

NICWA NEWS

Quarterly Newsletter • Summer 2020



The **LATEST**

INSIDE

Apart but Together



National Indian Child Welfare Association
 5100 SW Macadam Avenue, Suite 300
 Portland, Oregon 97239
 P (503) 222-4044
 F (503) 222-4007
www.nicwa.org

The National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) is a private, nonprofit, membership-based organization dedicated to the well-being of American Indian and Alaska Native children and families. Headquartered in Portland, Oregon, NICWA serves tribes, individuals, and private organizations throughout the United States and Canada by serving as the most comprehensive source of information on American Indian child welfare and acting as the only national Native organization focused on building tribal capacity to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Our Mission

The National Indian Child Welfare Association is dedicated to the well-being of American Indian and Alaska Native children and families.

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Terry Cross (*Seneca*)

Executive Director

Sarah Kastelic (*Alutiiq*)



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NICWA News is the quarterly newsletter for members and donors of the National Indian Child Welfare Association. Membership is available in multiple levels starting at \$35. For reprint requests, additional copies, or other information, contact us at info@nicwa.org

Message from the Executive Director

Dear NICWA Members, Sponsors, Donors, and Friends,

I hope this issue of NICWA News finds you, your family, and community healthy and well in body and in spirit. Despite the significant challenges our frontline human service professionals face on a daily basis to meet families' basic needs, we regularly find positive stories, hope, and inspiration talking with you. Our relational cultures and long history of being creative problem-solvers serve us well in this environment. In this new and constantly evolving situation, we are all learning about being apart, but together.

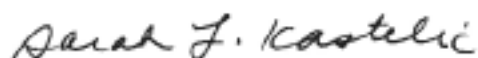
One of the greatest lessons I learned about being physically apart but meaningfully connected was our virtual 38th Annual Protecting Our Children Conference. In mid-March, the NICWA Board of Directors wisely decided that we should not meet in person in Denver. While this was a weighty and difficult decision in that moment, it was quickly affirmed by the spread of COVID-19. As we met virtually on March 30–April 1, I was surprised to feel such a genuine connection to our staff and board, our wonderful presenters, and even our hundreds of participants. Through my interactions with all of you for those three days, I felt centered with purpose, grounded in my values, and charged with direction.

Like many of you, I suspect, one of the greatest joys over the last two months has been learning how to be apart from but together with children. I have four nieces and nephews in the Midwest and on the East Coast who range in age from preschool to 8th grade. I've been amazed to see the volume of art, music, science experiments, Lego architecture, and newly invented indoor and outdoor games they're creating as their parents support their education at home. We read stories by FaceTime and play card games with relatives in multiple states (and even countries!) with Facebook Messenger.

These opportunities to see each other more and in a more personal way bind us together in new ways. With the kids, I've born witness to more tears and frustration as well as cooped-up silliness than I'd usually see or hear on briefer calls or video chats. With my colleagues, it's been interesting to see one another's homes in video meetings. There is much more opportunity to get to know someone in a different way when you see their family photos, art, or books in the background. People show you their pets. Children creep into the computer frame to ask their parent a question or sit on their lap. At the end of the afternoon, the conversation veers to what we're going to make for dinner or that we hope to get outside and take a walk when we shut off our computers.

We are apart but together as we continue to work and serve our communities in this uncertain time. I hope you can feel connection and a sense of belonging to something bigger than ourselves—our shared purpose to support children and families, and to use our cultures as our greatest resource to help families.

Sincerely,



Sarah Kastelic, PhD
(Alutiiq)



CARES Act Funding for Tribal Human Services

On March 27, 2020, the president signed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) into law. The law contains almost \$2 trillion in funding to provide support to individuals, governments, and businesses impacted by COVID-19. This was the third bill passed by Congress in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Within this, approximately \$10 billion funds tribal citizens, governments, urban Indian organizations, and tribal businesses impacted by COVID-19. The biggest source of funding in the legislation for tribal and state governments comes from the Coronavirus Relief Fund at \$150 billion, which has \$8 billion reserved for tribes.

