

Navajo Indian Child Welfare Act Program

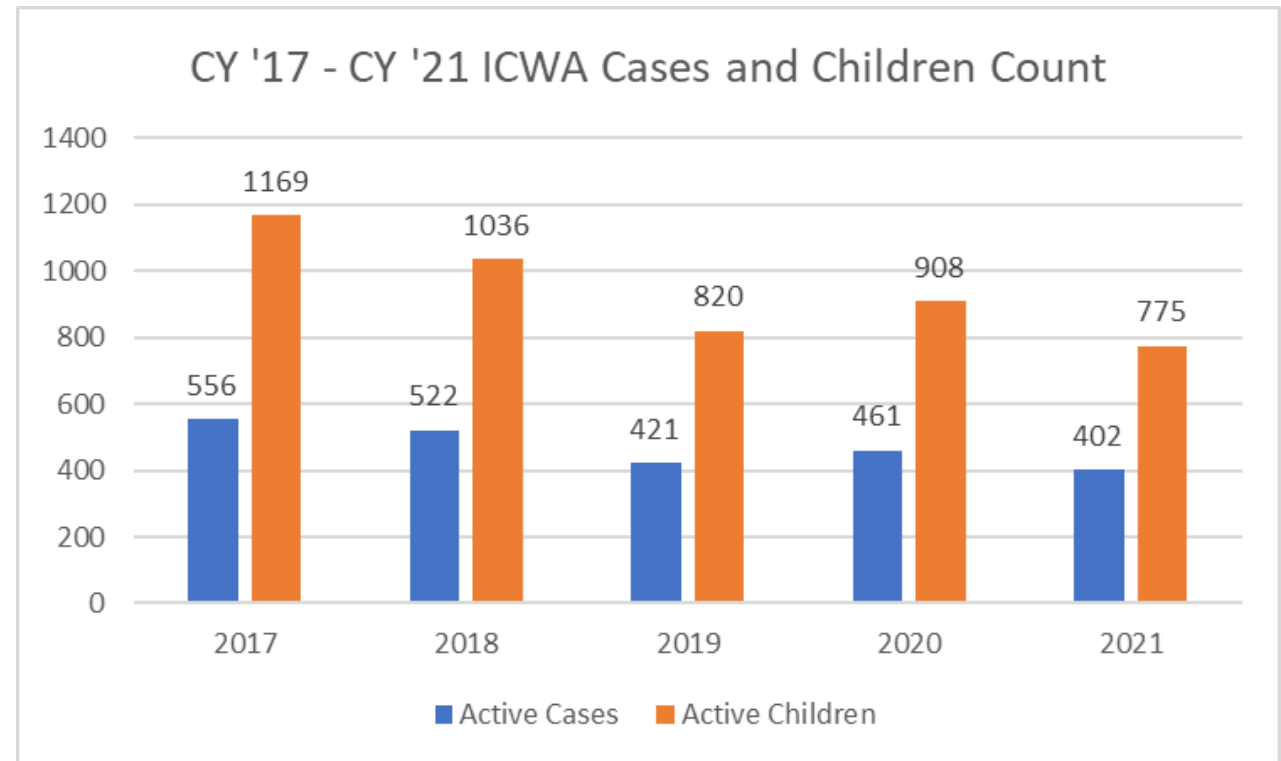
- We are within the Navajo Division of Social Services.

- Our team consists of:

Administrative Team:

