

A photograph of a man with a mustache, wearing a blue shirt, kissing a baby on the cheek. The baby is wearing a pink shirt and a black headband with a bow. The background is blurred, showing some foliage. The image is split diagonally by a black and orange geometric shape.

Housing and Services to Preserve Native American Families with Child Welfare Involvement

Themes and Recommendations from
Native American Partners

Updated October 2025



BACKGROUND

Building on decades of policies aiming to relocate, assimilate, and exterminate Native American people, President Andrew Jackson signed into law the Indian Removal Act in 1830 that opened the doors for Native American children to be easily removed from their homes. Beginning in 1860, over 357 Boarding Schools were created across the nation aimed at “assimilating” Native Children by divorcing them from their culture, heritage, language, social supports, foods, and spirituality, while also removing them from their families. In 1891, the U.S. Congress made attendance at these schools mandatory for Native children.¹ The repercussions of these policies that Native people have been subjected to since Europeans came to America reveals itself as disproportionately poor outcomes across almost every negative social indicator.

Nationally, American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) children make up 1% of all children in the United States, yet they are 2.7% of all children in foster care.² And 9% of all children in foster care (or 19,406 children) were in foster care due to their family’s housing status in 2021 (AFCARS.) One national study found that AI/AN children are two times more likely to be investigated, two times more likely to have substantiated allegations of abuse and neglect, and four times more likely to be placed in foster care than their white counterparts.³ This is especially true for the child welfare system in the State of Minnesota. In December 2021, the National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) released a report showing that in 2019, roughly 26% of children in Minnesota foster care identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native. That same year, only 1.7% of children in the state identified as AI or AN. The report found that Native children were overrepresented in the foster care system at 15 times the rate of their non-Native peers. Variances between Native and non-Native children are likely even higher, as NICWA has found that Native children are routinely undercounted in the child welfare system. Overall, Native children in 2019 in Minnesota were 16.4 times more likely than white children to be in out-of-home care, according to a 2022 report by MN Office of the Legislative Auditor.⁴

Partnering with Tribal Nations and Native people to apply the strengths of Native culture along with their expertise is critical to counteract the trauma and negative outcomes experienced by so many Native families due to child welfare involvement. Leading with Native voice and centering power within Native communities to connect systems and establish interventions, services, and resources that are culturally responsive and adaptive for tribal communities is

¹ [A century of trauma at U.S. boarding schools for Native American children | National Geographic](#)

² [NICWA 11 2021-Disproportionality-Fact-Sheet.pdf](#)

³ [The AFCARS Report #29 \(hhs.gov\)](#)

⁴ [Child Protection Removals and Reunifications](#)

necessary and required to change child welfare and housing systems, to ensure that all families have the same chance to succeed, and to create the freedom and support for Native families to thrive safely together.

In the summer and fall of 2022, CSH (Corporation for Supportive Housing) and Casey Family Programs hosted a virtual talking circle and a series of subsequent conversations with Native American leaders, service providers, and families from across the United States that work in the fields of child welfare, Indian Child Welfare Act, and supportive housing. These conversations were led by Patty Beech Consulting, and focused on how to better connect quality, affordable housing and supportive services to Native American families who are at-risk of being separated or who have child welfare system involvement, and are facing homelessness or housing instability.

The key goals of this series of conversations were to:

- Better understand the biggest housing and support needs facing Native American and Alaska Native families connected to child welfare systems of states, counties, and Tribal Nations;
- Listen to expertise on how the Indian Child Welfare Act, Tribal sovereignty, and Native culture can be connected and incorporated into supportive housing that responds to the needs of child welfare involved families;
- Learn from Native American families to better understand how Native strengths and assets should be incorporated into housing and support interventions;
- Continue initial exploration on growing connections between Tribal and non-Tribal child welfare and housing systems to create housing interventions for Native families involved in child welfare that consider the unique cultural and sovereignty aspects of tribal nations and their members living both on and off reservation, as well as for Native American families without Tribal enrollment.

