



NICWA

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



NICWA 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Culture Sustains Us

About NICWA

OUR MISSION

NICWA is dedicated to the well-being of American Indian and Alaska Native children and families.

OUR VISION

Every Native child must have access to community-based, culturally appropriate services that help them grow up safe, healthy, and spiritually strong—free from abuse, neglect, sexual exploitation, and the damaging effects of substance abuse.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

NICWA was created for the following stated principles:

- To protect Native children.
- To promote safe, healthy, and culturally strong environments for Native children.
- To promote the spiritual strength of Native children and a positive cultural identity.
- To be a strong voice for the needs of Native children and American Indian/Alaska Native child welfare programs nationwide.
- To advocate for and facilitate the proper implementation of the Indian Child Welfare Act.
- To promote the provision of effective services to Native children by child welfare workers.
- To provide technical assistance for and information sharing among American Indian/Alaska Native child welfare programs.
- To provide education and leadership opportunities for tribal and urban Indian child welfare workers.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

We help build tribal capacity to prevent child abuse and neglect through positive systems change at the federal, state, and tribal levels. By promoting prevention services, our programming supports the safety, health, well-being, and spiritual strength of Native children along the broad continuum of their lives.



TRAINING

We provide training, technical assistance, and professional development for those interested in learning about Indian child welfare and related fields. From our annual conference—the preeminent national event dedicated to tribal child welfare and well-being—to our trainings tailored for individual communities, NICWA strives to provide rigorous, timely, and meaningful information to those who serve Native children and families.



PUBLIC POLICY AND ADVOCACY

We advocate for policies that support tribal communities and their efforts to protect children, decolonize services, and reclaim cultural beliefs, traditions, and customs that are the foundation of protecting Native children and strengthening families.



RESEARCH

We conduct research and evaluation in service to tribal communities in ways that are sensitive to historical traumas and are respectful of community needs, values, cultures, and traditions. We provide data to help inform services and advocate for funding for child welfare programs.

Message from Our Executive Director

Dear NICWA Members, Donors, and Friends,

I am pleased to share with you the NICWA fiscal year 2022 annual report, *Culture Sustains Us*. When I think about our theme, each of the three words is significant to me.

Several times this year—in *NICWA News*, in our membership webinars, through our email communication, and at our Protecting Our Children Conference—we’ve talked about coming through the pandemic together and finding our way through to a new way of being together. We’ve acknowledged our Indigenous cultures as the foundation of our relationship, and our worldview, values, teachings, and beliefs as guides to navigate whatever is before us. One of our guiding principles at NICWA is that culture is our greatest resource for helping families. We don’t serve families directly, so we honor this principle in how we provide resources, training, and technical assistance to frontline workers, directors, and tribal leaders to draw on our cultures, to apply our cultures in every opportunity we can in our work.

We draw on our cultures for guidance, to find balance, and for healing. Our cultures sustain us. The Oxford dictionary defines “sustain” as “to strengthen or support physically or mentally.” Likewise, “sustenance” is defined as something that is “a source of strength; nourishment.” Our lived experience is that our cultures make us stronger people.

They give us daily practices and ways of being in the world and in relationship to one another. They also teach us how to build a well of reserve that we can draw on when we encounter hardship, when a situation is greater than what our daily practices help us to weather.

Finally, our cultures sustain *us*. Our cultures support us individually, as families, and as a community. Our different cultures even support us when we come together as diverse Native peoples from across our country. As we prepare to start a new calendar year and reflect back over the good work we’ve done in the last fiscal year, we recognize that in both the opportunities and challenges, this work to advocate for and support Native children and families is only possible when we stand together as a community. Strengthened by our ways of life, together we lift up and celebrate our children, the families that support them, and our communities that remember our ancestors and carry forward our cultures.

