

Children's Administration

Overview of the

Indian Child Welfare

Case Review



Children's Administration is committed to:

- Preserving the cultural heritage of Indian children by ensuring that staff identify tribal children and connect these children to their Tribes through early tribal notification.
- Recognizing tribal rights and cooperating with the Tribe's efforts toward enhanced self-determination relative to child welfare matters.
- Establishing policies and procedures that protect Indian children from unnecessary removal from their families and tribal communities.

ICW Manual 01.05(B) Objectives

Overview of the Indian Child Welfare Case Review

Case Review is an important component of the Children's Administration's (CA) quality improvement practice model. Case Reviews are part of a proactive process to assist social workers, supervisors and managers to improve outcomes for children and families. The results of case review are used for quality improvement activities at a regional and statewide level.

In 2005, work began developing an Indian Child Welfare (ICW) Case Review in collaboration with Tribal partners and the Indian Policy Advisory Committee (IPAC). The first ICW case review was completed in the summer of 2007 by Tribal and State child welfare experts.

The third ICW case review is scheduled for the fall of 2012.

Purpose of the ICW Case Review Model

The goal of the ICW case review is to ensure that the rights of Indian children, their families and their Tribes are met according to the provision of the Indian Child Welfare Act and the Washington Tribal/State Agreement.

The purpose of ICW case review is to:

- ✓ Assist CA social work staff in understanding the Indian Child Welfare Act and Washington State's Tribal/State Agreement.
- ✓ Improve the quality of services to Indian children and their families.
- ✓ Collaborate with Tribes and Recognized American Indian Organizations (RAIO) to evaluate and improve statewide ICW practice.
- ✓ Provide CA management, supervisors and social workers with reliable and meaningful data on current practice through regional and statewide reports that will identify strengths and areas needing improvement.
- ✓ Facilitate quality improvement activities at the regional and statewide level.

The ICW Case Review Process

Case Sample

- ✓ A random sample of open and closed cases will be reviewed in each region. The sample is drawn from cases recently open where children and/or parents have been identified as Native American in FamLink, the new CA statewide automated child welfare information system (SACWIS).
- ✓ The review will focus on social work practice during the time the case was open in the last year.

Areas of Practice Reviewed

- ✓ The ICW review consists of 29 questions that measure compliance and quality of social work practice with Indian children and families. The questions were developed in collaboration with Tribal partners and IPAC, and are based on best practice guidelines contained in the Indian Child Welfare Act, the Tribal/State agreement and CA's ICW Manual.
- ✓ The questions cover the areas of:
 - Inquiry of Indian Status
 - Engagement of families and Tribes
 - Cultural Connections
 - Voluntary Placement
 - Dependency
 - Placement preference of the Tribe
 - Safety
 - Permanency
 - Well being

Case Reviewers

- ✓ ICW case review will be conducted by a blended team of reviewers comprised of:
 - Tribal members/representatives
 - Recognized American Indian Organization (RAIO) child welfare representatives
 - CA ICW child welfare experts
 - Central Case Review Team members

- ✓ Qualifications for both Tribal and CA Reviewers
 - Minimum of 2 years of experience working in Indian Child Welfare.
 - Demonstrated excellence in social work practice and knowledge of ICW requirements.
 - Recognized as culturally responsive and having a collaborative and open approach.
 - Availability and willingness to attend a one day training and to participate in a four day review.

Training

- ✓ All reviewers will receive a one day training regarding the ICW case review process, questions and decision rules.

Oversight and Inter-rater Reliability

- ✓ Tribal, Recognized American Indian Organization (RAIO) representatives and CA ICW experts will review and rate a case together for collaboration, consensus and ratings.
- ✓ A Central Review Team member will be available to facilitate consensus building discussion to ensure consistency and thoroughness.

Conflict of Interest

- ✓ Both Tribal and CA reviewers may volunteer to participate in reviews in their own region or other regions. However, reviewers may not review cases from their own Tribe or office.

Debrief

- ✓ At the conclusion of the on site review team members will have an opportunity to discuss and identify regional and systemic issues, and suggested improvements related to the case review process.

ICW Practice Improvement Activities

- ✓ Individual feedback sheets that identify strengths and areas needing improvement on each case reviewed will be distributed to CA management, supervisors, and the social worker assigned to the case.
- ✓ Regional reports that summarize the case review results, including both areas of strength and areas needing improvement, will be distributed to Regional CA management and social work staff.
- ✓ Based on the regional results, each region will develop ICW practice improvement goals and strategies in collaboration with the Tribes in their region.
- ✓ A Statewide report will be distributed to CA, Tribes and IPAC that provides the statewide results including comparative results from each region. The report includes statewide systemic issues that were identified in the ICW reviews as well as suggestions for addressing these issues.
- ✓ All regional reports and the statewide reports will be made available to the Tribes, RAIO's and IPAC.