

Tribal Consultation

a) Provide an update, developed after consultation with Tribal organizations, of the specific measures taken by the state in the past year to improve or maintain compliance with each of the five major components of the ICWA.

Please refer to last year's APSR on the five major components of ICWA. There have been no major changes to how the state collaborates with the Indian Centers. During the past year, the Southwest Indian Center has been invited to participate in the quarterly PIP Advisory Committee meeting. However, they have yet to attend. The Heart of America Indian Center in Kansas City was also invited and they have fully participated in the process.

The CD continues its efforts to strengthen the early identification of Indian children by utilizing the FCS Family Assessment (CD-14). The intent to increase Native American membership on the SYAB has not occurred in FY 2007. This is due to the changes within the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. During the past year, CD has discontinued the role of the Independent Living Specialists which has temporarily disrupted local area youth advisory boards which help to generate membership to the State Youth Advisory Board (SYAB). Although CD central office staff has had conversations with representatives from the Indian Centers about this interest in SYAB membership, we have not been able to get the logistical variables figured out. With the advent of the Older Youth Program and contracted Chafee service providers, the CD and the SYAB still intend to recruit Native American youth for SYAB membership in FY 2008. The ability to recruit and transport at the local level will be more effective at that time.

The following strategies still need to be implemented:

- Partnering to increase the number of Native American foster homes through targeted recruitment and retention activities.
- Inviting Indian Center representatives to STARS training to speak or train on Native American culture and educate foster parents on how to integrate Native American children into their home.
- Researching information on what percentage of Native American fathers are incarcerated and target this population with ASFA information and the Fathers for Life program to help them stay connected to their children.

b) Provide a description of the understanding, gathered from state consultation with Tribes, as to who is responsible for providing the protections for Tribal children delineated at section 422(b)(8) of the Act, whether the state or Tribal custody.

Cooperation is maintained with the state or tribal court assuming or having jurisdiction over a Native American child when providing services. Missouri courts assume secondary responsibility when the tribal court does not take

jurisdiction. In any juvenile court proceedings, the Native American custodian or tribe of the child has the right to intervene at any point. All parties to the proceeding have the right to examine all the reports, testimony, witnesses and exhibits upon which the court's decision may be based.

c) Provide information regarding consultation with Indian organizations specifically as it relates to determining eligibility for benefits and services and ensuring fair and equitable treatment for Indian youth in care under the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act.

Discussions have occurred regarding the active recruitment of Native American youth for local or the state youth advisory board. Nonetheless, strengthening both local and SYAB recruitment is an area of focus for the CD. Please refer to above section a.

All benefits, services and programs are made available to Indian youth in the state on the same basis as other youth.