The following summarizes the overall themes from the talking circle and subsequent conversations. Direct quotes and recommendations from participants are included to give context and life to each theme. For a full process report and narrative of contributions from talking circle participants, please see Appendix B with the report written by Mary Riegert and Patty Beech with Patty Beach Consulting.



Talking Circle Overall Themes

- 1. Federal, State, and local solutions must be grounded in Native American culture and community, and center Native voices from both on and off tribal land.**
- 2. Child Welfare and housing systems must partner with Native American families and communities to identify, understand, and address the underlying causes of historical and generational trauma, which drives the large representation of Native American children involved in child welfare and homeless systems.**
- 3. Barriers that prevent Native communities and families from accessing the resources they need to thrive must be removed.**



Participant Voices and Recommendations for System Improvements by Theme

Federal, State, and local solutions must be grounded in Native American culture and community, and center Native voices from both on and off tribal land.

Native American people with experience of child welfare involvement should be at the table when creating new or changing policies and programs for Native American families and children. Native American families should be involved from the very beginning of the design and implementation of programs.

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“Community- and tribal-based solutions are needed to help and support families, acknowledging that there are differences among tribal communities in what these solutions may be.”

*“Not all Native American people are enrolled tribal members. **Non-enrolled Native American people cannot be left behind.**”*

*“Child Welfare systems said they were ‘saving’ Native American children during the boarding school era. **This has not changed except for where Native American children are placed.** No longer at boarding schools, but in predominantly white foster homes and group homes.”*

*“When we find housing for children that **is removed from their culture, that is essentially assimilation.**”*

Recommendations:

- 1. Native families’ voices must be centered in all policy and program creation.**
 - Native parents, families, and children with child welfare involvement and housing instability experiences must be included in all policy and program decisions.
 - Create pathways and opportunities for Native parents, families, and children to advocate for changes to the child welfare and housing systems.
 - Identify ways to share power and to support Native families in this work.
- 2. Native families must be meaningfully included in case planning; case plans should focus on reunification.**

- Create individualized case plans for, and with, families. Focus on the main issues that led to child removal.
- Use a whole-family approach, in which wrap-around services include the whole family and foster parents. This would be a model where the foster parent becomes a support to the whole family.
- Design foster placements to create natural, cultural supports instead of "adoption" and being separate from birth parents.
- Use positive reinforcement, not shaming. Change focus away from "what you did wrong."
- Ensure parent advocates and other supports are available and in place, with the goal that all parents understand the process, what is happening to them and their children when they are moving through the child welfare system; ensure that parents understand what resources and advocates are available and can easily access them.

3. Federal systems and definitions must reflect Native American culture and consider specific needs of Native American nations.

- Homeless Continuums of Care (CoCs) should embed on-going training about Native American history, culture, and Native-centered housing strategies.
- The HUD homeless definition should be updated to reflect homelessness in tribal areas.
- Support and help build a Native American Coordinated Entry assessment for families. Include basic core concepts but let each Native American community design it to align with their community goals and to ensure access to culturally specific housing resources.



Child welfare and housing systems must partner with Native American families and communities to identify, understand, and address the underlying causes of historical and generational trauma, which drives the large representation of Native American children involved in child welfare and homeless systems.

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“It is only with marginalized people where the expectation is complete sobriety at all times in order to be deserving of having your children.”

“States and counties seem to always have money to put Native American youth in residential treatment facilities – let’s instead use that money for family and youth housing and services.”

“How can we work to surround a family to keep kids out of care? It’s too easy to put kids in care – get a judge to sign off and remove kids. It’s more work to keep kids in the home”

“Housing is ultimately what’s going to bring families back together and keep them together.”

