



BRIGHTER FUTURES FOR NATIVE CHILDREN

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Commission on Native Children, Hawaii Regional Hearing

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What We Want to Accomplish

Building a Brighter Future for All Children, Youth and Young Adults



Our Investments

We want all children, youth and young adults to have the **FAMILY**, **OPPORTUNITY** and **COMMUNITY** they need to thrive. To that end, we invest in the following areas:

Basic Needs

Permanent Relationships

Financial Stability

Early Care, Education and Credentials

Community and Youth Leadership

Keeping Families Together

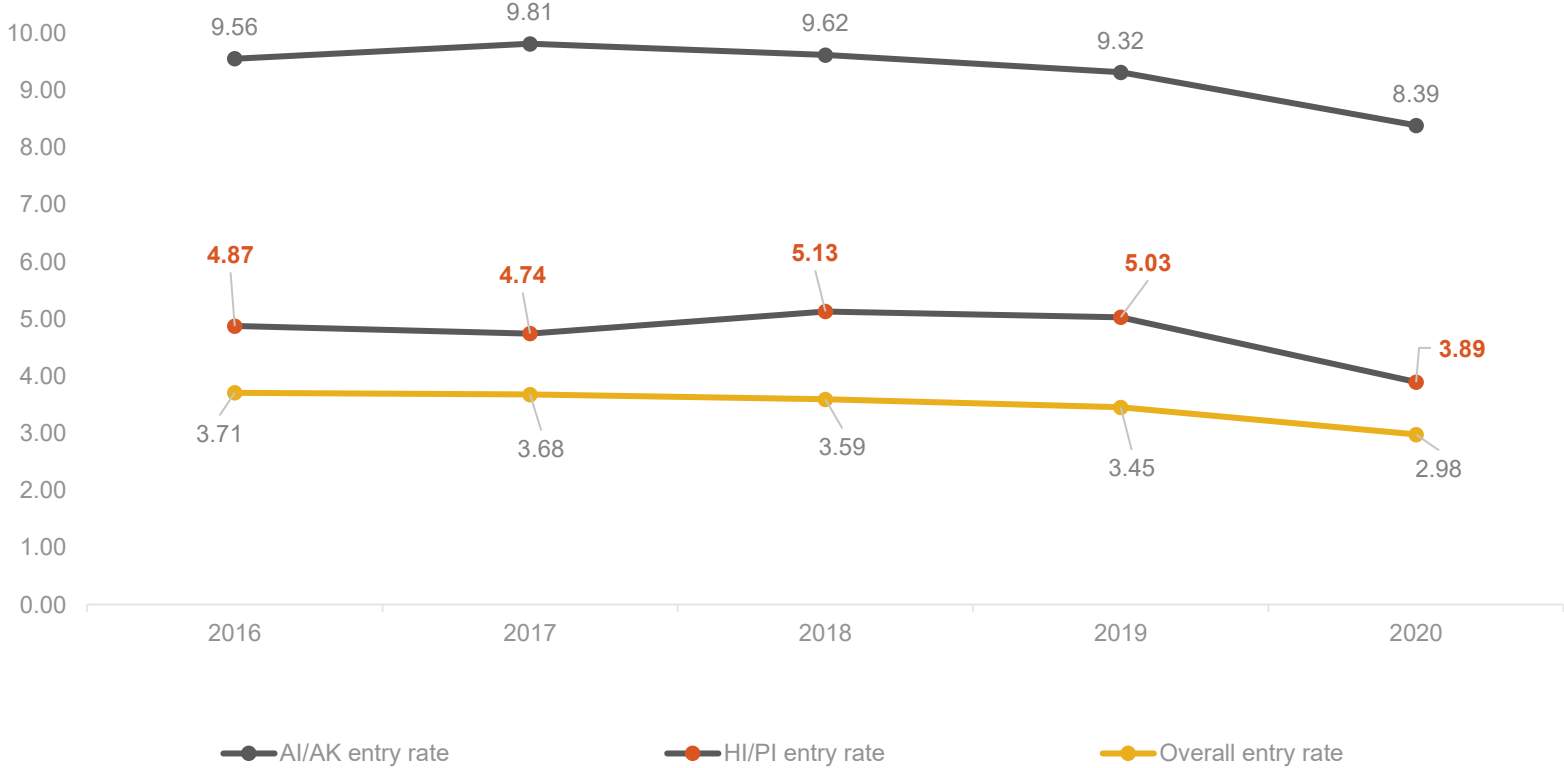
Transforming Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice

Native Children Enter Foster Care at Higher Rates Than Youth Overall (2016-2020)

9,854
 American Indian and Alaska Native children in foster care*

1,070
 Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander children in foster care

*As of September 30, 2020. The federal count, as reported by states, likely underrepresents the total of American Indian children in foster care, as administrative data does not include all children in the care of tribal governments. Also, the identification of native children entering care depends on the diligence of systems staffs and reporting by youth and families, so there may be undercounts.



