A recurring theme across interviews was that tribes and tribal courts were reluctant to terminate parental rights, that they tried to avoid adoptions, and might, instead, prefer guardianships or long-term kinship foster care arrangement as a means to keep birth parents' rights intact. One participant stated, "Our tribe does not do severance of parental rights or outside adoptions to nonfamily members, so we do preserve the family in that way." Overall, tribes appeared to be supportive of adoptions by family or other tribal members but were generally not supportive of children being adopted into non-Native homes and, in some cases, even Native homes that were from different tribes. However, tribal workers related that they could not always prevent these non-Native and nontribal-specific adoptions, especially when they occurred in state courts. Other tribes used variations on adoptions that sought to sustain parents' relationships with their children and had tribal codes that supported this. Among survey respondents, 38% indicated that they need T/TA around permanency options for children and families, including adoption, guardianship, and customary/cultural adoption, and 41% have a critical need for T/TA regarding in-home services such as placement prevention and post-reunification services.

Recently, several tribes have implemented *customary adoption*, which is a term used to refer to adoptions in tribal courts that do not terminate parental rights, and/or added this to their tribal codes. Other tribes shared that they were considering using customary adoptions, especially because they felt



that a tribe could do customary adoptions without severing parents' rights. Still other tribes used guardianship as their permanency option. However, tribal workers also expressed a concern that a customary adoption might not allow adoptive parents to receive adoption subsidies available to

We don't do very many adoptions . . . our tribal code is a little bit different than other tribal codes. Under some circumstances with parental consent, there can be an adoption without termination of parental rights. . . . Frequently, when that happens, it's another family member that's doing the adoption and the parent permanently gives up custody but still retains some visitation rights of some sort.

– Tribal Court Judge

adoptive parents who went through state courts.

Although the Children's Bureau has stated in their policy briefs that customary adoption should be considered as equivalent to "typical adoption" when considering adoption support, some tribes have found that particular states or counties are reluctant to translate this policy into practice.

A number of foster care providers who were interviewed for this needs assessment had moved from being kinship providers to adopting their

relative foster children through either the tribal or state courts. In general, regardless of the court through which the adoption was finalized, the majority of individuals felt the process had gone smoothly. Some found that their tribes were able to continue to provide some post-adoption services for their children and for them. In addition, tribal adoptive parents related that the tribal child welfare program was able to inform them of available adoption subsidies that state/county workers had not disclosed.

Foster Care Funding

As in other areas of tribal child welfare programming, funding for program operations and worker salaries; foster home recruitment; and foster parent subsidies were described as "inadequate." Relative and kinship foster care providers seem to bear the brunt of this lack of financial resources. A large number of tribal foster care placements are with family members, and the kinship foster care subsidy offered by most states is often just more than \$200 per month per child. Although tribes often provide some assistance with items such as clothing, food, and school supplies, the financial resources of tribal foster care providers remain strained when caring for relative children. In this needs assessment, tribal foster parents were often found to be providing for many of the needs of their foster children out of their own pockets. Yet, consistent with cultural values, these individuals stated that they did so willingly as part of fulfilling a responsibility to family, while identifying that other members of the tribal



community were worse off and needed scarce tribal resources more than they did. However, tribal foster parents felt that states and counties often took advantage of tribal people's willingness to sacrifice and care for relative children and perceived that these departments felt they had no obligation to assist the tribe financially.

The state felt like, because it's a tribal member and tribal children, that they should not assist financially like they would with any others. . . . How could you say, because we are Native, and that she's coming home, that this tribe should be responsible for solely. . . . I mean, my people have stepped up. They've held as much as they can, but that doesn't let you off the hook, especially with the background and some of the damage that you participated in making possible with these children.

– Tribal Child Welfare Family

Some tribal foster parents related that they were offered compensation by state or county departments, but then seemed to fall through the cracks and never receive reimbursement. Several of these foster parents found that straightening out the nonpayment involved lengthy waits and required them to fill out a great deal of paperwork. Still other foster parents simply provided care without compensation, as an interviewee related, "I do take care of a little nephew . . . he's been with me since he was three. The only thing with him is, I don't receive any type of assistance for him or anything." Another foster parent shared a burdensome expectation for receiving compensation, "When we started fostering, they told us if we wanted help we had to take the parents to court. I'm not paying for all that, so we just did it out of our own pocket."

Tribal foster parents frequently recounted that they believed that state child welfare departments liked relative providers because the departments would not have to pay for medical, mental health, and other needs of the foster children. Tribal foster parents also relied regularly on Medicaid and other state children's health programs for their children's medical needs, and some were also able to access tribal-run behavioral health programs for assessment, counseling, and mental health treatment. Most tribal programs appeared to be willing to give unhesitatingly in order to assist foster parents. However, these programs often had few resources to offer, especially in the form of cash assistance.

When considering the placement of children, tribal foster care programs must often determine which entity has funding available to support the placement. For example, if a child is placed by a tribe, the tribe must pay foster parents; if placed by the state or county, funding may be available from them.



However, with state/county placements, tribal foster parents must also be able to meet state licensing criteria, something tribal foster parents may find difficult or may be unwilling to do (see additional discussion below).

Foster Parent Recruitment, Licensing, and Training

Most tribes were actively involved in foster home recruitment, although in practice this might be more accurately described as identification and preparation of relative and kinship placements.

Despite the high percentage of tribal foster homes that were caring for relative children, tribal programs ideally strove to have homes that could provide emergency placements and accommodate nonrelative children in longer-term placements.

Several tribes responding to this needs assessment

identified that they have an adequate number of tribal foster homes, while the majority saw the need for a good number of additional homes. The latter group of tribes shared that they were engaged in ongoing efforts to recruit these homes yet were often hampered in their efforts by a lack of funding that could support the hiring of a foster home recruiter.

Unfortunately, what ends up happening is one person may qualify to be a foster parent, but their spouse or their partner may not . . . we run into those situations all the time, and it's really hard to recruit.

– Tribal Child Welfare Worker

Recruiting Native foster homes was considered easier if potential foster parents had the ability to be licensed and overseen by the tribe. Most tribal foster parents, however, continue to be licensed by a state or county entity. Some states cannot place a child in a tribally licensed foster home unless the foster care provider is also licensed by the state; other tribes are able to do joint licensing in conjunction with the state or use a licensed foster care agency to do the licensing. Several tribes have developed their own licensing standards and actively license foster homes, while other tribes identified that developing foster care licensing policies and procedures was needed.

A critical situation that tribal child welfare programs deemed to be hindering their ability to place children was that many tribal members are unable to pass state/county background checks and home studies.

Moreover, state licensing standards frequently seem intrusive and burdensome to tribal people. These standards often require foster parents to limit visits by family or community members or prohibit the



foster parent from allowing adult relatives to live in the home. These requirements directly conflict with important tribal values related to interactions with and caring for kin. They can leave tribal foster parents in an untenable bind that some resolve by forgoing the opportunity to receive foster care payments or by merely caring for children informally without any form of financial support.

Well, right now I'd lie if I said foster care is really an option, because we've had a lot of homes that, for whatever reason, choose not to assist with volunteering or becoming licensed foster parents.

– Tribal Child Welfare Director

Finally, tribal child welfare programs frequently do not provide training specifically for foster parents. Thus because funds are limited, these programs may not offer the level of preparation and training of their foster parents that they would like to receive. Foster parents interviewed frequently commented that they would have liked to have received additional training, especially on topics that would have helped them better understand their foster children's mental health conditions or other special needs. On the flip side, these parents often saw the parenting skills programs that they were offered as being of little value because they felt that they had years of hands-on experience raising their own children, grandchildren, and often relative's children.

Needs of Tribal Foster Care Programs

Simply stated, tribes need "more workers, more funding, and more foster parents." In addition, tribal child welfare program directors, workers, foster parents, community providers, and others identified the following need areas:

- Increased training and preparation for tribal foster parents;
- Better assessment of the needs of children being placed in tribal foster homes;
- Provision of foster parents with more information about the background and problems of the foster children being placed in their homes;
- Notification of foster parents as to the array of tribal and state/county services and funding that are potentially available;
- Assistance for tribal foster care workers, so they may become more familiar with state/county foster care policies, regulations, and procedures;
- Ability to more thoroughly inform tribal foster parents of state/county regulations and assistance in helping them determine if they have met these requirements;



- Coordination between tribal and state/county child welfare programs in order to provide the most comprehensive level of support and services possible to tribal foster parents and foster children; and
- Access to funding for care providers, especially when not licensed formally by the state.

Tribal Foster Parents' Perceptions of the Tribal Child Welfare Program

The majority of tribal foster parents perceived the tribal child welfare program and its workers as being “very good at what they do” and as committed to helping and to the well-being of the children. These foster parents felt that they had a strong relationship with their tribal foster care worker(s) and could call upon this individual “day or night.” Workers were perceived as providing a great deal of emotional support to foster parents in addition to the assistance with material resources and referrals to services they gave. Foster parents frequently commented on the fact that their tribal foster care worker took time to explain in-depth child welfare or adoption processes. Workers also kept foster parents informed about what was going on throughout the course of child welfare cases involving their foster children. Especially important to tribal foster parents was the fact that they considered their tribal worker to have a strong and caring relationship with the foster children, and they considered this individual to be focused on the safety of the children as well as on maintaining the children’s cultural connectedness.

The social worker worked with us extensively to provide a safe place for the children to be. Throughout the seven years that we’ve had the children, she worked very, very closely with us, making sure that all the court orders were taken care of and what-not. The original court proceedings took place in the county level, and then when we did the adoption, we transferred the actual adoption process to the tribal court. But the social worker here helped me in very many levels of raising these children, from doctoring and seeing to it that they had school supplies, and the older one needed counseling, and she visited them on a regular basis. And she helped with a few family issues that had come up, and just she was actively involved all the way around.

– Tribal Child Welfare Family

Most tribal foster care programs from the needs assessment operated in partnership with foster parents. Tribal foster care workers allowed foster parents a high degree of decision making in regard to what was best for the child, who in most cases was also a relative. Although tribal programs might not be working from a formal wraparound model, these programs provided an exceptionally integrated package of services to foster children and foster parents given the funding and staffing limitations they contend with (see Table 6). As one foster father commented, there were just “no negatives” about



working with the tribal program. In the end, however, like the tribal programs, tribal foster parents also expressed that programs needed more funding and more workers.

Table 6. Strengths and Positive Characteristics of Tribal Programs Identified by Tribal Foster and Adoptive Parents

Tribal foster and adoptive parents shared that tribal child welfare workers . . .

Were very competent.

Were readily available and accessible.

Were supportive, responsive, and culturally sensitive.

Had strong relationships with the foster children they served and treated them well.

Supported foster parents with materials goods (e.g., diapers, furniture, appliances, clothing, school supplies, and food), as well as emotional support and counseling.

Often transported foster children to needed appointments or cultural activities.

Provided helpful explanations of the child welfare and adoption processes.

Did their best to provide foster parents with background on the child.

Were concerned with helping foster children maintain their cultural connections.

Were able to access services for foster children that were helpful.

Indian Child Welfare Act

Services related to ICWA cover children who are enrolled tribal members or those who are eligible for tribal membership, yet are domiciled off-reservation or outside the boundaries of the tribal nation (e.g., those living in metropolitan areas or smaller cities). Tribal child welfare programs, therefore, are serving in some manner the children who live within and outside the tribal community. Although a number of tribes have workers dedicated to handling ICWA cases, other tribes do not; still others have an ICWA committee that reviews and makes recommendations to the tribal child welfare program about which cases to address and how.

ICWA work has the potential to strain the workforce and budget capacity of tribal child welfare programs severely. Tribes, even those with workers specifically dedicated to ICWA cases, frequently report that they are “overwhelmed” with ICWA notifications that may come from any one of the 50 states or from hundreds of counties across the country. However, tribal child welfare programs, in their commitment to keeping children with family and maintaining children’s cultural connections, frequently strive to address as many ICWA cases as possible by intervening as a party in state court cases or by



transferring jurisdiction of cases back to the tribal court. ICWA practice may also require workers to travel extensively, both within and out of state.

ICWA work is time consuming by nature. For example, ICWA notifications require that workers undertake a process that involves, at a minimum,

- Working with the tribal enrollment department to determine a child's enrollment status;
- Notifying the tribal legal department that a child has come into the custody of a state or county;
- Sending a letter back to the notifying party if a child is not eligible, or if they are eligible, locating and preparing a cultural-expert witness;
- Working with the tribal attorney or court to prepare motions for intervention and/or transfer of jurisdiction; and
- Identifying and contacting relatives if foster placements are needed.

In addition, ICWA practice requires that tribes track cases and maintain case information; not all tribes have an adequate process for accomplishing this. Furthermore, ICWA workers not only practice at a tribal level, but must also be prepared to appear in tribal and state or county courts, as well as collaborate with state/county child welfare departments and at the level of state policy and practice review. Thus tribal ICWA work requires that tribal child welfare programs have staff that are trained and experienced in all these areas.

Compliance with ICWA provisions, on the part of states and counties, remains a problem in some of the jurisdictions, even more than 30 years after the passage of ICWA (Bussey and Lucero 2005; Fletcher, Single, and Fort 2009). The most problematic compliance aspects appeared to be not receiving notifications from states or counties—or not receiving them in a timely manner; failure of these jurisdictions to honor ICWA foster care and adoption placement preferences; and jurisdictions not recognizing cases as falling under ICWA or acting in a way that conveys they are “just not going to do it.” The following subsections will discuss specific issues and needs regarding ICWA from the needs assessment, but a brief summary is provided in Table 7.



Table 7. Summary of Tribally Identified Issues and Needs in ICWA Work

ICWA Work Issues and Needs

Funding for more tribal workers dedicated to ICWA cases

Development of tribal ICWA policies and procedures

Timely receipt of ICWA notifications from states and counties

Need for training of state and county workers on ICWA legal and practice aspects

Increasing state and county workers' understanding of why ICWA is needed

Increasing understanding and awareness of tribes and reservation contexts on the part of state and county workers

Increased compliance with ICWA placement preferences, especially placement with extended family and other tribal kin

Widely differing perceptions on the parts of tribal and state/county child welfare staff regarding the quality and level of state/tribal collaboration and state ICWA compliance

Continuing adoption of tribal children by non-Indians in state and county courts

Indian Child and Welfare Act Collaboration with States and Counties

Many of those interviewed felt that, in general, state/county workers did not understand or correctly interpret ICWA, and that this created a barrier to collaborating on ICWA cases successfully. Respondents from the general survey rated that that most critical ICWA T/TA need was training for state/county child welfare staff (see Table 8). In addition, interviewees often viewed state/county workers as not accepting the need for ICWA and as lacking awareness of important cultural aspects and tribal processes, such as enrollment. Tribal child welfare program staff shared in the interviews that the state/county workers with whom they had worked on ICWA cases had had little, if any, prior experience with these types of cases. However, in states with a number of tribes, state or county workers tended to be more knowledgeable and experienced about ICWA than were workers in states with few tribes. A number of states were reported to have a staff person dedicated to ICWA cases within their child welfare departments. Although, tribal child welfare representatives shared that having state staff dedicated to ICWA did not always lead to better collaboration.



Table 8. Critical ICWA Training Needs of Tribal Child Welfare Programs from General Survey

ICWA Training Needs	N	Mean	1	2	3	4
			Critical need area for T/TA	Moderate need area for T/TA	Strength area (little or no need for T/TA)	Don't know
ICWA Training for State/County Child Welfare Staff	221	1.60	50.8% (120)	29.2% (69)	13.6% (32)	6.4% (15)
Qualified expert-witness training	222	1.64	46.0% (110)	34.3% (82)	12.6% (30)	7.1% (17)
Guardian ad litem and/or court-appointed special advocate (CASA) assigned to child welfare cases	225	1.79	40.6% (97)	33.1% (79)	20.5% (49)	5.9% (14)
ICWA training for tribal court staff	216	1.85	33.8% (79)	38.9% (91)	19.7% (46)	7.7% (18)
ICWA policies and procedures	226	1.85	33.6% (80)	42.4% (101)	18.9% (45)	5.0% (12)

A number of tribal workers and court personnel reported that they felt that tribal representatives were not respected as professionals by state workers and courts. They perceived that state child welfare departments and state courts viewed tribal attorneys and social workers as untrained, lacking credentials, and present simply to create stumbling blocks that would cause the case to stretch on.

Sometimes the impression I get when we come in, like everybody sighs and they're like, "What are they going to do? They're going to mess this up. The case is going to take twice as long or they're going to try to point out mistakes that were made before now."

– Tribal Judge

This attitude was especially troubling to tribal child welfare representatives because, for the most part, tribal child welfare directors, workers, attorneys, and judges feel that they are knowledgeable about ICWA and child welfare best practices. When things were seen to have gone well in the collaboration between state and tribe, interviewees felt that the state had sent a timely ICWA notice; state and tribe were in agreement regarding an identified family placement; and the state court had not objected to the tribe's motion for transfer of jurisdiction.

It seemed to many tribal participants as if states and counties were not interested in collaborating with tribes on ICWA cases, or that they did not follow up on their statements indicating that they wanted to work with tribes. However, state/county child welfare staff who participated in this needs assessment



were likely to feel that they were doing a good job of collaborating. These staff often reported that they notified tribes that they had a Native child in custody; collaborated with tribes in case planning; partnered with tribes in assisting non-Native foster parents efforts to maintain children's cultural connections and involvement; and felt their processes and procedures in working with tribes were working adequately.

Unlike many of the tribal interview participants who felt that states or counties did not do a good job of notifying the tribe and including them in cases, state/county staff members who were interviewed perceived that tribes considered themselves to be informed participants in state/county ICWA cases. This difference in perspective warrants further exploration because this needs assessment focused on tribal representative perspectives, and only state/county stakeholders associated with the 16 tribes that participated in the onsite portion of the assessment were interviewed.

Indian Child and Welfare Act in State and Tribal Courts

In general, tribal child welfare representatives had experienced a wide range of knowledge of ICWA on the part of state and county courts. Similarly, some tribal participants reported that their tribal court judge and tribal attorney were quite well versed in ICWA, while others had concerns in this regard. Counties in which tribes were located were often seen to be more amenable to ICWA, especially transfers of jurisdiction, with some tribal courts and judges reporting that they had encountered the most resistance in areas that were unfamiliar with tribes. Tribal participants, for the most part, have seen a difference in case outcomes, depending upon whether a case was heard in state or tribal court; outcomes judged as more positive were in those cases handled by the tribal court.

Transfers of Jurisdiction

Transfers of jurisdiction from state/county courts to tribal courts, a provision of the ICWA, were discussed by many interviewees. Tribal participants reported that they often transferred cases in order to give families more time to complete requirements and to give tribal child welfare workers more opportunities to assist families in ways that were believed to be more culturally appropriate. Tribes also commonly transferred ICWA cases in order to avoid state courts adopting children away from family, tribe, and community. Tribal participants felt that their tribes had been generally successful in facilitating the transfer of cases, although some waited until they discerned that things are not going well with the case at the state/county level before transfer to tribal court was requested.



Availability of tribal resources or the tribal capacity to provide services was a major consideration in whether a tribe requested a transfer of jurisdiction. When tribes did not request transfers of jurisdiction, it was often because they could not provide the services needed by a child. Also, although physical relocation of a child is not required when tribal courts take jurisdiction, tribal judges or child welfare staff may not request transfers if they feel that it would be too disruptive to move a child who has never lived on the reservation to a new environment.

Findings suggest that tribes, states, and counties want to work together to identify and resolve potential issues before they occur. Many participants report a lack of jurisdictional disputes between the county and the tribe and describe proactive steps are taken toward alleviating jurisdictional issues before they occur. For example, one tribe utilized the services of a prosecuting attorney in the county in which their tribal lands are located in order to assist in drafting the tribe's child welfare code. The interviewee stated that this "turned out to be a good thing" when describing the lack of jurisdictional issues and positive relationship between the county and the tribe. Another interviewee stated, "I can't even recall the last case where there's been an issue." Another participant shared that his tribe gave jurisdiction to the state through an agreement, and, therefore, because the state is handling all of their child welfare cases, no disputes exist.

When there are objections to transfers of jurisdiction, these were believed to stem from the state/county attorney or guardian ad litem (GAL), including not understanding why a tribe would be interested in a child who had not grown up on the reservation; fear that child's rights would not be honored by the tribal court; fear that the tribe would simply return the children immediately to the parent(s); and fear that the child would be moved, in cases in which the judge or GAL had a particular non-Native family that they wished to have adopt the child. Although several tribal judges reported that they had never seen a state court decline a transfer of jurisdiction, other tribal court representatives felt that the current economic recession now encourages states to transfer jurisdiction more readily as a cost-saving measure.

Interview participants recounted the time wasted in trying to ascertain which jurisdiction is responsible to respond to situations that are often at a crisis level. Further, serious problems can result when tribal officers are unable to enforce laws against non-Natives and must wait for a county sheriff or some other law enforcement official with jurisdiction to respond. In addition, participants described feeling like they



were treated unfairly in the state court system by recounting stories of how they were required to establish their competence before they were allowed to testify or practice in the state court system.

Legal and Judicial

Tribal communities are governed by multiple and overlapping systems of justice. Whether tribal, county, state, or federal jurisdiction, it becomes a difficult road to navigate for tribal child welfare and tribal court personnel. Essentially, unless otherwise provided by federal law, both federal and tribal laws apply to members of a tribe. However, in states that fall under PL 83-280, states have jurisdiction over criminal offenses committed by or against American Indian/Alaska Natives in areas officially designed as “Indian country” within that state. A majority of the tribes participating in this needs assessment administer their own tribal court and have access to an attorney either working directly for the child welfare agency or as a staff attorney for the tribe. Most courts allow lay advocates to practice as long as they are familiar with tribal law and have paid a fee. Some tribes utilize what is known as a Code of Federal Regulations Court; these courts are operated by the BIA. Most tribes involved in this needs assessment receive funding from the DOI and/or the Department of Justice, which partially fund the operation of their court systems. Most tribes also use their own funds to supplement federal funding with some tribes covering all tribal court costs.

Several participants indicated the use of traditional court systems such as Peacemaking Courts. These courts are operated by the tribe and follow the tribe’s customs and traditions in settling disputes among members. One interviewee stated that his tribal court consists of seven tribal council members who decide cases based upon council consensus.

Partnerships with Tribal Court

Participants shared that most tribal child welfare agency partnerships with tribal courts exist because the court is administered by the tribe and therefore is mandated to provide judicial services for the tribal child welfare agency. Thus the existence of a formal partnership with a tribal court occurs through child welfare and other codes that direct child welfare workers to utilize that court. Several participants indicated that they do not partner and/or meet with their tribal court beyond providing testimony in hearings, while others maintained they work well with their tribal court and did not elaborate on whether partnerships existed. Other participants stated that, although they do not have formal written



agreements with their tribal court, they testify weekly, if not daily, which may signify the existence of informal agreements through constant interaction. Some interviewees have had difficulties in the past working with a tribal court but have since formed a partnership and worked through their differences.

Often interviewees indicated being frustrated in their attempts to partner formally or informally with their tribal court through the expression of other challenges associated with practicing in their court. These frustrations consisted of:

- Frequent turnover of tribal judges or tribal court staff that requires the child welfare worker to prepare for court in a different way than was originally established.
- Frequent changes in tribal leadership that are often the catalyst for the above mentioned point.
- Tribal court exists but is not able to hear cases due to insufficient funds needed to operate the court.
- Lack of proficiency by court staff.

I think they [the tribal court] have a long way to go before they're going to be able to handle any kind of child welfare case. It's a major matter of funding on the one hand, but it's also I think they really have to be educated about what it's going to take to take this jurisdiction on, and make sure that they have the resources and the staffing that are able to do it well. Or don't bother, and leave it with the state until you can do it better.

– Tribal Child Welfare Director

Partnerships with State/County Court

Several participants reported that partnerships exist with state/county courts through tribal/state partnership programs or court improvement programs. However, there are tribes that do not have partnerships of any kind with their state or county court systems. One interviewee believes that partnerships do not exist due to a lack of effort, by all concerned parties, to establish communication between the state/county court and tribal court. Lack of communication, the interviewee felt, is also the

So they're all about improving the court systems, staying on top of the data, making things a lot more user-friendly. So I know the state is really good with that.

– Tribal Child Welfare Director

main reason why tribal court orders are not recognized by the state or county.

Many participants shared that they are involved with state/tribal court improvement projects with the main purpose being to facilitate collaboration and improve



court practice in child abuse, neglect, and dependency cases. Other participants felt that partnerships exist due to the close relationship fostered during previous employment with the county court. One participant who was previously employed with the local county court stated, “My relationship is all the time collaborating with the court.”

Some tribes can issue orders for American Indian/Alaska Native children; however, the state is mandated to be the lead agency on these cases and can issue orders that overrule the order issued by the tribal court. One interviewee in such a system described how they used the threat of state court involvement in order to get families to comply with court-ordered services.

Children’s Code

Most tribal child welfare codes, especially those that have been in existence for a decade or more, are what one interviewee called a “general child welfare code,” meaning the code was modeled after a state code or the result of a general code template received from the BIA during the early years of tribal child welfare development. Some Children’s Codes combine juvenile and child welfare processes. Many participants believed that their code needed substantial revision in order to make it more specific to the tribe’s culture and traditions despite the fact that their tribal child welfare codes have been revised to some extent and codified in the tribe’s code of laws through a tribal resolution process. In addition, several participants reported the tribe did not have a Children’s Code but are in the process of developing one. In addition, 46% of survey respondents identified code revisions as a critical need for their program, and 33% identified it as a moderate need.

Child Protection Team/Multidisciplinary Team

Although the actual name of the team may vary from tribe to tribe, the majority of interview participants identified the Child Protection Team (CPT) concept as the team most widely utilized in reviewing child welfare cases. Few participants identified a Multidisciplinary Team (MDT). However, when an MDT was discussed, it was correctly identified as a prosecution-oriented team, which signifies an understanding of team use. Depending upon the tribe, CPTs meet on a regular basis to review cases and ensure that children are protected. For example, participants indicated CPTs may meet once a week, once a month, or as one stated, “Often.” However, there are CPTs that meet only when there is a case to discuss.



Some participants stated their CPT needs more structure in order to operate effectively, and they could benefit from training regarding the roles and responsibilities of CPT members. One example was the presence of policy governing what the CPT can and cannot do and a list designating the types of cases having review priority (i.e., sexual or physical abuse cases before neglect cases). Also, participants felt it was important to have cohesive and enduring team membership. Another interviewee felt the team needed training about how to cope with “the things they hear and know and see,” which indicates that training was needed regarding how to cope with secondary trauma.

Many of the tribes that have a CPT reported a wide-ranging membership. Participants may remain constant or may come and go depending upon their individual schedules. However, in most tribal CPTs, a small core team always participates in reviewing cases and is committed to ensuring child safety. Tribal CPTs are generally composed of tribal child welfare staff, community members, tribal enrollment, law enforcement, tribal court staff, behavioral health staff, a social service director, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Attorney’s office, the BIA, county social workers, schools, CASAs, judges, attorneys, and prosecutors. Some tribal representatives also serve on county CPTs.

Tribal Child Welfare Operations

This section begins with a detailed description of participant responses about how tribal child welfare programs partner with state child welfare agencies for the provision of services through formal agreements. This section also presents key findings about tribal/state relationships and factors that influence this relationship, as well as access and opinions about funding resources to support programs.

