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Sent: Wednesday, March 23, 2016 1:54 PM
Subject: 2016 ICWA and Tribal Personnel Survey Report

Categories: Taneeka

Alaska Citizen Review Panel - 2016 ICWA and Tribal Personnel Survey Report

Second year in a row, a group of ICWA workers and other tribal personnel indicated that child protection in Alaska's communities involves multiple institutions. Local ICWA offices, local school, clinic, and public safety are all important components of their local child protection along with the state's Office of Children Services (OCS). They rated the local child protection at 6 out of 10, almost the same rating as last year. These are among the findings from a survey of a group of ICWA workers and other tribal child protection personnel that attended a presentation by the Alaska Citizen Review Panel at the annual BIA Providers' Conference. Key findings from the report are:

- Local child protection services (CPS) system is not a single-institution system. Most respondents identified at least two different institutions. Majority of them identified local ICWA office and the OCS as constituents of local CPS system. More importantly, local school, clinic, and public safety are also identified as important components of the local CPS system, indicating the need for a structured, multi-institutional approach to child protection at a local level.
- The overall mean rating of the local CPS system, as defined by respondents in their respective communities, was 6 on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being the worst and 10 being the best). This rating differed by region, with respondents from Northern and Southcentral regions scoring above the overall average, and Western and Southeast regions scoring below the average.
- Respondents that identified four institutions as part of their local CPS system rated their local CPS system highest. In general, respondents who identified fewer institutions as part of their local CPS systems also rated their local CPS system at a lower level.
- While Tribal State Collaborative Group (TSCG) has been instrumental in many key developments to foster and improve relationships between tribes and OCS, respondents of this survey did not feel very involved in TSCG. Almost 40% of the respondents were unfamiliar with TSCG, more than 60% never participated nor are participating in TSCG, and almost 70% felt that TSCG can be improved in some ways.
- While Initial Assessment (IA) is an important step in a child protection case case, majority of the respondents did not feel they interacted with the OCS workers frequently during IA. While respondents indicated that they interact most frequently on Administrative Reviews and Relative Search, these interactions are not always collaborative.

The full report can be accessed at <http://crpalaska.org/>. Please contact Ellen Ganley (ellen@iialaska.com) for any further questions.

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Alaska Citizen Review Panel

The Alaska Citizen Review Panel evaluates the policies, procedures, and practices of state and local child protection agencies for effectiveness in discharging their child protection responsibilities. The Panel is mandated through CAPTA 1997 (P.L. 104-235), and enacted through AS 47.14.205. For more information visit www.crpalaska.org.