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**NICWA
National Indian Child Welfare Association logo**

# Bridging Systems for Kinship Families

# Tribal Program Application

## Overview

The National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) is a proud partner of the Grandfamilies & Kinship Support Network (Network). The Network is the nation’s first federally funded technical assistance center for grandparents and other kin/relative caregivers and the children they raise. Together, we are thrilled to roll out a unique opportunityfor one tribe to work with the nation’s leading experts on relative caregiver/kinship families, **all free of charge**. NICWA will provide in-depth support to you on goals you and your tribal leaders and community self-identify to help you effectively collaborate internally across tribal departments and/or externally with state or county government systems and/or nonprofit service providers to better serve all kinship/relative caregiving families, whether child welfare involved or not. Collaborating effectively will help address service barriers and leverage your resources to maximize support for these families.

This project requires a two-year commitment from a lead tribal agency, as well as identified internal or external partner departments, programs, or agencies working in other areas impacting relative caregivers/kin. The project team for this cross-system work will consist of a minimum of two tribal government departments, or the lead tribe and at least one other governmental agency or department or Native community-based nonprofit with jurisdiction-wide impact. The team also is required to have two individuals with lived relative/kinship caregiving experience. Work will begin by discussing your goals and co-developing an action plan for cross-system collaboration with NICWA and the Network’s partners and subject matter experts.

A selected tribal site will benefit from the expertise of NICWA; the Network and its parent organization, Generations United; and the Network’s other partner agencies – Child Trends, the National Caucus and Center on Black Aging, USAging, and ZERO TO THREE. For example, if you identify it as a goal, NICWA can help you build your capacity to collaborate with a state or county agency. The Network also includes a cadre of [subject matter experts](https://www.gksnetwork.org/subject-matter-experts/) to support and collaborate with you.

Taking a cross-systems approach and working with your self-identified goals, NICWA and the Network’s team will help the selected tribe’s efforts to:

1. Create high-impact partnerships across systems.
2. Develop and implement and/or optimize
   * A tribal kinship navigator program; or
   * Tribal relative care provider outreach services; or
   * Native American Caregiver Support Program (NASCP); or
   * Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) supports for relative care providers; or
   * Tribal/state child welfare system collaboration regarding kinship/relative care/grandfamily services.
3. Identify culturally specific or adapted innovative/emerging evidence-based/evidence-informed practices and assist with integrating the practice in the tribal setting.
4. Implement culturally based Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion practices to support caregivers who provide care for relatives with diverse cultural or gender identities.
5. Amplify the voices of those with lived experience to shape programs, services, and systems.

Throughout the project, Child Trends will assess and evaluate the project. In year three, NICWA and Network staff, with your input and approval, will document the work we have done together as part of this initiative and elevate it nationally so that others can replicate your work. You will receive national recognition as a tribal organization that works together to value and support grandparents and other relative caregivers who raise children when parents cannot.

## Criteria to Qualify:

1. The lead applicant must be a tribe, urban Indian center serving the local tribal community, or reservation tribal services program.

* For tribal agencies, you must be focused on an area or areas in our Network umbrella:
* Aging
* Child Welfare
* Disability
* Education
* Housing
* Nutrition
* Medicaid/Medicare
* TANF

1. The project team must be committed to working across systems and include at a minimum: two tribal government agencies and two experts with lived experience. If working closely with a neighboring state agency, it would be ideal for them to be invited to be part of the project team.

## Commitments from NICWA and the Network:

* Provide in-depth, ongoing assistance and assessment of project free of charge from the nation’s leading kinship/relative caregiving experts.
* Designate a NICWA lead to serve as a contact for the work.
* Participate in monthly meetings and serve as a resource between meetings.
* Provide on-site technical assistance up to two times per year, as coordinated with your schedules.
* Provide compensation to lived experts for their expertise.

## Expectations for Your Team:

* Commit to work for two years (May 2024 through May 2026) with NICWA and the Network to co-develop and implement an action plan to work collaboratively to better serve relative/kinship families inside and outside of child welfare system involvement.
* Designate a lead staff member and one alternate contact staff member from each agency to work on this effort. At least one staff member from each agency must have decision-making authority.
* Ensure that staff participate in monthly meetings and act on identified tasks in preparation for each meeting.
* Meaningfully engage lived experts in meetings and ongoing work.
* Commit to co-create and participate in an assessment of the project in collaboration with NICWA and Child Trends.