Title IV-E Tribal/State Agreements

Tribal/state IV-E agreements provide a foundation for establishing relationships between tribal and state governments for the provision of child welfare services. Approximately half of the tribes that participated in onsite or telephone interviews report that they have agreements with the state or states in which the tribe resides that allow them to operate Title IV-E foster care programs (providing for some or all Title IV-E reimbursement categories) and receive Title IV-E reimbursements for eligible services. These agreements describe how ICWA will be implemented and address services provided to American Indian/Alaska Native children in nonkinship out-of-home care. They also specify procedures, roles, and responsibilities for tribal notification when the state receives a referral for an Indian child; when and



how state or tribal law enforcement is involved; the roles of the BIA and state and tribal courts; guidance dealing with transfers of jurisdiction to tribes that have their own child protection programs and courts; and procedures for establishing eligibility for Title IV-E payments. Additionally, when a state has a federal Title IV-E review, tribal cases are included through a stratified selection process.

About half of the tribes that participated in the needs assessment that currently have a tribal/state agreement felt that their agreements were working as long as the tribe agreed with the terms, the agreement was consistently honored by the state, and the tribe and state worked collaboratively to serve Indian children and families in a culturally appropriate way. These “satisfied” tribes were likely to have an agreement that clarifies jurisdictional authority and how services are provided in order to protect Indian children. Not surprisingly, these tribes also reported that they met regularly with state child welfare representatives who were part of state or tribal advisory committees, forums, or CPT/MDT groups. Almost all needs assessment participants who talked about good relationships with their state described personal relationships with key state child welfare representatives, with whom they worked closely to identify and resolve issues. These participants frequently mentioned at least one person by name who serves as a liaison between the state and the tribe, reaches out to the tribe, and facilitates interactions with other state representatives. Sometimes this person was a designated ICWA specialist in the state; in other cases, it was a person without a designated role. Interestingly, many tribes noted that the strong collaboration with their states/counties was a result of years of building interpersonal relationships with key individuals and developing formal and informal agreements through dialogue, negotiation, and compromise.

Another large segment of those interviewed felt that there were challenges with their tribal/state agreement and issues that needed to be addressed. Among their concerns were the lack of communication between the state and tribe; lack of state/county adherence to the terms and spirit of the agreement (e.g., failure of states to notify tribes as per ICWA); and issues with the agreement. In particular, two tribal representatives mentioned that

When [our state] wrote their Indian Child Welfare laws, their Indian Child Welfare Practice Manuals, and any other agreements that they have developed or thought about or wanted to have, they have what they call Tribal Consultation, which is a real formal event where they ask input from the tribes and they allow the tribes to weigh in or out on almost everything. And while it's sometimes tedious and sometimes hair-pulling, the alternative would be just dreadful. . . . They literally do a great job.

– Tribal Child Welfare Director



there were fundamental disagreements between the tribe and the state regarding the tribe's ability to manage a foster care program and that these disagreements often led to jurisdictional disputes. Two

What this agreement did is the tribes went in and we did like a treaty making ceremony. We did a ceremony where we had the governor come here. They sat down. They prayed. They did a traditional ceremony. They used the pipe, the sacred pipe. And they said, "This is what we will allow you to do here." And they gave the blessing for the state to do this, case manage it to IV-E foster care things. Well, it's just that they haven't actually honored that to what they should be. And so we've just been having some issues and problems with communication.

– Tribal Child Welfare Director

other tribes noted that they recently worked with their states to revise the tribal/state agreement in order to meet the needs of their children better and are hopeful that these changes will result in more positive collaborations.

For those tribes that were interviewed and have access to Title IV-E funding through their tribal/state agreements, the level of collaboration and cooperation between the tribes and states vary widely, as do the agreements. At issue is the fundamental question of which aspects of child protection services for Indian children are the responsibilities of the tribe and which are within the

purview of the state. Overall, however, it appears that most tribes that have a tribal/state agreement have relatively stronger collaborative relationships with their state child welfare programs compared to those tribes without formal agreements. From the interview discussions, this appears to be the result of a developmental process of relationship building and a longer history of collaboration, as well as motivation on the part of the state and the tribe to work in partnership and with mutual respect in order to achieve the common goal of serving American Indian/Alaska Native children and families.

Accessing Title IV-B and Title IV-E Funding

As described above, Title IV-B and Title IV-E funding are but one source of funding for tribal child welfare programs. However, this funding stream is an important resource for tribes because it supports the operation of Title IV-E foster care programs, reimburses tribes for eligible services, and provides Title IV-E-eligible training for caseworkers and foster parents. Recent Fostering Connections legislation has made direct access of Title IV-E funding possible for tribes. This needs assessment sought to gain a deeper understanding of how tribes access Title IV-B and Title IV-E funding and their views about utilizing this funding in the future. This section presents findings from interviews and surveys about these funding streams.



Title IV-B Funding

The majority of the survey respondents (64%) were familiar with Title IV-B funding, and 45% reported that they currently receive Title IV-B funding. For those not receiving this funding, the primary reasons included a time-consuming application and management process (35%); a lack of information about the process (21%); eligibility (14%); and other reasons (28%), such as lack of buy in from their tribal court or state/county agencies (see Figure 8).

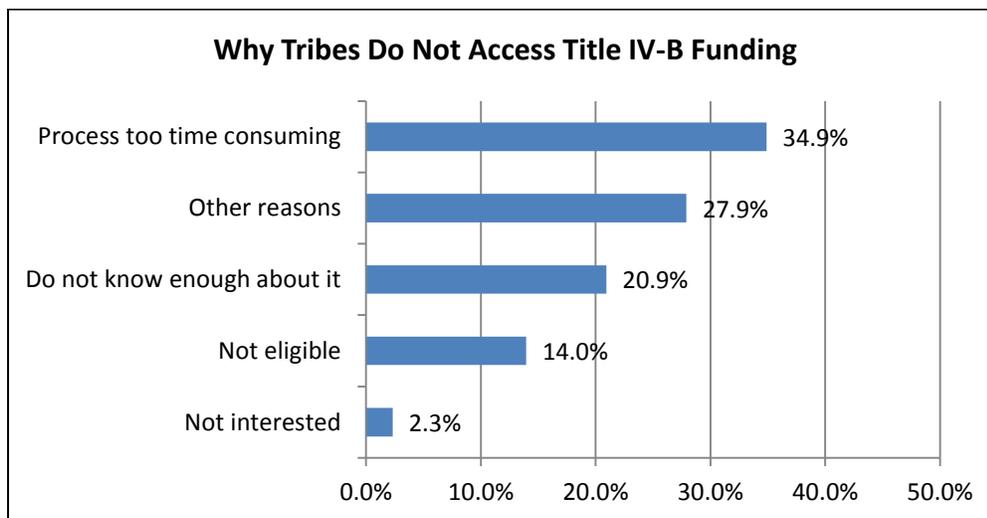


Figure 8. General survey responses to reasons tribes do not access Title IV-B funding (n = 43).

Title IV-E Funding through Tribal/State Agreement

The majority of survey respondents were also familiar with Title IV-E funding (68%), and 47% of respondents reported that they currently receive funding through a tribal/state IV-E agreement. Of the 45 tribal directors who were interviewed either in person or by telephone, 11 reported that they currently receive Title IV-E funding through a tribal/state agreement and 27 reported that they do not (including the seven that currently have a Title IV-E planning grant). It was clear from the interviews that some tribes are interested in developing tribal/state agreements in order to access Title IV-E funds, while others are not interested in doing so.

Tribes that currently access Title IV-E funding through tribal/state agreements describe many benefits, as well as some challenges. The greatest stated benefits were funding for foster care maintenance for Title IV-E-eligible children and the ability of tribes to manage their own foster care services.



Another identified benefit for tribes was access to Title IV-E–related training and the ability of tribal child welfare staff to participate in state trainings. Tribes are challenged with providing training for their staff due to lack of funding, and those tribes that had been able to send caseworkers to pre-service training provided by the state saw this as a valuable resource. Several tribes reported that they use the standardized state tools to assess safety and risk for Indian children, and that their caseworkers gain knowledge and skills around assessment when they attend statewide training. However, many tribal/state agreements that provide for Title IV-E maintenance payments do not include tribal access to administrative and training funds. Recovery of Title IV-E–related administrative expenditures is critical for program management, infrastructure, and operations.

Statistically, with the Title IV-E, it tailors to the big tribes. We happen to have a unique way. We're still interested in getting to foster care payments, establishing foster parents. I want that to increase on the reservation.

– Tribal Child Welfare Director

Despite these benefits, many challenges to accessing Title IV-E funding through tribal/state agreements emerged from the needs assessment interviews. Table 9 provides a list of reasons provided by interview participants regarding why or why not tribes pursue Title IV-E funding through tribal/state agreements.

So I think if these technical services are provided upfront on an individual tribe basis based on the number of IV-E cases, it will give a clear picture whether tribes should go into contract in their own IV-E as well as what's to be expected and how do we sustain that and how many numbers before we hit the threshold before it's actually going to be beneficial for that tribe to do so. So I think it would help . . . that the Feds, the state share that information to each tribe so that we can make a sound decision for our community.

– Tribal Child Welfare Director

The tribes that are ready to consider accessing Title IV-E funding either through a tribal/state agreement or direct funding access through ACF spoke about potential resources from their state or other tribes that they were seeking in order to help them in their planning. Although most tribes seemed unaware of federal T/TA resources that might be available to them from the regional CB office or the T/TA Network, two of the tribes described in detail how they were able to improve data monitoring and reporting with the help of the National Resource Center for Data and Technology.



Table 9. Reasons for and against Developing Tribal/State Agreements to Access Title IV-E Funds from Needs Assessment Interview Participants

Access to Title IV-E Funds through Tribal/State Agreements	
Reasons for Developing Agreements	Reasons against Developing Agreements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to funding to support all aspects of child welfare practice and staff training • Reduction in the number of Indian children in state/county foster care (although children may remain in foster care through the tribe) • Improved service availability and access for families receiving case management from the tribe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of support from the state • Costs associated with establishing the agreement are too high • Too few eligible children to warrant the time and resources • Lack of program infrastructure to meet requirements • Do not know enough about it • Loss of sovereignty, too much state control • Unwillingness to compromise traditional CPS for Indian families

Direct Title IV-E Funding

Many tribes that participated in the needs assessment stated that they were interested in learning more about direct Title IV-E funding. Others said that they were beginning to look at the feasibility of developing a Title IV-E plan. When asked about level of interest in direct Title IV-E funding in the general survey, about 22% (or 40 respondents) were definitely interested, while 21% (38 respondents) were definitely not interested, and 57% (106 respondents) were unsure. Meanwhile, several of the tribes that were interviewed shared that they were in the beginning stages of planning for eligibility to access Title IV-E funding.

Despite the advantages, needs assessment participants reported a number of obstacles that prevent tribes from directly accessing Title IV-E funds. First, most of tribes do not have other funding sources to cover the match or pay for nonreimbursable Title IV-E services. As discussed above, most tribal child welfare programs that were interviewed are quite small and do not have enough available staff to perform the required case management functions. Moreover, these programs do not have the staff capacity to meet the federal reporting requirements or the infrastructure required to track the required data. Another obstacle to applying for direct Title IV-E funding that was identified by many tribes was not having a sufficient number of licensed homes in which to place children once a tribe has jurisdiction.



Most tribes discussed that they need to build their program capacity infrastructure substantially in order to meet the needs of children and families. They identified the need to document or update policies and procedures; revise their Tribal Children’s Code; and create or enhance data-management and reporting systems. In addition to building child welfare program capacity, it was also identified that tribal courts must be willing and able to develop and implement court procedures and rules consistent with federal requirements (e.g., rendering judicial “reasonable efforts” determinations or holding permanency hearings). Building capacity and program infrastructure requires a great deal of preparation, program development, and collaboration among the tribal government; tribal agencies; tribal courts; state or county child welfare agencies and courts; and the BIA (for tribes in which the BIA is involved with tribal child welfare services) and presents a daunting challenge for tribes and clear opportunities for T/TA.

Many tribes are engaged in capacity building and collaboration development work, and a number of needs assessment participants spoke about the challenges and lessons learned so far. Other participants expressed interest in direct Title IV-E access but were not clear about the requirements and program capacity needed to support this reimbursement program. Often these participants stated that they could benefit from additional information and technical assistance around assessing program “readiness.” Other tribes reported that they would like, or have already started, to undertake the work needed to build program infrastructure, including revising their Tribal Children’s Code; revising policies and procedures; and creating data-management and reporting systems, to increase eligibility for funding and to build the effectiveness of their program to serve families better. However, many stated that they do not have the staff resources or the technical knowledge to develop their systems, and this is exemplified with a quote from a tribal child welfare director below.

We haven’t been able to put a request in for other funding resources, and I know there’s lots of funds available. People have told us about things and I’ve seen things on the Internet, but we just don’t have the expertise and the time to do all that because we’re in the trenches every day, either in court or on home visits or writing documents for our current cases either to keep them out of court or work within the court system. We need some definite TA to put a plan into writing.

– Tribal Child Welfare Director

Some tribes expressed reluctance about entering into an arrangement with either state or federal governments that would bind them to policy requirements around child welfare practice that may conflict with tribal values or what they consider to be best practice for the families with whom they



work. For example, one tribe's Children's Code allows for two years of placement before filing for termination of parental rights, which they felt was not in alignment with requirements set forth by the ASFA. Finally, some programs are wary about being "early adopters" of a program in which all of the details regarding eligibility and reimbursement have not yet been worked out. One participant shared that their tribal child welfare program would rather wait a few years to see how direct Title IV-E funding works for other tribes before applying for a Title IV-E grant.

I felt like for us, for a tribe, it was a little bit premature because we didn't know enough, and maybe the Feds didn't know enough about how all of that was going to play out.

– Tribal Child Welfare Director



DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The NRC4Tribes needs assessment was intended to assess the structure, operations, approach to practice, and organizational capacity of tribal child welfare programs throughout Indian country. It is expected that the assessment will provide the CB, NRC4Tribes, and the larger T/TA Network with sufficient information about systems issues impacting tribes in order to inform future strategies for T/TA.

In addition, the assessment sought to highlight aspects unique to tribal child welfare programs, such as the incorporation of culture-based interventions and traditional practices, and to understand from the perspectives of tribal and community stakeholders how history, context, policies, and laws might affect the provision of child welfare services to tribal families and children.

In sum, this study intended to learn about the strengths, challenges, and T/TA needs of tribal child welfare programs. Data gathered from the NRC4Tribes needs assessment came from a mix of survey instruments and qualitative interviews that were completed—either onsite, by telephone, or by means of the Internet—by a range of program and community stakeholders from a representative sample of tribes.

A descriptive overview of tribal child welfare programs has been presented, as well as findings in the areas of tribal child welfare program operations, practice approach, legal and judicial, and workforce development. The authors of these findings are aware that the 565 federally recognized tribes are each unique and distinguished by important differences such as language, culture, values, geography, size, and governmental structure. The purpose of this assessment was neither to generalize all tribes into a common whole in which distinctions disappear (as is frequently, and mistakenly, done when referring to tribes in a generic context) nor to compile an exhaustive list of how each tribe is unique and differs from others. Rather this needs analysis strove to find common themes in regard to tribal child welfare programs' strengths and challenges and tribal child welfare stakeholders' experiences and to examine characteristics and factors that either facilitate effective practice or are barriers to such.

Many tribal child welfare programs find themselves at a crucial developmental stage in which they feel they must increase their organizational capacity in order to meet the growing demand to provide services to children and families living in their tribal communities, as well as address ICWA cases that involve their member children who live in urban areas and outside the boundaries of the tribal nation.



At the same time, funding, which historically has been scarce, continues to be limited or tied to federal programs that also require increased tribal capacity and staff oversight. Moreover, families and children face evermore complex social, emotional, and material needs that frequently require staff members to be trained in advanced and specialized approaches to intervention and treatment.

Although tribal child welfare programs are faced with capacity and funding challenges, their work also requires that program staff creatively balance and incorporate cultural values, norms, practices, and expectations. However, there are few culturally based models that can provide direction, and these are not widely disseminated. Not only is each tribe uniquely different, but also diversity may exist among members of each tribal community, and thus, services cannot be provided in a “one-size-fits-all” model. Each tribe is tasked, then, with creating a service delivery system that is not only culturally responsive but also able to adapt to the varying needs of its members.

Findings of this needs assessment address the incorporation of traditional American Indian/Alaska Native practices and customs by tribal child welfare programs and the value these programs derive from using these elements as an approach to preventing and addressing child abuse and neglect. Use of cultural practices and ceremonies, such as peacemaking, sweat lodges, traditional languages, songs, and storytelling, as well as calling upon the knowledge and skills of traditional healers, medicine people, and elders, are all means that Native people use to strengthen their communities, foster a sense of belonging, and increase resiliency. These protective factors have allowed Native people to survive generations of oppression and have been expressed by interviewees as critical to ensuring the future of their communities. These practices also have the potential to assist tribes to address historical trauma and its manifestation in high rates of substance abuse, domestic violence, sexual abuse, and child maltreatment in tribal communities.

Despite a lack of funding and resources, tribal child welfare programs deliver services within a cultural system that is family centered and relationship based. Many of the elements of “best practice,” as identified and emulated by state and county systems, have long been characteristics of tribal child welfare practice. These include systems of care principles such as family centered practice, individualized strengths-based care, preventive in-home services, and community-driven practice.

Some current best practices, such as family group decision making, are considered to have originated in indigenous communities and continue to be viewed as a positive foundation for tribal child welfare



practice. For example, virtually all of the tribes interviewed for this assessment routinely involve parents, extended families, kin, and caregivers in decision making at every step of the case, and most used a form of family group conferencing, although they may not have referred to it by this formal term. A good number of interviewees expressed surprise at being asked a question about whether they use family meetings for case decision making, as they did not consider this to be a particularly innovative or unique approach.

Unfortunately, culturally based approaches are not considered to be evidence based until they are adopted and tested by mainstream child welfare. Most tribes do not have the resources or a sample size large enough in order to conduct the studies needed to establish the evidence base for their cultural interventions. Furthermore, traditional health and behavioral health practices have been consistently disregarded, undermined by federal policy, and barred from receiving funding, despite the practice evidence that they can lead to positive health outcomes (Goodkind et al. 2010). This is also true of tribal child welfare's family centered practices: many are not supported by mainstream child welfare, and some are considered to be in violation of federal or state policies. As such, resources could be directed to implement pilot "practice-based evidence" collaborative research projects with tribes in order to help document outcomes of tribal practices.

Many tribes seek to develop infrastructure to run their own programs more effectively without jeopardizing tribal cultural values and authentic engagement with families and their communities. For example, a large number of tribal child welfare programs expressed that they would like to use more structured processes such as formal practice models; safety, risk, and other assessment tools; and data-collection and managements systems. These tribes also wish to institutionalize cultural practices, in forms such as customary adoption, within tribal child welfare code, policy, and practice. Bringing together these elements, that at times may have differing expectations or represent contradictory perspectives, challenge tribal programs to innovate and discover new approaches.

Using a formalized practice model to structure and guide day-to-day child welfare decision making is currently considered best practice in most state and county child welfare systems. The majority of tribal child welfare programs have yet to incorporate their own practice models. However, most tribal programs operate from a foundation of strong cultural and community values that are inherent in the relational, behavioral, and communication styles of workers, but that may not have been formally written down or codified. Like the values that lie at the heart of many state/county practice models, the



cultural values underlying tribal child welfare practice have the potential to provide a starting place for building a more formalized practice model while also allowing practice to reflect important cultural norms and traditions. A formalized or documented practice model would also appear to be helpful in increasing the understanding of child welfare interventions and decision making by entities external to the child welfare program, such as tribal governmental entities and other departments, which in some tribes may make final decisions and recommendations to the tribal court.

Strong collaborations between tribes and states help strengthen tribal child welfare programs' abilities to expand services for American Indian/Alaska Native children. Building these collaborative partnerships can take many years of concerted work, and they rely on strong interpersonal relationships between key representatives on both sides, as well as on establishing formal and informal agreements. Dialog, negotiation, and compromise characterize the agreement-building process and must be maintained through ongoing efforts on the part of tribal and state representatives.

For those tribes that were interviewed and have access to Title IV-E funding through a tribal/state agreement, the level of collaboration and cooperation between the tribes and states varies widely, as do the agreements. Overall, most tribes that access Title IV-E funding through the state reported stronger collaborative tribal/state relationships as compared to states that do not access Title IV-E funds. This is indicative of a developmental process of relationship building that is occurring as a result of a history of sustained collaboration, as well as motivation on the part of both parties to work in partnership and from a stance of mutual respect in order to achieve the common goal of serving children and families.

Finally, as tribal participants indicated, in these collaborations, there is a concern that the burden of effort is one-sided. Participants shared that not only are tribes and tribal child welfare programs constantly negotiating across and within two different cultural systems, they also must maneuver through a complex web of governmental relationships. To illustrate, tribal child welfare programs and their workers must be knowledgeable of and able to operate within state and tribal governmental and court systems. In addition, they must interface with representatives of the federal government, such as the BIA and the ACF, which provide a myriad of tribal-related services. This creates the need for a level of knowledge and skills, as well as the ability to bridge two cultures, which is not commonly required of federal, state, and county child welfare programs and their workers.



FINDINGS SUPPLEMENT FOR THE CHILDREN'S BUREAU AND THE T/TA NETWORK: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The recommendations presented below are informed by the findings from interviews and survey responses of the national tribal child welfare T/TA needs assessment conducted by the NRC4Tribes. These recommendations identify potential areas of focus and support for tribal child welfare programs that could be provided by the NRC4Tribes and the T/TA Network.

As a new National Resource Center, the NRC4Tribes is faced with many varying expectations about its roles and responsibilities, both from within the T/TA Network and from tribes and tribal communities, including increasing the utilization by tribes of services offered by the T/TA Network. Thus it is anticipated that a National Resource Center devoted to tribal child welfare will enhance the direct support provided to tribes while strengthening the working partnership between tribes and the CB in order to meet the goal of building the capacity of tribal child welfare programs and improving outcomes for American Indian/Alaska Native children.

It is hoped that the needs assessment findings will promote greater understanding for the federal CB and T/TA Network of the unique needs, challenges, and hopes of tribal child welfare providers. The recommendations that stem from the findings are intended as guiding principles for the NRC4Tribes and the T/TA Network and to serve as a point of reference in efforts to move forward in order to increase tribal access to the array of T/TA offered through the NRC4Tribes' partners within the national T/TA Network.

Recommendation 1: Support the strengthening of tribal child welfare program infrastructure to improve practice

It is recommended that the NRC4Tribes and the T/TA Network partner with tribes in order to identify gaps in infrastructure, provide T/TA to address these gaps in order to improve the organizational effectiveness of these tribal child welfare programs, and address the specific T/TA needs identified in this needs assessment.

Many tribal representatives who were interviewed felt that they needed to grow their child welfare programs in order to meet the service needs of families in their communities. Interviewees expressed the need for a fully developed program infrastructure. This infrastructure included a documented



practice model; Tribal Children's Code; job descriptions and staff performance reviews; formal assessment protocols and case management processes; and an electronic MIS.

Overwhelmingly, tribes identified that they needed support in building program capacity and infrastructure. Upon request by tribes for T/TA, specific strategies for the NRC4Tribes may include some of the following:

- Assisting tribal programs and workers in order to bring together the discrete knowledge, awareness, understanding, and practices that they use with families to formulate an articulated approach to practice that incorporates cultural values and practices and certain identified values and practices from mainstream child welfare.
- Assisting tribal child welfare programs to consider how the interaction between tribal sovereignty and state and federal child welfare regulations impacts tribal programs and how tribal child welfare practice can respond to challenges and issues arising in this regard.
- Assisting tribes to assess the need for modification of their Children's Code in order to meet desired outcomes for their child welfare programs; providing T/TA for development of Tribal Children's Codes that are aligned with tribal child welfare practice models, reflect the culture and values of the tribe, and include federal child welfare requirements.
- Building awareness through training, Webinars, newsletters, and other communication mechanisms of the importance and relevance of using standardized assessment tools (i.e., safety, risk, and strengths assessments); assisting tribal programs to develop culturally based assessment tools or to modify current tools to align with their practice model and meet the needs of the families they serve.
- Assisting tribes to develop job descriptions for various functions in the child welfare program and standardized performance review and feedback processes that are aligned with the practice model.
- Developing and implementing a system for increasing the amount of formalized peer-to-peer technical assistance. Among the NRC4Tribes staff, consultants, National Advisory Council members, and the network of individuals connected with the NRC4Tribes, there is a rich pool of experience and information about promising practices in tribal child welfare systems. These connections can be used to link tribes requesting T/TA to others who have skills and information that can assist these tribes in their efforts to address their challenges.

It is further recommended that innovative efforts to assist tribes in building infrastructure capacity that are emerging from previous or current CB initiatives and other efforts in the field of child welfare be examined for incorporation by a wider number of tribes. It is important that the T/TA Network help



disseminate the knowledge emerging from these model programs, as well as products that are being produced, and to incorporate these in their consultation work with tribes.

It is also important to recognize and acknowledge that the T/TA Network has already been providing effective tribal T/TA for many years. Examples of innovative approaches to working with tribal child welfare programs currently underway with the CB include:

- The Mountain and Plains Child Welfare Implementation Center is working with tribes in North Dakota and Oklahoma to develop and implement culturally based and family centered practice models in order to improve the coordination and delivery of child welfare services to tribal children and families.
- The Midwest Child Welfare Implementation Center is supporting Wisconsin's 71 county child welfare agencies and 11 sovereign tribes in order to implement the Wisconsin Indian Child Welfare Act.
- The Western and Pacific Child Welfare Implementation Center is working with 15 tribes and tribal organizations in Alaska and the State Office of Children's Services in order to reduce disproportionality by strengthening cultural competency and interagency collaboration.
- The National Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues is providing exemplary qualified expert-witness training for ICWA cases.
- The National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections has facilitated the development of video-based training on ICWA for state social service agencies.
- The National Resource Center for Organizational Improvement (NRCOI) has developed fact sheets and other products that states can use to enhance state-tribal collaboration. Additionally, NRCOI has provided support to conduct several tribal child welfare program assessments that have offered tribes the opportunity to identify strengths, challenges, service gaps, and recommendations for their child welfare service delivery systems.
- The National Resource Center for Recruitment and Retention of Foster and Adoptive Parents at AdoptUSKids has modeled promising practices in engaging tribes in state-focused T/TA such as the development of state plans for recruiting Native foster parents.
- The National Resource Center for Adoption has modeled promising practices in engaging tribes in state-focused T/TA such as the development of a state law on customary adoption.
- Several of the CB regional offices have, over the course of many years of targeted effort, developed very close and positive working relationships with tribes in their Regions and can model effective practice for partnering with tribes in order to provide individualized and responsive support and technical assistance for ongoing program development.