(1) Program Manager, (1) Administrative Assistant

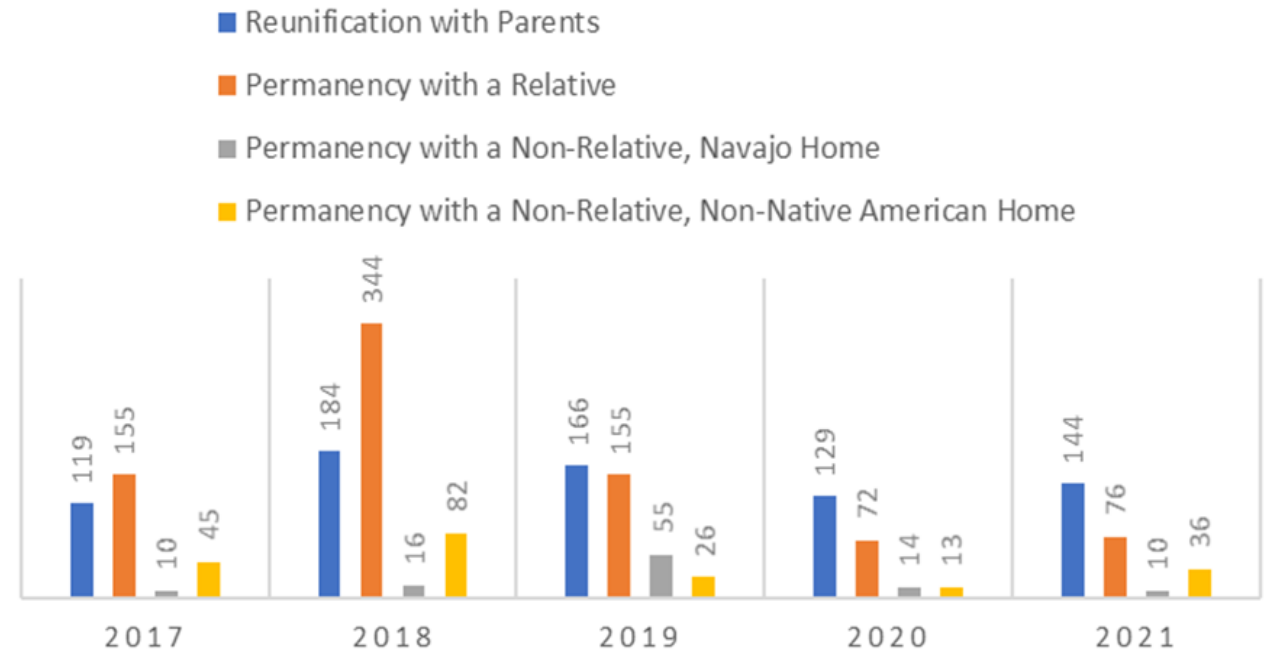
ICWA Team: (1) ICWA Unit Supervisor, (8) ICWA Social Workers, (3) ICWA Case Workers and (1) ICWA Research Assistant



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- Our Navajo children have the right to grow up learning their Navajo language, culture and traditional practices.
- Our Navajo children have the right to grow up with their biological relatives
- Our Navajo children have the right to grow up within their matrilineal society.
- Our Navajo children are the carrier of our clans, language, and traditions.
- Our Navajo children are the future leaders of the Navajo Nation, so it is vital they grow up within their tribe.

CY '17 - CY '21 PERMANENCY OUTCOMES



What's Working/Helping

- ▶ **Implement State ICWA Law**
 - ▶ Assured protection for our Navajo children and parents
 - ▶ Increase knowledge base of individuals involved in ICWA cases
- ▶ **Collaboration & Coordination with State Child Welfare Agencies**
 - ▶ Reoccurring Case Staffing/Case Consultation
 - ▶ Tribal involvement in ICWA Court Training
 - ▶ Intergovernmental Agreements with Arizona, New Mexico, & Utah
- ▶ **Tribe conducting Home Study and Foster Care License**
- ▶ **Cultural Compact Agreements**
- ▶ **Tribal definition of “Kinship”**

Obstacles

- ▶ Inconsistency in understanding the Federal ICWA Law
- ▶ Untimely Notification to Tribe
- ▶ Lack of support and understanding to the importance of a child's cultural connection
- ▶ Non-compliance with Federal ICWA Placement Preference
- ▶ Bonding and Attachment Studies conducted to deviate from ICWA Placement Preference
- ▶ Need for further analysis of recruitment efforts for ICWA Compliant Foster Homes and Adoptive Homes
- ▶ Elimination of AI/AN data elements in the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS)

Best Practice Models

- ▶ State of New Mexico's consistent collaboration with Navajo Nation
 - ▶ Monthly Case Staffing on Out of Preferred Placements
- ▶ State of New Mexico's Early Notification of Investigation to Tribe
- ▶ State of New Mexico's efforts towards acknowledging and respecting the importance of cultural and traditional interventions
- ▶ State of Arizona's kinship placement
- ▶ Establishment of ICWA Court
- ▶ Navajo Nation Division of Social Services implementation of the Tribal Assistance System

Recommendations

- ▶ Establishment of State ICWA Court
- ▶ Establish an Office of Tribal Affairs at the State Level that have expertise in ICWA
- ▶ Establish court orders that implement the “Promise to preserve” a child’s cultural connection at the onset of a dependency
- ▶ To conduct a culturally competent analysis of recruitment efforts for ICWA Compliant Foster Homes and Adoptive Homes

Ahéhee' (Thank you)