In the CARES Act, funding for tribal governments is much more extensive than in the previous bills. There is funding for health care, economic development, employment, tribal governance, human services, housing, education, and nutrition programming. Some of the key tribal human services funding in the legislation includes the following:

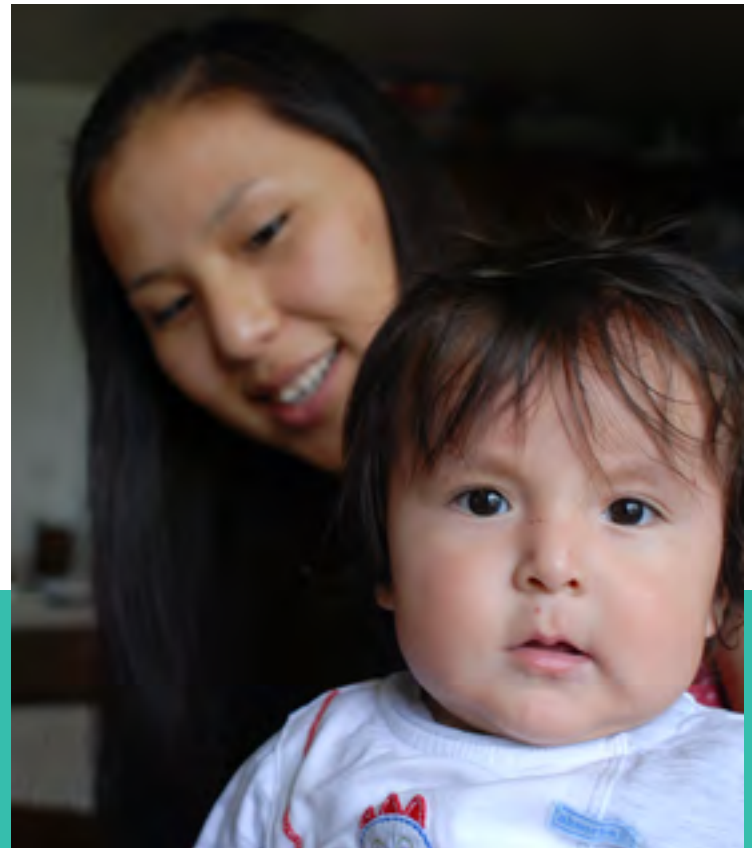
- \$453 million in Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Operation of Indian Programs. The funding includes BIA programs under the Human Services category.
- \$45 million for domestic violence shelters through the Family Violence and Prevention Services Act (tribal share \$4.5 million).
- \$45 million in additional Title IV-B, Subpart 1 (Child Welfare Services) funds (tribal share estimated \$850,000).

Tribal human service programs are encouraged to talk with their tribal leadership about their COVID-19 needs and inquire how they can benefit from the additional BIA funding made available through the CARES Act. In addition, tribal human service programs can speak with their [Administration for Children and Families](#) regional office to learn more about the non-BIA funding listed here. A more detailed description of the tribal human services funding available under the CARES Act can be found at www.nicwa.org/policy-update. NICWA provides regular updates on the CARES Act funding and other resources at www.nicwa.org/coronavirus.

What Can We Do with New Title IV-B, Subpart 1 Funding?

Over 300 tribes are grantees through the Social Security Act Title IV-B, Subpart 1 program (Stephanie Tubbs Jones Child Welfare Services program). Until September 30, 2020, the new temporary funding is only available one time unless and until Congress continues the funding in future legislation, and the funding is flexible. As there are many options for how tribes can use the funding, here are a few ideas on how to use funds to meet child welfare needs:

- Sign up your staff and/or partner agencies for a NICWA training. We are providing virtual training institutes in addition to the Introduction to ICWA Online Course. Read more about virtual training institutes on page 5 and find more information on the online course at www.nicwa.org/online-icwa-course.
- Purchase personal protective equipment (PPE) for your staff or children and families you are working with.
- Purchase cell phones and data plans for children and families who need the technology to support visitation



or other service needs. [The Children's Bureau issued guidance](#) on using Title IV-B funding for this purpose.