Recommendation 2: Support the use of culturally based practices in tribal child welfare

Because many tribal staff who were interviewed for the assessment described that they would prefer that their programs' child welfare services be based upon their own tribes' cultural values and practices rather than upon mainstream tools and practices taken directly from state or county systems, a focus of the T/TA provided by the NRC4Tribes, and with assistance from partners in the T/TA Network, should be on supporting the use of culturally based practices in tribal child welfare. At the request of tribes (and only at the request of tribes), strategies in this regard may include:

- Facilitating tribal engagement in a critical analysis of culturally based practices and how they support, or may not support, successful case outcomes with tribal families.
- Assisting tribes to develop tribally specific and culturally informed practice models that reflect values and practices that not only keep children safe but keep them connected to culture, extended family, and community. These models not only incorporate culture but specifically articulate how and what cultural elements differentiate the model from a mainstream child welfare practice model. For example, what do tribes do differently, and how do they do things differently? Also, how might a child welfare investigation be conducted differently in a tribal community?
- Assisting tribal child welfare programs to articulate the cultural values and practices that underlie their programs' approaches to practice; determining whether there is relevance in identifying how mainstream child welfare practices can be modified in order to align with cultural values and practices (such as the different boundaries that may exist between tribal clients and tribal workers) and how these can be operationalized.
- Working with programs in order to identify cultural practices, such as customary adoption, that they may wish to incorporate into their child welfare practice and determining how, and in what situations, these cultural practices can be utilized.
- Assisting tribal child welfare workers to determine how to incorporate the close and often first-hand knowledge they possess of families' situations; community context and resources; and cultural norms and practices when completing safety, risk, and family needs assessments and providing other child welfare interventions.
- Providing workers with ways that they can use the community connections and affiliation they share with families in order to heighten engagement in addressing substance abuse and other family challenges.



Recommendation 3: Partner with the T/TA Network to support the development of MIS for tribal child welfare programs

It is recommended that the NRC4Tribes work in partnership with the T/TA Network, particularly the National Resource Center for Child Welfare Data and Technology (NRCCWDT) to support its efforts, and that the two National Resource Centers disseminate knowledge gained about effective MIS for tribal programs. Findings in this needs assessment in regard to data and technology indicate a need for collaboration among members of the T/TA Network, and the resources and concerted efforts of the National Resource Centers and Implementation Centers working in this area can promote the development of MIS for tribal child welfare programs.

The NRCCWDT has worked successfully with several tribes that were interviewed in this needs assessment and has helped them to implement systems for managing and reporting case-level data. There is a concern, however, that tribal child welfare programs' needs for T/TA in this area may be greater than what can be fulfilled by one National Resource Center. Tribes frequently mentioned in their responses in this needs assessment that they lacked sufficient funding to purchase or build the automated data-tracking systems that they need to manage their child welfare systems, especially when considering accessing Title IV-E funding for program services.

The experience of states in developing their own SACWIS systems supports the need for extensive time and funding for such efforts, although most tribes agree that they do not need systems as complex or large as SACWIS. However, tribes reported that they do need systems that will allow them to manage cases, track ICWA efforts, document case outcomes, and generate automated data reports. The following strategies are recommended for the NRC4Tribes in partnering with the NRCCWDT and other T/TA Network members:

- Develop a resource guide for tribes that details existing systems currently in use, functionality needed by MIS, and possible vendors who can build or adapt current software systems and/or customize databases for tribes. In this way, tribes can leverage their resources more effectively and avoid the trial-and-error process that many states experienced when building their SACWIS systems.
- Support the development of a template database from a common or inexpensive system that incorporates general tribal data needs with federal reporting standards, and make that tool available to tribal communities to use and modify.



- Help to create and disseminate tribally oriented sample case management procedures, policies, and other tools.
- Provide onsite coaching and TA for staff on how to use an MIS with consistency and fidelity, as well as how to extract and use data in case management decision making.

Recommendation 4: Promote the development and maintenance of successful tribal foster care and adoption (permanency) programs

It is recommended that the NRC4Tribes and the T/TA Network support tribes in strengthening foster care and adoption programs. This recommendation would involve working collaboratively with the National Resource Center for Recruitment and Retention of Foster and Adoptive Parents at AdoptUSKids, the National Resource Center for Adoption, and the National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections to assist tribes in developing the program infrastructure necessary to keep children in their families and tribal communities and to maintain their connections to tribal culture and tradition; assist tribes and states to work in partnership to develop agreements that support traditional or cultural practices in foster care and adoption, while also ensuring that child safety is paramount; and support tribes' efforts to implement their Title IV-E implementation grants effectively.

Specifically, the NRC4Tribes, with assistance from T/TA Network partners, can provide T/TA to

- Promote increased and improved dialogue between the tribes and states about the disparity between state foster care licensing requirements (e.g., background checks and housing requirements) and cultural adoption practices and facilitate negotiations that allow for tribes to maintain children in their tribal communities.
- Assist tribes in gaining increased information about state and federal foster care and adoption policies, as well as in gaining clarity about those cultural aspects of their own tribal foster care and adoption practice that they wish to preserve.

Recommendation 5: Support the strengthening and improvement of tribal/state relationships

It is recommended that the T/TA Network utilize the following strategies to the greatest extent feasible in order to strengthen and improve tribal/state child welfare relationships and collaborative tribal/state agreements:

- In all T/TA requests made by state agencies, determine whether the request has an impact on tribes within the state, including impacting the population of American Indian/Alaska Native children and families in the state or county system.



- Maintain a dialog with state agencies about the role of tribes throughout the duration of any T/TA Network assistance provided to states or counties.
- Work with states, counties, and tribes, as a group, to develop structured mechanisms for communication among these child welfare programs, such as standing committees, advisory councils, and CPTs/MDTs.
- Assist states, counties, and tribes in an effort to improve the ability of tribes to access state SACWIS systems in order to input and retrieve data about American Indian/Alaska Native children and families. The ability to customize state SACWIS systems to track data elements for ICWA better would be of mutual benefit to tribes, counties, and states.
- Identify and address communication and cross-training challenges among states, counties, tribal child welfare programs, and courts of various jurisdictions.
- Work with states, counties, and tribes to address ways to leverage resources that could enable tribes to provide services to a greater number of children and families involved in ICWA cases.
- Work collaboratively within the regional office/state/tribe relationship to address issues of concern in regard to ICWA compliance, tribal foster care licensing, and other related issues that arise between state and tribal child welfare agencies.

Most tribes interviewed for the needs assessment reported that states and counties comply with ICWA by notifying them when member children are taken into the custody of these departments, and very few jurisdictional disputes were reported. However, many tribes also expressed that they do not have the financial resources and staff capacity necessary to address the large number of ICWA cases in states and counties across the United States that involve their member children. Tribes expressed that although state agencies are only required to be familiar with their own system, tribes are required to be experts in all of the systems in which their children may be in custody, which includes not only the home state's system but also state and county child welfare systems throughout the United States.

T/TA is needed to foster communication between the states and tribes in order to develop mutually agreed upon strategies in regard to ICWA compliance; collaboration between state and tribal child welfare departments on ICWA cases; and appropriate foster care services for American Indian/Alaska Native children.

It is further recommended that the NRC4Tribes and the T/TA Network work with tribes and states to address the repercussions of long-standing historical trauma and distrust.

A history of genocide and broken treaties—followed by centuries of laws, practices, and policies aimed at assimilating American Indian/Alaska Native people into the dominant culture and destroying tribes



and tribal cultures, such as forced boarding school attendance, tribal termination programs, and urban relocation—have severely compromised the trust between tribal nations and the federal government. Despite the tribal sovereignty and self-determination aims of contemporary federal Indian policy, trust between tribes and governmental entities remains tentative and often difficult to attain. The issue of racism is also never far from the surface.

Given this history, the number of tribes that reported having tribal/state agreements for the administration of child welfare programs—and importantly, that say these agreements are functioning well—is truly remarkable. However, needs assessment findings indicated that there is still much work to be done to improve these agreements and adherence to their terms, as well as overall tribal/state relationships, in order to ensure that tribes and states collaborate effectively to serve American Indian/Alaska Native children and their families.

Some of the strategies that may be employed by the NRC4Tribes and the T/TA Network in this area include:

- Providing education to states and tribes through training, Webinars, written documents, and other communication strategies about historical trauma and the implications for collaborative child welfare practice and community engagement.
- Continuing to foster strong relationships between tribes and states using the strategies described above.
- Developing and delivering competency-based skills training to tribal child welfare workers about the effects of historical trauma and how to work with families in order to address the deleterious effects of intergenerational trauma.
- Developing and delivering training for tribal child welfare staff that will assist them in recognizing the effects of their own historical trauma, secondary/vicarious trauma, and burnout and providing strategies for coping with these conditions, including using culturally based self-care strategies.

Recommendation 6: Build tribal child welfare peer networks

It is recommended that the NRC4Tribes and its partners in the T/TA Network identify and utilize the collective experience, skills, and knowledge of tribal child welfare programs by establishing peer networks that provide tribes with a way to assist and support one another.

This strategy is congruent with culturally based approaches in which elders in many tribal communities share their wisdom through teaching and providing counsel to the community. It also reflects the



importance of relationships within tribal communities and across Indian country. Although the expertise of T/TA Network members can provide quality T/TA, sharing expertise between tribal child welfare programs can offer valuable perspectives from those who have developed and implemented appropriate strategies that work for tribal communities. Suggested approaches to and strategies for building tribal peer networks for T/TA include:

- Disseminating basic information about tribal child welfare programs, including their structures and operations, and innovative and culture-based approaches to child welfare practice.
- Fostering tribal peer networking through conferences, tribal gatherings, workshops, teleconferences, and Web-based activities.
- Identifying specific peer networks, such as ICWA program coordinators, tribal child welfare directors, tribal foster care coordinators, tribal judges, and others.
- Facilitating one-on-one coaching and mentoring by matching tribes based on requests and expertise. The NRC4Tribes could reduce barriers such as transportation and travel costs associated with bringing tribes together to work face to face by employing teleconferences and Web conferencing. Tribal peer consultants could also be partnered with a National Resource Center consultant to maximize expertise and facilitate consultant learning.

Recommendation 7: Address workforce issues in tribal child welfare programs

It is recommended that the NRC4Tribes and its partners in the T/TA Network work with tribes and tribal child welfare programs in order to address workforce issues such as staff recruitment and retention; professional development; agency climate and culture; and overall organizational effectiveness.

Specific strategies for building a strong workforce include:

- Defining the scope, mission, and role of the program within the tribal community.
- Identifying and implementing strategies to improve communication with tribal government and to partner more effectively with community providers in order to serve families using a systems-of-care approach.
- Creating job descriptions and processes for staff performance reviews.
- Developing and incorporating a practice model that clearly defines the purpose, values, interventions, and staff responsibilities of the program while maintaining tribal uniqueness and cultural strengths.
- Incorporating the use of assessment tools and automated data systems that will assist staff to work more efficiently and effectively.
- Increasing understanding of issues that arise from working within one's own community (e.g., stress, confidentiality, conflicts of interest, vicarious trauma, and boundary issues).



- Improving training access for staff, including increased access to state-level child welfare training, regional training with other tribes, and training about topics specifically needed by tribal child welfare programs.
- Developing a “train the trainers” model to build the skills of American Indian/Alaska Native professionals in order to work with tribal child welfare programs, including through the peer consultant network discussed previously in these recommendations.
- Accessing an increased number of regional trainings, conferences, and distance learning opportunities (including Web-based trainings or Webinars) about topics identified as training need areas; providing training resources on a centralized Web site.
- Advocating for customized and need-identified training through tribal/state agreements as well as informal partnerships.

The child welfare workforce is one of the areas of greatest strength and greatest challenge for tribal child welfare programs, as indicated by the findings of the NRC4Tribes needs assessment. Chronic and substantial lack of funding for programs has led to understaffing. Most programs are working with too few workers to handle the number of cases (including ICWA cases), and child welfare directors commonly report that staff are overworked, overwhelmed, and burned out. Due to the rural and often-isolated geographic location of most tribal communities, programs may also have difficulty recruiting qualified candidates and providing necessary training in critical areas of child welfare practice. Moreover, child welfare workers are tasked with working within their own communities and with a population that has experienced high levels of trauma and victimization (Greenfield and Smith 1999).

Thus tribal child welfare workers are serving a large number of families whose members may suffer from historical and intergenerational trauma, as well as have experienced a significant amount of contemporary personal trauma, and importantly, with whom workers share common family relationships and cultural, tribal, and community experiences and bonds. This closeness to the children and families with whom they work puts tribal child welfare workers at high risk for experiencing vicarious, or secondary, traumatization. Workplace stressors, such as high case loads, long hours, and lack of resources, can add the burden of burnout to the pain of vicarious trauma. Together, these conditions have the potential to reduce the effectiveness of workers and threaten their physical and emotional well-being.

Yet most tribal representatives spoke of the staff as being the child welfare program’s greatest strength. Staff experience, skills, knowledge, and, above all, ability to engage with families and commitment to doing whatever it takes to keep families together and children safe were cited repeatedly by needs



assessment participants. These interviewees spoke of the cohesion of the tribal child welfare workforce and about the peer support that protects against burnout and vicarious trauma, as well as how the staff relies on traditional practices to heal families and themselves.

A great deal of knowledge is to be gained from better understanding the resiliency and coping strategies of the tribal child welfare workforce, and it is recommended that these factors be the focus of further study. In addition, there is much that the T/TA Network can do to help tribal programs address workforce issues.

Recommendation 8: Enhance multidisciplinary collaboration for prevention services

It is recommended that the NRC4Tribes and the T/TA Network assist tribal child welfare programs in their efforts to collaborate with tribal community-based programs and providers in family preservation efforts and to partner with tribal and state courts in order to identify and develop innovative approaches that will prevent the breakup of American Indian/Alaska Native families and keep children connected to family, tribe, and community.

One path to collaboration is through the development of strong Child Protection/ Multidisciplinary Teams in order to improve decision making about child safety and family risk factors; better advocate for new programming to meet child/family needs and child welfare program needs; and work more effectively within tribal governmental structures. Strong multidisciplinary collaboration between tribal leaders, service providers, tribal and state courts, and community members is the foundation of the systems-of-care approach to prevention and family preservation. Collaboration is essential to tribes' abilities to bridge the services gap created by chronic underfunding for family services and in efforts to implement prevention programs in order to address the substance abuse, mental health, sexual abuse, and domestic violence issues that are pervasive in many tribal communities.

It is recommended that standardized assessment for tribes (part of the process outlined in the business process maps for the Training and Technical Assistance Coordination Center) include questions about the extent to which tribes requesting T/TA have existing and effective CPTs and/or Multidisciplinary Teams that include tribal and state representatives. In this way, issues regarding tribal/state collaboration that might pertain to requested T/TA can be identified and addressed by the Network. Efforts to address this recommendation should be discussed in collaboration with the new National Resource Center for In-Home Services, an important new resource to tribes within the T/TA Network.



Recommendation 9: Ensure targeted T/TA that meets the individualized needs of tribes

It is recommended that the NRC4Tribes facilitate tribal T/TA by working collaboratively and effectively with other National Resource Centers and Implementation Centers to ensure that the T/TA provided by the Network meets the individualized needs of tribes.

This recommendation can be achieved by using strategies such as developing a culturally based assessment protocol that accurately identifies strengths and needs; identifying and training a cadre of expert American Indian/Alaska Native consultants who are familiar with tribal child welfare program structure and operations, culture, values, and history and can serve as a resource for the T/TA Network; and brokering T/TA for tribes when NRC4Tribes is not the lead agency to ensure that targeted, effective, and culturally based T/TA is delivered and received. The specific strategies that follow support these three components of this recommendation:

- **Develop culturally based assessment protocols.** As mentioned in Recommendation 8, the Business Process Maps developed through a subcommittee of stakeholders in the T/TA process describe an assessment process that is the first step in working with states and tribes requesting T/TA. It is recommended that the NRC4Tribes play a key role in the development of its own internal culturally based assessment (an addendum to the standard T/TA Network assessment) for work with tribal programs that will help build a foundation for future work. It is critical to consultations with tribes to begin by building relationships in which the needs and concerns of tribes are clearly heard and validated. An interview-based assessment is an important tool that can be used in this relationship-building process and that will support and facilitate the T/TA work. The tribal assessment may include teleconference discussion or onsite meetings. This exploration and assessment is also an important first step in all T/TA partnerships because what is first proposed in a formal request may not represent the full scope of T/TA needs.

The initial assessment should gather information about structure and operations of the tribal child welfare program and the tribal government, and as well as information that is important for understanding contextual elements that impact upon the tribe's children and families. As this information is gathered systematically, it can be managed in a centralized location, such as a searchable database, and made available to other T/TA providers and tribal communities to form the foundation of a growing knowledge base of information about tribal programs.

- **Develop a cadre of expert consultants.** It is recommended that a team of American Indian/Alaska Native consultants from across Indian country and who are familiar with tribal child welfare program structure and operations, culture, values, and history be identified and



developed, and that the NRC4Tribes assist in recruiting, organizing, training, and supporting these consultants, as well as helping to match them with requests coming into the T/TA Network.

The NRC4Tribes can play a pivotal role in recruiting, training, and supporting a team of national tribal child welfare consultants accessible to the entire T/TA Network that would provide T/TA to tribes. The role of Native consultants in gathering needs assessment data proved to be a culturally respectful and effective approach in tribal communities. A number of participants in the needs assessment commented that they appreciated the opportunity to talk with a consultant who they felt understood their tribal child welfare system as well as their tribe and its cultural values. Several participants also remarked in their interviews that because the consultant was also a tribal person, they felt they could talk candidly and openly about program challenges and issues. As such, utilization of consultants who possess a wide range of expertise and who could be matched with tribes based on prior relationships, cultural understanding, geography, program, or regional knowledge should be considered for the provision of all T/TA involving tribes.

- **Help broker T/TA for the Network.** According to the Business Process Maps referenced above, there will be requests from tribes for T/TA that will be addressed directly by the NRC4Tribes as the lead agency. There will be other instances, however, when the NRC4Tribes may not be the lead agency but will provide brokering services, ensuring that the tribal program requesting T/TA receives the support they need and that the lead National Resource Center has the resources it needs to meet the request. In its brokering capacity for tribal access to CB technical assistance, the NRC4Tribes will work directly with tribes by
 - Providing direct information to tribes about access to T/TA (e.g., public presentations, in-person meetings, and telephone contact);
 - Providing indirect information to tribes about access to T/TA (e.g., Web site and written materials);
 - Responding to T/TA requests made to the NRC4Tribes by telephone or e-mail;
 - Assisting tribes in clarifying T/TA requests;
 - Participating in assessments (either onsite or by telephone) in preparation for developing T/TA work plans on tribal requests; and
 - Assisting in jointly determining with the tribe how T/TA can best be provided.

In addition, the NRC4Tribes may also support the T/TA Network by



- Helping the lead National Resource Center or Implementation Center to identify a consultant with knowledge of the tribe or Region and/or the content area of the request;
- Providing the lead National Resource Center or Implementation Center with resources such as literature, materials, training curriculum, and other information that will guide them in their work;
- Being available for consultation with the T/TA provider or tribe as needed through ongoing planning and development consultation teleconferences or e-mail communications;
- Developing a resource library of culturally based tools, curricula, and other products that would be available at no cost to tribal child welfare staff; and
- Providing all resource materials to the Child Welfare Information Gateway as another method of making resources available on a larger scale to tribal, state, county, and private child welfare providers.

Recommendation 10: Partner with other federal agencies within the ACF, the BIA, and others to model effective systems of care that will support tribal child welfare programs

It is recommended that the NRC4Tribes reach out to partners in other service systems beyond child welfare. Building relationships with other federal providers of T/TA to tribes, such as the BIA, are equally important. As a new member of the T/TA Network, the NRC4Tribes will benefit from the guidance of the CB in identifying and pursuing T/TA partnerships across federal bureaus, offices, and agencies. A key partnership should be made with the BIA due to the substantial role that the BIA plays in many tribal communities' tribal child welfare systems. Additionally, the NRC4Tribes' provision of T/TA, which is consistent with systems-of-care principles and informed by evidence-based and evidence-informed practice in tribal child welfare, is critical to its success in serving tribal communities.

Strategies that can support this recommendation include:

- Convening individual teleconferences with the NRC4Tribes' Leadership Team, Federal Project Officer, and T/TA Network members to discuss common issues and strategies for collaboration between federal partners;
- Identifying opportunities to host training teleconferences or Webinars in collaboration with federal partners;
- Posting key announcements (e.g., funding and policies) from federal partners on the NRC4Tribes Web site; and
- Maintaining regular communication among agencies.



Table 10. Findings Supplement: Summarized Recommendations for T/TA

Summarized T/TA Recommendations	
Recommendation	Implementation Strategies
<p>Recommendation 1: <i>Support the strengthening of the tribal child welfare program infrastructure to improve practice</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NRC4Tribes and the T/TA Network should partner with tribes to identify gaps in infrastructure, provide T/TA to address these gaps in order to improve organizational effectiveness of tribal child welfare programs, and address the specific T/TA needs identified in the needs assessment. In partnership with tribes, NRC4Tribes should examine and utilize innovative strategies from across the T/TA Network and the field in order to build program infrastructure and capacity.
<p>Recommendation 2: <i>Support the use of culturally based practices in tribal child welfare</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NRC4Tribes, with support from its partners in the T/TA Network, can assist tribes in developing tribally specific and culturally informed practice models that reflect the values and practices that keep children safe and connected to culture, extended family, and community. NRC4Tribes and the T/TA Network can also assist tribal child welfare programs to articulate the cultural values and practices that underlie their programs' approaches to practice; determining whether there is relevance in identifying how mainstream child welfare practices can be modified to align with cultural values and practices, such as the different boundaries that may exist between tribal clients and tribal workers, and how these can be operationalized.
<p>Recommendation 3: <i>Partner with the T/TA Network to support the development of MISs for tribal child welfare programs</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NRC4Tribes can partner with the T/TA Network, and particularly the National Resource Center for Child Welfare Data and Technology (NRCCWDT), to support dissemination of knowledge, and promote the development of MISs for tribal child welfare programs.
<p>Recommendation 4: <i>Promote the development and maintenance of successful tribal foster care and adoption (permanency) programs</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NRC4Tribes can work in partnership with the National Resource Center for Recruitment and Retention of Foster and Adoptive Parents (NRCRRFAP) at AdoptUSKids and other members of the T/TA Network to improve the program infrastructure necessary to keep children in their families and tribal communities and maintain their connections to tribal culture and tradition; assist tribes and states in an effort to work collaboratively to develop agreements that support traditional or cultural practices in foster care and adoption; and support effective implementation of Title IV-E grants.
<p>Recommendation 5: <i>Support the strengthening and improvement of tribal/state relationships</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NRC4Tribes and the T/TA Network should work with tribes and states to determine whether T/TA requests by state agencies have an impact on tribes within the state in question; develop structured mechanisms of communication; improve the ability of tribes to access Statewide Automated Information Systems (SACWIS); identify and address cross-training challenges; and address the repercussions of long-standing historical trauma and distrust.
<p>Recommendation 6: <i>Build tribal child welfare peer networks</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NRC4Tribes and its partners in the T/TA Network should identify and utilize the collective experience, skills, and knowledge of tribal child welfare programs by establishing peer networks that provide tribes with a way to assist and support one another.
<p>Recommendation 7: <i>Address workforce issues in tribal child welfare programs</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NRC4Tribes and the T/TA Network can work with tribes and tribal child welfare programs in an effort to address workforce issues such as staff recruitment and retention; professional development; agency climate and culture; and overall organizational effectiveness.



Summarized T/TA Recommendations	
Recommendation	Implementation Strategies
<p>Recommendation 8: <i>Enhance multidisciplinary collaboration for prevention services</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NRC4Tribes and the T/TA Network can assist tribal child welfare programs in their efforts to collaborate with community-based programs and providers in family preservation efforts and to partner with tribal and state courts to develop innovative prevention approaches that can keep children connected to family, tribe, and community.
<p>Recommendation 9: <i>Ensure a targeted T/TA that meets the individualized needs of tribes</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NRC4Tribes, and other NRCs and Implementation Centers, should facilitate tribal T/TA by working collaboratively and effectively to ensure that the T/TA provided by the Network meets the individualized needs of tribes. NRC4Tribes should develop culturally based assessment protocols; recruit, train, and support a team of American Indian/Alaska Native consultants for the T/TA Network; and help broker T/TA for the Network.
<p>Recommendation 10: <i>Partner with other federal agencies within the ACF, the BIA, and others to model effective systems of care that will support tribal child welfare programs</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NRC4Tribes and the T/TA Network should reach out to partners in other service systems beyond child welfare, such as the BIA, National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare, and the National Technical Assistance Center for Children's Mental Health, to support tribal child welfare services.



REFERENCES

- Baird, S. and Jenkins, S. R. (2003). "Vicarious Traumatization, Secondary Traumatic Stress, and Burnout in Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Agency Staff," *Violence and Victims* 18 (1): 71–86.
- Brave Heart, M. Y. H. and DeBruyn, L. M. (1998). "The American Indian Holocaust: Healing Historical Unresolved Grief," *American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research* 8 (2): 56–78.
- Bussey, M. C. and Lucero, N. M. (2005). "A Collaborative Approach to Healing Substance Abuse and Child Neglect in an Urban American Indian Community," *Protecting Children* 20 (4): 9–22.
- Carter, V. B. (2010). "Factors Predicting Placement of Urban American Indian/Alaska Natives into Out-of-Home Care," *Children and Youth Services Review* 32 (5): 657–63.
- Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2005). *Tribal-State Relations* (Issue Brief). Washington, DC. Available at http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/issue_briefs/tribal_state/index.cfm.
- Cross, T. L. (1986). "Drawing on Cultural Tradition in Indian Child Welfare Practice," *Social Casework* 67 (5): 283–89.
- Cross, T. L. (1997). "Understanding the Relational Worldview in Indian Families," *Pathways Practice Digest* 12 (4). Available at <http://www.nicwa.org/services/techassist/worldview/worldview.htm>.
- Evans-Campbell, T. (2008). "Historical Trauma in American Indian/Native Alaska Communities," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 23 (3): 316–38.
- Farmer, E. M. Z., Southerland, D., Mustillo, S. A., and Burns, B. J. (2009). "Returning Home in Systems of Care: Rates, Predictors, and Stability," *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders* 17 (3): 133–46.
- Fletcher, M. L. M., Singel, W. T., and Fort, K. E., eds. (2009). *Facing the Future: The Indian Child Welfare Act at 30*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.
- Freedenthal, S. and Stiffman, A. R. (2004). "Suicidal Behavior in Urban American Indian Adolescents: A Comparison with Reservation Youth in a Southwestern State," *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior* 34 (2): 160–71.