Recommendations:

- 1. Provide training on Native American history and the impact of historical trauma on people, family systems, and communities.**
 - In states or counties that have specialized ICWA workers, provide them training to better understand generational and historical trauma, and the effects and long-term impacts of past decisions, including behavioral and emotional connections between generations.
 - Use trauma-informed professional titles; stop using titles like “social worker” and “Indian child welfare worker” as these titles are associated with historical trauma, family separation, and historical mistrust.
- 2. Create community-based commissions to review allegations of discrimination in policy and practice, and then provide remediation/solutions to ensure fairness.**
- 3. Build on the work and education underway to ensure that poverty and homelessness are not misunderstood for neglect, especially for the populations most significantly impacted by child welfare and homeless systems.**

4. Ensure that state and local child welfare and housing agencies understand the HUD regulations that can be used to promote family stability, help keep families together, and decrease length of family separation.

- Ensure Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) follow HUD regulations and have the policies and practices that support parents to access a family-size unit when that family is working towards reunification.
- HUD regulations state that a child temporarily in foster care is to be considered part of the household and included when calculating unit size based on PHA subsidy standards. Ensure Public Housing Authorities have the knowledge, policies, and practices to prevent families from losing their housing voucher if a child is temporarily removed from the home.
- Promote policies and practices that allow for and encourage a child to stay in their own home when their parent/caregiver attends in-patient treatment; for example, extended family, kin, or foster parents move into the child's home while their parent is temporarily accessing in-patient programs.



Barriers that prevent Native communities and families from accessing the resources they need to thrive must be removed.

Current housing and services resources must be increased and barriers to funding must be removed so Tribal Nations and Native people can more easily access the necessary resources to fully respond to the needs in their communities.

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“Culturally specific, permanent supportive housing is key. More money is needed from legislation and from tribes.”

*“Serious activism is needed to allow **all Native American people to utilize and access housing resources.**”*

*“**Tribes can serve their people the best.** Tribes are begging for resources for their people. Fund tribes to provide housing.”*

*“National language has changed and is being led by tribal communities – there is finally a link between health care, mental health, and housing because of Covid. **Tribes and Native American people should lead this conversation with this language,** this basic tenet – children should not lose family because they don’t have housing.”*

*“Remove restrictions on funding sources. Tribes and Native American-led organizations can do it better for Native American people. **Tribes need the same access to funding sources.**”*

Recommendations:

1. Build or create long-term, affordable housing that allows and promotes cultural considerations.

- Build multi-generational housing and houses with multiple separate living areas to help keep families together. Houses owned by Tribal members create financial security and assets to be passed down to the children.
- Advocate for zoning and policy changes to allow for multi-generational housing.
- Remove barriers to leveraging federal housing vouchers/resources to support multi-generational housing. Also, promote culturally responsive flexibility around family composition that allows children to remain in their homes through temporarily or permanently shifting the adult family members.

2. Amend the federal Fair Housing Law so it is interpreted and implemented with its original intent of fairness and equality.

- As it currently stands, the Fair Housing Law is a significant barrier to creating culturally specific housing for youth and families. Currently, it is not legal to designate housing specifically for Native Americans. This law, or the reading of it, must be changed.

3. Decrease barriers to accessing housing that significantly impact Native Americans.

- Advocate for tenant selection policies that screen-in people who may have poor credit, past evictions, and/or felonies. *“Just because they have a felony, it doesn’t mean they don’t deserve or can’t fulfill the responsibilities of a renter; and it doesn’t make them bad parents.”*
- Identify systemic and programmatic policies and practices that result in Native American people being less likely to be referred to permanent supportive housing; then make the necessary changes to correct.
- Identify systemic and programmatic policies and practices that result in Native American people being likely to experience homelessness when exiting housing programs; then make changes to correct.



Commitment to Action

In an effort to ensure and promote that participants' voices are reflected in the report, as well as the intent of sharing what was discussed, talking circle and interview participants reviewed a first round of summary information and provided reflections and additional commentary, which were incorporated into this current version of the report.

CSH will move through an internal process to reflect on and discuss the themes and recommendations of the report to further explore CSH's role as a partner organization and to identify ways CSH can shift power to center Native voices and Native-led work around supportive housing and policy education. CSH will use our platform to educate policy makers, promote systems change, and partner with Native families to create and expand opportunities to improve housing and services for Native families across the country. We will share this report with our national, state, and county partners to determine which actions they can commit to working on. In one year, we will reconnect with our Talking Circle participants to report on what actions CSH has taken, with the commitment that this report and the recommendations provided will not sit on a shelf of inaction while Native families continue to be harmed by the child welfare system.