- Purchase virtual training or written resources for foster care, relative care, and guardianship care providers to help them with the challenges they face in providing care to children placed in their homes.

These are a few examples of special projects or resources that may not be possible without the new funding. Contact your Administration for Children and Families Regional Office for more information.

Importance of Intentional Resilience

Intentional Resilience:

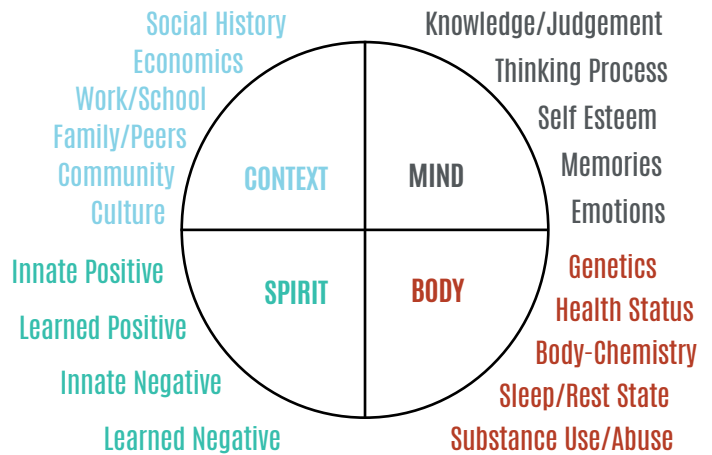
1. the ability to actively plan and engage in holistic personalized strategies that promote balance and mitigate the negative impacts of adversity.
2. an Indigenous approach to understanding life, health, and well-being as a composite of many Indigenous teachings including the medicine wheel.

During times of increased stress and trauma, it is important for us, as community helpers, to take care of ourselves. The Relational Worldview Model is a roadmap to resilience, a tool to intentionally shift the balance within us. We know how to do this, and in fact, we naturally do it all the time. When we're cold, we put on a sweater. When we're hungry, we eat.

Adversity is a normal part of life, and we are built to find balance. However, the greater the stress, the more intentional we must be to find balance. Tribal teachings, traditions, and practices are full of intentional strategies that promote balance, so those teachings can be a good source of approaches to try. You can only help others if you help yourself first. Terry Cross, founder and senior advisor of NICWA, says, "We must heal the healer."

Developed by the National Indian Child Welfare Association, the Intentional Resiliency Plan is represented by a relational worldview in a four-quadrant circle. It represents a fluid, cyclical view of time, where all aspects of life are interconnected. What we choose to focus on and include in our resiliency plan serves to restore balance in life. It will look different for each person.

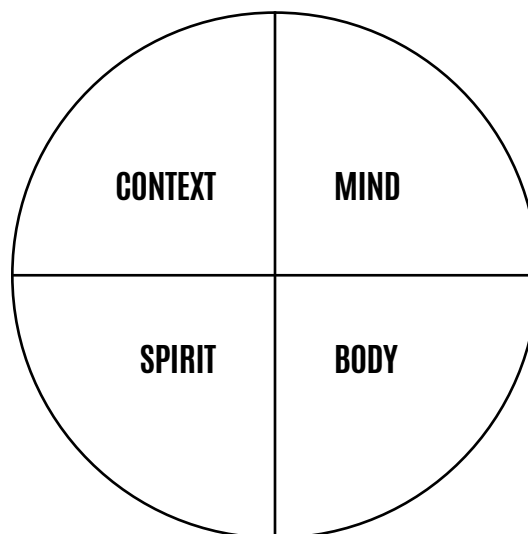
RELATIONAL WORLDVIEW



As a way to mitigate the negative impacts of today's reality, we encourage you to reflect on your mind, body, spirit, and context. It can be beneficial to pair up with another person and discuss your state of balance across the four quadrants as well. This activity can be used with colleagues or family members. If possible, take turns sharing your self-assessments, and share any "a-ha" moments together.