- Goldberg, C. and Champagne, D. (2007). *Final Report: Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice under Public Law 280*. U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice publication. Available at http://www.tribal-institute.org/download/pl280_study.pdf.
- Goodkind, J. R., Ross-Toledo, K., John, S., Hall, J. L., Ross, L., Freeland, L., and Lee, C. (2010). "Promoting Healing and Restoring Trust: Policy Recommendations for Improving Behavioral Health Care for American Indian/Alaska Native Adolescents," *American Journal of Community Psychology* 46 (3/4): 386–94.
- Jones, B. J., Gillette, J. A., Painte, D., and Paulson, S. (2000). *Indian Child Welfare Act: A Pilot Study of Compliance in North Dakota*. Portland, OR: National Indian Child Welfare Association.
- Limb, G. E., Chance, T., and Brown, E. F. (2004). "An Empirical Examination of the Indian Child Welfare Act and Its Impact on Cultural and Familial Preservation for American Indian Children," *Child Abuse and Neglect* 28 (12): 1279–89.
- Lucero, N. M. (2007). *Resource Guide: Working with Urban American Indian Families with Child Protection and Substance Abuse Challenges*. Englewood, CO: American Humane Association. Available at <http://www.americanhumane.org/assets/docs/protecting-children/PC-rmqic-dif-guide.pdf>.
- Martin, J. (unpublished manuscript). *Addressing Vicarious Trauma in Social Work Field Education*.
- Meyers, T. W., Cornille, T. A., and Figley, C. R. (2002). "The Trauma of Working with Traumatized Children." In *Treating Compassion Fatigue*, ed. C. R. Figley (pp. 39–55). New York: Brunner-Routledge.
- North American Council on Adoptable Children. (2007). *Child Welfare Financing 101*. Available at <http://www.nacac.org/policy/financing101.pdf>.
- O'Brien, K., Pecora, P. J., Echohawk, L. A., Evans-Campbell, T., Palmanteer-Holder, N., and White, C. R. (2010). "Educational and Employment Achievements of American Indian/Alaska Native Alumni of Foster Care," *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services* 91 (2): 149–57.



Pevar, S. L. (2004). *The Rights of Indians and Tribes: The Authoritative ACLU Guide to Indian and Tribal Rights*. New York: New York University Press.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. (2009a). *Considerations for Indian Tribes, Indian Tribal Organizations or Tribal Consortia Seeking to Operate a Tribal Title IV-E Program*. Available at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/laws_policies/tribal_considerations.htm.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. (2009b). *Attachment A: Fiscal Year 2009 Allotments for Indian Tribes/Tribal Organizations, Title IV-B, Subpart 1—Stephanie Tubbs Jones Child Welfare Services*. Available at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/laws_policies/policy/pi/2009/pi0907a1.htm.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. (2009c). *Attachment A: Fiscal Year 2009 Allotments for Indian Tribes/Tribal Organizations, Title IV-B, Subpart 2—Promoting Safe and Stable Families*. Available at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/laws_policies/policy/pi/2009/pi0907c2.htm.

U.S. Department of the Interior, Indian Affairs, Bureau of Indian Affairs. (2005). *2005 American Indian Population and Labor Force Report*. Available at <http://www.bia.gov/WhatWeDo/Knowledge/Reports/index.htm>.



APPENDIX A: SHARED VISION, MISSION, PHILOSOPHY AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE NRC4 TRIBES

National Resource Center for Tribes

The National Resource Center for Tribes (NRC4 Tribes) is the one of the newest resource centers within the Children’s Bureau Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) National Network.



This new National Resource Center joins the Children’s Bureau’s Child Welfare Training and Technical Assistance Network (T/TA Network) which is designed to improve child welfare systems and to support States and Tribes in achieving sustainable, systemic change that results in greater safety, permanency, and well-being for children, youth, and families. The Children’s Bureau (www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb) is located within the Administration for Children, Youth and Families (ACYF) of the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Tribes will continue to be able to access training and technical assistance (T/TA) through various national resources centers within the Children’s Bureau national T/TA Network. Following an initial planning/assessment year, the NRC for Tribes will be the focal point for coordinated and culturally competent child welfare T/TA for

Tribes within the T/TA Network. The NRC4 Tribes will work collaboratively with Tribes and the T/TA Network to assist Tribes in the enhancement of child welfare services and the promotion of safety, permanency and well-being for American Indian/Alaska Native children and families – including:

- Enhancing Tribal access to and utilization of the Children’s Bureau T/TA Network;
- Brokering Tribal T/TA through the T/TA Network;
- Assisting in the provision of T/TA as needed and feasible;
- Facilitating peer-to-peer consultation between Tribes on child welfare issues;
- Increasing cultural competence and sensitivity to Tribal voices in the T/TA Network and in State child welfare systems
- Generating toolkits, resource manuals, and other products for dissemination
- Participating in NRC4 Tribes-specific and national cross-site evaluation process

A key objective of the NRC for Tribes in its first year is to conduct in a national assessment of tribal child welfare systems, to better understand and appropriately serve tribal communities in subsequent years. The National Resource Center for Tribes is authorized to provide T/TA services to federally-recognized Tribes who receive federal Title IV-B funding.

Who We Are

National Resource Center for Tribes Partnership



The Tribal Law and Policy Institute (TLPI) (www.tlpi.org), based in Los Angeles, CA – with additional offices in Minneapolis, MN and



Helena, MT - was awarded a 5-year cooperative agreement with the Children’s Bureau in October 2009 to establish the National Resource Center for Tribes. TLPI is joined by the Indian Child and Family Resource Center, the Native American Training Institute and the Butler Institute for Families at the University of Denver to implement the work of the NRC4Tribes.

Lead agency, the **Tribal Law and Policy Institute (TLPI)** is a 100% Indian owned and operated non-profit corporation established in 1996 to design and develop education, research, training, and technical assistance programs which promote the enhancement of justice in Indian country and the health, well-being, and culture of Native peoples. TLPI’s organizational vision is to empower Native communities to create and control their own institutions for the benefit/welfare of all community members now and for future generations. TLPI’s mission is to enhance and strengthen tribal sovereignty and justice while honoring community values, protecting rights, and promoting well-being. This vision now expands to the work of the NRC4Tribes.

The **Indian Child and Family Resource Center (ICFRC)**, Helena, MT, is a Native American non-profit agency guided by a board of directors who, like the partner agencies, have “been there” for many years doing the work of Indian child welfare: tribal social workers, ICWA advocates and tribal leader. Established in 2004 to provide training and technical assistance resources for tribal child welfare programs, ICFRC has worked closely for several years with the National T/TA Network of the Children’s Bureau to offer tribes throughout the country quality, no-cost technical assistance and training opportunities.

The **Native American Training Institute (NATI)**, an inter-tribally controlled, tribally chartered, non-profit entity located in Bismarck, ND, was originally established in 1995 to address the great need for local, culturally appropriate training and professional development opportunities for ND tribal child welfare agencies, staff, and foster partners. Since that time, the NATI has expanded its services to include training, technical assistance curricula and other products to strengthen the capacity of community members, practitioners and agencies to improve positive outcomes for Native American children, youth

and families in urban, tribal and first nation communities in the United States and Canada. Evaluation partner, the **Butler Institute for Families (BIF)** at the University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work, has a strong history of evaluation of federally funded initiatives. Butler’s evaluation team is comprised of experienced researchers with expertise in sampling, design, instrumentation, data management and verification, qualitative and quantitative data analysis, contextualization and interpretation of results, and reporting. Since its founding in 1994, Butler’s mission has been to enhance the well being of children, youth and families through research, education, and consultation. The Institute has grown to become a resource for building professionalism through training and technical assistance and discovering effective practices and policies for child and family programs through evaluation and research.

NRC4Tribes Implementation

The National Resource Center for Tribes is guided in its daily work by a Leadership Team, comprised of TLPI and its partner agencies. In addition, a **National Advisory Council**, comprised of tribal child welfare professionals, tribal leaders, and community stakeholders will review plans and activities of the NRC4Tribes and the larger T/TA Network, provide recommendations regarding the Network’s approach to serving Title IV-B funded tribal child welfare systems. Implementation of the NRC work will, through a Systems of Care framework, include engaging, assessing, informing and supporting culturally appropriate Tribal child welfare services nationwide to implement strategies for improving the quality and effectiveness of services for American Indian and Alaska Native children, youth, and families leading to increased safety, permanency, and well being for children.

For more information please contact:
Jerry Gardner,
TLPI Exec Director / NRC4Tribes Interim Director
323-650-5467 jerry@tlpi.org
Kathy Deserly
NRC4Tribes Interim Associate Director
406-431-5941 Kathy@NRC4Tribes.org

a service of the Children’s Bureau





In a Good Way, We Honor the Children

During January 2010, the leadership team of the National Resource Center for Tribes (NRC4Tribes), comprised of the Tribal Law & Policy Institute; the Indian Child & Family Resource Center; the Native American Training Institute; and the Butler Institute for Families, University of Denver, convened a strategic planning meeting to lay the groundwork for how we would conduct our work and fulfill our responsibilities as part of the new NRC4Tribes, a service of the Children's Bureau Training & Technical Assistance Network. To ensure that we would start off our work "in a good way," with an offering of tobacco, we asked for spiritual guidance through Rick Two Dogs, Wakan Iyeska (Interpreter of the Sacred), Oglala Lakota. From this foundation, Rick Two Dogs and Ethleen Iron Cloud-Two Dogs, Oglala Lakota, facilitated the strategic planning meeting.

It should be noted that Rick is a recognized spiritual leader for the Lakota people and we felt it was important that we be mindful of the sacredness of the work we would be doing, as many tribal nations hold the belief that children are sacred and therefore, the work we would be doing is part of a sacred trust and responsibility.

After starting our planning session with an opening prayer, the facilitators began with a guided imagery exercise as part of the initial process to develop our vision, mission, and guiding principles to complement the system of care (SOC) framework we will adhere to throughout our journey. Ethleen asked us to close our eyes, listen to her voice and

instructions, while her husband Rick sang a ceremonial song and we were asked to imagine ourselves sitting in a place where we were safe and happy, and then to imagine a child off in the far distance coming nearer and nearer to us, until they were right next to us. From this point, we were asked to talk to the child who came to us, and to listen for any messages they would bring to us. The messages that were given were that the children wanted to be loved, they wanted to be safe, they wanted to be with their families, they wanted to belong and they wanted to have a home. It was a very profound and moving experience for us and it set the tone for the rest of the meeting. After we discussed the messages and their significance, Ethleen suggested as we left for lunch that day, that we remember the children and consider making an offering to the children who came to us and to thank them for their guidance. In our Native American belief ways, we believe that we are all spiritual beings before we come to this earthly world and thereafter -- even after we have left our



human bodies and have passed on to the other side we continue our spiritual journey and our spirits continue to live on. And in light of this, many tribal people will

acknowledge the spiritual world by making offerings of tobacco, food, material goods, smoke from various natural herbs such as sage, cedar, sweetgrass, etc. This is a practice that many Indian people continue to do today and so as to remember our commitment to the children, we decided that we would always have an offering bowl as a symbolic way to honor and remind us of that sacred trust.

National Resource Center for Tribes



We left it to Jerry Gardner, NRC4Tribes Director and his staff to find a suitable container or bowl that we could use and we agreed that every time we gathered, we would have the offering bowl with us and set before us in a very visible way. After that January meeting, we finally gathered again during our first consultant training that was held in Detroit, MI at the end of March in conjunction with NRC for Adoption and the NRC for the Recruitment and Retention of Foster and Adoptive Parents at AdoptUsKids. Jerry brought the offering bowl, in this case, the offering basket, that was so graciously loaned to us by Jessica Allen, the Administrative Manager for NRC4Tribes/ TLPI. This basket holds great emotional meaning for Jessica as it was a wedding gift to her and her husband and was passed down by her family so it is greatly valued and treasured by her, but because Jessica believes so strongly in the work we are doing, she allows us to use this cherished gift. Jessica was very instrumental in the material preparation of the NRC4Tribes application and worked tirelessly along with Kathy Deserly and Jerry to ensure the application met the deadline. During this time, Jessica

was expecting her first child, and two weeks after we had the strategic planning meeting in January, Jessica's daughter was born. We believe it was no co-incidence that we had this little child's spirit with us throughout the process and now she is here with us. This little spirit is a blessing to her family and we believe she brings blessings to the NRC4Tribes. Today, we continue to share the meaning of the NRC4Tribes basket to honor Jessica's daughter and all children -- those who have gone on before us, those that are here with us, and those who are yet to be born. We are thankful to Jessica, her family and the children who will guide us in our work. Most importantly, we humbly thank the Creator for allowing us the opportunity to do things in a good way, so that our tribal children will reach their highest potential, live in a safe and stable home, with a loving family, will have their needs met, and know who they are so they too, will become respected and wise elders in their community.

Spa-na-na-ta-ka
April 8, 2010

National Resource Center for Tribes



VISION

The vision of the National Resource Center for Tribes (NRC4Tribes) is to facilitate the empowerment of Native Nations to nurture the safety, permanence and well-being of American Indian/Alaska Native children, families and communities by offering culturally relevant information, resources and technical assistance so that the dreams and sacrifices of their ancestors are fulfilled and honored.

MISSION

Our mission is to collaborate with Native Nations and our training and technical assistance partners to identify and effectively implement community, culturally based strategies and resources that strengthen tribal child and family services.

PHILOSOPHY

Children are sacred and entitled to be cherished in a safe and nurturing environment with strong family, community and cultural connections. Their happiness and well-being includes nourishment of mind, body and spirit in order to fulfill their dreams throughout their journey toward becoming a healthy Elder. To honor the sacredness, the NRC4Tribes believes:

(1) in the inherent sovereign right and ability of American Indian/Alaska Native Nations to create, control and improve their own local child and family service systems for the healthy functioning of tribal communities.

(2) empowerment and solutions come from within tribal communities as they build upon their inherent strengths as sovereign nations since they are the source of cultural knowledge through elders, leaders and culture-bearers.

(3) the environment of disparity and despair in Indian Country and Alaska Native communities is the result of ongoing impact of colonization and historical trauma.

(4) the responses to child and family needs must include culturally based solutions that honor and respect the voice and choice of families.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The NRC4Tribes Team agreed to develop principles that would guide our work with the Tribal Nations as well as with our technical assistance partners. Our principles are:

- Compassion
- Humility
- Responsiveness
- Respect
- Integrity
- Inclusion
- Seamless and Effective Service Delivery

SYSTEM OF CARE VALUES

In addition to principles guiding the work, the NRC4Tribes Team agreed that the following System of Care values are instrumental in the development and implementation of the work of the NRC4Tribes:

- Least Restrictive
- Culturally Competent
- Community-based Services
- Accountable
- Family and Youth Driven
- Interagency Collaboration
- Individualized and Strength-based



APPENDIX B: GENERAL SURVEY RESULTS

Section 1A: Tribal Child Welfare Services

1. Who provides **child welfare services** for American Indian/Alaska Native children in your tribal service area? *n* = 260, *responses* *n* = 440 (could select more than one option)

Tribal Child Welfare Program	Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Child Welfare Program	State/County Child Welfare Program	Private Agency or Non-Profit Corporation Child Welfare Program	Other	Don't know
83.1% (216)	18.8% (49)	49.6% (129)	10.8% (28)	4.2% (11)	2.7% (7)

Other responses/ comments provided:

- Collaborative Tribe/State
- Federal IV-B
- Indian Child and Family Services
- Quinalt Family Services
- Social Services
- Tanana Chiefs Conference, Inc.
- Tribal Courts
- Tribal Dept of Human Services
- Tribal Empowerment Department
- Tribal Human Services department
- Tribal Social Services (3)
- Makah Family Services
- Petersburg Indian Association
- State government. No tribal government.

2. How many people are employed who provide child welfare services for your tribe? *n* = 258

One-person office	2-5 staff	6-10 staff	11-20 staff	More than 20 staff	Don't know
14% (36)	38.4% (99)	17.1% (44)	10.9% (28)	12% (31)	7.8% (20)

3. Does your Tribal Child Welfare agency have an Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Program? *n* = 257

Yes	No	Don't know
91.1% (234)	3.1% (8)	5.8% (15)

4. Does the state/county have identified workers who manage ICWA cases? *n* = 256

Yes	No	Don't know
53.1% (136)	25.8% (66)	21.1% (54)

5. Does your tribe actively manage cases in collaboration with state/county workers? *n* = 153

Yes	No	Don't know
84.0% (216)	8.2% (21)	7.8% (20)

Section 1B: Children's Bureau Federal Funding (IV-B and IV-E) for Tribal Child Welfare Services

6. Do you know what Title IV-B funding is? *n* = 254

Yes	No
65.7% (167)	34.3% (87)

7. Does your tribe receive federal Title IV-B funding from the Federal Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau? *n* = 171

Yes	No	Don't know
68.4% (117)	19.3% (33)	12.3% (21)

8. If your tribe does not receive federal Title IV-B funding, why not? *n* = 38, *responses* *n* = 43 (could select more than one option)

Not eligible	IV-B development process is too time-consuming/difficult for the amount of funding	We do not know enough about it to apply for the funding	We are not interested	Other
15.8% (6)	39.5% (15)	23.7% (9)	2.6% (1)	31.6% (12)

Other responses provided:

- Can't get collaboration with Tribal Courts for necessary language in court orders
- I don't know
- I don't work for a Tribal child welfare program.
- In process (2)
- Non-profit Tribal organization
- Not sure our County agrees with Tribal Organizations being able to receive?
- Recently attended a Children's Law conference; may not be eligible in State of Texas
- We have financial means.
- Small tribe
- The second response is most often the reason tribes do not receive IVB funding.

9. Do you know what Title IV-E funding is? *n* = 154

Yes	No
71.0% (179)	29.0% (73)

10. Does your tribe receive federal Title IV-E funding through a Tribal/State IV-E agreement? *n* = 119

Yes	No	Don't know
46.7% (84)	42.2% (76)	11.1% (20)

11. Is your tribe considering (or "have a plan to") establishing a Tribal/State IV-E agreement? *n* = 82

Yes	No	Maybe	Don't know
28.0% (23)	25.6% (21)	32.9% (27)	13.4% (11)

11a. Responses if respondents answered "yes" above: Why?



- Already have one
- Because we want our families to access to those entitlements but we want tribal social workers managing the cases.
- Considering
- For additional funding to support our programs, particularly training monies.
- For direct funding and providing quality services to our own Native families.
- For needed funding for intervention/prevention services and for collaboration purposes.
- Don't have any agreement now
- Have had a plan in place for a number of years now.
- It is due to our sovereignty. We have had a lot of trouble getting the state to do an agreement with our Tribe. We have been going on for 10 years without an agreement!!! We believe we can do our own Title IV-E!
- Monetary gains
- Other tribes in our state use these funds to serve their children and families. We will pursue this agreement to ensure members' needs are met.
- Our tribe is a traditional form of government and have not passed or considered adopting Children's codes, foster care standards, the basis to have Title IV-E
- Reasons may vary including it being a recognized resource made available to children in the child welfare system.
- The state of Oklahoma, DHS receives this funding and therefore helps with foster care and medical eligibility for our tribal custody children.
- To access money for child welfare from the federal government. Too costly to access money directly at this point.
- To assist our foster parents
- To be able to access monies
- To expand resources to improve child welfare services to members to reduce the number of children in county foster care.
- To have control over finances and provide for grandparent/relative care
- To protect our children's heritage and connection with our tribe due to the lack of effectiveness by the state and its private contractors
- Tribe would like their own Foster care program
- Uncertain at this time

11b. Responses if respondents answered "no" above: Why?

- Again, very small tribe. Not cost effective.
- Being tied down to state requirements.
- Cost to the Tribe's general fund. Also Council likes an arms' length from removals.
- Don't know the pros and cons of it yet. Waiting for another local Tribe to establish theirs to discuss further.
- Gaming tribe, most members will not meet the federal financial eligibility requirements
- I know when its IV-E the foster check comes in the mail not through our office
- It was decided that our Tribe was not large enough to justify establishing a IV-E agreement.
- Lack of social services infrastructure
- My work ain't associated with it
- Not a tribe, but a tribal organization
- Not eligible-small enrollment numbers and children in foster care.
- Not enough knowledge or enough children in the system to warrant the time and resources
- Not enough paid placements to be worth the tribe's time.
- Sovereignty
- The administration of the funding is too costly.
- The information I have reveals that the ICWA programs in the southern area of California are small

- and that even the consortia they have formed does not give them the ability to provide the infrastructure to administer a Title IV-E program.
- The number of cases does not warrant the time and money needed to meet the requirements for reporting. The state has not worked with the tribe to provide information on how to establish a contract although I have brought this up many times for a number of years.
 - The number of Child In Need of Care Cases was zero for October 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010.
 - The state wants the tribe to waive sovereign immunity and the Tribe is not willing to do that
 - Too small (2)
 - Too time consuming, requirements are more than we are currently able to accomplish
 - We do not have enough cases/caseload to have IV-E by ourselves/directly from the Feds
 - We have been unable to receive IV-E funding due to income guidelines. Most of our clients are over income.

12. Is your tribe considering accessing (or "have a plan to access") Title IV-E funding directly from the Federal Government? n = 184

Yes	No	Maybe	Don't know
21.7%	20.7%	28.8%	28.8%
(40)	(38)	(53)	(53)

12a. Responses if respondents answered "yes" above: Why?

- A matter of sovereignty and self-determination: Provide services and care for tribal children ourselves VS contracting out or having to contract with state to do so
- Already have one
- Because it is a Self-governed Tribe that is self-determined and tries to eliminate "middle men" and/or barriers.
- Because the reservation crosses state lines and one state is willing to enter into a funding agreement despite the fact of direct funding from the feds.
- Because under new law it may become available.
- Compensate foster care providers
- Direct access to funding
- It only makes sense and to do otherwise buys into the myth that tribes are less capable of running their affairs.
- Might be easier than an agreement with the state
- More funds going to the tribe instead of State
- Primarily for Kinship Care and Adoption Reimbursement; also administrative reimbursements
- Provides greater tribal autonomy
- So we can follow federal regulations rather than the state's, which allows more adaptability to meet tribal needs.
- So, we don't have to wait too long for the funding to be processed. Title IV-E funding might just go from one desk to another for approval and signatures.
- Sovereignty and Tribal right to Federal funding. As well as providing child welfare services from a Native American perspective.
- The Chippewa Cree Tribe is a Self-Governance Tribe that would rather work directly with the federal government in terms of funding issues, etc.
- The state has proven difficult to work with, especially in some geographic locations. Funding would allow the Tribe to support its children and families in culturally appropriate ways, allowing Tribal Court intervention which is often less litigious than county and state systems. This supports family members and recognizes their value in a child's life while providing the necessary services for the safety and well-being of the child.
- To administer to own Native people
- To allow children's placements to be funded at appropriate levels.
- To be able to access monies.



- To be independent from the state with regards to funding, etc.
- To better service the needs of our Native American Children
- To eliminate the difficulties we have accessing the funds from the county/state agencies. Also, to better serve our children directly, too many of our children are denied access to these funds after reaching their teenage years.
- To gain control over funding and assist relative care givers more
- To implement services directly to Tribal children/families without having to negotiate with the State.
- To obtain more control over expenditures of monies for Tribal children.
- To receive help for foster parents
- Washington State passed HB2106 so Title IVE funding may provide more control over foster care placements considering the impending privatization.
- We are waiting for the first couple of Tribes to iron out the kinks. Then we may be interested in joining other smaller Tribes to build the program.
- We are working on readiness to access direct IV-E funding due to the barriers we encounter in our work with counties when applying for our youth.
- We have been waiting 10 years for a Title IV-E agreement from the state!!! We believe we have a sovereign right to access Title-IV-E ourselves and run our programs with the money we receive directly from the Federal government.
- We need resources to support foster and adoptive parenting and also appropriate kin placements
- Work directly with tribal families and run own foster care program

12b. Responses if respondents answered "no" above:

- Administration costs are too high.
- As stated- the requirements for reporting are too costly and time consuming and the case load is small.
- Currently not able to
- Does not qualify
- Don't know the pros and cons.
- Don't think they are focused on child welfare so much and are rather under staffed to meet all the needs of tribal members I think.
- Funding
- Gaming tribe, most members will not meet the federal financial eligibility requirements
- Ineligible
- It was decided that our Tribe was not large enough to justify implementing the IV-E program or to access the funding.
- IV-E is under our county
- No available funds for the match
- No tribal personnel to run the program
- Not cost effective, small tribe
- Not enough cases in tribal court to warrant the extras we would have to go through.
- Not enough need for foster care placement at this time
- Not ready
- Not sure that we are ready to do so or do we have the need capacity in all the areas.
- Our statistical data is extremely low.
- Our tribe does not have the infrastructure to access directly from the Feds. We will probably get an agreement with state
- Our tribe has attended meetings in regards to applying and was informed that since we have minimal numbers in foster care, it would probably not be worth the time and effort of applying.
- Sovereignty
- The development grant (\$300,000) had to be repaid if you did not establish Title IV-E after that. We need to establish the infrastructure before we decide. The grant made that impossible without a

- commitment to become Title IV-E. We will not commit to what we do not know.
- The requirements are too cumbersome for a small tribe with limited staff to handle
- Too small of a tribe
- Unable to manage their current program now

Section 1C: Law Enforcement and Courts

13. Who provides **law enforcement services** for your tribe? *n = 250, responses n = 437*

Tribal Law Enforcement	Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Law Enforcement	Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI)	State/County Law Enforcement	Other	Don't know
75.6% (189)	24.8% (62)	24.4% (61)	42.8% (107)	6.4% (16)	0.8% (2)

Other responses provided:

- Agencies off reservation
- Appointed tribal officers
- CFR Court [Courts of Federal Regulations]
- City
- Cross Deputization Agreement
- Agreement
- ICE
- Municipal police
- No one ...sometimes the state, but it has to involve a weapon for them to come
- Not all county and state law enforcement agencies provide support so staff is sometimes required to carry out Tribal Court orders even though they are not law enforcement.
- Public safety (2)
- Some of the gaming tribes have security forces, but they do not conduct law enforcement procedures.
- State, Municipal, and Village Public Safety Officers
- Tribal Court
- We are a PL-280 state
- We don't have law enforcement at this time. We are working on it.

14. Does your tribe have a **Tribal Court** that handles **child welfare cases** (including ICWA cases)? *n = 251*

Yes	No	Don't know
82.5% (207)	14.7% (37)	2.8% (7)

15. Which **court system** handles the **majority** of your tribe's child welfare cases (including ICWA cases)? *n = 250*

Tribal Court	State/County Court	Don't know
60% (150)	34% (85)	6% (15)

16. Who presents child welfare cases in court on behalf of your child welfare program? *n = 242, responses n = 403*

Tribal	Tribal court advocate	Child Welfare Agency	Child Welfare	Other



attorney	(non-lawyer)	Director/Supervisor	Worker	
45.0%	16.1%	26.9%	67.4%	11.2%
(109)	(39)	(65)	(163)	(27)

- Other responses provided:**
- At this time, Tribal Court is not receiving these cases
 - CA Indian Legal Services attorney on contract
 - CASA
 - CFR PROSECUTOR
 - Expert witness
 - GAL
 - ICWA has a contracted attorney for complex and difficult cases
 - ICWA
 - ICWA Advocate
 - ICWA Director
 - ICWA Social Worker (4)
 - Lawyer
 - Legal Aid Native American Project attorneys
 - Makah Family Services- MINOC/ Juvenile office
 - Non-profit legal services agency
 - Presenting Officer (Prosecutor)
 - Response may be different from tribe to tribe
 - Social services program
 - Social worker
 - Tanana Chiefs Conference Legal Reps
 - TFYS
 - Tribal ICWA representative (2)
 - Tribal officials
 - Tribal Prosecutor(s) (3)
 - Tribal Representative/ICWA Worker
 - Tribal Social Services (3)
 - Tribal Social Services Director/Tribal social worker
 - Tribal Social Worker (3)

17. Are there **jurisdictional disputes** concerning which government (tribal, state or federal) handles child welfare cases in your community? *n = 244*

Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Don't know
36.5%	40.9%	11.5%	11.1%
(89)	(100)	(28)	(27)

18. If there are jurisdictional disputes concerning child welfare cases in your community, who do these jurisdictional disputes concern? *n = 224, responses n = 335*

Which child welfare agency handles the case	Which law enforcement agency handles the case	Which court system handles the case	Other	Don't know
51.8%	21.9%	44.6%	9.4%	21.9%
(116)	(49)	(100)	(21)	(49)

Other responses provided:

- Collaboration with the Tribe
- Disputes are rare
- Does not apply
- Following placement preferences, preventative efforts to prevent removal!
- Foster parents who are not native aren't let know that I am involved in the case regarding their foster child, so I have to usually contact a supervisor of an OCS worker to get them to inform the foster parents with me about what my role is in the case.
- I guess it is who all is involved in the case when ICWA/OCS and the juvenile justice system.
- ICWA voluntary cases that the State asserts should remain under state jurisdiction for purposes of the parents request for anonymity or other reasons; the state court interprets these as an objection to the tribe having jurisdiction.
- Lack of notice from county to tribe
- Non-Native Parent
- None of the above
- Not applicable (2)
- Not notifying the tribe in ICWA cases
- Receiving notice, lack of cooperation from state workers, lack of knowledge regarding ICWA and OICWA
- Unwilling to follow ICWA
- What Tribe will intervene on behalf of a child who is eligible for enrollment for more than one tribe.
- Whether or not Tribal Police will enforce CHIPS orders from other counties if the child is located on the reservation.
- Which tribe has jurisdiction depending on enrollment or eligibility for enrollment of the child, especially when there is a child with multiple tribal heritages.