APPENDIX A

Examples of Native American Programs and Approaches

Housing Approaches:

Maricopa County, Arizona

- Created a Native American Coordinated Entry System (CES) to provide greater access to culturally specific housing resources for Native American families and individuals. This resolves Fair Housing Law barriers because in Arizona, Native American is not a race; it is a legal designation.
- Native American Connections has created approximately 600 units of supportive and affordable housing for families. They are currently converting motel rooms and an Assisted Living facility to provide transitional housing for youth.

Alaska Tribes

- A full-family approach to foster care, in which the entire family is in foster care together, is being implemented by Alaska tribes.

The Lumii Tribe; Washington

- Created Sche'lang'en Village, a novel housing arrangement for parents seeking to reunite with their children in foster care, as well as housing homeless families, those overcoming addictions, and women fleeing domestic violence.

The Native American Housing Circle; Denver, CO

- Originally an outgrowth of the Denver Indian Family Resource Center, the Native American Housing Circle is a Native-led collaborative working toward culturally responsive housing to support stability and healing for both individuals and families across the greater Denver area, with a new intergenerational supportive and affordable housing under development.

Health and Mental Health Approaches

Indian Women's Resource Center; Minneapolis, MN

- Healing Journey is a program that provides cultural activities to participants as an incentive to take steps to improve their health. Substance abuse decreased as the participants learned about their culture, practiced their traditions, and developed relationships.

American Indian Community Development Center (AICDC); Minneapolis, MN

- Received a grant to hire a mental health practitioner to work with a street outreach team. No insurance coverage is required, and the practitioner can meet with a person at the time of their mental health incident.

Boise Forte Band; Minnesota

- Implemented therapeutic parent therapy. This is an approach that engages both parents and their children in therapy.

Supportive Service and Foster Care Approaches

Perkins, Oklahoma

- Lions Meadows of Hope is a licensed foster care community providing family foster care homes for sibling groups and boys and girls of all ages.

St. Paul, Minnesota

- Ain Dah Yung has the Oyate Nawajin program that is designed to keep American Indian families together and strong by providing the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to provide a safe, stable, environment for their children. The program will help families navigate the IWCA system, if needed.

Unnamed Tribal community

- One tribal community uses their vocational rehabilitation services to assist tribal members coming from incarceration or the child welfare system. They help them gain the knowledge to change housing, get a job, maintain housing, and be self-sufficient.

APPENDIX B

Native American Talking Circle and Interview Process with Detailed Participant Conversation Narrative

PARTNERS

The Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) engages broader systems to invest in solutions that help people thrive. CSH believes that helping to connect systems and establishing housing and service resources that are culturally responsive and adaptive for tribal and Native American communities is essential to ensuring family supportive housing solutions can be successful for Native American and Alaskan Native families. CSH coordinated this project to foster collaboration to identify needs, assess promising approaches, and develop recommendations for housing and services for Native American families with children who are involved with child welfare systems.

Casey Family Programs' Indian Child Welfare Program works on national and tribal initiatives that aim to strengthen tribal nations' capacity to keep children healthy, safe, and connected with their families, communities, and cultures. Casey Family Programs' Indian Child Welfare Program partners with American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and Native American leaders to support the development and administration of effective and culturally responsive child welfare services.

Mary Riegert-Soyring is the Tribal Consultant for this planning process. Mary is a first-generation descendant of the White Earth Band of Ojibwe. Mary brings extensive knowledge of the issues of human services, homelessness, especially those that affect Native people and was instrumental in establishing the Minnesota Tribal Collaborative to End Homelessness. Mary assists tribal nations in securing more equitable resources around homeless funding and ensuring that tribal voices are heard when decisions that affect Native American people are made.