- Using the Relational Worldview Model as a guide, create an Intentional Resiliency Plan with at least one action from each quadrant.
- Practice using the actions you've identified. Reflect on how they affect your well-being.
- Feel free to adjust your plan as needed and to add different actions.

RELATIONAL WORLDVIEW



MY INTENTIONAL RESILIENCE PLAN



APART BUT TOGETHER



Although our face-to-face programming, events, and trainings are temporarily on hold, NICWA remains committed to supporting culturally responsive best practice models to support children and families. Physically apart, but together online, we held the 38th Annual Protecting Our Children Conference virtually. Nearly 1,500 people registered for the three-day event, with nine workshop sessions, three keynote presentations, and our annual membership meeting.

Native cultures are full of natural support systems, and that extends online. We know that Native people everywhere have a sense of shared community responsibility and interdependence; we turn to each other in times of need. Two Host Sponsors supported our virtual 38th Annual Protecting Our Children Conference, and below we highlight the two tribes whose partnerships made our event possible, the Seminole Tribe of Florida and Cowlitz Indian Tribe.

Host Sponsor Spotlight: Seminole Tribe of Florida's One-of-a-Kind Program

NICWA's annual conference Host Sponsor, the Seminole Tribe of Florida, is a long-time partner in the fight to protect Native children and families. Here we highlight one of their amazing local programs that has been developed by the Seminole Tribal Court in conjunction with the Broward Unified Family Court.

The Seminole Reservation in Hollywood, Florida, has a unique partnership between the Seminole Tribal Court and the Broward County Dependency Court. Once a month, Circuit Court Judge Jose Izquierdo travels onto the reservation to hear cases through the Seminole Tribal Court. This approach places Seminole families first by allowing parents to be surrounded by community members who know them.

Maggie Puentes's story is an example of the benefits of on-reservation dependency hearings. Maggie worked with the Seminole Tribal Family and Child Advocacy child welfare program to successfully navigate through the tasks of her

case. In the state court system, she might have felt alone, but at her tribal court she walked into a room with familiar faces—tribal court judges who inspire her and community members who support her and her family. Instead of fear or shame, each progress update is a source of pride, hope, and trust. With the help of this unique collaboration, Maggie now has custody of her children and grandchildren. She is active in her recovery, working, and finding joy in art.

"We are the only reservation in Florida to enjoy the benefits of a program like this, and it has been a significant support to our Seminole families," shared Natalie Gomes, director of advocacy and guardianship. Seminole Tribal Court is building on the success of its Hollywood reservation program and is currently expanding to include other circuit court districts that serve other Seminole reservations throughout the state. If you'd like to learn more about this program, reach out to Stan Wolfe, director of the Administrative Office of the Seminole Court, at (954) 966-6300 or stanwolfe@semtribe.com.



Pictured from left to right: Andrea French (Indian child welfare social worker for Cowlitz Indian Tribe), Cindy Blackstock (keynote presenter and First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada's executive director), and Sarah Kastelic (conference host and NICWA's executive director)

Host Sponsor Spotlight: Cowlitz Indian Tribe and NICWA Collaborate Over Four Decades

The Cowlitz Indian Tribe, located in southwest Washington, is a new NICWA annual conference Host Sponsor but has a long history of working with NICWA.