Section 2: Training and Technical Assistance

	N	Mean	1 Critical need area for T/TA	2 Moderate need area for T/TA	3 Strength area (little or no need for T/TA)	4 Don't know
Child Welfare Services:						
Child Welfare policies, procedures and practice model	231	1.79	37.4% (91)	40.3% (98)	17.3% (42)	4.9% (12)
Use of assessment tools (safety, risk, well-being) for decision-making	227	1.78	36.5% (88)	41.9% (101)	15.8% (38)	5.8% (14)
In-Home Services (placement prevention and/or post reunification)	231	1.75	40.7% (98)	38.6% (93)	16.6% (40)	4.1% (10)
Case Plan development and monitoring	227	1.86	31.4% (76)	43.8% (106)	18.6% (45)	6.2% (15)
Reunification Services	225	1.87	33.2% (79)	40.3% (96)	21.0% (50)	5.5% (13)
Permanency options for children and families (adoption, guardianship, customary/cultural adoption)	226	1.76	37.7% (90)	42.3% (101)	14.6% (35)	5.4% (13)
Recruitment and retention of resource families (including kinship)	231	1.48	59.1% (143)	26.9% (65)	9.5% (23)	4.5% (11)
Independent Living/Transitional Living services for youth	229	1.57	49.4% (118)	37.8% (91)	8.3% (20)	5.0% (12)



Traditional activities that support and strengthen families	230	1.73	40.4% (97)	40.8% (98)	14.6% (35)	4.2% (10)
Child Protection teams (child welfare based)	230	1.9	30.8% (74)	43.3% (104)	21.7% (52)	4.2% (10)
Multidisciplinary teams (prosecution based)	221	1.92	27.9% (67)	43.3% (104)	20.8% (50)	7.9% (19)
Other Child Welfare Services needs	15	1.13	73.7% (14)	0.0% (0)	5.3% (1)	21.1% (4)

- Other responses provided:**
- Alternative/Differential Response as a factor and option to prevent removal and family preservation. This approach is culturally congruent and eliminates the current value laden (judgmental/prosecution model of CPS) to that of non-judgmental, working with families as partners w/o the threat of removal.
 - CASAs, GAL, attorneys, etc. - someone to represent children, especially older children in court.
 - Chemical dependency training in working with parents of children removed from the home. Most Native American children are removed for neglect related to alcohol and/or drug use.
 - Court procedures, testimony, etc.
 - critical need for a database to track cases
 - DATA!
 - Deal with tribal politics effects on ICWA cases!!
 - Early ICWA intervention prior to removal from families, in a collaborative fashion ensure ICWA specific services are provided to families with CPS cases or concerns.
 - effectively working with County agencies and courts
 - evaluation of impact and outcomes of program and training for case management
 - I believe as many members of the community as possible should receive education and training on these issues.
 - I feel that we need more native foster homes, and we really need independent living skills for the youth that are ready to age out of the system, so they know how to care for themselves. Apply for and keep a job. Know how to balance their checking account They also need to know what services they can get to assist them with finding jobs, and a place to rent etc. In some cases I feel that the protection of the children team do good, but then in another case they go opposite of what is in the best interest of the child/dren.
 - I see a need for a mediation process. I have seen parents do all they have to do to get their children back, and the system fails.
 - I've been working for ICWA since April. This service is doing good.
 - Impressing on the county the continued need for an Indian Specialty Unit to serve the tribal children that come into the caseload -- especially those children from out-of-state.
 - Local county child welfare agency just recently began following ICW standards and they should be provided extensive training in this area.
 - Loss of good knowledgeable workers. No funds is another great need for the Tribe and County to do their job efficiently.
 - OCS in the southeast region of Alaska SUCKS
 - Our Child Welfare programs is contracted with Tanana Chiefs Conference so I am not sure exactly what has been handled because we do not have any cases at this time that I know of. So I am not sure on some of these questions-I have not yet been involved with child welfare from this aspect..
 - people who understand and work within the Alaska child protection and Tribal child welfare systems to do our training...people outside of Alaska don't know how to help us
 - Post-re-unification monitoring, follow-up on adult rehab and relapse, checkpoints/milestones for family to achieve together post reunification up to three years.
 - question consistency, equity, and effectiveness
 - State-Tribal relations as they related to IV-E agreements, courts/jurisdiction, ICWA, general working relationships, etc.

- T/TA in need to focus on mental health & other behavioral issues & needs
- teams to become educated and skilled in the cultural aspects of Native American children/youth and their families for a much better understanding of the Native American family structure, i.e. 'extended family'
- The "systems" "programs" Tribe, Family Services, Law Enforcement, Schools working together to educate and do whatever necessary to protect the unborn fetus. PREVENTION!!!! IN ALL ASPECTS OF HUMAN SERVICES!!!!
- Traditional services are a strength due to staff from the same culture of the clients
- Working with State DHS

	N	Mean	1 Critical need area for T/TA	2 Moderate need area for T/TA	3 Strength area (little or no need for T/TA)	4 Don't know
Legal and Judicial Services:						
Tribal Child Welfare Code Revisions <i>(Providing child welfare laws separate from juvenile delinquency; incorporating Tribal custom and tradition such as customary adoption, Tribal specific placement preferences, and legal infrastructure for Title IV-E compliance)</i>	219	1.65	46.4% (109)	32.8% (77)	14.0% (33)	6.8% (16)
Other Legal and Judicial Services needs	11	1.45	58.3% (7)	25.0% (3)	8.3% (1)	8.3% (1)

- Other responses provided:**
- Alaska State Court is the other judicial service.
 - Creating Tribal Child and Family Codes
 - Emergency placement is sometimes a barrier when county workers do not know the families on the reservation.
 - For all including DOJ and OCS and ICWA to know all the rules and regulations for everyone, and all parties to know what role they have with the young youth.
 - How to work more effectively with alcohol/drug dependency where children have been removed due to abuse/neglect related to alcohol dependence.
 - I think that we know how to handle parts of the case, but at the same time the probation officer, OCS worker doesn't inform the ICWA worker about what is going on, and their rules and laws they have to follow so we all know what is being done right in the best interest of the youth.
 - Is in development for native children to be placed into native foster homes, rather than non-native, if feasible.
 - need revisited, codes were templated
 - Need to develop further services in this area as it is limited at this point.
 - Other codes that impact Tribal child welfare - education, domestic relations, etc.
 - Our tribal leaders and government need to be much more educated in the ICWA/court process to be able to support our court system.
 - Our very social fabric is shredded. Our children & our elders do not have a place to socialize. More "programs" more training is more of the same someone making a living off the injustices while nothing on the reservation is impacted and we lose another generation without values/language sense of purpose & pride.
 - The Court System does not acknowledge the Children and Families Code that is from a Lakota perspective, therefore Traditional practices are not being followed.
 - Training for tribal court personal. Familiarize non-tribal personal on Native issues



- Tribal is an odd word to use. After all, 2/3rds of enrolled Indians live off reservation and cannot get tribal services.
- Tribal specific training and working with traditional elders who are judges to help them apply traditions in the correct way to child protection....need to come to our village to work with us
- We are in the process of approving policies for adoption etc....

<i>Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA):</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	1 Critical need area for T/TA	2 Moderate need area for T/TA	3 Strength area (little or no need for T/TA)	4 Don't know
ICWA training for state/county CW staff	221	1.60	50.8% (120)	29.2% (69)	13.6% (32)	6.4% (15)
ICWA training for Tribal court staff	216	1.85	33.8% (79)	38.9% (91)	19.7% (46)	7.7% (18)
ICWA training for Tribal CW staff	224	1.95	29.5% (70)	40.1% (95)	24.9% (59)	5.5% (13)
Qualified expert witness training	222	1.64	46.0% (110)	34.3% (82)	12.6% (30)	7.1% (17)
ICWA Policies and Procedures	226	1.85	33.6% (80)	42.4% (101)	18.9% (45)	5.0% (12)
Establishment of Tribal-specific Placement Priorities	222	1.93	32.4% (77)	34.9% (83)	26.1% (62)	6.7% (16)
Court orders and legal procedures	225	1.88	34.7% (83)	35.6% (85)	23.8% (57)	5.9% (14)
Guardian ad Litem (GAL) and/or Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) assigned to CW cases	225	1.79	40.6% (97)	33.1% (79)	20.5% (49)	5.9% (14)
State/County and federal court system	219	1.86	33.1% (79)	38.5% (92)	20.1% (48)	8.4% (20)
Other ICWA needs	7	1.29	66.7% (6)	0.0% (0)	11.1% (1)	22.2% (2)

- Other responses provided:*
- Agreements or MOU's with all CW agencies
 - every program within the tribal system can use assistance in improvement due to turnover in staff within to program
 - high need in all areas
 - How to relate to other tribes within the State and other Indian tribes in other States.
 - I don't think ICWA resources are marketed well to the community at large.
 - I have had some cases where the child could have been placed in a relative placement but the OCS worker never finished licensing them , so they went to a non-native placement, but in the same community
 - ICWA Staff do not know the Law and need to know the intent of ICWA. Children are being brought back to reservation and services are not being provided or set up prior to children coming home.
 - Implementation of new Tribal Customary Adoption law.
 - Need to clarify BIA position on not allowing ICWA staff to monitor or manage cases of Associate members
 - One of our problems has been the lack of information with regard to the county which via agreement has the responsibility to process all child welfare, delinquency and ICWA cases for the tribe. With changes to our state codes, ICWA has been made a part of the children's code and due

<i>Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA):</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	1 Critical need area for T/TA	2 Moderate need area for T/TA	3 Strength area (little or no need for T/TA)	4 Don't know
to previous tribal case law, our tribal social services agency is now invited to hearings and helps and in reality, monitors our county workers. Our county has also restructured its self. We will see what that brings but I am hopeful that all of this will help us in the long run.						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy makers at the elected level need to understand the gravity of the need as well as the policies and the consequences of inaction or sometimes worse, poor quality of service. • Relationships with other Tribes intervening in Tribal cases. • The BIA here does a very good job of providing all the training we need to carry out ICWA activities and tribal courts etc. • The CW state workers here have little or no involvement with the Native American family infrastructure; most of the state workers treat it as a jurisdictional 'problem' and when they do place a child/children families are endlessly caught up in the court system – a vicious cycle. • The State of Michigan Court CIP has worked hard to provide training that is positive, working with tribes in partnership there has been the development of Bench Book and an attempt to codify ICWA in Michigan State Law • Training for Tribal Council to understand what ICWA covers and what it does not • We desperately need Guardian ad Litem. When a Grandparent literally rescues her granddaughter from harm only to be told by tribal administration and court advocates that Grandparents have no rights in the tribal court something is SERIOUSLY WRONG with the system. 						

<i>Organizational Effectiveness:</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	1 Critical need area for T/TA	2 Moderate need area for T/TA	3 Strength area (little or no need for T/TA)	4 Don't know
Agency vision, mission and values	221	2.14	23.7% (55)	34.1% (79)	37.5% (87)	4.7% (11)
Staff recruitment/retention	218	2.02	29.2% (68)	33.0% (77)	31.3% (73)	6.4% (15)
Clear job descriptions and staff performance measures	220	2.10	25.9% (60)	34.1% (79)	34.9% (81)	5.2% (12)
New worker (core) trainings for workers	222	1.64	47.9% (112)	32.9% (77)	14.1% (33)	5.1% (12)
Training and development for experienced staff	222	1.75	37.4% (88)	43.0% (101)	14.0% (33)	5.5% (13)
Supervisor training	217	1.72	43.7% (101)	32.9% (76)	17.3% (40)	6.1% (14)
State, regional or national Peer Networks for staff	204	1.85	29.1% (67)	43.5% (100)	16.1% (37)	11.3% (26)
Leadership Training	214	1.75	37.9% (88)	39.2% (91)	15.1% (35)	7.8% (18)
Workload issues	219	1.74	42.7% (100)	32.9% (77)	17.9% (42)	6.4% (15)



Workplace morale	220	1.77	38.6% (90)	38.6% (90)	17.2% (40)	5.6% (13)
Burnout/Vicarious trauma	214	1.68	42.4% (98)	37.7% (87)	12.6% (29)	7.4% (17)
Partnering with community members, Tribal Council and Elders	221	1.71	44.4% (104)	32.5% (76)	17.5% (41)	5.6% (13)
Developing community partnerships	220	1.81	37.1% (85)	40.2% (92)	18.8% (43)	3.9% (9)
Data-informed decision-making	213	1.64	42.4% (98)	40.3% (93)	9.5% (22)	7.8% (18)
Community outreach and awareness activities	215	1.81	36.0% (82)	39.9% (91)	18.4% (42)	5.7% (13)
Other Organizational Effectiveness needs	6	1.00	66.7% (6)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	33.3% (3)

Other responses provided:

- Again Prevention a place for community members to socialize i.e. an elder center "structured" like a home setting COMFORTABLE AND WELCOMING. EMPOWER OUR ELDERS DON'T IGNORE THEM!
- data entry
- funding is inadequate for full time ICWA positions in most tribes....more funds need to be allocated so these positions wouldn't be PT ... that is the BIG reason for turnover. our workers need FT jobs!
- I don't work for an ICWA program. These questions are better answered by the programs than by me.
- I feel our and all communities need to come together and work harder to keep families together and to also help do what is in the best interest of the child
- I think that ICWA workers need more support from other agencies in the cases they are working, and to have elders there that could inform the children and youth about their traditions and language.
- needs facelift with community involvement, community distrusts current system
- Police do what they can, but community thinks they should arrest everyone.
- State ICWA Office does provide good information and assistance
- The caliber of leadership on child welfare issues has been a challenge on our reservation for some time. Neither the education department nor children and families department are well regarded for championing their work.
- This survey is getting too long. What is section 2 above even asking?
- True community engagement, data collection
- We believe that our program efforts are very good and that the Early Intervention Model of collaborative services with Tribal and State workers is positive in nature and provides assurance of carrying out ICWA requirements.

Systems of Care Principles:	N	Mean	1 Critical need area for T/TA	2 Moderate need area for T/TA	3 Strength area (little or no need for T/TA)	4 Don't know
Engaging families and youth	227	1.77	39.9% (93)	40.3% (94)	17.2% (40)	2.6% (6)
Partnering with Tribal, federal and State/County agencies to assure culturally competent service plans	223	1.78	39.2% (91)	39.2% (91)	17.7% (41)	3.9% (9)

Systems of Care Principles:	N	Mean	1 Critical need area for T/TA	2 Moderate need area for T/TA	3 Strength area (little or no need for T/TA)	4 Don't know
Family decision-making processes (FGDM, FGC, FUM)	221	1.77	36.5% (85)	43.8% (102)	14.6% (34)	5.2% (12)
Addressing historical trauma	226	1.72	40.3% (94)	43.8% (102)	12.9% (30)	3.0% (7)
Maintaining cultural values	228	1.84	38.7% (91)	34.9% (82)	23.4% (55)	3.0% (7)
Other Systems of Care needs	6	1.17	83.3% (5)	16.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)

Other responses provided:

- Basic child welfare training needed in all areas
- generational issues
- I think maintaining cultural values needs to be addressed because I can give out dates for things they can attend and even give them Tlingit stories and drum making kits etc., but I feel that they need to know more about the history of the cultural values and learn their language.
- Inadequate funding in System of Care which could help reduce removals (i.e. ICWA).
- Informal gathering places for elders a place where youth can seek the elders out
- lack of qualified individuals to implement and maintain SOC
- The department's ability to coordinate is challenging for clients and foster parents especially when the tribal court, treatment programs all have separate requirements of the person being treated for reunification
- The state needs TA on these issues...not the Tribes!
- This survey needs to talk about Urban Indians too.
- Tribal council and administration, random, reckless and ignorant interference and undermining ICW decisions

Data Collection and Technology:	N	Mean	1 Critical need area for T/TA	2 Moderate need area for T/TA	3 Strength area (little or no need for T/TA)	4 Don't know
Automated case management and data system	211	1.41	59.4% (139)	24.4% (57)	6.4% (15)	9.8% (23)
Computer equipment (hardware and software)	213	1.72	44.4% (104)	27.4% (64)	19.2% (45)	9.0% (21)
Improved service monitoring and outcomes tracking system	209	1.39	60.1% (140)	24.0% (56)	5.6% (13)	10.3% (24)
Data Analysis	206	1.43	58.3% (133)	25.0% (57)	7.0% (16)	9.6% (22)
Cross-systems data sharing	205	1.40	59.4% (136)	24.0% (55)	6.1% (14)	10.5% (24)
Selecting data systems and/or data system vendors	198	1.45	54.6% (125)	24.5% (56)	7.4% (17)	13.5% (31)



	N	Mean	1 Critical need area for T/TA	2 Moderate need area for T/TA	3 Strength area (little or no need for T/TA)	4 Don't know
Data Collection and Technology:						
Other Data Collection and Technology needs	3	1.00	60.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	40.0% (2)
Other responses provided:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-shared electronic case management • In process of getting case management/data collection software and hardware. • skills needed in order to do this • these are pretty much irrelevant due to our small case loads and PT jobs • tribal specific, BIA, and IHS continuous collection and reporting of all child related data and monthly and annual public reports • We are working on the State level to try and collect better data -- but everyone admits what we have now is unreliable. • We need to ask the local providers these questions. • We were never told that we could have had access to the Oregon State computer system as we are not Title IV - E. We will join when ORKIDS opens in Feb. 2011. 						

Community Resources <i>In your community, please indicate</i> Availability of Services in the following areas:	N	Mean	0 No	1 Yes	3 Don't know
Substance abuse	233	0.91	8.5% (20)	91.0% (213)	0.4% (1)
Mental health	233	0.85	14.5% (34)	85.0% (199)	0.4% (1)
Domestic violence	231	0.81	11.6% (27)	87.6% (204)	0.9% (2)
Faith-based services	192	0.79	17.7% (41)	65.4% (151)	16.9% (39)
Education services (Headstart, GED Programs, Special education)	229	0.95	5.1% (12)	92.7% (217)	2.1% (5)
Group Living	190	0.35	53.2% (123)	29.0% (67)	17.7% (41)
Wraparound services	194	0.52	40.1% (93)	43.5% (101)	16.4% (38)
Developmental disabilities	193	0.61	33.3% (76)	51.3% (117)	15.4% (35)
Family Support Services	212	0.75	22.6% (53)	67.9% (159)	9.4% (22)
Transportation	223	0.69	29.7% (69)	66.4% (154)	3.9% (9)
Housing	221	0.75	24.1% (56)	71.1% (165)	4.7% (11)

1. In your opinion, what training or technical assistance support would be most helpful to strengthen your child welfare program?

Subject of Comment	Quote
T/TA on: Improved data collection, management and outcomes tracking, and analyzing data for decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis to determine true needs in the community based on data collection. • usage of data collecting software and software that would allow us to share confidential information in a protected process • Anything having to do with Quality Assurance systems and data collection, outcome measurement, performance indicators, tracking, monitoring, and evaluation. • user-friendly data system to track cases
TA on: Cross-systems data sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shared data collection • A data system that integrates with the state system for: IV-E, reporting, ILP, tracking. • A data base system that would enable us to keep better track of clients' information in both tribal and state cases. • Access to FAMLINK information, background check results, and proper training, and a data base to connect the information and track the progress, statistics and concerns.
TA on: Improving relationship with state	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practices when negotiating an agreement with the state/states. Updated model agreements are badly needed as well as talking points and tips for dealing with state people who are watching their own budgets being cut. • We need more assistance in working with the state • Our workers meet the minimum qualifications to serve in the capacity of ICWA worker, and have more practical experience working with tribal families. They should not be made to feel less than qualified to testify about how they work with families in court. • collaboration efforts between tribal partners and the state - how to get the state to really hear what we are doing and place some value in the voice that we have as Tribal Representatives
Training: ICWA training for state staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also, they do not understand the distinction between a) eligibility for services and b) adjudicatory jurisdiction. From one state's point of view, because the Tribe has exclusive jurisdiction over a child's case, that child is no longer eligible for services from the state. Cited legal opinions on that topic and the state's responsibility to provide IV-E services to all eligible children in the state and the state's responsibility to negotiate in good faith is needed. Also, if you could develop fact sheets on the money states will save if they work with the tribes, I think that will go a long way towards bringing everyone together. • For the state child welfare social workers to be more willing to cooperate within the ICWA parameters.
Training: ICWA training for tribal court/council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need more training for our council members also, they are the ones making decisions for our tribe, but if they don't know what all the court stuff means how can they really make the right decision??? • Our tribal court system and tribal prosecutors could benefit from specialized training specific to child welfare civil proceedings. Our biggest challenge is getting and maintaining eligibility for IV-E foster



Subject of Comment	Quote
	care funding for children due to language in the tribal court orders not meeting the requirements through the regulations.
Training: ICWA training for tribal staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For all of us to get intensive training on the court system and the laws and regulations. For example what paper we can file and when and what we are allowed to ask in court and the right way to ask. Training and TA on GAL's and Court-appointed advocates We have also found a great need for victim/witness advocacy by a tribal representative. Any new revisions to ICWA, case law information, specific ICWA training for District Court involvement, legal specifics to case advancement, accountability for State-County case supervision concerning ICWA cases, concurrent jurisdictional issues with State-County Officials/workers, best interest of the child issues with CFR Court and District Court Officials, limitations and provisions of ICWA specific to Tribes with layman terminology, active efforts issues with parents, families, District & CFR Court Officials.
T/TA on: Community outreach and awareness, developing community partnerships:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding the magic keys to engaging the community in prevention and awareness activities. Advocacy Training. How do we advocate to systemically change the response of the community (legal, court, tribal, etc.) to child welfare issues Development of MOUs with State and local service agencies. Cross services agreements to better serve families and insure cultural based services community (family) understanding of child welfare system Multi-disciplinary training (opportunities for court staff, social workers, service providers, and community leaders to all meet together to network and train). The policy makers, executive director, and department heads of the tribal government all need to be aware of the breadth and depth of the child welfare needs in this community so that they can support the services and the families working through these issues. The council members need T.A. regarding child welfare There are resources available, but the problem is that resources do not collaborate or coordinate cases and sometimes duplicate services or drop services when there needs to be referred for other services
TA on: Funding opportunities and/or management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of funding, at the administrative level to ensure that funding used resourcefully to meet community needs. pursuing funding sources Ways to expand funding to hire and train more staff More funding opportunities that would allow the small tribes to create programs that provide specific interest areas to their needs.
T/TA on: Federal policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Also more education with the Title IV-E plans Title IV-E and Title IV-B plans Training - On the new federal laws and permanency planning, etc. Technical Assistance - Title IVE implementation both on the tribal court and social services sides Procedures and Federal and State regulations. Any trainings, to either introduce new laws and procedure or solidify already learned ones would be helpful.
Training on:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training opportunities for staff to stay abreast of current issues relating

Subject of Comment	Quote
Organizational effectiveness and strengthening child welfare practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to children and families. More effective work with abuse/neglect cases with the parents around alcohol/drug dependency is needed. professional development for new staff on cultural teachings of tribe Development of policy and procedures/mission statement Improving staff morale, training and retention of workers. We also lack in any type of New Supervisory Orientation or Training. Independent living skills services need to be improved. Basic child welfare training, focusing on documenting the story of the child and family. Tribal Child Welfare Programs struggle with the importance of documenting the family's story, when failing to do this, the safety, permanency and well-being of the child is not thoroughly documented. The most important issue in my opinion is the benefit and necessity of collaboration and wrap around services needed to treat the whole individual, family, and community. We must address the emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual aspects of child abuse. Alternatives to the current child protection model currently used around Indian country and by PL280 states ... that builds on strengths, is family-centered. Training specifically for the resource families providing direct care for our children in custody. Foster care training, family preservation training and the need for all tribal agencies involved with children to collaborate their efforts for a reservation wide system of safety for the children.

2. Please describe any innovative strategies that your Tribe's child welfare program has developed, especially those that incorporate Tribal custom and tradition in the child welfare program.

