

# INDIAN CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM

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The Indian Child Welfare (ICWA) Program is in place to provide training and to assist the improvement of foster parents. The ICWA program works closely with the Northern Arapaho Child Protective Services (CPS) to provide training to families to better assist them as foster parents and to help children adjust to their new surroundings and new families. ICWA also strives to work with the elders among the tribe to advise qualified staff on the proper training to the foster parents. The reasons for doing so are to better uphold the traditional upbringing that they had as children and to preserve the heritage and culture of the Northern Arapaho people, to help them understand the various issues most important, from ceremonies to "key members" of the tribe.

ICWA as well as CPS have plans that are underway to help develop cultural competent Indian foster families within the tribe. Their intentions are to build a program that will assist families in upholding the Northern Arapaho culture, to better immerse tribal members into their traditions that are almost lost and forgot. ICWA also doesn't get involved with custody issues. If the child in question is involved in a custody dispute between two parents, ICWA normally doesn't get involved and lets the Northern Arapaho CPS mediate. ICWA is federal under federal law and being that, ICWA supersedes state law when it comes to child placement.

ICWA is funded through the Bureau of Indian Affairs under entitlement grant which is based on the tribes population count. Presently, the ICWA program is currently in the process of hiring an administrative assistant to ensure that ICWA is meeting their objectives.

ICWA right now, consists of two staff members, Theresa Hanway and Jamie Moss. Theresa is a consultant who provides quality assurance to the ICWA and CPS program. She ensures that goals and objectives are met for the ICWA program and goes over their fiscal accounting. From time to time, she will report to the Northern Arapaho Business Council on ICWA's status and whether or not they are meeting their goals that were set in ICWA's funding grant.

Jamie Moss is the program's current Director. She is responsible for making sure that ICWA is meeting all their objectives. She also reviews the applications that come into the ICWA office pertaining to tribal children that are in foster care or are waiting to be placed into foster homes. The ICWA program works with children that are placed with non-Indian families and Indian families and make sure that their day to day needs are met along with their cultural needs. However, if a non-native foster family decides to move to an area where there are not many native families, ICWA steps in and tries to find the Arapaho foster child a family that is closer to or on the reservation and is Arapaho. ICWA tries to keep Arapaho foster children within the tribe and, only as a last resort option, ICWA will place a tribal child with a non-tribal family

The ICWA program has only the best interest in mind of any Northern Arapaho child in foster care and they strive to make sure that the child's needs are met. ICWA wishes only to keep the child immersed as much as possible in their culture and they don't forget who they are or where they come from.