As far back as the 1980s, NICWA worked with the Cowlitz Tribe, then a state-recognized tribe, in implementation of a tribal-state agreement in the State of Washington. Once Cowlitz gained federal recognition in 2000, NICWA provided training and technical assistance to help the tribe start up its child welfare department. In 2012, NICWA partnered with the Cowlitz Tribe to host a meeting for United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples James Anaya to gather testimony from Northwest tribes for his report to the UN. This relationship positioned NICWA to take a vital step in gaining international recognition for the Indian Child Welfare Act when we gave testimony to the UN in Geneva, Switzerland. From 2012–2015, the Cowlitz Tribe was a partner with NICWA on an

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention research grant to develop culturally appropriate evaluation measures. NICWA and the Cowlitz Tribe together demonstrated how tribes can produce practice-based evidence, that is, evidence of effectiveness of services built through routine service delivery as opposed to methods like randomized control trials. In 2019, NICWA began our most recent partnership with the Cowlitz Tribe, an evaluation of the in-home delivery of our Positive Indian Parenting training (for more about this partnership, please see the [Spring 2020 issue of NICWA News](#)).

“We are so pleased to have enjoyed this long and mutually beneficial relationship and proud to say a hearty thank you to the Cowlitz Indian Tribe for being a host sponsor for this year’s conference,” said Terry Cross, NICWA founder and senior advisor.

NICWA’s 2020 Protecting Our Children Conference was one of the first large conferences in Indian Country to go virtual during the COVID-19 epidemic. As a staff, we had two and a half weeks, while working from our homes, to transition our in-person conference to a virtual event, and that timeline was the greatest challenge. We worked hard to make this a meaningful experience for our stakeholders, who embraced it and ran with it. I received so many texts and emails from grateful supporters. Through the event, people really felt connected to us and to each other. When we realized it was not responsible to convene in person, we converted our conference to a virtual event instead of canceling it. We wanted to do something to support and nurture our community, and the Creator honored our intent.

— NICWA Executive Director Sarah Kastelic, host of the virtual event

COVID-19 Impacts Communities Served by NICWA

COVID-19 has impacted communities and the delivery of social services and family support across the world. The tribal/First Nations and urban Indian communities that NICWA serves have been especially hard hit. The global pandemic, stay at home orders, and daily death tolls have increased economic vulnerability, anxiety, depression, domestic violence, substance misuse, and conditions that lead to child abuse, while service providers are left with few options to provide help to the people who need their services. In addition to the stress of the current situation, the pandemic has become a trigger for historical trauma in many communities, as well as an indicator of the serious disparities in health, housing, and broadband access that make our communities vulnerable.

Nationally, service providers turned to telemedicine. For many American Indian and Alaska Native families living in rural or remote communities in poverty, access to a computer is unlikely. Two of the communities we regularly work with reported that the only way to provide services to families in need is the telephone. One even explained that due to high volume, the phone service has become unstable at peak hours. Adding to the challenge, Medicaid regulations did not allow for providers to bill for telephone services. Just as the demand for services was increasing, the options to serve people were decreasing.

Joining with others across the nation, NICWA helped to win a temporary policy change from Medicaid allowing services to be provided via the telephone. For those who can provide internet-based services, NICWA compiled a brief guide listing free

telemedicine resources that are HIPAA compliant and that tribes can use to reach their families with mental health and child welfare services.

In thinking about the challenges that a few communities have shared with us, we're asking what other communities are facing and what NICWA might do to help.

Please take a few minutes to send us your responses to the questions below:

1. What are the major challenges that you are facing in your child welfare-related program?
2. How are you reaching out to families in need of support?
3. How are you handling visitation for foster children?
4. How are you responding to allegations of abuse or neglect?
5. What strategies are working for you that NICWA can help share with other tribes?

Please send your comments to info@nicwa.org. NICWA will continue to advocate for resources and policy changes that will help tribes and tribal programs respond to the needs brought on or exacerbated by COVID-19.



Programs

Resources for Children, Youth, and Families

This is a tough time for everyone, including Native children, youth, and families. We are all experiencing changes to meet the new normal of being home, rather than at school or at work. During the summer months, we hope you find new activities to do together as a family, like cooking and eating dinner, physical activity, and art and music. Share the Intentional Resiliency Plan on page 5 with your family to help support each other's well-being through an Indigenous lens. Talk about what's helpful to each of you and the things that support you in feeling healthy and well. Some additional resources for children and parents are below. If you are reading a printed version of NICWA News, you can access the links from www.nicwa.org/latest-news.

