

Administration for Children and Families Native American Child and Youth Policy Agenda: Policy to Pathways

ACF has been working to develop a comprehensive *Native American Child and Youth Policy Agenda* to both reflect on-going work within ACF program and staff offices and to act as a blueprint for future action in support of thriving, resilient, safe, healthy, and economically secure Indian children, families, and communities. In addition, this *Policy Agenda* is intended to establish a set of policy standards for fostering connections of Native American children and youth to the relationships they have with their cultures, languages, extended families, and Native communities.

Content Highlights:

- For the purposes of the *Policy Agenda*, ‘policy’ is defined as ‘a course or principle of action.’
- The work to develop ACF’s action-oriented *Policy Agenda* is guided by the belief that we must match the intensity of our policy tools to the intensity of the problems such tools attempt to address if outcomes are to improve over the long-term.
- The *Policy Agenda* will reflect a structure for policymaking that includes key focus areas, overarching policy principles, key ACF programmatic strategies and activities supporting such principles, and illustrative examples from Native American communities reflecting promising models, approaches, strategies, and practices.
- This Policy Agenda is intended to be a living document based on a foundation of optimism drawing on the rich history of Native American peoples that reflect the inherent capacities of Native American communities not only to survive, but also to thrive.

ACF seeks the input of the ACF Tribal Advisory Committee with respect to the following:

- The key focus areas of the draft *ACF Policy Agenda* are:
 - Quality early childhood development and learning
 - The role of acts of self-determination in strengthening Native families
 - The protective role of Native American culture and language
 - Financial and economic security
 - Building a new narrative with data
- The draft policy principles under discussion are:
 - **Principle 1:** Native American Children and Youth Should Have High Quality Learning Environments Starting in Early Childhood and Continuing Through College/Career
 - **Principle 2:** Acts of Self-Determination Foster Strong Native Families and Communities
 - **Principle 3:** Native Language Holds Culture, Culture Holds Language, and Both Hold Wellness
 - **Principle 4:** Vibrant and Self-Sustaining Native American Economies Promote the Well-Being of Native Children, Youth, and Families
 - **Principle 5:** The vision of Native children and youth who are resilient, safe, healthy, and secure requires many types of evidence, including a wide range of evaluation data, descriptive research studies, performance measures, innovative practice models, financial and cost data, survey statistics, and analyses of program administrative data; all contributing to shared strengths-focused narratives relevant and useful to tribal leadership and stakeholders.