Subject of Comment	Quote
Specific names of programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sacred Child Program Wellness Court Child Welfare Commission Circle of Care for Children in Foster Care FEATHERS
Closely working with county/state/HIS staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bi-Weekly meetings with County Child Welfare Services to staff open cases and new referrals ... have allowed Tribal Services to assist families before a substantiated referral is received by the county and if needed allow families to make voluntary or family placements. Child Welfare is working closely with our IHS services to identify risks and provide early intervention services ... more cross training and regular meetings to identify needs and develop systems for addressing these needs. Job shadowing between Tribal and State Social Workers, with State workers spending a day with Tribal ICW staff ... direct team building between Tribal and State workers has resulted in better notification to Tribes if children come into the State system and fewer children being removed into State custody.
Integrating culture into practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are presently working on incorporating tribal values in our practice guidelines and even business processes. The Family Protection Services curriculum has been modified to



Subject of Comment	Quote
	<p>include all of our culturally appropriate customs in child rearing and relationship building practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our tribe through the child welfare agency has developed a specialized model of practice that is a hybrid incorporating both cultural as well as mainstream options for families involved in the child welfare system. • Psycho-social assessments include details and measurement of cultural activities/medicine use as resources with/for family. • We have created a Tribal Treatment Team that brings together all of the human services programs to staff critical cases and create achievable case plans and coordinate services. • Allowing for Tribal CW agencies to approve foster home compliance rather than the State. This ensures that culture and custom and tradition are taken into account. State compliance parameters are not culturally sensitive.
Cultural activities for families, tribal youth and tribal youth in foster care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Custom gifts and tribal language. Coloring books for children in out of home care. All ICWA children receive monthly contact. Cultural agreement between all non-native and outside FCP community foster homes. • Our program provides tribal foster children with shawls, blankets, and other items needed to allow these children to participate in ceremonial dances and powwows. • Our tribe does invite our children who are not in ICWA placement homes, to come home for all our Native events such as fish camp, stick dance, anything that will share knowledge of their identity as an Alaska Indian. Also we try our hardest to keep our children with their family, that is the most important. • We are trying to add more cultural activities for the youth for those especially those who are placed off the Reservation and in Non-Native, Non-Relative homes. Youth support group that meets twice a month
Utilizing Elders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are working on several ideas such as Tribal mentors to work with children in foster care not connected to the Tribe. • Elders group provide in-depth traditional stories, self-respect and healthy life style to clients • We have begun an advisory panel of elders to give us assistance and guide us in decision making.
Tribal-specific placement priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We use Designation of Indian Custodian document to let parents have a say in who will take care of their children when they are unable to do so and to avoid placement in foster care home of a non-Indian stranger. • An MOU with the state to provide cross jurisdictional placement of children, allowing the siblings to remain together and allow the state to place children on the reservation while working on the case. • To advise our CFR Court Prosecutor of applying Tribal custom and traditions that specifically deals with the "best interest of the child". Used in establishing relative/kinship placements outside of the "family member" guidelines. Used in "extended family" issues during or concerning placement of a child(ren). • Signs of Safety model - High emphasis on family preservation

Subject of Comment	Quote
	and/or child placement with relatives versus out of home placement

3. Please provide any other comments about your child welfare services and/or training and technical assistance needs.

Subject of Comment	Quote
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think tribal leaders and tribal social workers need to understand that, with IV-E funding comes accountability and audits.
Acknowledge the strengths of tribal CW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge the strengths of tribal programs and delivery systems rather than defer or view non-Indian programs as better or what does the state do, let's do it that way. This is perhaps an outcome of historical trauma however, if so, and despite that, we need to acknowledge our strengths and cultural approaches as equal to or, in many cases superior to non-Indian models/approaches.
Building collaborative partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Welfare and Substance Abuse providers: How to building a collaborative partnerships within the context of HIPAA and 42 CFR. • Need better coordination and collaboration with all agencies • Our tribal system is a fragmented system where law enforcement, the courts, the ICWA program and the tribal child welfare program all approach working with the families in common through a different lens. The oppression in the community has impacted the way we work together and treat one another and this hampers our abilities to be effective in our work. • The substance abuse treatment side of things needs to be packaged with the child services such that foster parents and kids aren't caught in the middle of whether or not visitation will/will not occur.
Child interviewing techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child interview Techniques related to non-leading questioning.
Children's Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Services is also in critical need of revision of the Children's Code.
Confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have some issues with confidentiality with being in the same office area as the rest of the tribal employees.
Culturally relevant programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creating culturally relevant programs for our community.
Developing workplan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We would like assistance in developing an overall work plan with corresponding desk reference manuals specific to each positions role and the overall department plan.
Difficulty transferring cases to tribal court	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the last three years, we have had difficulty transferring cases to tribal court because the Judge for the tribal Court believes that the states should serve these children rather than using tribal resources (money staff, services, etc). This is in conflict with what the Social Services Department believes should be done for these children and families; but the Judge has the final say, so we do the best we can to stay involved in all state cases from the moment we are notified till the case closes.
Documentary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We would really like to see a PBS-type documentary made about the history of ICW, how and why ICWA came about, and the current state of ICW. A documentary that reaches the general public, because I think we need to tackle the issue somewhat from the PR side, to get others involved in our fight.
Focus on prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I wish we could create a village where mothers to be could have a



Subject of Comment	Quote
	refuge to learn all the important skills in raising the next generation. We should be into prevention i.e. If a mother to be is using drugs/alcohol she would be sentenced to the village a least until the child is born or until she has learned the importance of protecting the unborn and the skills to raise the child thereafter. (parenting, bonding, nutrition, household upkeep, traditions/customs, relationships, history of the tribe, etc.) the father of the unborn included in the village.
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple funding for staff, facilities, transportation, training for staff & clients, emergency funding for client emergencies & housing, Indian youth programs, etc.
Help applying for IV-E funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Also the tribe needs to get someone to apply for the title 4-E funding directly, which would help with the financial part of our program.
Literature to give to clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Also some literature to give to the members on ways to improve child care all the time. Especially the teens.
Make use of what is available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We need to start to use it and take advantage of what is available to make us a better service provider for our families and children
More staff to manage high caseloads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In my opinion our Tribal Social Service is overwhelmed by it's case load. They are not up to par in following up on case, especially when children are involved, plus their attitudes are not always polite. I think they need more staff to really take care o our people.
More Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> refresher courses in child welfare policy and practice and the interrelationship with ICW would be of assistance. We need training in just about all areas. We are allowed to partake in the state academy for new workers, but they have not had any classes for some time as they are revamping it.
Need more time to identify needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I think we have an excellent team here but it is just beginning to establish itself. It will take some time to more accurately identify needs.
Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I would like to go to different communities and see firsthand how they do their work.
Onsite assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It would be beneficial for a team to conduct onsite assessment to child welfare agencies at their request.
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I would appreciate some assistance in developing a policy on child neglect and abuse.
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> need resources information from the state office of children offices as well as the tribal The needs are real and the constant challenge faced by tribal child welfare agency's is where and how to access the resources to address the needs. We need a place to put juveniles
Restructuring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to restructure a social services program from scratch. A how to guide would be sooooo helpful!
States do not involve the tribe when they should	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our biggest problem in working with states is the fact that states do not involve us when they should and they do not give us equal standing when it comes to making actual decisions for/with the children and their families. We believe it is vital that we be allowed to be treated as an equal partner whenever any decisions are being made for our children and families, and we work hard to improve the relationships we have with states.

Subject of Comment	Quote
Stereotypes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> T/TA on helping tribal child welfare programs overcome a negative stereotype of, 'you take kids away.'; on helping tribes promote child and family safety, promoting strengths of families, etc.
Systems of Care principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systems of Care principles: What do they mean, how can we apply, approaches...to eliminate tribal silos and build collaborative partnerships
Things are going well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I think services are going in the right direction.
Tribal Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tribal Councils need to know and understand what child welfare really is so that they can support good resolutions and provide direction to the tribe. Training Councils would be most beneficial. Tribal Council suggestions and input into case planning of children and families. This provides strengths to the family in obtaining reunification but also is a barrier to assuring child safety.

Section 3: About You

- Please indicate the State where most of your reservation land lies.
- What is the name of your tribe? $n = 225$

State	Percentage of Respondents (Count)	Tribe Names
Alabama	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poarch Creek Indians
Alaska	22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bristol Bay Native Association Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes Hydaburg Cooperative Association Knik Tribe Maniilaq Association Metlakatla Indian Community Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government Native Village of Eyak (2) Native Village of Tazlina Ninilchik Traditional Council Other (1) Petersburg Indian Association (2) Tanana Chiefs Conference (8)
Arizona	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hopi Tribe Navajo Nation Tohono O'odham Nation (6)
California	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bear River Band of Rohnerville Rancheria Hoopa Valley Tribe Hopland Band of Pomo Indians Other (4) Redwood Valley Rancheria of Pomo Indians of California Sherwood Valley Rancheria of Pomo Indians of California Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians, Shingle Springs Rancheria Smith River Rancheria (2) Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians (2) Yurok Tribe
Colorado	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Southern Ute Indian Tribe (2)



Idaho	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Reservation of Idaho Coeur d'Alene Tribe of the Coeur d'Alene Reservation
Kansas	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska (2) Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas Prairie Band of Potawatomi Nation (2) Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas
Louisiana	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana (2)
Maine	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Penobscot Indian Nation (2)
Massachusetts	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head
Michigan	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keweenaw Bay Indian Community Little River Band of Ottawa Indians (2) Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians (7) Other (1) Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan (3)
Minnesota	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bois Forte Band of Chippewa Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe (2) Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe (2) Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians of Minnesota Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community of Minnesota
Montana	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blackfeet Tribe of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation of Montana (5) Chippewa Cree Tribe of Rocky Boy's Reservation of Montana (2) Fort Belknap Indian Community (3) Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes (3) Northern Cheyenne
Nebraska	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ponca Tribe of Nebraska (3) Santee Sioux Nation of Nebraska
Nevada	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fallon Paiute Shoshone Tribe (2) Te-Moak Tribe of Western Shoshone Indians Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California (2) Yerington Paiute Tribe
New Mexico	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jicarilla Apache Nation Navajo Nation Pueblo of Isleta Pueblo of Nambe Pueblo of Santo Domingo Pueblo of Taos Pueblo of Zuni
New York	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other
North Dakota	21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other Spirit Lake Nation (2) Three Affiliated Tribes of the Fort Berthold Reservation (3) Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa (15)
Oklahoma	27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cherokee Nation (8) Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Comanche Nation (2) Kaw Nation Kiowa Indian Tribe of Oklahoma

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Miami Tribe of Oklahoma Osage Nation Other Otoe-Missouria Tribe of Indians Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma Seneca-Cayuga Nation of Oklahoma (2) Wyandotte Nation
Oregon	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua & Siuslaw Indians of Oregon Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (3)
South Dakota	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oglala Sioux Tribe (4) Rosebud Sioux Tribe (2)
Texas	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ysleta del Sur Pueblo (11)
Washington	22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation (2) Cowlitz Indian Tribe Kalispel Tribe of Indians Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe Lummi Tribe of the Lummi Reservation (3) Makah Tribe Other (3) Quinalt Tribe of the Quinalt Reservation (5) Samish Indian Tribe of Washington Suquamish Tribe of the Port Madison Reservation Upper Skagit Indian Tribe of Washington
Wisconsin	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bad River Band of the Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians (4) Forest County Potawatomi Community of Wisconsin Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin (2) Other
Wyoming	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eastern Shoshone Tribe of the Wind River Reservation

3. What is the approximate size of your enrolled Tribal population? $n = 225$

Category	Percentage	Frequency
Less than 250	3.6%	8
250 to 500	6.7%	15
500 to 1,000	3.6%	8
1,000 to 5,000	39.6%	89
5,000 to 10,000	19.6%	44
10,000 to 20,000	10.2%	23
More than 20,000	13.8%	31
Don't know	3.1%	7

4. What is your job title and/or Tribal community position? (Please check all that apply) $n = 220$, responses $n = 285$

Category	Percentage	Frequency
Tribal Child Welfare Agency	55.5%	122
a. Senior Management Staff	34.4%	42
b. Mid-Level Management Staff	27.0%	33
c. Direct Service Staff	31.1%	38
d. Missing	7.3%	9



Tribal Law Enforcement	1.8%	4
Tribal Court Personnel (Judge, Prosecutor, Clerk, etc.)	9.5%	21
Tribal Leader (Elected and/or Traditional)	5.5%	12
Other Tribal Government Employee	15.0%	33
State/County or Federal government employee (BIA, IHS, etc.)	3.2%	7
Community service provider	10.9%	24
Private agency employee	3.2%	7
Licensed foster care, kinship or Indian custodian	5.0%	11
Adoptive parent	2.7%	6
Family member receiving child welfare services	2.3%	5
Other community member	15.0%	33

<i>Other responses provided:</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration • AK Native Tribal member • Attorney/ Advocate/ Educator • Child welfare • Child Welfare Commissioner • Community school • Committee member, Tribal Administrative Assistant, and Tribal workforce development specialist • Community Services Manager • Consultant/trainer/advocate (2) • Counselor • Director of Human Services (2) • DV prevention advocate • Elder (2) • Enrolled member • Health and Social Services Director • Human Services Division Chief • Legal department • LICWA committee member • No ties to the establishment at the moment but served on the school board as well as the Tribal Council • Parent aide • Private non-profit • Provide TA to program • Social Services Director/ICWA Coordinator • Social worker • Tribal Child Welfare Commissioner • Tribal court lay advocate and work as an administrative assistant • Tribal Family Youth Specialist (2) • Tribal ICWA support worker/ Tribal Social Services (2) • Tribal Member • Tribal member of the CTUIR and was a foster care until taken away • Tribal Social Worker 		

5. Are you a member of the tribe that you are working with? *n* = 229

Yes	No
55 % (126)	45% (103)



APPENDIX C: NEEDS ASSESSMENT RECRUITMENT MATERIALS

NATIONAL CHILD WELFARE RESOURCE CENTER FOR TRIBES

*A service of the Children's Bureau
A member of the T/TA Network*

Invites you to participate in
an online National Tribal Child
Welfare Needs Assessment



The Tribal Law and Policy Institute, in partnership with the Indian Child and Family Resource Center, the Native American Training Institute, and the Butler Institute for Families at the University of Denver, was awarded a cooperative agreement with the federal Children's Bureau to operate the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Tribes. This resource center is part of the Children's Bureau Training and Technical Assistance Network which offers no-cost child welfare focused training/technical assistance (T/TA) to tribes and states.

The NRC4Tribes is seeking Tribal input about the training and technical assistance needs of Tribal child welfare systems. This information will be used by the NRC4Tribes to develop and provide appropriate T/TA for tribes over the next four years of the project.

The online needs assessment will also inform the Children's Bureau about the types of T/TA that is needed to support and strengthen Tribal child welfare systems.

For more information about the assessment, please contact:

Kathy Deserly
Interim Associate Director
National Child Welfare Resource Center for Tribes
a service of the Children's Bureau
Kathy@NRC4Tribes.org
406-443-8202

Respondents may include:

- Tribal Leaders
- Tribal child welfare directors and staff
- Tribal foster parents
- Tribal community program staff (such as court staff, law enforcement, community health and others)
- Birth parents
- Youth
- Kinship providers
- Community members

**Online participation is available at
www.NRC4Tribes.org**



NATIONAL CHILD WELFARE RESOURCE CENTER FOR TRIBES

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



NRC4TRIBES PARTNERS

June 14, 2010

**TRIBAL LAW AND
POLICY INSTITUTE**
WEST HOLLYWOOD, CA
ST. PAUL, MN
www.tlpi.org

[Redacted]

Dear [Redacted]

**INDIAN CHILD AND FAMILY
RESOURCE CENTER**
HELENA, MT
www.icafrc.org

The National Child Welfare Resource Center for Tribes (NRC4Tribes), a service of the Children’s Bureau, invites the [Redacted] input in an onsite child welfare technical assistance needs assessment. The assessment will be helpful in creating a better understanding of the unique needs of Tribal child welfare programs and inform us concerning the types of child welfare training and technical assistance that might assist Tribes in strengthening their child welfare service delivery.

**NATIVE AMERICAN
TRAINING INSTITUTE**
BISMARCK, ND
www.nativeinstitute.org

The Tribal Law and Policy Institute - in partnership with the Indian Child and Family Resource Center, Native American Training Institute, and the Butler Institute for Families at the University of Denver - was awarded a cooperative agreement in September 2009 from the federal Children’s Bureau to operate the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Tribes. This resource center is part of the Children’s Bureau Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) Network which offers child welfare-focused T/TA to Tribes and states at no cost.

**BUTLER INSTITUTE
FOR FAMILIES**
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER
DENVER, CO
www.thebutlerinstitute.org

During our first year, the NRC4Tribes is responsible for conducting a national technical assistance needs assessment of Tribes to learn more about Tribal child welfare technical assistance needs. All Tribes will be invited to participate in a brief national online needs assessment survey. Twenty (20) Tribes have been selected through a random stratified sampling of all Tribes receiving Title IV-B funds for invitations to participate in a more detailed on-site technical assistance needs assessment.

8235 SANTA MONICA BLVD., SUITE 211
WEST HOLLYWOOD, CA 90046
323 650-5467 ~ FAX: 323 650-8149
www.NRC4Tribes.org



Your Tribe is one of the 20 Tribes that have been selected for invitations to participate. We would like to offer you, your child welfare program, and others associated with your child welfare program (for example, tribal court, foster parents, tribal leaders and others) the opportunity to participate in this onsite needs assessment to share your perspectives and experiences about strengthening Tribal child welfare systems. These needs assessments will be conducted by one or two NRC4Tribes consultants with substantial knowledge and experience concerning Tribal child welfare systems. This assessment will give you the opportunity to reflect on your own tribal child welfare strengths and needs and identify areas where you might request support from the NRC4Tribes and/or other training or technical assistance opportunities offered through the Children's Bureau T/TA Network.

All 20 onsite needs assessments must be completed by August 31, 2010. Consequently, we will need to know by the first week in July 2010 whether you would like to take part in an onsite needs assessments. If not, we will still have enough time to contact other randomly selected Tribes in time to meet our August 31, 2010 assessment deadline.

We hope that your Tribe will consider participating in this important project. The NRC4Tribes will contact you in the next week by telephone to provide more information and explore whether your Tribe is interested in participating.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me and/or NRC4Tribes Interim Deputy Director Kathy Deserly. I can be reached by phone at (323) 650-5467 or by email at jerry@tlpi.org. Kathy Deserly can be reached by phone at (406) 431-5941 or by email at kathy@NRC4Tribes.org.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely yours,

Jerry Gardner, Interim Director
National Child Welfare Resource Center for Tribes (NRC4Tribes)

cc: Don Shircel, Director of Client Development
cc: Racquel Martinez, Children's Services Director
cc: Mary Johnson, Child Protection Program
cc: Kathleen Halverson

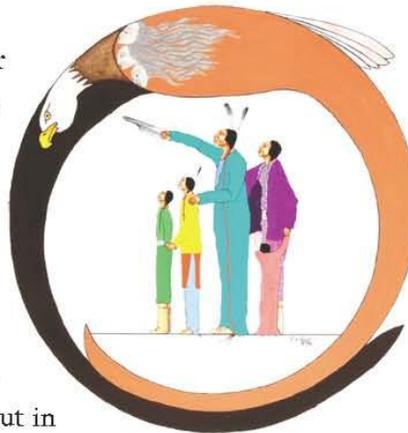


A strong Tribal child welfare system benefits *from your insight.*

Children are sacred and entitled to be cherished in a safe and nurturing environment with strong family, community and cultural connections. Their happiness and well-being includes nourishment of mind, body and spirit in order to fulfill their dreams throughout their journey toward becoming a healthy Elder.
-NRC4Tribes philosophy

Child Protection and Safety • Family Preservation
Foster Care • ICWA • Permanence

Please share your ideas about what your community child welfare agency needs to tackle these challenging issues.



The National Child Welfare Resource Center for Tribes invites your input in a national Tribal child welfare training and technical assistance needs assessment.

Please fill out the Online
Child Welfare TA Needs
Assessment at
www.NRC4Tribes.org
available online through August 31, 2010

Who should respond?

Tribal leaders, child welfare staff, families & youth, court & law enforcement staff, community members, and others interested in Tribal child welfare services.

Purpose of the Assessment

The assessment is being conducted by the National Resource Center for Tribes, a member of the Children's Bureau National Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) Network. The purpose is to learn what training or technical assistance Tribal child welfare service providers need to support them in strengthening Tribal child welfare systems.

Your insight will help provide a better picture of the T/TA needs of Tribal child welfare programs nationwide in order for the National Resource Center for Tribes and Network members to develop and offer appropriate training and technical assistance for Tribal child welfare providers.

Thank you for taking the time to share your valuable input.

NATIONAL CHILD WELFARE
RESOURCE CENTER for TRIBES
A Service of the Children's Bureau

For more information:

web: www.NRC4Tribes.org
email: Kathy@NRC4Tribes.org
phone: 406.443.8202



APPENDIX D: NEEDS ASSESSMENT TOPIC DOMAINS

- I. Organizational Effectiveness
 - a. Implementation readiness (NIRN framework)
 - b. Use of a practice model
 - c. SOC principles
 - d. Workforce issues (culture and climate, job satisfaction, burnout/secondary trauma, etc)
 - e. Recruitment and retention
 - f. Training and staff development (continuum of skill-based education from social work education to pre-service training to advanced supervisor and leadership training)
 - g. Leadership and supervision
- II. Adoption
 - a. Recruitment and retention for adoptive parents
- III. Foster Care
 - a. Recruitment and retention for foster parents
- IV. Youth Development
- V. In-Home Services
- VI. Legal and Judicial Issues
 - a. ICWA
 - b. Court orders, legal procedures
 - c. Partnering with court staff and judges
 - d. Cross-systems training
- VII. Safety and Assessment
 - a. Intake procedures/protocols
 - b. Use of assessment tools (safety, risk, well-being)
- VIII. Prevention
- IX. Family and Youth Engagement
 - a. Teaming, FGC, etc.
 - b. Engaging families in agency strategic planning and decision making
- X. Ensuring Culturally Responsive Practice
 - a. Coping with historical trauma
 - b. Maintaining cultural values
 - c. Community vision from elders, leaders and families
 - i. Connection with Tribal Council
- XI. Data and Technology
 - a. Service monitoring
 - b. Automated case management data systems
 - c. Outcomes tracking
 - d. Data analysis
 - e. Data driven decision-making
- XII. Service Array
 - a. Mental health
 - b. Substance abuse
 - c. Wraparound process
- XIII. Community Partnerships
 - a. Courts
 - b. Education
 - c. Other providers
 - d. Cross-systems training
- XIV. State-Tribal Relationships



APPENDIX E: LIST OF NEEDS ASSESSMENTS INSTRUMENTS

Instrument	Administration
#1: General Online Survey	Administered via Qualtrics online survey software and paper/pencil version to Tribal Child Welfare directors participating in on-site assessments for distribution to key stakeholders (families, Tribal Leaders, community partners, etc.)
#2 (IV-B), #2A (non-IV-B), #2B (IV-E): Tribal Child Welfare Director Interview	Administered to 30+ Tribal Child Welfare directors via a telephone or in-person interview
#3: Staff Questionnaire	Administered via paper/pencil questionnaire to all child welfare staff in an agency participating in on-site assessment
Interview Protocols for Tribal On-site Assessments:	
<p>#2, #2a, #2b: Tribal Child Welfare Director (same as above)</p> <p>#4: Child Welfare Supervisor</p> <p>#5: Child Welfare Worker</p> <p>#6: Community Provider/CPT</p> <p>#7: Tribal Judge, Attorney/Advocate who represents child welfare cases</p> <p>#8: Tribal Leader (elected and/or traditional leader)</p> <p>#9: Law Enforcement</p> <p>#10: Tribal Child Welfare Family</p> <p>#11: Tribal Foster Parent</p> <p>#12: Tribal Child Welfare Youth</p>	



APPENDIX F: NEEDS ASSESSMENT GENERAL SURVEY

Section 1A: Tribal Child Welfare Services

These questions are about the capacity and infrastructure of your child welfare services. Your answers to these questions provide information that will help us in designing/developing training and technical assistance resources and delivery methods to meet tribal needs

- Who provides **child welfare services** for American Indian/Alaska Native children in your Tribal service area? (Please check all that apply)
 - Tribal Child Welfare Program
 - Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Child Welfare Program
 - State/County Child Welfare Program
 - Private Agency or Non-Profit Corporation Child Welfare Program
 - Other: Please describe _____
 - Don't know
- How many people are employed who provide child welfare services for your tribe?
 - One-person office
 - 2-5 staff
 - 6-10 staff
 - 11-20 staff
 - More than 20 staff
 - Don't know
- Does your Tribal Child Welfare agency have an Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) program?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't know
- Does the State/County have identified workers who manage ICWA cases?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't know
- Does your Tribe actively manage cases in collaboration with state/county workers?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't know

Section 1B: Children's Bureau Federal Funding (IV-B and IV-E) for Tribal Child Welfare Services

These questions provide information about the capacity and infrastructure of your child welfare services.

- Do you know what Title IV-B funding is?
 - Yes
 - No

If No, here is a definition of Title IV-B funding:

Please note that (1) Title IV-B subpart I provides grants to states and tribes for programs directed toward the goal of keeping families together by promoting the safety, permanence and well-being of children in foster care and adoptive families; and (2) Title IV-B subpart 2 provides grants to prevent the unnecessary separation of children from their families, improve the quality of care and services to children and their families, and ensure permanency for children by reuniting them with their parents, by adoption or by another permanent living arrangement. IV-B funds are available to tribes according to a formula that is based on population and according to a 5 year Plan. A match is required.

Please move on to question #9.

If Yes, please answer questions 7 and 8:

- Does your Tribe receive federal Title IV-B funding from the Federal Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't know
- If your Tribe does not receive federal Title IV-B funding, why not? (Please check all that apply)
 - Not eligible
 - IV-B development process is too time-consuming/difficult for the amount of funding
 - We do not know enough about it to apply for the funding
 - We are not interested
 - Other (please describe) _____
- Do you know what Title IV-E funding is?
 - Yes
 - No

If No, here is a definition of Title IV-E funding:

Please note that Federal IV-E funding provides reimbursement for a percentage of certain child welfare agency cost, specifically foster care maintenance, administration and training. A match is required depending upon the reimbursement category. It has been available to tribes through a IV-E agreement with the state and now directly from the federal government in accordance with an approved Tribal Title IV-E Plan.

Please move on to Section 1C, question #13.

If Yes, please answer this question:

- Does your Tribe receive federal Title IV-E funding through a Tribal/State IV-E agreement?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't know

If you answered Yes or Don't know to question #10, please move on to question #12.

If you answered No to question #11, please answer this question:

- Is your Tribe considering (or "have a plan to") establishing a Tribal/State IV-E agreement?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Maybe
 - Don't know

11a. If yes, please describe why:

11b. If no, please describe why not:

- Is your Tribe considering accessing (or "have a plan to access") Title IV-E funding **directly from the Federal Government**?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Maybe
 - Don't know



12a. If yes, please describe why:

12a. If yes, please describe why:

Section 1C: Law Enforcement and Courts

These questions provide information concerning two other entities that handle child welfare cases - law enforcement and courts.

13. Who provides **law enforcement services** for your Tribe? (Please check all that apply)
 - Tribal Law Enforcement
 - Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Law Enforcement
 - Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
 - State/County Law Enforcement
 - Other: Please describe _____
 - Don't know

14. Does your Tribe have a **Tribal Court** that handles **child welfare cases** (including ICWA cases)?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't know

15. Which **court system** handles the **majority** of your Tribe's child welfare cases (including ICWA cases)?
 - Tribal court
 - State/County court
 - Don't know

16. Who presents child welfare cases in court on behalf of your child welfare program? (Please check all that apply)
 - Tribal attorney
 - Tribal court advocate (non-lawyer)
 - Child Welfare Agency Director/Supervisor
 - Child Welfare Worker
 - Other _____

17. Are there **jurisdictional disputes** concerning which government (tribal, state, or federal) handles child welfare cases in your community?
 - Frequently
 - Rarely
 - Sometimes
 - Don't know

18. If there are jurisdictional disputes concerning child welfare cases in your community, who do these jurisdictional disputes concern? (Please check all that apply)
 - Which **child welfare agency** handles the case
 - Which **law enforcement agency** handles the case
 - Which **court system** handles the case
 - Other: Please describe _____
 - Don't know

Section 2: Training and Technical Assistance

This Section will help us to identify some specific training and technical assistance needs.

