



Tribal Law and Policy Institute

Testimony before the Commission on Native Youth

Subject Matter: Tribal capacity building to prevent and respond to child maltreatment and increase coordination of services

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What is working

- Projects where priorities are set by the tribal child welfare agency
- Projects where capacity building teams have experience providing direct services at a tribal child welfare agency
- Projects where capacity building teams have a broad range of expertise in order to meet the myriad of needs expressed
- Projects where capacity building teams have time to build relationships with the programs they serve
- Projects where tribal child welfare agencies can learn from other tribal child welfare agencies



Challenges

- Covid-19
- Staff turnover at tribal child welfare agencies
- Lack of services to coordinate
- Lack of similar capacity building services for urban service providers
- Harmful relationships with states and counties
- Turnover at states and counties
- Intergenerational and ongoing trauma
 - Need for long term projects (we didn't get here overnight, and we won't undo the trauma overnight)
- Smaller tribes with fewer resources often have highest needs
- Need for flexibility to meet community needs
- Lack of culturally grounded evidence-based interventions



Recommendations

- Include Indian Child Welfare Act provisions on relative search for placement as institutionalized practice – search both sides out to 2nd cousin
- Collect data on youth in care who exit foster care with a fictive relative as a caregiver
- Create a library of independent living skills curricula for caregivers that reflect tribal values and culture
- Include tribal youth in care experience in best practice examples
- Recognition of the housing crisis for youth as a significant factor in rates of successful transition to independence – create programming for aid like aid for incarcerated parents being released.