

2019 Indian Child Welfare Case Review

DCYF was honored to partner with tribes, Recognized American Indian Organizations (RAIO's), Court representatives, the Alliance for Child Welfare Excellence and Casey Family Programs to conduct the 2019 ICW Case Review. DCYF's commitment to the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) requires:

- That we protect the essential tribal relations and best interests of Indian children by promoting practices designed to prevent out-of-home placement of Indian children that is inconsistent with the rights of the parents, the health, safety, or welfare of the children, or the interests of their tribe.
- That when placement away from the parent or Indian custodian is necessary, the placement reflects and honors the unique values of the child's tribal culture and is best able to assist the Indian child in establishing, developing, and maintaining a political, cultural, social and spiritual relationship with the tribe and tribal community.

The ICW Case Review was developed in collaboration with Washington State Tribes, RAIOS, the Tribal Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC) and DCYF. The first ICW Case Review was conducted in 2007. Subsequent reviews have occurred in 2009, 2012, and 2015.

The goals of the ICW Case Review include:

- Evaluating compliance with Washington State and federal ICWA. The state and federal ICWA's apply to Indian children who are a member, or eligible for membership, of a federally recognized tribe and the biological child of a member;
- Evaluating the quality of culturally competent case management for all Indian families;
- Enhancing staff development and understanding of ICW practice through utilizing the ICW Case Review Tool for training and skill building.

The ICW Case Review results lay the groundwork for improving the quality of ICW social work at the regional and the Statewide level. Specific practice areas include:

- Early identification of Indian children;
- Early engagement and ongoing collaboration with Tribes;
- Active efforts to provide services to parents and families to prevent the removal of the child, or to safely return the child home;
- Timely legal notice to Tribes of dependency, guardianship, and termination actions.

The reviews occurred in the six regions, with a random sample of 138 cases. The ICW Case Review Tool identifies ICWA requirements and the elements of sound culturally competent case management with references to the WICWA and DCYF ICW Policies and Procedures. A Statewide report and a report for each region provides a breakdown of the 43 questions in the Case Review Tool, areas of strength and areas needing improvement. Each region worked in collaboration with tribes and RAIO's to create Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Action Plans with goals that target primary areas needing improvement. The following are the goals for each region and the ICW Program Consultant/Tribal Liaison you may contact for further information about the ICW Case Review reports and Action Plans:

Region 1:

- Increase active efforts.
- Increase cultural connections for children and their families.

- Increase timely inquiry into tribal affiliation for Indian children and their families including the NAIR process.

L J Adkinson, ICW Program Consultant/Tribal Liaison for Region 1, linda.adkinson@dcyf.wa.gov

Region 2:

- Increase initial contact with fathers (parents) and asking them about tribal affiliation.
- Increase appropriate use of LICWAC.
- Increase collaboration with tribes.

Billie Patterson, ICW Program Consultant/Tribal Liaison for Region 2, billie.patterson@dcyf.wa.gov

Region 3:

- Ensure completion Indian Identity Request forms completed at the first visit/initial contact.
- Ensure completion of NAIR referrals within 10 days of indication that a child may be American Indian/Alaskan Native.
- Ensure ongoing active efforts are made to provide services in cases where a child is member or eligible for membership in a federally recognized tribe.
- Ensure tribes are contacted and asked what their placement preferences are.

Betsy Tulee, ICW Program Consultant/Tribal Liaison for Region 3, betsy.tulee@dcyf.wa.gov

Region 4:

- Improve completion rate of asking father, Indian custodian or paternal relative if the child has American Indian/Alaska Native ancestry.
- Improve compliance of timely LICWAC staffings during the time the inquiry is pending with the tribe.
- Improve ongoing efforts to encourage and support the child's participation in tribal customs and activities specific to the child's tribe when child is placed in out of home care.
- Ensure legal notice prior to the dependency fact finding, Title 13 guardianship fact finding or termination fact finding hearings.
- Ensure there is a Qualified Expert Witness for the dependency fact finding, Title 13 guardianship fact finding and termination fact finding hearings.
- Increase outreach to tribes to identify the tribe's placement preference.

Roxanne Finney, ICW Program Consultant/Tribal Liaison for Region 4, Roxanne.finney@dcyf.wa.gov

Region 5:

- Improve the completion rate of the Indian Identity Request form at the initial visit with parents.
- Improve ability to maintain the child's familial/cultural relationships.
- Increase number and availability of Qualified Expert Witnesses for Dependency, Title 13 Guardianship and Termination fact finding hearings.

Lisa Humphrey, ICW Program Consultant/Tribal Liaison for Region 5, lisa.humphrey@dcyf.wa.gov

Region 6:

- Improve ongoing active efforts to provide services to the parents including engaging and actively working with the parents to complete services.
- Improve ongoing efforts to collaborate with the tribe in case planning, including timely notification of FTDM staffings.

- Increase the occurrence of legal notification to the child's tribe and having a Qualified Expert Witness (QEW) for dependency fact-finding, guardianship fact-finding and termination hearings, and of informing the child's tribe of all dependency reviews.

Linda Vande Lune, ICW Program Consultant/Tribal Liaison for Region 6, linda.vandelune@dcyf.wa.gov

The ICW Case review has been discussed at the regional level at Tribal-State meetings. It was an agenda item at the 1/7/2020 TPAC meeting and also at the ICW Subcommittee meetings.

Please contact Robert Smith for the Statewide ICW Case Review report at robert.smith@dcyf.wa.gov.

You may also access the Statewide and the six regional ICW Case Review reports at

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/tribal-relations/icw/resources>.