



National Indian Child Welfare Association

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**San Manuel Band of Mission Indians Invests in Indian Child Welfare Act Education and Resources**

**(Portland, OR, June 14, 2018)**—The National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) acknowledges and thanks the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, located in Highland, California, for the generous grant to help tribal and non-tribal stakeholders understand the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and facilitate proper ICWA implementation. ICWA provides important legal protections for Native children and families to prevent the unnecessary removal of children from their homes.

Even with ICWA's 40-year history, sizeable improvements in the unnecessary removal and placement of Native children, and the dramatic gains in collaborative tribal-state relationships to better serve Native children and families, NICWA receives more than 1,000 phone calls, emails, and Facebook posts each year with questions about Indian child welfare and ICWA. Parents who come into contact with the child welfare system and family members trying to navigate the system to gain custody of their relative children ask questions about how to secure supportive services for their children and families, their rights under ICWA, and how to locate an attorney familiar with ICWA. Tribal and state agencies, service providers, and lawyers and judges contact NICWA to learn more about the provisions of ICWA, best practices for ICWA implementation, and training resources. Additionally, adult adoptees call NICWA hoping to reconnect to their communities and extended families. This work is made possible by grants and important partners like San Manuel Band of Mission Indians.

In presenting the grant to support NICWA's work to educate a wide variety of stakeholders about ICWA, San Manuel Chairwoman Lynn Valbuena said, "The San Manuel Band of Mission Indians understands the importance of the Indian Child Welfare Act and its impact on Native families; respecting tribal sovereignty and keeping communities whole is at the heart of why we are supporting the educational efforts of the National Indian Child Welfare Association."

NICWA board president Gil Vigil stated, "The vision of the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians is to honor their ancestors, culture, and sovereignty for all generations. Their support of NICWA in educating the public about ICWA and staffing the requests for information we receive each year is a significant gift to Indian Country. We thank the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians tribal leadership for keeping Native children safe and connected to their family, culture, and community whenever possible by making this generous gift to NICWA to provide information, resources, and referrals directly to families and to those that serve them."

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**About the National Indian Child Welfare Association**

NICWA works to support the safety, health, and spiritual strength of Native children along the broad continuum of their lives. The organization promotes building tribal capacity to prevent child abuse and neglect through positive systems change at the state, federal, and tribal levels. For more information, visit [www.nicwa.org](http://www.nicwa.org).