With gratitude for your partnership,

Sarah Kastelic

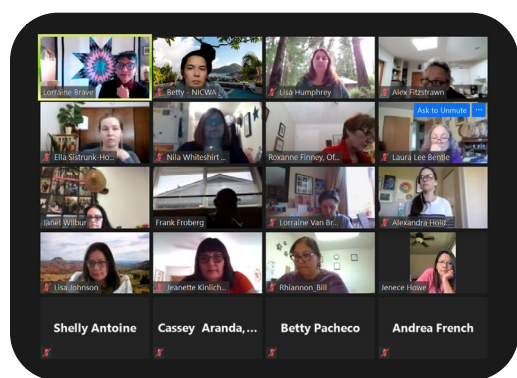
PhD, MSW, *Alutiiq*



Fiscal Year 2022 Highlights

MAY 2021

As advocacy to redesign child welfare systems gains momentum across the country, we began hosting virtual regional and national listening sessions with funding from the The Annie E Casey Foundation to ensure tribal priorities and concerns are part of the national conversation.



NICWA Qualified Experts Witness Virtual Training

JULY 2021

- NICWA President Gil Vigil (*Tesuque Pueblo*) provided [testimony](#)² before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs regarding H.R. 1688, the **Native American Children's Protection Act**. The legislation reauthorizes the funding of two grant programs and a resource center under the Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act.
- Contracted with Alaska Native Justice Center, a subsidiary of Cook Inlet Tribal Council, to conduct a statewide survey of tribal child welfare workers to inform future training and technical assistance, including a fall 2023 conference for tribal child welfare workers.

JUNE 2021

- With the Protect ICWA Campaign, we hosted a two-part webinar series focused on the legal implications and the impacts to state agency practice and tribal advocacy of the Fifth Circuit en banc decision in *Haaland v. Brackeen*, the case concerning the constitutionality of the Indian Child Welfare Act.
- [Published](#)¹ **ICWA Best Practices for State Child Welfare Agencies After the Brackeen Decision** which detailed the impact on families with ICWA cases and best practices for state child welfare workers after the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals en banc decision in *Haaland v. Brackeen*.

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Fiscal Year 2022 Highlights

AUGUST 2021

- Launched a new suite of [child welfare resources](#)³ for families who have recently come into contact with the child welfare system, including extensive information for parents on voluntary or in-home services and considering private adoption.
- Veronica Krupnick (*Hopi Tribe*) shared a moving personal essay about the importance of heritage and culture in her life in the 2021 Summer/Fall issue of NICWA News titled “Generational Joy.”
- Submitted [comments](#)⁴ to the Department of Health and Human Service’s Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse Handbook of Standards and Procedures, Version 1.0, focused on the challenges to fair and accurate review of culturally based programs and services within the mainstream review process being used by the Clearinghouse.



Veronica Krupnick
Hopi Tribe

SEPTEMBER 2021

- Issued a [statement](#)⁵ and called on members of Congress to pass the **Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act** when it was introduced by Senator Elizabeth Warren and Representative Sharice Davids. The act establishes a Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies in the United States to formally investigate and document Indian boarding school policies and the impacts and ongoing effects of historical and intergenerational trauma in Native communities resulting from them.

GRANDFAMILIES & KINSHIP SUPPORT NETWORK

A National Technical Assistance Center

- With Generations United and national partners, we [launched](#)⁶ the **Grandfamilies & Kinship Support Network**. As a national technical assistance center, the Network’s purpose is to provide an array of technical assistance to government agencies—aging/elders, child welfare, disability, education, housing, Medicaid and Medicare, nutrition, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families—and organizations that serve kinship families.

OCTOBER 2021

With the Protect ICWA Campaign, we [joined](#)⁷ an **amicus brief** filed in support of the United States and tribal intervenors’ petitions asking the United States Supreme Court to review the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals’ decision in *Haaland v. Brackeen*, a case challenging the constitutionality of the Indian Child Welfare Act.

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Fiscal Year 2022 Highlights

NOVEMBER 2021

As the White House hosted the Tribal Nations Summit, NICWA supported tribal leaders in sharing concerns regarding protection of and compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act and the need to restore the 2016 data elements on Native children and families within the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System.