- » The Centers for Disease Control provides messages for parents, school staff, and others working with children: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/talking-with-children.html.
- » The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTS) offers activities to parents and caregivers while sheltering in place, social distancing, and homeschooling: www.nctsn.org/resources/simple-activities-children-and-adolescents.
- » Healthy Native Youth is a one-stop shop for educators and health advocates for age-specific curricula designed or adapted and evaluated with Native youth: www.healthynativeyouth.org/.
- » The Native Wellness Institute promotes the well-being of Native people through programs and trainings that embrace the teachings and traditions of our ancestors: www.nativewellness.com/.
- » The Phoenix Indian Center supports workforce

development, prevention services, cultural enrichment, youth development, and provides resources: <https://phxindcenter.org/online-options/>.

- » The Center for Native Youth ensures Native youth voices are heard with Native Youth Response to COVID-19: www.cnay.org/native-youth-response-to-covid-19-2/.
- » We R Native provides comprehensive health content and stories to promote holistic health and positive growth: www.wernative.org.
- » Coach Art provides parents, guardians, and caregivers enriching crafts for children with motor disabilities: www.coachart.org/blog/10-easy-crafts-for-kids-with-motor-disabilities/.
- » Chrome Music Lab is a website that makes learning music more accessible through fun, free, hands-on experiments: <https://musiclab.chromeexperiments.com/Experiments>.
- » Funbrain provides free educational games for Pre-K–8th grade kids, with activities that help develop skills in math, reading, problem-solving, and literacy: www.funbrain.com.
- » Wide Open School is a free collection of the online learning for Pre-K–12th grade children and youth: <https://wideopenschool.org/>.
- » Mindfulness for Teens is a site for teens looking to experience mindfulness. Mindfulness is about living fully in the present moment, without judgment, and with an attitude of kindness and curiosity: <http://mindfulnessforteens.com/>.

Leaders of Today: Pascua Yaqui Youth Move

The past months have been difficult as tribal communities continue to feel the impacts of and respond to the coronavirus. While NICWA works with tribes in addressing the urgent needs of the most vulnerable populations through the pandemic, stories of resiliency are a much-needed salve. Below we look back to a visit we had earlier this year with the Pascua Yaqui Tribe Youth MOVE chapter.

Youth MOVE is a youth-led and youth-focused program consisting of over 60 chapters of young leaders who use their voice, motivating and supporting other youth, to make positive changes in their community.

NICWA staff traveled to southern Arizona for a site visit and were able to join the Pascua Yaqui Youth MOVE in their day of service inspired by the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. and his vision of community. They solicited community organizations to donate vans to transport groups of people to various targeted

locations in the community; dumpsters that were placed in different locations to facilitate easy cleanup; cleaning supplies, like trash bags and gloves; and food. It was an honor for us to join as they prepared and cooked a family meal to say thank you to community members for coming together to make the community clean and safe for all. The youth also prepared baskets of household cleaning supplies for the volunteers and families to pick up and take home with them as another way of giving back.

The youth are our leaders of today and tomorrow. Pascua Yaqui youth are examples of how to become a great role model for other youth. They remind us that our resilience, community focus, and care for one another will help us get through the most challenging of times.



Pictured: Luke Madrigal at the 2017 35th Annual Protecting Our Children Conference in San Diego, California

Active Efforts in ICWA Cases During the Pandemic (via California Indian Legal Services)

Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) cases are being severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic: courts are delaying time-sensitive hearings, tribal families' visits are being disrupted or canceled altogether, and case plan services are being put on hold. This raises concerns about whether the active efforts tribal families need in order to reunite with their children—and are required by law—can still be provided during the pandemic.