On this project, Mary worked with Patty Beech-Dziuk at Patty Beech Consulting. Patty uses her expertise and passion to expand resources to address the housing and supportive service needs of people in rural and tribal areas, and to increase the capacity of people and organizations to improve outcomes. The roles of Mary and Patty in this project were to:

- Convene a national team to create recommendations leading to a housing/child welfare framework
- Identify key leaders/experts as potential members of the national senior team, tribal leaders, Native American child welfare and/or housing experts, families, etc.
- Draft an actionable framework report and accompanying presentation materials that incorporate and synthesize themes from talking circle meeting and interviews, including a set of recommendations and potential next steps for participants to review

INFORMATION GATHERING OPPORTUNITIES

TALKING CIRCLE

In June 2022, tribal leaders, Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), supportive housing experts, and other advocates participated in a virtual talking circle to discuss the issues related to supportive housing for Native American families with child welfare involvement. Participants spoke freely about their experiences with the child welfare system, supportive housing, and important cultural and historical considerations in this work. The following questions were shared as prompts for the conversations.

- What are you seeing as some of the significant gaps or unmet needs related to housing when Native American family involvement with child welfare?
- What do families and tribes know that they need and how might this differ from what agencies and policy makers may think they need?
- Have you found there to be significant barriers to creating or helping families access housing paired with services? Are there any program or policy change ideas to help alleviate these barriers?
- For those that have seen some success with housing and services to help families prevent or end child welfare involvement:
 - What is it about such approaches that have made them work – that positively influence a family's experience and pathway forward?
 - Are there specific community and or cultural arrangements? How are needs related to trauma, chronic stress, behavioral health approached through partnerships, program design, flexibilities or approach?
 - How have you seen the benefits of partnerships and collaboration support housing success for children and families?
- How can child welfare agencies, supportive housing agencies, tribes, courts, and others working to support families, improve their existing work or do something differently?
- Do you have any ideas for things that are needed; approaches to try; partnerships to forge, etc.?

FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEWS

After the virtual talking circle, Mary Riegert-Soyring and Patty Beech-Dziuk conducted interviews to gather additional feedback and recommendations, and provide an opportunity for a smaller group discussion. The interviews included discussion on these questions:

- Have you found there to be significant barriers to creating housing paired with services, or helping families access housing paired with services? If so, please describe.
- How do these barriers differ from what outside agencies and policymakers believe? What program or policy changes are needed to remedy these barriers?
- If you have seen success with housing and services to help families prevent or end child welfare involvement, what is it about such approaches that have made them work? I am looking for specific examples of things that you may have witnessed that have positively influenced a family's experience and pathway forward.
- As child welfare agencies, supportive housing agencies, Tribes, courts, and others work to support Native families, how can they improve their existing work together and/or should they be doing something differently?

HOUSING, CHILD WELFARE AND NATIVE AMERICAN FAMILIES: CONTINUED CONVERSATION

On September 14, 2022, individuals who were invited to the talking circle and who participated in the interviews were invited to a follow-up conversation. The purpose of the meeting was to review the initial summary and themes collected from the talking circle and interviews and to discuss if the initial report accurately reflects the content important to the participants. The questions that were asked were:

1. What needs further attention?
2. What are the bright spots to share and advocate for?
3. Are there housing strategies or frameworks to pursue?
4. How would you like to use this information?
5. What role, if any, could CSH and Casey Family Programs play with advocacy, policy change, or supportive housing?

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

Native American and Tribal leaders identified system concerns with child welfare and housing systems, as well as successful approaches to meeting the needs of Native American families. They identified potential innovations to better support families with child welfare involvement and ways to improve access to housing and supports for those families with child welfare involvement.