JANUARY 2022

Gathered virtually to update our relational worldview assessment of our organizational health and performance as well as to generate ideas about what will make the biggest difference for Native children and their families and what will make the biggest difference in staff members' ability to successfully execute the work needed by the communities we serve.

DECEMBER 2021

- National and regional child welfare redesign listening sessions for tribes and Indian Country advocates [culminated](#)⁸ in the development of four briefing papers and a summary of the nine listening sessions.
- With funding from the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, we created new resources and updated existing materials related to [1\) federal child welfare protections for Native children and families that are not eligible for ICWA's protections](#)⁹, [2\) ICWA compliance](#)¹⁰, [3\) foster care disproportionality and disparate treatment](#)¹¹, and [4\) an ICWA guide for families](#)¹².

ICWA Doesn't Apply to My Child Welfare Case. What Other Help Can I Receive?
A publication of the National Indian Child Welfare Association

This brochure is not a substitute for legal counsel. The amount of child support required for a child may vary depending on the state's laws and the child's needs.

ICWA: THE "GOLD STANDARD" OF CHILD WELFARE PRACTICE
The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) was established to protect the best interests of Native children and their families. It sets a high standard for child welfare practice, ensuring that Native children are placed in their own homes or with Native families whenever possible.

WHAT PROTECTIONS DO I HAVE IF ICWA DOES NOT APPLY TO MY CASE?
If ICWA does not apply to your case, you may still have other legal rights and protections. It is important to understand these rights and seek legal advice if you are unsure.

A GUIDE TO COMPLIANCE WITH THE INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT
October 2021

NICWA
Protecting our children. Preserving our culture.

This guide provides essential information for child welfare professionals and tribal leaders regarding the requirements of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). It covers topics such as identifying potential ICWA cases, conducting proper investigations, and ensuring compliance with ICWA's provisions.

Disproportionality in Child Welfare Fact Sheet
A publication of the National Indian Child Welfare Association

What is Disproportionality in Child Welfare?
Disproportionality occurs when certain groups of children are placed in foster care or adoption at a rate significantly higher than their proportion in the general population.

American Indian/Alaska Natives Disproportionality in Child Welfare Nationally
American Indian/Alaska Natives are overrepresented in foster care and adoption. This is due to a variety of factors, including historical trauma, poverty, and limited access to services.

Why are children who are not eligible for ICWA's protections placed in foster care or adoption?
Children who are not eligible for ICWA's protections may be placed in foster care or adoption due to a variety of reasons, including family circumstances, child safety concerns, and limited resources.

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Fiscal Year 2022 Highlights

FEBRUARY 2022

- At Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, our technical assistance resulted in development and launch of a new child welfare program practice model and organizational structure.
- Released the [2022 Policy Priorities](#)¹³ outlining four major priorities that guided our efforts to improve services and resources for American Indian and Alaska Native children and families.

MARCH 2022

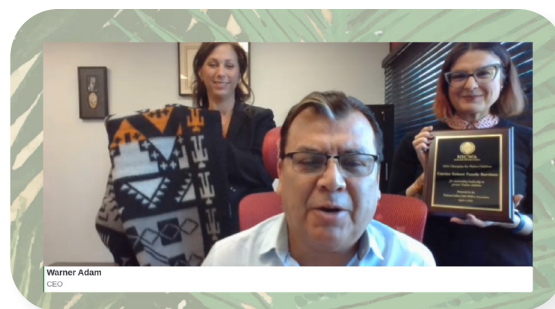
Funded by the Oregon Community Foundation, in the Spring we were at the halfway mark of a project to update NICWA's Positive Indian Parenting (PIP) curriculum. Since 1987, NICWA has trained thousands of community trainers, who in turn train parents in their community. The updated curriculum will be published in early 2023 with updates to discussion questions and activities, local adaptation guidance, and maintaining fidelity in in-home and virtual instruction.

APRIL 2022

- Announced the **2022 Champion for Native Children** awardees, Cristi Heath (*Choctaw*) and Carrier Sekani Family Services, and the **2022 NICWA Member of the Year**, the Nebraska Indian Child Welfare Coalition, at the virtual 40th Annual Protecting Our Children Conference.



