

PART II: Final Report for Fiscal Years 2000-2004

(6) Indian Child Welfare

**Children's Administration
Department of Social and Health Services**

Final Report for 00-04: Indian Child Welfare

Washington's primary Indian Child Welfare goals have been to maintain and support:

- The Indian Child Welfare Act
- Washington's Centennial Accord
- Washington's Basic Tribal-State Agreement
- Washington's Localized Tribal-State Agreements
- Washington State Indian Child Welfare Administrative Policy 7.01

CA has Indian Child Welfare (ICW) Program Managers located in the headquarters office who serve as a bridge between all the tribes in the state and CA staff. The ICW Program Manager ensures the opportunity for involvement and consultation of tribal governments, landless tribes, off-reservation American Indian organizations and American Indian participants to provide meaningful input in department relations, plans, budgets, policies, manual and operational procedures which affect American Indian people.

Quarterly Tribal-State Washington State Indian Child Welfare Administrative Policy 7.01 planning and implementation meetings are held in each of the six regions, resulting in locally produced annual plans for each region.

Washington's Indian Child Welfare manual establishes the framework for services to Native children and families.

Tribal concerns with CA largely fall into three realms: communication, policy, and funding. Specific services to and identification of Indian children are additional areas of focus, including the recruitment and licensing of Indian foster homes. CA has committed to the following steps to address these concerns:

- development of a formal protocol on on-going consultation with IPAC, Tribes and Indian Organizations,
- drafting with Tribes a list of potential licensing options that would allow Tribes to license their own homes and continue to get payment for care of children in tribal homes,
- discuss a formal review process for ICW cases, outside of the current ICW case review questions (Were efforts made to discover the child's Native American status? If the child was believed to have Native American status, was a written

- inquiry accompanied by an ancestry chart made to the Tribe(s) or the BIA if the Tribe was unknown? If the child was determined to be Native American, was the Tribe(s) contacted at the earliest possible point for planning services?), and
- continued targeted recruitment of foster homes

The federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) completed in November, 2003 noted that Washington is in substantial conformity with the factor "Agency Responsiveness to the Community" and that there is "a long and positive history of consultation and collaboration between the State and Tribes." However, the CFSR also identified a need for a more effective "government-to-government" relationship between the State and the Tribes that would include greater consultation, increased collaboration with regard to Tribal licensing, and improved monitoring of ICWA compliance. Specific steps to this end have been identified in the Strategic Plan found in section III ((1) of this Child and Family Services Plan and will also be noted in our CFSR Program Improvement Plan when finalized.

CA also commits to discussions throughout 2005-09 with Tribes on permanency protections.