



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

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT: DEPUTY DIRECTOR

The National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) seeks an accomplished operations leader to serve as our deputy director. This is an exceptional opportunity to anchor the internal operations of a nationally recognized organization dedicated to advancing Tribal child welfare, protecting the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), and strengthening Indigenous families and communities.

About NICWA

For over 40 years, NICWA has championed the well-being of Native children and families through policy advocacy, training and technical assistance, research, and community engagement. We work in partnership with Tribal Nations, Indigenous and ally organizations, policymakers, service providers, and advocates to ensure that Native children grow up connected to their families, communities, and cultures—grounded in the understanding that our children are sacred gifts.

Our work is rooted in cultural values, driven by evidence and best practices, and committed to upholding Tribal sovereignty and self-determination.

The Role

As NICWA's chief internal operations officer, the deputy director ensures that our organizational infrastructure, systems, and team culture enable us to fulfill our mission with excellence. While the executive director focuses on external engagement, advocacy, fundraising, and strategic partnerships, the deputy director leads all internal operations and ensures seamless alignment between external strategy and internal execution.

Key Responsibilities

- Oversee all internal operations, including finance, human resources, facilities, travel, grants administration, and compliance

- Provide oversight of fiscal operations, including budget development, financial planning, cash flow management, and financial reporting
- Lead all personnel functions, including recruitment, onboarding, performance management, benefit administration, professional development, and staff retention as well as trains and coaches supervisors for consistent implementation of policies and procedures
- Facilitate coordination between the executive director's external strategy and internal operational execution
- Lead development and implementation of operational policies, procedures, and systems that support organizational effectiveness
- Foster a positive, culturally grounded organizational culture that centers staff well-being, equity, professional growth, and mission impact
- Supervise and develop operational leaders (fiscal director, operations and human resources manager, development manager, operations coordinator)
- Serve as acting executive director during absences with full authority for organizational leadership and crisis response

Required Qualifications

Education and Experience

- Master's degree in nonprofit management, business administration, public administration, social services, or related field preferred; 10 or more years of relevant experience may substitute
- At least 10 years of progressive leadership experience in nonprofit operations, with demonstrated expertise in organizational management, financial oversight, and human resources
- Proven track record managing complex operations, including budgets over \$5 million, multi-site or hybrid work environments, and teams of 20+ staff

Operational and Technical Expertise

- Strong nonprofit financial management skills, including budget development, financial analysis, cash flow management, and fiscal compliance
- Expertise in human resources management, including recruitment, performance management, staff development, and employment law compliance
- Experience managing federal, state, Tribal, foundation, and private grants, including compliance, reporting, and evaluation
- Demonstrated ability to ensure compliance with legal, regulatory, and contractual requirements, including nonprofit governance and grant compliance
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite, project management tools, and organizational software systems

Leadership and Communication

- Strategic mindset with the ability to see connections between operational decisions and mission impact

- Excellent written and oral communication skills with the ability to communicate complex information clearly to diverse audiences
- Ethical leadership grounded in high integrity, accountability, transparency, and cultural humility
- Sound judgment and decision-making capabilities, with resilience and adaptability in navigating organizational challenges

Preferred Qualifications

- Experience working with or for Tribal Nations, serving Native peoples or communities, or working with or for a Native nonprofit organization
- Deep knowledge of and respect for Tribal, Indigenous, and Native cultural contexts, protocols, and sovereignty principles
- Experience leading organizational development and change management initiatives in mission-driven environments
- Familiarity with child welfare systems, social services, or related fields

What Success Looks Like in Your First Year

- Build strong, collaborative relationships with operational staff, senior leadership, and the executive director
- Support an efficient, well-organized local office move
- Conduct a comprehensive operations assessment and implement 2–3 priority improvements to systems and processes
- Provide oversight of the FY2027 budget development process and strengthen financial planning and reporting systems
- Enhance grant compliance and administration systems to support organizational growth
- Foster organizational culture initiatives that strengthen staff engagement, wellbeing, and professional development
- Translate strategic priorities into operational objectives and ensure cross-functional alignment

Why NICWA

- Work within an organization grounded in Indigenous values and dedicated to the well-being of Native children and families
- Join a collaborative, mission-driven team committed to excellence, cultural responsiveness, and continuous learning
- Lead with autonomy and authority while working in partnership with a strong senior leadership team
- Contribute to systems change that honors Tribal sovereignty and strengthens Native communities
- Make a meaningful impact on Tribal nations, urban Indigenous communities, and the lives of Native children and families across the country

Compensation and Benefits

- Competitive salary range: \$113,923–\$160,000, commensurate with experience
- Comprehensive paid health benefits including medical, dental, and vision insurance
- Retirement plan
- Generous paid time off including vacation, sick leave, and holidays
- Professional development opportunities and support
- Hybrid work environment with flexibility and work-life balance
- Supportive, culturally grounded workplace culture

Position Details

- **Location:** Portland, Oregon (hybrid work environment with Tuesday/Wednesday in-office requirement)
- **Reports to:** Executive Director
- **Classification:** Regular, Full-time; Exempt, Salaried
- **Travel:** Up to 10% annually for organizational meetings and conferences
- **Application Deadline:** March 9, 2026
- **Expected Start Date:** May 1, 2026
- **Hiring Timeline:** Applications reviewed on a rolling basis; interviews expected March 10, 2026

How to Apply

Please submit the following materials to Operations Coordinator Andrea Zaragoza via email at andrea@nicwa.org by March 9, 2026:

- Cover letter (maximum 2 pages)
- Current resume
- Contact information for three professional references
- NICWA employment application

In your cover letter, please address:

- Your experience with Tribal communities, Native organizations, or Indigenous service systems (if applicable)
- Your approach to operational leadership and building culturally grounded organizational systems
- What draws you to NICWA's mission and how your values align with our work
- Specific examples of how you've managed complex operations and led organizational development

Questions about the position? Contact Executive Director Sarah Kastelic at skastelic@nicwa.org.

To learn more about this position, organizational culture, and benefits of working for NICWA, please join our webinar entitled “Job Opportunities at NICWA” on Thursday, February 26, 2026 at 10 a.m. PT. Register here:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_FLIEifR2QPaN8EGrDmD4g

Equal Opportunity

NICWA is committed to building a diverse team that reflects the communities we serve. We strongly encourage applications from Indigenous peoples, people of color, women, LGBTQIA2S+ individuals, people with disabilities, and individuals from all backgrounds who share our commitment to Native child welfare.

NICWA is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. Qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, sex, disability, veteran status, or any other protected status.

Join Us

If you're an experienced operations leader who is passionate about advancing Indigenous child welfare and building the organizational infrastructure that enables mission success, we want to hear from you.

Help us build the organizational foundation that supports our mission to ensure all Native children thrive in strong families and vibrant communities.