Cristi Heath, *Choctaw*



Carrier Sekani Family Services

- Published **Positive Indian Parenting: A Unique Collaborative Study in the Age of COVID-19** in a special issue of the American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research journal dedicated to research adaptations during the COVID-19 pandemic among researchers working in Native communities.
- Funded by the Collins Foundation and in partnership with the Oregon Department of Human Services Office of Tribal Affairs at the first ICWA/ORICWA Summit, NICWA presented three 90-minute sessions on the Relational Worldview as a basis for child welfare practice to meet the diverse and complex needs of Native families. The summit demonstrated the need for ICWA and the value of having state ICWA legislation such as ORICWA.

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NICWA by the Numbers



- **11** Virtual training institutes with **277** frontline child welfare workers trained
- **187** Introduction to ICWA Online Course participants
- **9** virtual national and regional child welfare redesign listening sessions with **445** tribal child welfare professionals and individuals with lived experience in attendance



- **20** Fee-for-Service contracts for training, consultation, and speaking engagements
- **62** Working with Substance-Abusing Families Course participants
- **404** NICWA curriculum sales



398

requests for information



7

press releases



11

NICWA publications



76,337

social media followers

THERE ARE NICWA MEMBERS IN...

43

U.S. states

7

Canadian provinces

FOR A TOTAL OF

1,224

individual members

58

tribal and organizational members

1,282

total members

NICWA by the Numbers

PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN

- 1,346 registrants
- 9,520 sessions watched
- 921 viewers at opening general session
- 687 viewers at general sessions on average
- 133 participants at workshops on average
- 142 speakers
- 4 general sessions
- 50 workshops
- 34 sponsors
- 272 tribes represented
- 47 states and provinces represented
- 1 membership meeting
- 1 National Day of Prayer for Native Children
- 3 days of virtual programming
- 2 Champion for Native Children awardees



Lavender watching Sesame Street at general session



Stephanie Weldon, Kendra Potter, Daryle Conquering Bear, and Lukas Angus sharing about their lived experiences