Child Welfare Agency Resources: <i>Please rate the extent to which each of the following categories is an area of strength or an area of need for training and technical Assistance (T/TA) for your Tribal Child Welfare program or Agency.</i>	Critical need area for T/TA	Moderate need area for T/TA	Strength area (little or no need for T/TA)	Don't know
Child Welfare Services:				
Child Welfare policies, procedures and practice model				
Use of assessment tools (safety, risk, well-being) for decision-making				
In-Home Services (placement prevention and/or post reunification)				
Case Plan development and monitoring				
Reunification Services				
Permanency options for children and families (adoption, guardianship, customary/cultural adoption)				
Recruitment and retention of resource families (including kinship)				
Independent Living/Transitional Living services for youth				
Traditional activities that support and strengthen families				
Child Protection teams (child welfare based)				
Multidisciplinary teams (prosecution based)				
Other (please describe): _____				
Legal and Judicial Services:				
Tribal Child Welfare Code Revisions <i>(Providing child welfare laws separate from juvenile delinquency; incorporating Tribal custom and tradition such as customary adoption, Tribal specific placement preferences, and legal infrastructure for Title IV-E compliance)</i>				
Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA):				
ICWA training for state/county CW staff				
ICWA training for Tribal court staff				
ICWA training for Tribal CW staff				
Qualified expert witness training				
ICWA Policies and Procedures				
Establishment of Tribal-specific Placement Priorities				



Child Welfare Agency Resources: <i>Please rate the extent to which each of the following categories is an area of strength or an area of need for training and technical Assistance (T/TA) for your Tribal Child Welfare program or Agency.</i>	Critical need area for T/TA	Moderate need area for T/TA	Strength area (little or no need for T/TA)	Don't know
Court orders and legal procedures				
Guardian ad Litem (GAL) and/or Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) assigned to CW cases				
State/County and federal court system				
Other (please describe):				
Organizational Effectiveness:				
Agency vision, mission and values				
Staff recruitment/retention				
Clear job descriptions and staff performance measures				
New worker (core) trainings for workers				
Training and development for experienced staff				
Supervisor training				
State, regional or national Peer Networks for staff				
Leadership Training				
Workload issues				
Workplace morale				
Burnout/Vicarious trauma				
Partnering with community members, Tribal Council and Elders				
Developing community partnerships				
Data-informed decision-making				
Community outreach and awareness activities				
Other (please describe):				
Systems of Care Principles:				
Engaging families and youth				
Partnering with Tribal, federal and State/County agencies to assure culturally competent service plans				
Family decision-making processes (FGDM, FGC, FUM)				
Addressing historical trauma				
Maintaining cultural values				

Child Welfare Agency Resources: <i>Please rate the extent to which each of the following categories is an area of strength or an area of need for training and technical Assistance (T/TA) for your Tribal Child Welfare program or Agency.</i>	Critical need area for T/TA	Moderate need area for T/TA	Strength area (little or no need for T/TA)	Don't know
Other (please describe):				
Data Collection and Technology:				
Automated case management and data system				
Computer equipment (hardware and software)				
Improved service monitoring and outcomes tracking system				
Data Analysis				
Cross-systems data sharing				
Selecting data systems and/or data system vendors				
Other (please describe):				

Community Resources <i>In your community, please indicate Availability of Services in the following areas:</i>	Yes	No	Don't know
Substance abuse			
Mental health			
Domestic violence			
Faith-based services			
Education services (Headstart, GED Programs, Special education)			
Group Living			
Wraparound services			
Developmental disabilities			
Family Support Services			
Transportation			
Housing			

1. In your opinion, what training or technical assistance support would be most helpful to strengthen your child welfare program?



2. Please describe any innovative strategies that your Tribe's child welfare program has developed, especially those that incorporate Tribal custom and tradition in the child welfare program.

3. Please provide any other comments about your child welfare services and/or training and technical assistance needs.

Section 3: About You

This Section provides us with general information that tells us who has completed this questionnaire and helps us to understand your relationship to Tribal child welfare services. All questions are optional.

1. Please write the State where most of your reservation land lies: _____
2. Name of Tribe: _____
3. What is the approximate size of your enrolled Tribal population?
 - Less than 250
 - 250 to 500
 - 500 to 1,000
 - 1,000 to 5,000
 - 5,000 to 10,000
 - 10,000 to 20,000
 - More than 20,000
 - Don't know

4. What is your job title and/or Tribal community position? (Please check all that apply)
 - Tribal Child Welfare Agency (please check one of the following):
 - Senior Management Staff
 - Mid-Level Management Staff
 - Direct Service Staff
 - Tribal Law Enforcement
 - Tribal Court Personnel (Judge, Prosecutor, Clerk, etc.)
 - Tribal Leader (Elected and/or Traditional)
 - Other Tribal Government Employee
 - State/County or Federal government (BIA, IHS, etc.) employee
 - Community service provider
 - Private agency employee
 - Licensed Foster care, kinship or Indian custodian
 - Adoptive Parent
 - Family member receiving child welfare services
 - Other Community member
 Please describe: _____

5. Are you a member of the Tribe that you are working with?
 - Yes
 - No

Thank you for completing this NRC4Tribes Needs Assessment survey!!!

required depending upon the reimbursement category. It has been available to Tribes through a IV-E agreement with the state and now directly from the federal government in accordance with an approved Tribal IV-E Plan.

16. Is your Tribe considering (or “have a plan to”) entering into a Tribal/State IV-E agreement?
 Yes No Maybe Don’t know

Questions Asked for Tribal Child Welfare Directors for Tribes without IV-B funding:
 Why is it that your Tribe does not receive federal Title IV-B funding? (Please check all that apply)
 Not eligible
 IV-B development process is too time-consuming/difficult for the amount of funding
 We do not know enough about it to apply for the funding
 We are not interested
 Other (please describe) _____
 Is your Tribe considering (or “have a plan to”) entering into a Tribal/State IV-B agreement?
 Yes No Maybe Don’t know

- Frequently Rarely Sometimes Don’t know

22. If there are jurisdictional disputes concerning child welfare cases in your community, who do these jurisdictional disputes concern? (Please check all that apply)
 Which *child welfare agency* handles the case
 Which *law enforcement agency* handles the case
 Which *court system* handles the case
 Other: Please describe _____
 Don’t know

Law Enforcement and Courts

These questions provide information concerning two other entities that handle child welfare cases - law enforcement and courts. Your information will provide us with information that will help us in developing training and technical assistance resources and delivery methods to meet Tribal needs.

17. Who provides *law enforcement services* for your Tribe? (Please check all that apply)
 Tribal Law Enforcement
 Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Law Enforcement
 Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
 State/County Law Enforcement
 Other: Please describe _____
 Don’t know
18. Does your Tribe have a *Tribal Court* that handles *child welfare cases* (including ICWA cases)?
 Yes No
19. Which court system handles the majority of your Tribe’s *child welfare cases* (including ICWA cases)?
 Tribal court
 State/County court
 Other: Please describe _____
20. Who presents *child welfare cases* in court on behalf of your *child welfare program*? (Please check all that apply)
 Tribal attorney
 Tribal court advocate (non-lawyer)
 Child Welfare Agency Director/Supervisor
 Child Welfare Worker
 Other _____
21. Are there *jurisdictional disputes* concerning which government (tribal, state, or federal) handles *child welfare cases* in your community?

Interview Protocol

Please note that the interviewer does not need to ask every follow up question that has been provided.

1. **I'd like to begin by having you briefly describe your tribal child welfare program.** (Or if interviewee indicates the tribe does not have its own child welfare program, but uses that of another tribe, ask them to reflect on the other tribe's child welfare program.)

Possible follow up questions for more detail:

- How did this program come into being? What drives the structure and operations of this program?
- Does the program use a formal practice model, (e.g., guiding principles or a structured approach to practice)? If so, how would you describe it?
- Does the tribe/program currently provide services to children in their own homes?
- Does the program currently provide foster care/relative placement services? Guardian/adoption services?
- How does your program use research or evidence-based practice to make decisions?
- How would you describe the strengths and challenges of your program? What works well? What is difficult to do?

2. **Is the tribal leadership supportive of operating a Title IV-E foster care program through a tribal state agreement? If yes:**

Possible follow up questions for more detail:

- How supportive is the Tribal community of operating its own foster care, relative, and/or adoption programs?
- What relationship issues between the state and tribe may affect the willingness of the tribe or state to enter an agreement?
- What else might impact your ability to operate a Title IV-E foster care program through a tribal state agreement?

3. **Are there workforce or program development issues that your program is facing?** Workforce issues include things like training and staff development, recruitment and retention, job satisfaction, workplace climate, burnout and secondary trauma. Program development issues are related to improving or increasing the services or effectiveness of your program

Possible follow up questions for more detail:

- Are you in need to expanding or growing your program, or increasing the services it provides?
- Are you in need to additional staff to handle program tasks?
- Do you have position descriptions that accurately describe the current duties and responsibilities of child welfare staff?
- What types of training and staff development opportunities are available to you and your staff members, including those that are newly hired? Are there additional needs that you see in this area?
- When the need arises to hire a new staff member, how do you recruit qualified individuals? Have you experienced any problems in finding and retaining child welfare staff for your program?
- Are staff provided with regular feedback on how to improve their work performance?
- Are staff asked on a regular basis for ideas/input on how to improve the overall performance of the program?
- How would employees describe their experience working here?
- Do they feel they have support from their peers, supervisors, Tribal leaders and community?

Secondary and Historical Trauma:

- What does your program do to assist workers to address secondary trauma and burnout that may result from their work with families and communities?

- How does historical trauma or historically traumatic events affect your community? How does it affect your staff? How is it dealt with, or processed?
- Do you have ceremonies or traditions that are still in use to help deal with historical trauma?
- How do traumatic events in the life of staff and their family members/ancestors affect what choices they make in the child welfare work they do? (Example: a worker is opposed to placements that he considers to be similar to his boarding school experiences.)

4. **Please describe your program's philosophy around engaging and working with the families and community or communities you serve.**

Possible follow up questions for more detail:

- If asked, how do you believe families would describe what your program does?
- To what extent are families involved in case planning and decision-making?
- How do you work together with community partners to ensure a well-rounded or wraparound service provision for families?

5. **How would you describe the cultural elements of your program's approach to practice?**

Possible follow up questions for more detail:

- What cultural aspects seem to be foremost for families you serve?
- What cultural modifications has your program made to make your services more relevant to families (i.e., incorporation of language, values, traditions, spiritual practices; understanding of traditional family roles)?
- What input has your program solicited and/or received from community members, elders, and/or spiritual leaders to make it more culturally relevant?

6. **What are the major challenges or needs you address with the families you serve?**

Possible follow up questions for more detail:

- What services are available to families to help prevent placement or re-entry into care once a child has been returned to the home?
- What kinds of appropriate and culturally-based services are available in your community to address these challenges?
- Which needs of families do you feel are not being fully met? Do any of these needs typically remain unmet?
- What types of prevention activities or services are available to children, youth, and families in your community?
- What are the service gaps, if any, in your community? (i.e., mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence, housing, etc.)?
- Do families travel considerable distances to access services? Are travel issues in general a challenge facing families?

7. **Does your tribe/community have a functioning Child Protection Team (CPT) and/or Multidisciplinary Team (MDT)?**

Possible follow up questions for more detail:

- What is the purpose of these teams?
- How do these teams function?
- To what extent do these teams address policy issues? Individual case review?
- To what extent do you use prosecution based MDT that includes the FBI and U.S. Attorney's office?

8. **What processes and tools do you use to assess child safety and risk, and the well-being of family members?**

Possible follow up questions for more detail:

- How does your program determine if a child is at risk? At risk of placement out of the home? At risk of other actions or services? Where did this process come from?

- What standardized assessment tools do you use to assess safety, risk and well-being with children and families?
- How do you use assessment data to make decisions?
- How do you involve family members? Are there formal ways you bring them into the process to help figure out supports and safety plans?
- How do you involve Tribal Elders to assist in supporting safety and well being of family members?

9. **Please discuss the data and technology used by your program to track and monitor service provision and outcomes for families.**

Possible follow up questions for more detail:

- How does your program monitor the services it is providing?
- Is there someone specifically hired where their sole job is to collect and/or manage data?
- What types of data do you currently track?
- Do you track data manually or use an electronic data collection system?
- In what ways does this data drive program decision-making?
- Have you identified needs that your program has related to data and technology?

10. **Please briefly describe how the law enforcement for your tribe works with your program.**

Possible follow up questions for more detail:

- How well does your program partner with law enforcement?
- How could your program work more effectively with law enforcement?
- What do you think are the greatest T/TA needs of law enforcement?

11. **Please briefly describe how the court system for your tribe works with your program.**

Possible follow up questions for more detail:

- Does your Tribe have a Tribal Court that handles child welfare cases (including ICWA cases)?
- Does your Tribal court handle both civil child welfare cases and criminal child abuse and neglect cases – or only civil child welfare cases? (Please note that criminal cases are generally those cases in which the court has the authority to sentence the offending parent/guardian to jail time.)
- Which court system handles the majority of your Tribe's child welfare (including ICWA) cases – tribal court or state/county court?
- Who presents child welfare cases in tribal court on behalf of your child welfare program?
- Who represents the children who are the subject of child welfare cases in your court?
- How could your program work more effectively with the tribal and/or state/county court?
- What do you think are the greatest T/TA needs of your tribal and/or state/county court systems?

12. **How do you handle ICWA cases that involve your tribe's member children?**

Possible follow up questions for more detail:

- Do you think your staff is knowledgeable about the provisions of ICWA?
- In your experience is your tribal court knowledgeable about the provisions of ICWA? In your experience are your tribal attorneys/advocates knowledgeable about the provisions of ICWA? If you have a tribal bar examination, are ICWA questions included in that tribal bar examination?
- How does your program handle cases that result from transfers of jurisdiction in ICWA cases?
- How does your state/county court handle requests to transfer cases?
- How do you think outcomes for children and family differ depending on whether the case is heard in state/county or tribal court?
- Describe your experiences in collaborating with non-tribal child welfare departments on ICWA cases.

13. **Is your Tribal Child Welfare Code (Tribal Civil Children's Code) in need of revisions?**

Possible follow up questions for more detail:

- General revisions to the entire Tribal child welfare code
- Separation of civil child welfare laws from juvenile delinquency laws
- Add laws to address tribal custom and tradition issues such as customary adoption
- Add laws to establish tribal specific placement preferences to replace standard placement preferences under ICWA
- Providing the legal infrastructure to ensure compliance with Title IV-E requirements

14. **Has your tribe entered into any state-tribal agreements regarding child welfare services? If so, please talk about your experiences in regard to these working relationships.**

Possible follow up questions for more detail:

- How would you describe the relationship between your tribe and the state(s) in which you are located?
- Are you involved in any state-tribal consultation? Have you had an opportunity to develop or have input into the development protocols for consultation or collaboration?
- What would help improve the relationship between the tribe and state?

15. **In your opinion, what training or technical assistance support would be most helpful to your child welfare program?**

16. **How would you summarize the greatest strengths of your program?**

17. **Please describe any innovative initiatives or programs that you are involved with that other Tribes might be interested in, especially those that incorporate tribal custom and tradition.**

18. **Please describe any models or services for placement preventing the out-of-home placements that you use.**

Tribal Child Welfare Supervisor Interview Protocol

Interviewer Name:	Interview Date:
Interviewee Name:	Interviewee Tribe:

Pre-Interview Checklist

- CW Staff Consent Form
- What is the purpose of the NRC4Tribes?
- What is the Needs Assessment? (Who are we talking to and why?)
- What does “completely voluntary” participation mean?
- Confidentiality (who is the researcher, access to the data, aggregate responses, 2 exceptions to confidentiality)
- Consent form must be signed before interview can begin. Interviewee keeps page 1, collect signed page 2.

1. **I'd like to begin by having you briefly describe the tribal child welfare program in which you work.**
How is your program structured? How many/what type of staff work in your program?

2. **Providing child welfare services are not easy, but it is an important service for all communities. What kinds of services does your program provide that you are most proud of or feel are truly helping children and families?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- What are the operational strengths and challenges of your program? (i.e., How do things work/function around here?)
- Does the agency have clear and formal guiding principles or a structured approach to practice (also called a practice model)? If so, how would you describe it?
- How does this practice model help with work that staff do with families?

3. **What types of workforce issues is your program facing?** Workforce issues include things like training and staff development, recruitment and retention, job satisfaction, workplace climate, burnout and secondary trauma.

Follow up questions for more detail:

- What types of training and staff development opportunities are available to you and your staff members, including newly hired staff? Are there additional needs that you see in this area?
- What educational opportunities are available to your staff (BA, BSW, MSW, etc.)?
- When the need arises to hire a new staff member, how do you recruit qualified individuals?
- Have you experienced any problems in finding and retaining child welfare staff?
- Are there any special challenges you face as a supervisor in a tribal child welfare program?
- What does your program do to assist workers to address secondary trauma and burnout that may result from their work with families and communities?
- How do historical traumatic events affect the work of supervisors and front-line staff?

4. **Please describe your program's philosophy around engaging and working with the families and community or communities you serve.**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- If asked, how do you believe families would describe what your program does?
- How have families and community members been involved in planning and decision-making for your program's services?

5. **What processes and tools do you use to assess child safety and risk, and the well-being of family members?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- How effective are these tools for assessment, planning, and supporting families?
- Does your program use a family decision-making process such as Family Group Conferencing to identify strengths and needs?

6. **Please discuss the data and technology used by your program.**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- How does your program monitor the services it is providing?
- What types of data do you currently track?
- In what ways does this data drive program decision-making?
- What needs can you identify that your program has related to data and technology?

7. **What are the major challenges or needs you address with the families you serve?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- What services are available to families to help prevent placement or re-entry into care once a child has been returned to the home?
- What kinds of appropriate and culturally-based services are available in your community to address these challenges?
- Which needs of families do you feel are not being fully met?
- What types of prevention activities or services are available to children, youth, and families in your community?

8. **How would you describe the cultural elements of your program's approach to practice?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- What cultural issues seem to be foremost for the families you serve?
- What cultural modifications has your program made to make your services be more relevant to families (i.e., incorporation of language, values, traditions, spiritual practices; understanding of traditional family roles)?
- What input has your program solicited and/or received from community members, elders, and/or spiritual leaders to make it more culturally relevant?

9. **What partnerships (both formal and informal) does your program call upon to help meet the needs of the families you serve?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- Does your program have a partner(s) who provide services in the following areas: substance abuse treatment, mental health, domestic violence?
- How effective are these partnerships?
- In what ways does your program partner with the educational system?
- In what ways does your program partner with the legal/judicial system?
- What community relationships/partnerships are the most challenging? Why?

10. **Does your tribe/community have a functioning Child Protection Team (CPT) and/or Multidisciplinary Team (MDT)?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- What is the purpose of these teams?
- How do these teams function?
- To what extent do these teams address policy issues? Individual case review?
- To what extent do you use prosecution based MDT that includes FBI and U.S. Attorney's office?

11. **Please briefly describe how the law enforcement for your tribe works with your program.**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- How well does your program partner with law enforcement?
- How could your program work more effectively with law enforcement?
- What do you think are the greatest T/TA needs of law enforcement?

12. **Please briefly describe how the court system for your tribe works with your program.**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- Does your Tribe have a Tribal Court that handles child welfare cases (including ICWA cases)?
- Does your Tribal court handle both civil child welfare cases and criminal child abuse and neglect cases - or only civil child welfare cases? (Please note that criminal cases are generally those cases in which the court has the authority to sentence the offending parent/guardian to jail time.)
- Which court system handles the majority of your Tribe's child welfare (including ICWA) cases - tribal court or state/county court?
- Who presents child welfare cases in court on behalf of your child welfare program?
- Who represents the children who are the subject of child welfare cases in your court?
- How could your program work more effectively with the tribal and/or state/county court?

13. **How do you handle ICWA cases that involve your tribe's member children?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- How knowledgeable is staff is about the provisions of ICWA?
- In your experience, how knowledgeable is your tribal court about the provisions of ICWA?
- In your experience how knowledgeable are your tribal attorneys/advocates about the provisions of ICWA?
- How does your program handle cases that result from transfers of jurisdiction in ICWA cases?
- How does your state/county court handle requests to transfer cases?
- Describe your experiences in collaborating with non-tribal child welfare departments on ICWA cases.

14. **Is your Tribal Child Welfare Code (Tribal Civil Children's Code) in need of revisions?**

Possible revisions might include:

- General revisions to the entire Tribal child welfare code
- Separation of civil child welfare laws from juvenile delinquency laws
- Add laws to address tribal custom and tradition issues such as customary adoption
- Add laws to establish tribal specific placement preferences to replace standard placement preferences under ICWA
- Providing the legal infrastructure to ensure compliance with Title IV-E requirements

15. **Has your tribe entered into any state-tribal agreements regarding child welfare services?** If so, please talk about your experiences in regard to these working relationships.

Follow up questions for more detail:

- How would you describe the relationship between your tribe and the state(s) in which you are located?
- Are you involved in any state-tribal consultation? Have you had an opportunity to develop or have input into the development protocols for consultation or collaboration?
- What would help improve the relationship between the tribe and state?

16. **How would you summarize the greatest strengths of your program?**

17. **In your opinion, what training or technical assistance support would be most helpful to strengthen your child welfare program?**

18. **Please describe any previous or current innovative initiatives or programs for children and families that you are involved with that other Tribes might be interested in.** Please include descriptions of models for placement prevention services and any innovative approaches/techniques that incorporate Tribal custom and tradition in the child welfare program.

19. **Please provide any other comments about your child welfare services and/or training and technical assistance needs?**

Tribal Child Welfare Worker Interview Protocol

Interviewer Name:	Interview Date:
Interviewee Name:	Interviewee Tribe:

Pre-Interview Checklist

- CW Staff Consent Form
- What is the purpose of the NRC4Tribes?
- What is the Needs Assessment? (Who are we talking to and why?)
- What does “completely voluntary” participation mean?
- Confidentiality (who is the researcher, access to the data, aggregate responses, 2 exceptions to confidentiality)
- Consent form must be signed before interview can begin. Interviewee keeps page 1, collect signed page 2.

1. **I'd like to begin by having you briefly describe the tribal child welfare program in which you work.**
How is your program structured? How many/what type of staff work in your program?

2. **Providing child welfare services are not easy, but it is an important service for all communities.**
What kinds of services does your program provide that you are most proud of or feel are truly helping children and families?

Follow up questions for more detail:

- What are the operational strengths and challenges of your program? (i.e., How do things work/function around here?)
- Does the agency have clear and formal guiding principles or a structured approach to practice (also called a practice model)? If so, how would you describe it?
- How does this practice model help you in the work you do with families?

3. **What types of workforce issues is your program facing?** Workforce issues include things like training and staff development, recruitment and retention, job satisfaction, workplace climate, burnout and secondary trauma.

Follow up questions for more detail:

- What types of training and staff development opportunities are available to you and your staff members, including those that are newly hired? Are there additional needs that you see in this area?
- What types of professional development or support would help you do your job better?
- What opportunities are there for workers to advance to higher leadership or management positions within the program? How are people prepared to move up?
- What is your supervisor(s) like? What kinds of support have you needed from them and how was that support provided?
- What is it like for you and other staff to work here?
- What does your program do to assist workers to address secondary trauma and burnout that may result from their work with families and communities?
- How do historical traumatic events affect the work of staff in your agency?

4. **Please describe your program's philosophy around engaging and working with the families and the community or communities you serve.**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- If asked, how do you believe families would describe what your program does?

- Have families and community members been involved in planning and decision-making for your program's services?

5. **What processes and tools do you use to assess child safety and risk, and the well-being of family members?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- How effective are these tools for assessment, planning, and supporting families?
- Does your program use a family decision-making process such as Family Group Conferencing to identify strengths and needs?

6. **Please discuss the data and technology you use in performing your job.**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- How does your program monitor the services it is providing?
- What types of data do you currently have to gather?
- What needs can you identify that your program has related to data and technology?

7. **What are the major challenges or needs you address with the families you serve?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- What services, especially culturally-based services, are available to families to help prevent placement or re-entry into care once a child has been returned to the home?
- Which needs of families do you feel are not being fully met?
- What types of prevention activities or services are available to children, youth, and families in your community?

8. **How would you describe the cultural elements of your program's approach to practice?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- What cultural issues seem to be foremost for the families you serve?
- What cultural modifications has your program made to make your services be more relevant to families (i.e., incorporation of language, values, traditions, spiritual practices; understanding of traditional family roles)?
- What input has your program solicited and/or received from community members, elders, and/or spiritual leaders to make it more culturally relevant?

9. **What partnerships (both formal and informal) does your program call upon to help meet the needs of the families you serve?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- Does your program have a partner(s) who provide services in the following areas: substance abuse treatment, mental health, domestic violence?
- How effective are these partnerships?
- In what ways does your program partner with the educational system?
- In what ways does your program partner with the legal/judicial system?
- What community relationships/partnerships are the most challenging? Why?

10. **Does your tribe/community have a functioning Child Protection Team (CPT) and/or Multidisciplinary Team (MDT)?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- What is the purpose of these teams?
- How do these teams function?

11. **Please briefly describe how the law enforcement for your tribe works with your program.**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- How well does your program partner with law enforcement?
- How could your program work more effectively with law enforcement?

12. **Please briefly describe how the court system for your tribe works with your program.**
Follow up questions for more detail:
- How could your program work more effectively with the tribal and/or state/county court?
 - What do you think are the greatest T/TA needs of your tribal and/or state/county court systems?
13. **Let's now think about your tribe's ICWA program. How do you handle ICWA cases that involve your tribe's member children?**
Follow up questions for more detail:
- How knowledgeable do you feel you are in regard to the provisions of the ICWA? Your supervisor and program directors?
 - Describe your experiences in collaborating with non-tribal child welfare departments on ICWA cases.
14. **Are you aware of any state-tribal agreements that affect how your tribe provides child welfare services?** If so, please talk about your experiences in regard to these working relationships.
Follow up questions for more detail:
- How would you describe the relationship between your tribe and the state(s) in which you are located?
 - Are you involved in any state-tribal consultation? Have you had an opportunity to develop or have input into the development protocols for consultation or collaboration?
 - What would help improve the relationship between the tribe and state?
15. **How would you summarize the greatest strengths of your program?**
16. **In your opinion, what training or technical assistance support would be most helpful to strengthen your child welfare program?**
17. **Please describe any previous or current innovative initiatives or programs for children and families that you are involved with that other Tribes might be interested in.** Please include descriptions of models for placement prevention services and any innovative approaches/techniques that incorporate Tribal custom and tradition in the child welfare program.
18. **Please provide any other comments about your child welfare services and/or training and technical assistance needs.**

Community Partner/Provider Interview Protocol

Interviewer Name:	Interview Date:
Interviewee Name:	Interviewee Tribe:

Pre-Interview Checklist

- Community Partner Consent Form
- What is the purpose of the NRC4Tribes?
- What is the Needs Assessment? (Who are we talking to and why?)
- What does “completely voluntary” participation mean?
- Confidentiality (who is the researcher, access to the data, aggregate responses, 2 exceptions to confidentiality)
- Consent form must be signed before interview can begin. Interviewee keeps page 1, collect signed page 2.

(This protocol could also be used for a Child Protection Team (CPT) member – including a Tribal Elder serving on the CPT.)

1. **I'd like to begin by having you briefly describe your organization—what it does and how it works with children or families involved with the tribe's child welfare program.**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- What program do you work with?
- What is your position?
- Is your organization operated by the tribe or is it a non-tribal entity?
- What types of services does the organization provide to children/families involved in the tribe's child welfare system?
- Are there other organizations in the community that provide similar services?
- What are the criteria for tribal children/families to receive services from your organization?
- What services are you most proud of or feel are the most successful?

2. **Does your tribe/community have a functioning Child Protection Team (CPT) and/or Multidisciplinary Team (MDT)?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- What is the purpose of these teams?
- How do these teams function?
- To what extent do these teams address policy issues? Individual case review?
- To what extent do you use prosecution based MDT that includes the FBI and US Attorney's office?
- Does your agency have a representative on the CPT/MDT? How could your program work more effectively with the CPT/MDT? What are the greatest T/TA needs of the CPT/MDT?