## Application Launch, Process, and Timeline

NICWA and the Network have a two-step process in selecting the tribe.

* **January 10, 2024**: Application period opens.
* **March 18, 2024, 11:59 PM PT**: Application period closes.
* **April 22, 2024-April 26, 2024**: NICWA staff will reach out to lead tribal agencies for 60-minute virtual interviews.
* **May 2024**: NICWA will notify applicants of decisions.

Interested applicants are encouraged to reach out to NICWA at [dallas@nicwa.org](mailto:dallas@nicwa.org) or to the Network at [kcraggett@gu.org](mailto:kcraggett@gu.org) with any questions.

Application

## **Can be completed on this fillable electronic** [form](https://forms.office.com/Pages/DesignPageV2.aspx?subpage=design&FormId=1OGczDeA2Eu4bspgoy1u3ZLZBXRzeMJAuYqJzL6AEZhURERLNFpQTzNUOUhMWVo5N1hVS1hIVDNQQi4u&Token=21cf9eb00d1a47d09b55b54fef24566f) **(or use the word template below)**

### Contact Information for Lead Tribal Agency Applicant

1. Lead agency name:

Tribe/Tribal Organization:

Address:

Website:

Primacy staff contact name:

* Title:
* Email:

1. Select the system that best represents your government agency (*provide drop-down with system options)* or identify yourself as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit agency working on behalf of kin.
2. Share the name and title of one additional staff member in the agency who will commit to participating in this project (at least one participating staff member should have decision-making authority within the agency)

### General Information on Lead Agency

1. In two paragraphs, briefly provide an overview of your agency’s relative caregiver/kinship services, including the number of relatives/kin served annually and how they identify by tribe or tribal organization.
2. Since the success of this work will be realized by cross-system collaboration, please provide a brief explanation of existing efforts to promote this type of collaboration, as well as planned efforts to operate in a cross-system framework. (Cross-system collaboration can include working with service systems such as aging/elders programs, tribal child welfare, disability, education, housing, legal, Indian Health Services (IHS), Medicaid/Medicare, nutrition, and TANF, or with other tribes.
3. Does your agency offer services to relative/kinship families whose children are not in tribal and/or state child welfare custody?(Options: Yes/No/Unsure)

### Partner Agencies

*For your application to be considered you will need to have a partnership with* ***at least*** *one other agency representing a different system or a nonprofit working on behalf of relative caregivers/kin. The Network’s primary systems are aging, child welfare, disability, education, housing, Medicaid/Medicare, nutrition, and TANF. Applicants with two partners will receive preference in the selection process.*

#### Agency #1 participating as a partner/co-applicant:

1. Partner agency name:

Tribal affiliation:

Address:

Website:

Primary contact name:

* Title:
* Email:

1. Indicate the system that best represents this agency (provide drop-down with system options) or if it is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit working on behalf of kin.
2. If applicable, what is the primary way your agency currently partners with this agency?

#### Agency #2 participating as a partner/co-applicant:

1. Partner agency name:

Tribal affiliation:

Address:

Website:

Primary contact name:

* Title:
* Email:

1. Indicate the system that best represents this agency (*provide drop-down with system options)* or if it is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit working on behalf of relative/kin.
2. If applicable, what is the primary way your agency currently partners with this agency?

### Lived Experts

1. Please name two relative/kin caregivers, young adults raised in relative/kinship families, and/or parents of children in relative/kinship families who will work with you on this project and provide an up to 150-word biography of each. (If you have not yet identified lived experts, please indicate a commitment to work with lived experts.)

### Cross Collaboration Efforts

1. List the names of other agencies that you plan to engage in this project if you are selected as a site.
2. If none of the agencies listed above operate kinship navigator/relative caregiver programs, describe how you will engage your jurisdiction’s kinship navigator/relative caregiver program in this project. If your state and/or tribe does not have one, indicate that here.
3. Does your tribe/state/territory/large county have an active kinship taskforce or workgroup? (Yes/No/Unsure)

* If yes, what is its name?
* Is your agency a part of the coalition?

### Additional Information

1. Briefly share why your agency is interested in this opportunity with the National Indian Child Welfare Association and the Grandfamilies & Kinship Support Network.
2. Optional: If you have any other information you would like to share to substantiate your application, please do so here. You may also hyperlink to any relevant documents or submit them by email to Dallas Archuleta at [dallas@nicwa.org](mailto:dallas@nicwa.org)