Kama Einhorn, Sesame Street in Communities, at general session



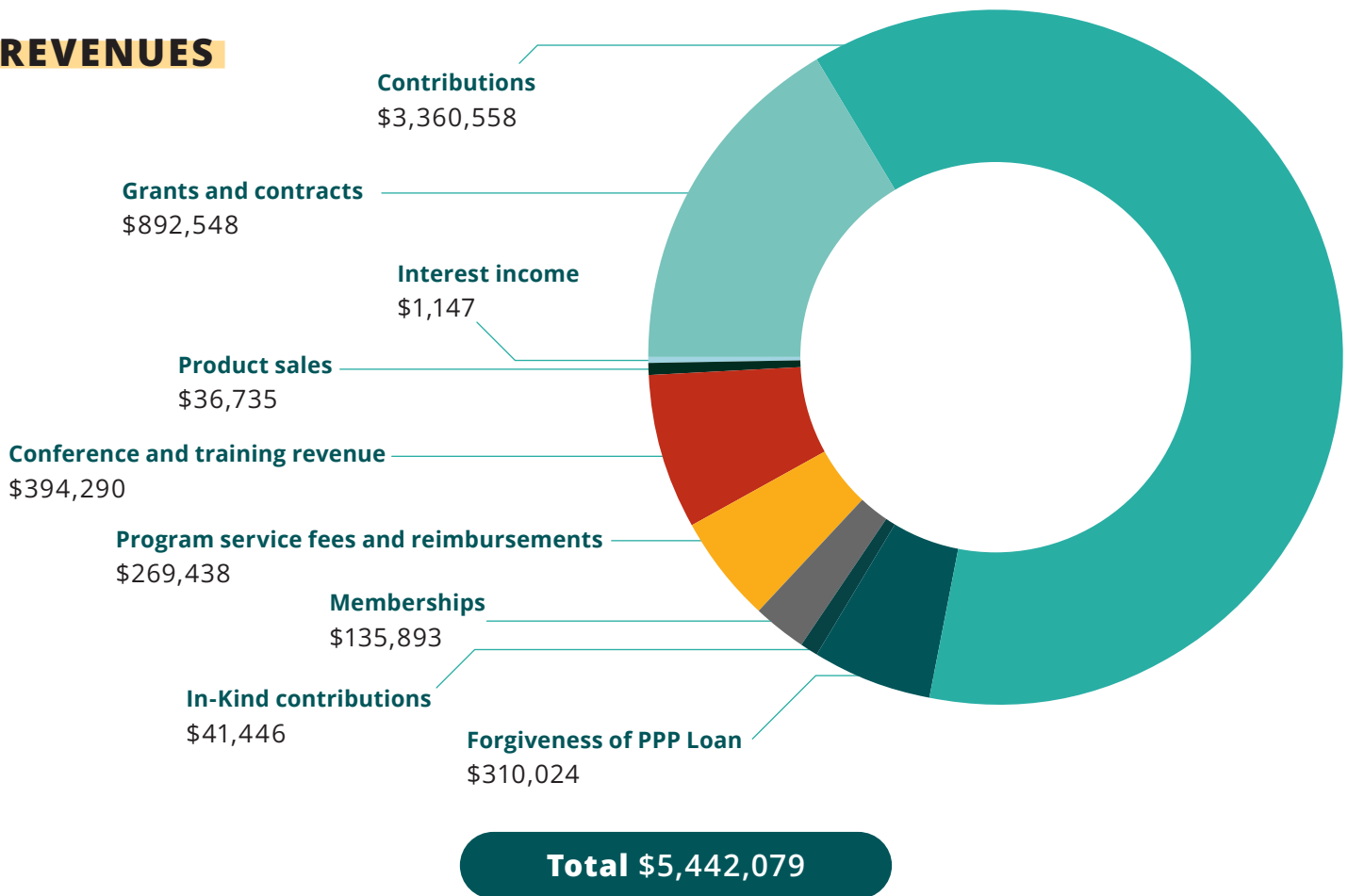
Terry Cross, NICWA founder, and Gary Peterson, NICWA founding board member at general session

[View full list of NICWA members¹⁴](#)

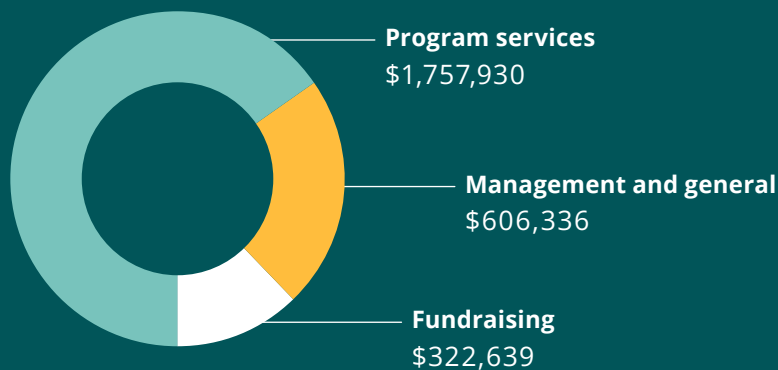
[View full list of NICWA donors¹⁵](#)

Financials

REVENUES



EXPENSES



Net Assets, Beginning of year
\$1,754,547

Change in net assets
\$2,755,174

Net Assets, End of year
\$4,509,721

NICWA Board and Staff

2022 FISCAL YEAR

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

Gil Vigil, *Tesuque Pueblo*
President

Angela Connor, *Choctaw*
Vice President

Alex Wesaw, *Pokagon Band of Potawatomi*
Secretary

Aurene Martin, *Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa*
Treasurer

MEMBERS

Teresa Baldwin, *Inupiaq*

Mikah Carlos, *Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community*

Patricia Carter-Goodheart, *Nez Perce*

Rose Domnick, *Orutsararmiut Native Council*

Rochelle Ettawageshik, *Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians*