As an advocate for ICWA compliance, you may be asking yourself, should I hunker down for now and deal with all efforts and services issues once the pandemic is under control? **NO!** Do ANY services even exist in a time like this, let alone active efforts or reasonable services? **YES!** What can I do to make sure active efforts continue to be provided to tribal families?

Here are some ideas to get your cases back on track with active efforts:

- Ensure that tribal families have the technology to access their children, services, and support networks.
- Ensure that tribal children and parents have meaningful, frequent family time.
- Assess whether case plans need to be updated and tailored for a family's current situation.

In Honor of Luke Madrigal

It is with great sadness that the NICWA Board of Directors mourns the passing of board member Luke Madrigal, citizen of the Cahuilla Band of Mission Indians.

Luke Madrigal served as a board member of the California Native Nations College; chairman of the Native American Chancellors Advisory Committee, University of California Riverside; co-chair of the Tribal Alliance for Indian Youth and Families Riverside County; and member of the gaming commission of the Cabazon Band of Mission Indians. He previously served as executive director of Indian Child and Family Services, on tribal council for the Cahuilla Band of Indians, and on the school board for Sherman Indian High School.

"I'm deeply saddened by the passing of my friend and colleague Luke Madrigal, who served as a member of the NICWA Board of Directors since 2012. Luke leaves an important legacy as a Cahuilla tribal scholar, a cultural and spiritual leader in his community, and a fervent advocate for Native children across Indian Country. We are grateful for his service to NICWA, and we will miss him."

— Gil Vigil, president of NICWA

- Evaluate if alternative placement is available if tribal children are in congregate care.
- Act now! Do not wait until the next review to address active efforts.

You can find the full resource at <https://www.calindian.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Active-Efforts-and-Reasonable-Services-During-the-Pandemic.pdf>.

Membership

New and Renewing Member List

The member list has long been a feature of NICWA News, but in order to offer members the greatest possible access to timely recognition and increased programmatic content, we are moving the member list online. This will allow us to more easily recognize new and renewing members, share information, and provide transparency. Find NICWA's new and renewing members at www.nicwa.org/membership/.



Member Portal

The NICWA member portal is an important part of the member experience. Traditionally, the portal has been used as a repository for member webinars, monthly e-bulletins, and as a directory for NICWA's members. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen an increased demand for web services, so we are in the process of transforming the member portal into a more robust, helpful tool for our members. The updated portal will feature greater curation of member materials, enhanced sections covering important resources, and other features that will be announced over the next few months. When it comes to developing benefits, we look to our members for guidance. If there are resources, tools, or additions to the member portal that you feel would enhance your NICWA member experience, please don't hesitate to reach out to Jeremy Chase-Israel, member relations manager, at membership@nicwa.org.

NICWA Virtual Training Community

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, tribal community members have reached out to NICWA to request additional virtual trainings. The originally scheduled in-person June Training Institute in Portland, Oregon, has been converted to a virtual, interactive training. The course, Enhancing Basic Skills for Tribal/First Nations Child Welfare Workers, will be taught over five 90-minute sessions. It will be offered one day a week during the first week of June and again in a condensed format over two days, on June 17–18.

NICWA Founder and Senior Advisor Terry Cross will facilitate sessions on the following topics: effective interviewing skills; assessment, case plans, and care coordination; essential elements of working with substance-abusing families; writing effective court reports; and case records and documentation. The training will be a mix of dialogue, small group discussion, case scenarios, and classroom instruction.

Open for registration now, find more information at www.nicwa.org/training-institutes/ or email training@nicwa.org. Select members receive a discount.



1,110

Total NICWA Members



225

Annual Member Meeting Attendees



43

States & Provinces Represented



100

Member Surveys



573

New Members from Conference



NICWA

National Indian Child Welfare Association
Protecting Our Children • Preserving Our Culture

NICWA News

National Indian Child Welfare Association
5100 SW Macadam Avenue, Suite 300, Portland, Oregon 97239

PHONE: (503) 222-4044 FAX: (503) 222-4007 WEB: www.nicwa.org

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