- **Important Issues to Center in the Work & Discussion**
 - It is critical to understand historical and generational trauma, and how this shows up at systems and personal/people levels.
 - Underlying inequality must be acknowledged and addressed.
 - Crises can be prevented. Currently the child welfare system is in reactive mode.
 - Community- and tribal-based solutions are needed to help families. Things are done differently in different communities. Follow what works in communities.
 - Permanent supportive housing is key. More money is needed from legislation and from tribes.
 - The current housing affordability crisis is increasing homelessness and is leading to children being removed from their families.
 - Cultural housing is lacking. *“When we find housing for a household that is far from their culture, that is essentially assimilation.”*
 - People need to be treated as human beings. *“Programs treat clients as children and then get mad when they are not grateful”.*
 - The expectation of complete sobriety for Native parents is unfair. *“It is only with marginalized people where the expectation is complete sobriety at all times in order to be deserving of having your children.”*
 - Services work. Foster homes are not services. Children need services, too.
 - Not all Native American people are enrolled tribal members. Non-enrolled Native American people cannot be left behind.
 - Community is important in Native American culture and in supporting Native American families.

- **System Concerns**

- Native American people need to be at the table when decisions are being made.
- Must think outside the box and must include people most impacted by the child welfare and housing systems. Original policies were written by people without lived experiences, by people who don't have "boots on the ground" experiences.
- Our systems are created around negative perceptions.
- Child Welfare systems said they were "saving" Native American children during the boarding school era. This has not changed except for where Native American children are placed. No longer at boarding schools, but in non-native foster homes and group homes.
- At all levels, community involvement is needed. People need to be heard.
- Systems need to understand and address historical and generational trauma.
- States and counties seem to always have money to put Native American youth in residential treatment facilities – let's instead use that money for family and youth housing and services.

- **Housing System Concerns:**

- The Fair Housing Law is a huge barrier for youth and families.
- People who need permanent supportive housing are being given Rapid Rehousing (RRH) vouchers instead. In Arizona, it was found that black and brown communities were given RRH more than PSH and had high rates of homelessness when the vouchers expired.
- Homeless Continuums of Care (CoCs) need to be culturally sensitive. Serious advocacy is needed to allow all Native American people and tribally enrolled people to utilize and access housing resources.
- Tribes can serve their people the best. Tribes are begging for resources for their people. Fund tribes to provide housing.
- The HUD homeless definition needs to be changed to reflect what homelessness looks like in tribal areas.
- How can Housing Choice Vouchers be used in multi-generational housing? Allow families and housing authorities to add family members and friends that help keep children at home.
- The norm/standard of stable housing may not be the "right way" to look at it. Being unsheltered doesn't mean you can't be a good parent. There are steps that can be taken before there is adequate permanent housing.

- **Historical and Current Child Welfare Systems Create Additional Trauma**

- Taking the children away is the non-native way of doing things.
- Teach Native American history accurately. Teach Minnesota history accurately.
- Parents lose access to family housing when children are removed. They are unable to get family housing without their children but need the housing to get the children returned.
- Overcrowding in poor quality housing on reservations increased COVID deaths among Native people and led to a high number of orphaned children.
- We invest in stadiums, but we don't prioritize human beings.
- How can we work to surround a family to keep kids out of care? It's too easy to put kids in care – get a judge to sign off and pick up kids. It's more work to keep kids in the home.

STRATEGIES AND INNOVATIONS TO EXPLORE FURTHER

- National language being used to link health care, mental health, and housing has changed, this language change has been led by tribal communities moving through Covid. Tribes and Native American people should continue to lead this conversation with this language, this basic tenet – children should not lose family because they don't have housing.