Jocelyn Formsmma, *Moose Cree First Nation*

Debra Foxcroft, *Tseshah*

Robert McGhee, *Poarch Band of Creek Indians*

Gary Peterson, *MSW, Skokomish*

Robin Sigo, *Suquamish Tribe*

Mary Tenorio, PhD, RN, *Santo Domingo*

Stephanie Weldon, *Yurok Tribe*

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

John Shagonaby, *Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomi Indians*

Brad Earl, *Nez Perce descent*

Sherry Salway Black, *Oglala Lakota*

Allard Teeple, *Bay Mills Indian Community*

Victor Rocha, *Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians*

Derek Valdo, *Acoma Pueblo*

NICWA STAFF

Sarah Kastelic, *Alutiiq*
Executive Director

Elizabeth Brando, *Cherokee Nation*
Development Director

Lynn Lindell, *Suquamish*
Project Coordinator

Amory Zschach, *Cheyenne Arapaho*
Strategic Communications Manager

April Ybarra Black
Executive Assistant to Sarah Kastelic and
Library Specialist

OPERATIONS

Tia Begay, *Diné*
Fiscal Director

Betty Bryant
Project Coordinator

Lindsay Early, *Comanche*
Deputy Director

Vilma Vere
Fiscal Assistant

PROGRAMS

Terry Cross, *Seneca*
Founder and Senior Advisor

Alexis Contreras, *Grand Ronde*
Research Assistant

Mariah Meyerholz
Government Affairs and
Community Development Fellow

Puneet Sahota
Research Director

David Simmons
Director of Government Affairs and Advocacy

*As of the end of the 2022 fiscal year, 4/30/2022



NICWA

National Indian Child Welfare Association

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 info@nicwa.org



ENDNOTES

1 NICWA, "ICWA Best Practices for State Child Welfare Agencies After the Brackeen Decision" www.nicwa.org/icwa-best-practices-for-state-child-welfare-agencies-after-the-brackeen-decision/

2 NICWA, Policy Update, "NICWA President Vigil Providing Testimony for the Native American Childrens Protection Act" www.nicwa.org/nicwa-president-vigil-providing-testimony-for-the-native-american-childrens-protection-act/

3 NICWA, Child Welfare Resources. www.nicwa.org/child-welfare-resources/

4 "Comments of the National Indian Child Welfare association regarding the Department of Health and Human Services Clearinghouse Handbook of Standards and Procedures, Version 1.0" www.nicwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/NICWA-clearinghouse-comments-Final-002.pdf

5 NICWA, "NICWA Applauds Truth and Healing Commission Legislation" www.nicwa.org/nicwa-applauds-truth-and-healing-commission-legislation/

6 Grandfamilies & Kinship Support Network, A National Technical Assistance Center. www.gksnetwork.org/

7 NICWA, "Amicus Briefs Filed in Brackeen V. Haaland" www.nicwa.org/amicus-briefs-filed-in-brackeen-v-haaland/

8 NICWA, Policy Update, "Indian Country Leading the Way in Redesigning Child Welfare" www.nicwa.org/indian-country-leading-the-way-in-redesigning-child-welfare/

9 "ICWA Doesn't Apply to My Child Welfare Case. What Other Help Can I Receive?" www.nicwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/2021-When-ICWA-Doesnt-Apply-Updated.pdf

10 "A Guide to Compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act" www.nicwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/NICWA-Guide-to-ICWA-Compliance.pdf

11 "Disproportionality in Child Welfare" Fact Sheet. www.nicwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/NICWA_11_2021-Disproportionality-Fact-Sheet.pdf

12 "The Indian Child Welfare Act: A Family's Guide" www.nicwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/2021-Family-Guide-to-ICWA-Updated.pdf

13 "NICWA 2022 Policy Priorities" www.nicwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/NICWA-2022-Policy-Priorities.pdf

14 Full list of NICWA members: www.nicwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/FY2022-NICWA-Member-Listing.pdf

15 Full list of NICWA donors: www.nicwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/FY2022-NICWA-Donor-List.pdf