3. **Do you provide prevention or family preservation services that are aimed at helping children/families avoid involvement in the child welfare system?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

If so, describe these types of services and the ways they work to prevent child welfare involvement.

4. **Please talk about any collaborative relationship or partnership, formal or informal, you have with the tribal child welfare program.**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- Does your organization have a formal working agreement with the tribe?

- How would you describe the quality of the working relationship between your organization and the tribal child welfare program? What works well? What is most challenging?

5. **What partnerships (both formal and informal) does your program call upon to help meet the needs of the tribal children/families you serve?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- What strategies do you use to partner/collaborate with other organizations?
- What community relationships/partnerships are the most challenging? Why?

6. **How does your organization receive compensation for its services to tribal children/families?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- Possible sources of funding to suggest: Contracts with tribe; Medicaid reimbursement; private insurance; Indian Health Services; client direct payment
- Is payment for services ever a problem in serving tribal children/families? If so, in what ways?

7. **Please describe your program's philosophy around engaging and working with the tribal families and the community or communities you serve.**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- If asked how they view your program, what do you believe members of the tribal community would say?
- Have tribal families and community members been involved in planning and decision-making for your program's services?
- How important are community partnerships in assisting tribal children/families to achieve their goals?

8. **How well do you believe your organization does in being responsive to the cultural needs of the tribal children/families you serve?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- Has your organization's staff received training on culturally responsive practice with American Indian children/families?
- What cultural issues seem to be foremost for the tribal families you serve?
- What cultural modifications has your program made to make your services more relevant to tribal families (i.e., incorporation of language, values, traditions, spiritual practices; understanding of traditional family roles)?
- What input has your program solicited and/or received from tribal community members, elders, and/or spiritual leaders to make it more culturally relevant?

9. **What are the major challenges or needs you address with the tribal children/families you serve?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- What kinds of services—in addition to your program—are available in your community to address these challenges?
- Which needs of families do you feel are not being fully met? Do any of these needs typically remain unmet?
- What types of prevention activities or services are available to children, youth, and families in your community?

10. **Do you, or someone from your program, ever find yourself working with the tribal law enforcement and/or court system as part of serving tribal children/families? If so, please briefly describe your experiences in this regard.**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- How well does your program partner with law enforcement? How could your program work more effectively with law enforcement? What are the greatest T/TA needs of law enforcement?

- How well does your agency partner with the Tribal and/or state/county court?
- How could your agency work more effectively with the courts?
- What are the greatest T/TA needs of your Tribal and/or state/county court systems?

11. **How would you summarize the greatest strengths of your program?**
12. **How would you summarize the most important needs of your program or challenges you face?**
13. **In your opinion, what training or technical assistance support would be most helpful to strengthen the Tribal child welfare program?**
14. **Please describe any previous or current innovative initiatives or programs for children and families that you are involved with that other tribes might be interested in.** Please include descriptions of models for placement prevention services and any innovative approaches/techniques that incorporate Tribal custom and tradition.
15. **Do you have any other comments about the needs of your Tribal Child Welfare program?**

Tribal Judge, Attorney or Court Advocate Interview Protocol

Interviewer Name:	Interview Date:
Interviewee Name:	Interviewee Tribe:

Pre-Interview Checklist

- Community Partner Consent Form
- What is the purpose of the NRC4Tribes?
- What is the Needs Assessment? (Who are we talking to and why?)
- What does “completely voluntary” participation mean?
- Confidentiality (who is the researcher, access to the data, aggregate responses, 2 exceptions to confidentiality)
- Consent form must be signed before interview can begin. Interviewee keeps page 1, collect signed page 2.

(This protocol can also be used for interviews with court attorneys or advocates who present child welfare cases on behalf of Tribal Child Welfare Program.)

1. Does your Tribal Court handle *child welfare* cases (including ICWA cases)?

Follow up questions for more detail:

- Does your Tribal Court handle both civil child welfare cases and criminal child abuse and neglect cases - or only civil child welfare cases? (Please note that criminal cases are generally those cases in which the court has the authority to sentence the offending parent/guardian to jail time.)
- Which court system handles the majority of your Tribe’s child welfare cases (including ICWA cases)? (Tribal Court or State/County Court)
- How could the state/county court work more effectively with your tribal court?
- What kinds of child welfare cases typically come before your court? (Reunification, termination, adoption, etc.)
- Does your court handle customary adoptions?

2. How are *Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)* cases handled?

Follow up questions for more detail:

- How knowledgeable is your staff about the provisions of ICWA?
- In your experience, how knowledgeable are your tribal attorneys/advocates about the provisions of ICWA?
- If you have a tribal bar examination, are ICWA questions included in that tribal bar examination?
- In your experience, how knowledgeable is the tribal child welfare program about the provisions of ICA?
- How does the tribal child welfare program handle cases that result from transfers of jurisdiction in ICWA cases?
- In your experience, how does the Tribe intervene in state court ICWA cases? (Primarily to transfer to tribal court, sometimes leaves the case in state court due to tribal resource limitations, rarely seeks transfer to tribal court, or does not intervene at all?)
- When your does Tribe intervenes in state court ICWA cases to seek transfer to tribal court, does the state court grant your tribe’s request for transfer to tribal court most of the time, some of the time, rarely, or tribe does not request transfer to tribal court?
- In your experience, how knowledgeable are state/county court staff about the provisions of ICWA?

3. Are there *jurisdictional disputes* concerning which government (tribal, state, or federal) handles *child welfare* cases in your community?

- Frequently Rarely Sometimes Don’t know

4. If there are *jurisdictional disputes* concerning *child welfare* cases in your community, do these *jurisdictional disputes* concern:

- Which *child welfare agency* handles the case?
- Which *law enforcement agency* handles the case?
- Which *court system* handles the case?

Follow up questions for more detail:

How are these *jurisdictional disputes* (especially those related to which court system handles the case) resolved?

5. Who provides *law enforcement services* for your Tribe? (Tribal Law Enforcement, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Law Enforcement, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), State/County Law Enforcement, etc.)

Follow up questions for more detail:

- How well does the child welfare program partner with law enforcement?
- How could your program work more effectively with law enforcement?

6. How would you describe your *relationship with the child welfare program*?

Follow up questions for more detail:

- How would you describe your relationship with the Director of the program?
- How would you describe your relationship with the case managers?
- How would you describe your relationship with the ICWA Director/Coordinator/Worker? (*if there is one*)

7. What do you think are the greatest T/TA needs of the *child welfare program*?

8. Who presents *child welfare cases in tribal court* on behalf of the Tribe’s *child welfare agency*?

(Tribal attorney, tribal court advocate, child welfare agency director/supervisor, child welfare worker, etc.)

Follow up questions for more detail:

Are there any issues with the presentation of child welfare case?

9. Who represents the *children* who are the subject of *child welfare* cases in your court? (Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) appointed by the court, volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) appointed by the court, Traditional Elder or Spokesperson appointed by the court, or no one represents the children)

Follow up questions for more detail:

Are there any issues with the representation?

10. Does your *tribe/community* have a functioning *Child Protection Team (CPT) and/or Multidisciplinary Team (MDT)*?

Follow up questions for more detail:

- What is the purpose of these teams?
- How do these teams function?
- To what extent do these teams address policy issues? Individual case review?
- To what extent do you use prosecution based MDT that includes the FBI and US Attorney’s office?

11. **How prepared are child welfare program staff who appear in your court?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- Who prepares the program's pleadings? Do they prepare their own Petitions, Court Orders, etc?
- Are the case plans adequate?
- Are the reports submitted in a timely manner?
- What training areas or information is needed to prepare for court?

12. **Does any of the child welfare program staff act as a lay advocate in court?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- Does your tribal code have a provision for lay advocates?
- What types of people serve as lay advocates?
- Does the tribe have any way of assessing the competency for lay, non-attorney advocates?
- If utilized, who trains lay advocates?

13. **Does program staff ever serve as Qualified Expert Witnesses (QEW) under ICWA in tribal court proceedings?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- Have you received training on QEW?
- Is program staff knowledgeable in the QEW process?
- Are there any QEW issues we haven't discussed?

14. **Is your Tribal Child Welfare Code (Tribal Civil Children's Code) in need of revisions?**

Possible revisions might include:

- General revisions to the entire Tribal child welfare code
- Separation of civil child welfare laws from juvenile delinquency laws
- Add laws to address tribal custom and tradition issues such as customary adoption
- Add laws to establish tribal specific placement preferences to replace standard placement preferences under ICWA
- Providing the legal infrastructure to ensure compliance with Title IV-E requirements

Follow up questions for more detail:

- Do you have access to the code?
- Do tribal child welfare workers have access to the code?
- Is there a section within the code that relates to the ICWA?
- Do case managers appear to have sufficient knowledge in the code that allows for clear articulation of practice during court proceedings?
- When was the last time the child welfare code was updated?

15. **Has your tribe entered into any state-tribal agreements regarding child welfare services? If so, please talk about your experiences in regard to these working relationships.**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- How would you describe the relationship between your tribe and the state(s) in which you are located?
- Are you involved in any state-tribal consultation? Have you had an opportunity to develop or have input into the development protocols for consultation or collaboration?
- What would help improve the relationship between the tribe and state?

16. **How would you summarize your community's most important legal Technical Assistance (TA) needs concerning child welfare cases?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- What are the TA needs for your Tribal Child Welfare program?

17. **Please describe any previous or current innovative initiatives or programs for children and families that you are involved with that other Tribes might be interested in – especially any innovative approaches/techniques that incorporate Tribal custom and tradition in the child welfare program.**

18. **Do you have any other comments?**

Tribal Leader (Elected or Traditional Leader) Interview

Protocol

Interviewer Name:	Interview Date:
Interviewee Name:	Interviewee Tribe:

Pre-Interview Checklist

- Community Partner Consent Form
- What is the purpose of the NRC4Tribes?
- What is the Needs Assessment? (Who are we talking to and why?)
- What does “completely voluntary” participation mean?
- Confidentiality (who is the researcher, access to the data, aggregate responses, 2 exceptions to confidentiality)
- Consent form must be signed before interview can begin. Interviewee keeps page 1, collect signed page 2.

1. How would you describe the community’s needs for child protection and child welfare services?

Follow up questions for more detail:

- Do you think there’s a high rate of child abuse or neglect in the community?
- Do you think there are sufficient services to meet the community’s needs?

2. How would you describe the needs of the Tribe’s child welfare program?

Follow up questions for more detail:

- Are sufficient resources (human, financial, other) available to meet the need?
- In your opinion, do you think case loads are too high? If so, why?
- Do you think staff is sufficiently trained?
- What do you think are the greatest T/TA needs of the child welfare program?

3. Do you know what Title IV-E funding is?

Follow up questions for more detail:

- Is your Tribe considering (or “have a plan to”) entering into a Tribal/State Title IV-E agreement? Why or why not?

4. How would you describe how the community views the child welfare program and its ability to provide appropriate and quality services?

Follow up questions for more detail:

- Is the community aware of the program?
- How do you think the community would describe the program?
- Have community members raised concerns about the program?

5. Does the child welfare program have budgetary constraints that may inhibit their ability to provide quality care for children and families?

Follow up questions for more detail:

How does agency staff meet identified needs with a limited budget?

6. How would you describe the tribal government’s relationship with the Tribe’s child welfare program?

Follow up questions for more detail:

- Are there regularly scheduled meetings with child welfare leaders?
- How would you describe your relationship with tribal court personnel (e.g., judge, prosecutor, court administrator, etc.)?
- Does your tribal council have a subcommittee that specifically handles/addresses tribal child welfare issues? If so, please describe.

7. Are you aware of how are Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) cases handled?

Follow up questions for more detail:

- In your experience, do you think that the tribal child welfare program, the tribal court, the tribal attorneys/advocates, and/or tribal law enforcement are knowledgeable about the provisions of ICWA?
- In your experience, how does the Tribe intervene in state court ICWA cases? (Primarily to transfer to tribal court, sometimes leaves the case in state court due to tribal resource limitations, rarely seeks transfer to tribal court, or does not intervene at all.)
- When your does Tribe intervene in state court ICWA cases to seek transfer to tribal court, does the state court grant your tribe’s request for transfer to tribal court most of the time, some of the time, rarely, or tribe does not request transfer to tribal court?

8. How well does your program partner with law enforcement?

Follow up questions for more detail:

How could your program work more effectively with law enforcement?

9. Is your Tribal Child Welfare Code (Tribal Civil Children’s Code) in need of revisions?

Possible revisions might include:

- General revisions to the entire Tribal child welfare code
- Separation of civil child welfare laws from juvenile delinquency laws
- Add laws to address tribal custom and tradition issues such as customary adoption
- Add laws to establish tribal specific placement preferences to replace standard placement preferences under ICWA
- Providing the legal infrastructure to ensure compliance with Title IV-E requirements

10. Has your tribe entered into any state-tribal agreements regarding child welfare services? If so, please talk about your experiences in regard to these working relationships.

Follow up questions for more detail:

- How would you describe the relationship between your tribe and the state(s) in which you are located?
- Are you involved in any state-tribal consultation? Have you had an opportunity to develop or have input into the development protocols for consultation or collaboration?
- What would help improve the relationship between the tribe and state?

11. How would you summarize the greatest strengths of your program?

12. Please describe any previous or current innovative initiatives or programs for children and families that you are involved with that other Tribes might be interested in. Please include descriptions of models for placement prevention services and any innovative approaches/techniques that incorporate Tribal custom and tradition in the child welfare program.

13. In your opinion, what training or technical assistance support would be most helpful to strengthen your child welfare program?

14. Please provide any other comments about your child welfare services and/or training and technical assistance needs.

Law Enforcement Interview Protocol

Interviewer Name:	Interview Date:
Interviewee Name:	Interviewee Tribe:

Pre-Interview Checklist

- Community Partner Consent Form
- What is the purpose of the NRC4Tribes?
- What is the Needs Assessment? (Who are we talking to and why?)
- What does “completely voluntary” participation mean?
- Confidentiality (who is the researcher, access to the data, aggregate responses, 2 exceptions to confidentiality)
- Consent form must be signed before interview can begin. Interviewee keeps page 1, collect signed page 2.

1. **I'd like to begin by having you briefly describe your law enforcement department and its role in child welfare—what is the role of law enforcement in child welfare and how does law enforcement interact with the tribe's child welfare program and tribal court system?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- Is your law enforcement program/department tribal, federal (BIA or FBI), or state/county?
- What is your position?
- How long have you been in this department and in this position?
- Are you a member of this tribe?
- How does your law enforcement program/department work together with other law enforcement in your community (Tribal, BIA, FBI, or state/county)? How could the law enforcement departments work together more effectively?
- What is the role of law enforcement in the tribe's child welfare system?
- What kinds of child welfare cases have you been involved in?
- How does law enforcement determine if a child is at risk?
- What services are you most proud of or feel are the most successful?

2. **Are there jurisdictional disputes concerning which government (tribal, state, or federal) handles child welfare cases in your community?**

- Frequently Rarely Sometimes
 Don't know

3. **If there are jurisdictional disputes concerning child welfare cases in your community, do these jurisdictional disputes concern:**

- Which **child welfare agency** handles the case?
 Which **law enforcement agency** handles the case?
 Which **court system** handles the case?

Follow up questions for more detail:

- How are these jurisdictional disputes (especially those related to which court system handles the case) resolved?

4. **How would you describe the community's needs for child protection and child welfare services?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- Do you think there's a high rate of child abuse or neglect in the community?
- Do you think there are sufficient services to meet the community's needs? If not, what services are needed that are not available?

5. **How would you describe the needs of the Tribe's child welfare program?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- Are sufficient resources (human, financial, other) available to meet the need?
- In your opinion, do you think case loads are too high? If so, why do you think they're too high?
- Do you think staff is sufficiently trained?
- What do you think are the greatest T/TA needs of the child welfare program?

6. **How would you describe how the community views the child welfare program and its ability to provide appropriate and quality services?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- Is the community aware of the program?
- How do you think the community would describe the program?
- Have community members raised concerns about the program?

7. **How would you describe your relationship with the child welfare program?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- How would you describe your relationship with:
 - The child welfare Director/Administrators
 - Supervisors and case managers
 - ICWA Director/Coordinator/Worker Describe your relationship with the case managers
- How could the child welfare program and law enforcement work more effectively together?
- What do you think are the greatest T/TA needs of the child welfare program?

8. **Please briefly describe how the court system for your tribe works with your program.**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- How do you think child welfare could work more effectively with the court system?
- How could law enforcement work more effectively with the courts for child welfare cases?

9. **Does your tribe/community have a functioning Child Protection Team (CPT) and/or Multidisciplinary Team (MDT)?**

Follow up questions for more detail if the answer is yes:

- What is the purpose of these teams?
- How do these teams function?
- Are you or anyone else from your department a member of the CPT/MDT?
- How could the CPT/MDT function more effectively?
- What are the greatest technical assistance (TA) needs of the CPT/MDT?

10. **Is your Tribal Child Welfare Code (Tribal Civil Children's Code) in need of revisions?**

Possible revisions might include:

- General revisions to the entire Tribal child welfare code
- Separation of civil child welfare laws from juvenile delinquency laws
- Add laws to address tribal custom and tradition issues such as customary adoption
- Add laws to establish tribal specific placement preferences to replace standard placement preferences under ICWA
- Providing the legal infrastructure to ensure compliance with Title IV-E requirements

11. **Has your tribe entered into any state-tribal agreements regarding child welfare services? If so, please talk about your experiences in regard to these working relationships.**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- How would you describe the relationship between your tribe and the state(s) in which you are located?

- Are you involved in any state-tribal consultation? Have you had an opportunity to develop or have input into the development protocols for consultation or collaboration?
 - What would help improve the relationship between the tribe and state?
12. **How would you summarize your community's most important law enforcement related technical assistance (TA) needs concerning child welfare cases?**
 13. **Please describe any previous or current innovative initiatives or programs for children and families that you are involved with that other tribes might be interested in.** Please include descriptions of models for placement prevention services and any innovative approaches/techniques that incorporate Tribal custom and tradition in the child welfare program.
 14. **In your opinion, what training or technical assistance support would be most helpful to strengthen your child welfare program?**
 15. **Please provide any other comments about your child welfare services and/or training and technical assistance needs.**

Tribal Child Welfare Family Interview Protocol

Interviewer Name:	Interview Date:
Interviewee Name:	Interviewee Tribe:

Pre-Interview Checklist

- CW Family Consent Form
- What is the purpose of the NRC4Tribes?
- What is the Needs Assessment? (Who are we talking to and why?)
- What does “completely voluntary” participation mean?
- Confidentiality (who is the researcher, access to the data, aggregate responses, 2 exceptions to confidentiality)
- Consent form must be signed before interview can begin. Interviewee keeps page 1, collect signed page 2.

1. **I'd like to begin by having you talk about what it was like for you and your family to be involved with the tribe's child welfare program or what many people call “social services”.**

2. **What types of services did you receive to help you with the problems that caused you to be involved with social services?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- To what extent did your caseworker explain the services that are available to you and your family?
- Who in your family received services and what types did each person receive?
- Were you referred to community agencies for services? If so, please describe.
- If you were referred to a non-tribal agency for services:
- How far did you have to travel for these services?
- How would you describe the cultural competency or cultural sensitivity of these non-tribal providers?
- How did you pay for these services?

3. **How helpful were the services you received?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- If the services were helpful, what was it that made them work well for you and your family?
- If the services were not helpful, what would have worked better for you?

4. **Were you able to get all of the services you needed?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- What did you need that you didn't get or wasn't offered?
- Were there specific barriers that you feel prevented you from getting certain kinds of services (e.g., transportation, child care, paying for services)?
- How could the tribal child welfare program improve its services to families and children?

5. **Were you able to get all of the services you needed?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- What did you need that you didn't get or wasn't offered?
- Were there specific barriers that you feel prevented you from getting certain kinds of services (e.g., transportation, child care, paying for services)?
- How could the tribal child welfare program improve its services to families and children?

6. **Were you included in the planning of your services?**

Follow up questions to for more detail:

- Did you have input into the planning of your services? What was this like?

7. **Did you participate in a meeting or meetings with social services and members of your family to make decisions as a group about things like the placement of your children, the services you needed and how family members could help you?** (Some social services programs call these meetings Family Group Conferences or Team Decision-making Meetings.)

8. **How respectful was your caseworker in attending to the cultural and spiritual needs of your family?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- Did your caseworker ask you about your tribal heritage and your involvement in cultural or spiritual traditions/practices?
- Were cultural traditions or practices that your family follows addressed in your service plan (e.g., attending ceremonies, respecting kinship relationships and roles)?
- What changes could be made to the way the child welfare program operates that would make it more sensitive to or respectful of your tribal culture?

9. **Do you remember ever dealing with law enforcement (tribal, state/county, and/or federal law enforcement)?** If so, please talk about your experience with law enforcement.

10. **Were you involved with the tribal or state/county court as part of your child welfare case?** If so, please talk about your experience.

11. **Thinking about your caseworker, what did he or she do well? What did he or she do that didn't work well for you?**

12. **What are the most important things that you think the tribal child welfare program needs to know about the children and families it works with?**

Tribal Foster Parent Interview Protocol

Interviewer Name:	Interview Date:
Interviewee Name:	Interviewee Tribe:

Pre-Interview Checklist

- Foster Parent Consent Form
- What is the purpose of the NRC4Tribes?
- What is the Needs Assessment? (Who are we talking to and why?)
- What does “completely voluntary” participation mean?
- Confidentiality (who is the researcher, access to the data, aggregate responses, 2 exceptions to confidentiality)
- Consent form must be signed before interview can begin. Interviewee keeps page 1, collect signed page 2.

1. **Please talk about how you came to be a foster care provider.** What factors influenced your decision to assist children in this way?

Follow up questions for more detail:

- How long have you been providing foster care services?
- Are you providing foster care for a relative or non-relative child(ren)?
- Are you licensed through the tribal child welfare program or a state program?
- Do you provide foster care through a specific child placement agency? If so, which?
- From what agency do you receive funding? (tribal/state/private agency?)
- How many children have you cared for since becoming a foster care provider?
- Are you a member of the same tribe as your foster child(ren)? Another tribe? Are you a non-Indian foster care provider?
- Are you aware of the Indian Child Welfare Act and other tribal and federal laws that may affect your tribal foster child(ren)?

2. **What types of training have you received as a foster care provider?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- Have you received any training specifically provided by the tribal child welfare program? If so, in what areas?
- What types of training have you received to make you aware of and help you meet the cultural needs of your foster child(ren)? How helpful was the training?
- Are there areas in which you feel you need additional training or information to better assist you to care for a tribal child?

3. **As a foster care provider, what services/support have you received (or are currently receiving) from the tribal child welfare program?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- Are there additional services/support that you need but have not received? If so, please describe.

4. **What services does your foster child(ren) receive from the tribal child welfare program?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- Are there additional services/support that your foster child(ren) needs but has not received? If so, please describe.
- From which non-tribal agencies does your foster child(ren) receive services?

- Has the tribal child welfare program referred your foster child(ren) to these services or encouraged you to use these services?
- Have you participated in a meeting or meetings with tribal child welfare staff, service providers, and your foster child’s family members to make decisions as a group about the needs of your foster child(ren)? (Some child welfare programs call these meetings Family Group Conferences or Team Decision-making Meetings.)

5. **Does the tribal child welfare program encourage you to be involved with your foster child(ren)’s family members? If so, please talk about your experiences with family members?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- What are the barriers to being involved with family members?
- Has the tribal child welfare program helped connect you with your child(ren)’s extended family members?

6. **Does the tribal child welfare program encourage you to help your foster child remain connected to the tribal community from which he or she comes?**

Follow up questions for more detail:

- If so, have you done this? In what ways have you done this? If not, what has prevented you from doing this?
- Has the tribal child welfare program helped connect you with community members or other tribal members?

7. **In your role as a foster care provider, have you been involved, in any way, with law enforcement (Tribal, state/county, and/or federal law enforcement)? If so, please talk about your experience with law enforcement**

8. **In your role as a foster care provider, have you been involved, in any way, with the tribal and/or state/county court or meeting with a judge? If so, please talk about your experience with the court and/or judge.**

9. **Thinking about the tribal child welfare caseworker(s) with whom you have been involved, what has he or she done well? What has he or she done that didn’t work well . . . for you . . . for your foster child(ren)?**

10. **What are the most important things that you think the child welfare program needs to know about working with foster care providers?**

11. **What are the most important things that you think the child welfare program needs to know about tribal children who are in foster care?**

12. **How could the tribal child welfare program improve its services to foster care providers? To foster children?**

Tribal Child Welfare Youth Interview Protocol

Interviewer Name:	Interview Date:
Interviewee Name:	Interviewee Tribe:

Pre-Interview Checklist

- Youth Consent Form or Parent Signing for Youth Consent Form
- What is the purpose of the NRC4Tribes?
- What is the Needs Assessment? (Who are we talking to and why?)
- What does “completely voluntary” participation mean?
- Confidentiality (who is the researcher, access to the data, aggregate responses, 2 exceptions to confidentiality)
- Consent form must be signed before interview can begin. Interviewee keeps page 1, collect signed page 2.

Do not interview youth younger than 12.

Reminder to youth: Everything you tell me today is confidential – your name won’t be connected with your answers. Also, we will not ask specific questions about your case – we just want to know what you think about the tribal child welfare program and its staff, and the services they provide to youth and families. If there is anything that you don’t want to answer, that’s OK. Just say “pass” to that question and we’ll move on to the next.

1. **Please tell me what it has been like being involved with the tribe’s child welfare program or what some people call “social services.”**

2. **When you and your family were involved with the tribal child welfare program, did you feel you had any say in the decisions that were being made by the child welfare people?**

Follow up questions to probe for more detail:

- Do you remember any times when you were involved in making decisions that affected you? What was that like?
- Were you involved as much as you wanted to be in the decision-making? Why or why not?

3. **Do you feel like the tribal child welfare program helped you? Helped your parent(s) or other adult family members? Helped your siblings?**

Follow up questions to probe for more detail:

- Were there any services that you received that you thought were really helpful to you, personally? To your parent(s) or other adult family members? To your siblings? What was it that made these services helpful? If the services were not helpful, what would have worked better for you? How about for your parent(s) or other adult family members? How about for your siblings?

4. **Were you able to get all of the services you needed?**

Follow up questions to probe for more detail:

- What did you need that you didn’t get or wasn’t offered?

5. **Was your caseworker a tribal member (or Indian)?** If not, Do you believe your caseworker was respectful of you and your tribal culture?

Follow up questions to probe for more detail:

- Did your caseworker ever ask you about your tribal heritage and your involvement in cultural traditions/practices?
- Were you able to follow the cultural traditions or practices that you wanted to while you were involved with the tribal child welfare program? (e.g., attending ceremonies, learning about your tribe, visiting with your grandparents, aunts/uncles or other family members)
- What did you like about the way your caseworker treated you? What didn’t you like?

6. **Do you remember ever dealing with law enforcement (Tribal, state/county, and/or federal law enforcement)?** If so, please talk about your experience with law enforcement?

7. **Do you remember ever going to the Tribal and/or state/county court or meeting with a judge?** If so, please talk about your experience with the court and/or judge?

8. **What are the most important things that you think the child welfare program needs to know about young people like yourself?**

9. **How could the tribal child welfare program better help young people like you? Families like yours?**