

Working with Your

ICWA FAMILY PRESERVATIONIST (IFP)

A Quick Practice Guide for North Dakota Child Welfare Professionals



The IFP Program works because of trusting relationships. Strong relationships create better outcomes for Native children and families.

1 WHEN DO I INVOLVE AN IFP?

When there is **Reason to Know** that ICWA may apply **AND** the IFP Program has an MOU with the identified Tribe(s).

- ✓ Submit the ICWA Inquiry.
- ✓ CC the IFP Program central contact.
- ✓ The IFP works on behalf of the Tribe under Reason to Know while eligibility is being reviewed.
- ✓ Begin collaborating immediately.



No Release of Information (ROI) is required when the IFP Program has an MOU with the Tribe and the IFP is acting as the Tribe's authorized representative.

2 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

A REASON TO KNOW + TRIBAL MOU



B NO MOU WITH TRIBE



i The IFP provides voluntary support to the family.

A signed Release of Information (ROI) is required for any voluntary support.

3 YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Submit ICWA Inquiry within policy timeframe.
- Keep communication open and timely.
- Invite the IFP to Child & Family Team meetings.
- Share relevant case information appropriately.
- Document collaboration with the IFP.
- Coordinate Active Efforts.
- Collaborate with the IFP and the Tribe to identify preferred placement options.
- The IFP strengthens ICWA implementation and outcomes—it does not replace case management.

QUICK TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS



COMMUNICATE EARLY AND OFTEN
Consistent, open communication helps build trust and clarity.



INVITE THE IFP BEFORE DECISIONS ARE FINALIZED
Early involvement leads to better information and better outcomes.



ASK FOR CULTURAL GUIDANCE AND PERSPECTIVE
The IFP brings valuable cultural knowledge that strengthens decisions and outcomes.



SHARE UPDATES AND INFORMATION REGULARLY
Keep the IFP informed throughout the case so they can best support the family.



VIEW THE IFP AS PART OF THE CHILD & FAMILY TEAM
Strong teamwork with the IFP, Tribe, family, and partners creates the best outcomes.



Strong partnerships create positive change.

It is not the program that works—
IT IS THE PARTNERSHIP.



Strong relationships between IFPs, Tribal Nations, child welfare professionals, and families create the conditions where accurate ICWA implementation and better outcomes become possible.

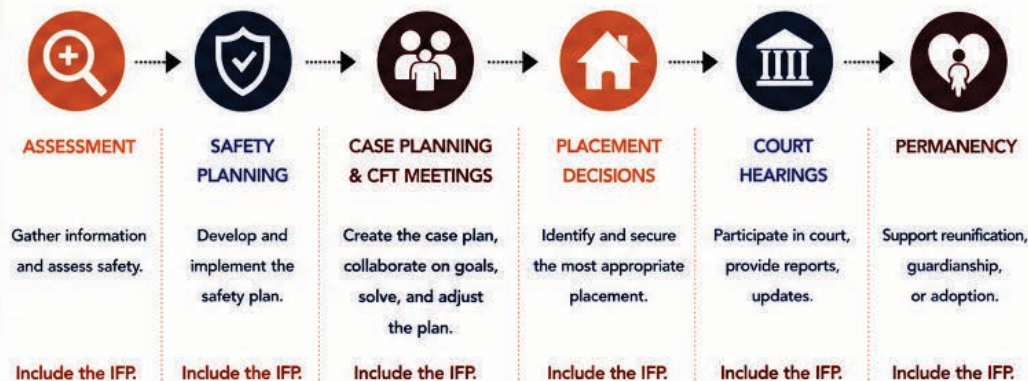
4 HOW THE IFP SUPPORTS YOUR WORK

					
1. ICWA IMPLEMENTATION	2. TRIBAL COMMUNICATION	3. FAMILY ENGAGEMENT	4. ACTIVE EFFORTS PLANNING	5. RELATIVE & PREFERRED PLACEMENT	6. CULTURAL GUIDANCE
Supports accurate ICWA compliance at every stage, including court.	Connects with Tribes and shares important information.	Helps engage families and strengthens relationships.	Collaborates on active efforts strategies and service planning.	Helps identify relatives and preferred placement options.	Provides cultural knowledge and perspective to inform decisions.



The IFP strengthens ICWA implementation and outcomes—it does not replace case management.

5 PARTNER THROUGHOUT THE LIFE OF THE CASE



Include the IFP early. Include the IFP often. Better outcomes start with partnership.

6 WHAT THE IFP DOES NOT DO

- ❌ Conduct CPS investigations.
- ❌ Make removal decisions.
- ❌ Serve as legal counsel.
- ❌ Make placement decisions.
- ❌ Provide case management or transportation.



The IFP contributes to these conversations and provides Tribal perspective and guidance.

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