- Tribal licensing for ICWA staff, so that tribes can find employees that meet their needs in terms of education, knowledge, and experience.
- Create positions within the child welfare system that have fewer educational or professional requirements, such as parent allies.
- Urban offices and/or Tribal ICWA workers embedded in urban areas to serve tribal families that live in these areas.
- Peer Supports/Family Mentorship. Parents who have been part of the system can provide ongoing support to families in the system.
- When reunification is a goal, allow parents to qualify for a family unit, rather than be on a long list of single individuals waiting for a housing unit.
- Increase housing and services that support parents with children who have special medical needs, so families can reunify and parents have the support and advocacy to care for children with medical needs.
- Create a full-family approach to foster care, in which wraparound services are for the whole family and the foster parent becomes a support to the whole family. Design foster homes to create natural supports instead of "adoption" and being separated from birth parents.
- Use positive reinforcement not shaming. The current focus is on "what did you do wrong?" People involved with child protection can be in compliance, but the focus is on the one time they fall short.. Parents can make six appointments and miss two, and the focus is on the two.
- In states or counties that have specialized ICWA workers, provide training to better understand generational and historical trauma and the direct effect of how past decisions are passed down, behaviorally and emotionally, between generations.
- Explore challenges with implementing voluntary services within supportive housing that may prevent those most in need from accessing services.
- People had a break from paying rent during COVID. They were also protected from rising rents. This created housing stability that was good for families.
- Get a Medicaid code for substance abuse treatment that allows families to stay together. _
- Change HUD's definition of homelessness to reflect what the lack of housing looks like among Native Americans.
- Create individualized case plans, for and with, families. Focus on the main issues that led to child removal.
- Explore different models of housing for Native youth, like dorm facilities. Housing units don't end homelessness for youth. They must have basic skills and services as well.
- Change titles. When families hear the words, "social worker" or "Indian Child Welfare worker," the wall goes up due to historical trauma.
- Tribes and Native American-led organizations do it better for Native American people. Tribes need the same access to funding sources. Remove all these restrictions. Tribes and Native Americans do it better for Native American people.
- Work to change perceptions of who Native American people are. Why is it harder for tribal communities to get funding for more housing? How do we change systems so that tribes can access and utilize funding for more housing? *"Nothing to us, without us."*
- There are community-based commissions to review when discrimination is playing out. Consider creating a community-based system-level commission to address fairness in policy solutions. It's an example of a local approach to federal policies.
- More advocacy around property managers/landlords accepting people with felonies is needed. *"Just because they have a felony, it doesn't mean they don't deserve or can't fulfill the responsibilities of a renter; it doesn't make them bad parents."*

- Find ways to keep children in the house when the parent must leave; create options that allow for both temporarily or permanently supporting children in their own homes with their own families.
- Support and help build a Native American Coordinated Entry assessment for families. Include basic core concepts but let each individual Tribe or Native American community change it for their community.
- Improve opportunities for people with felonies to live in permanent supportive housing. Allow people with felonies to live in housing if they have met all their conditions. Look into a housing applicant's history to see what really happened with the felony to determine if they are a current risk to others.
- Knock down barriers – back rent, old utility bills, etc., so families can secure and maintain housing.
- Build multi-generational housing, not apartments but actual homes. Houses with multiple separate living areas will keep families together. Houses owned by Tribal members create financial security and assets to be passed down to the children.
- Because knowledge is power, it is important that parents have knowledge about child welfare and housing, especially when the system is rushing through a housing or child case. CSH and Casey Family Programs can support better education for Native families involved in the child welfare system.
- Host a Summit, a gathering with parents about what is actually happening to them, giving parents the power to guide and to answer the questions discussed in the talking circle and interviews. Let families advocate for change and tell their stories. Native Americans with lived experience of both housing instability and child welfare need a seat at the table.
- Casey Family Programs and CSH have a seat at the table in leadership positions and need to lobby for legislation to increase funding for housing.
- Areas for advocacy include: dedicated funding for Tribes, zoning and policy changes to allow for multi-generational housing, accurate definition of American Indian homelessness, tenant selection policies that screen more people in, and changes to policies so homelessness alone does not lead to foster care for Native children.

HIGHLIGHTING BRIGHT SPOTS: EXAMPLES OF PROGRAMS, LOCAL SYSTEMS AND APPROACHES TO LEARN FROM

- Native American Coordinated Entry System (CES) in Maricopa County, AZ. This is possible because Native American is not a race; it is a legal designation.
- A full-family approach to foster care is being implemented by Alaska tribes. The whole family is in foster care together.
- Healing Journey was a program at the Indian Women's Resource Center in Minneapolis. Cultural activities were offered to participants as an incentive to take steps to improve their health. Substance abuse decreased as the participants learned about their culture, practiced their traditions, and developed relationships.
- Fair tenant selection policies that do not deny housing for all felonies is an approach being used to get families into supportive housing units for families; for example, showing or documenting the steps that person has taken to address and overcome the issue in background check. Create a certificate/document showing issue has been addressed and create a policy that landlords cannot deny application for that background issue when applicant shows certificate.
- Therapeutic parent therapy is an approach that engages both parents and their children in therapy. The Bois Forte Band in Minnesota will be implementing therapeutic parent therapy.

- Lions Meadows of Hope is a licensed foster care community providing family foster care homes for sibling groups and boys and girls of all ages at its campus located in Perkins, OK.
- In Maricopa County, Native American Connections is converting motel rooms and an Assisted Living facility to provide transitional housing for youth.
- One tribal community uses their vocational rehabilitation services to assist tribal members coming from incarceration or the child welfare system. They help them gain the knowledge to change housing, get a job, maintain housing, and be self-sufficient.
- AICDC in Minneapolis received a grant to hire a mental health practitioner to work with a street outreach team. No insurance coverage is required, and the practitioner can meet with a person at the time of their mental health incident.
- Ain Dah Yung has the Oyate Nawajin program that is designed to keep American Indian families together and strong by providing the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to provide a safe, stable, environment for their children. The program will help families navigate the IWCA system, if needed.
- The Lumii tribe created Sche'lang'en Village, a novel housing arrangement for parents seeking to reunite with their children in foster care, homeless families, those overcoming addictions, and women fleeing domestic violence.

APPENDIX C

Participants

TALKING CIRCLE PARTICIPANTS

- Sheri Riemers, Ain Day Yung Center, St. Paul, MN
- Patrice Kunesh, Pehin Haha Consulting, Minneapolis, MN
- Taylor McClellan, Oklahoma Department of Health, Oklahoma City, OK
- Mike Goze, American Indian Community Development, Minneapolis, MN
- Dede Devine, Native American Connections, Phoenix, AZ
- Deanna Reder, American Indian Community Housing Organization, Duluth, MN
- Nadja Jones, Tribal Law and Policy Institute, Portland, OR
- Pamela Hughes, Bois Forte Human Services, Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, Tower, MN
- Maricella Pacheco, Ain Day Yung Center, St. Paul, MN
- Mary Riegert-Soyring, Tribal Consultant, Waubesa, WI
- Patty Beech-Dziuk, Patty Beech Consulting, Duluth, MN
- Amy Stetzel, CSH, Apple Valley, MN
- Andrew Johnson, CSH, San Diego, CA

INTERVIEW DISCUSSION PARTICIPANTS

- Dede Devine, Native American Connections, Phoenix, AZ
- Deanna Reder, American Indian Community Housing Organization, Duluth, MN
- Patina Park, Tribal State Relations Office, Governor Walz & Lt. Governor Flanagan, St. Paul, MN
- Danielle Goodwin, CSH, Seattle, WA
- Sheri Riemers, Ain Day Yung Center, St. Paul, MN
- Pamela Hughes, Bois Forte Human Services, Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, Tower, MN

FOLLOW-UP MEETING TO REVIEW INITIAL SUMMARY

- Dede Devine, Native American Connections, Phoenix, AZ
- Deanna Reder, American Indian Community Housing Organization, Duluth, MN
- Sheri Riemers, Ain Day Yung Center, St. Paul, MN
- Mike Goze, American Indian Community Development, Minneapolis, MN
- Mike Thompson, White Earth Nation, White Earth, MN
- Lauretta Blakely, White Earth Nation, White Earth, MN
- Danielle Goodwin, CSH, Seattle, WA
- Amy Stetzel, CSH, Apple Valley, MN
- Leah Lindstrom Rhea, CSH, Minneapolis, MN
- Mary Riegert-Soyring, Tribal Consultant, Waubesa, WI
- Patty Beech-Dziuk, Patty Beech Consulting, Duluth, MN