SOURCES: State of American Indian/Alaska Native Children and Families, National Indian Child Welfare Association brief, Nov. 22, 2022; Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) public use data FY2016 – FY2020, U.S. Administration for Children and Families; U.S. Census data 2016-2020

Native Hawaiians Are Overrepresented in Child Welfare

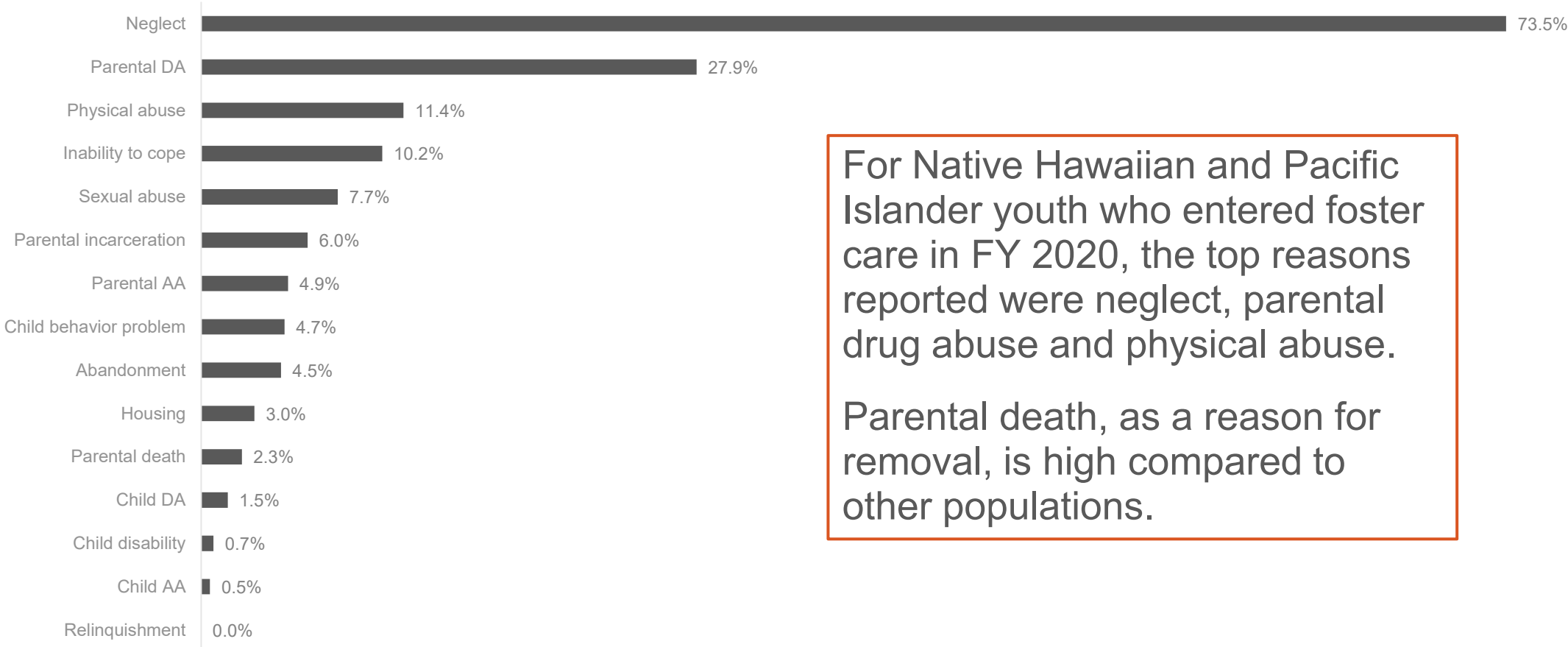
- Of the 2,523 children in foster care in Hawaii in 2021, 45% were Native Hawaiian.
- Native Hawaiian children are 45% of the children in foster care but only about 34% of Hawaii's children under age 18. (2019)
- Hawaii has the largest proportion of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander children entering foster care, followed by Alaska and Utah.

Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)

The Annie E. Casey Foundation joined 26 other child welfare and adoption organizations in signing an amicus brief in support of ICWA, filed with the U.S. Supreme Court in the case *Haaland v. Brackeen*.

Native Hawaiians do not have a political status that makes them eligible for ICWA protections.

Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders: Reasons for Child Removal



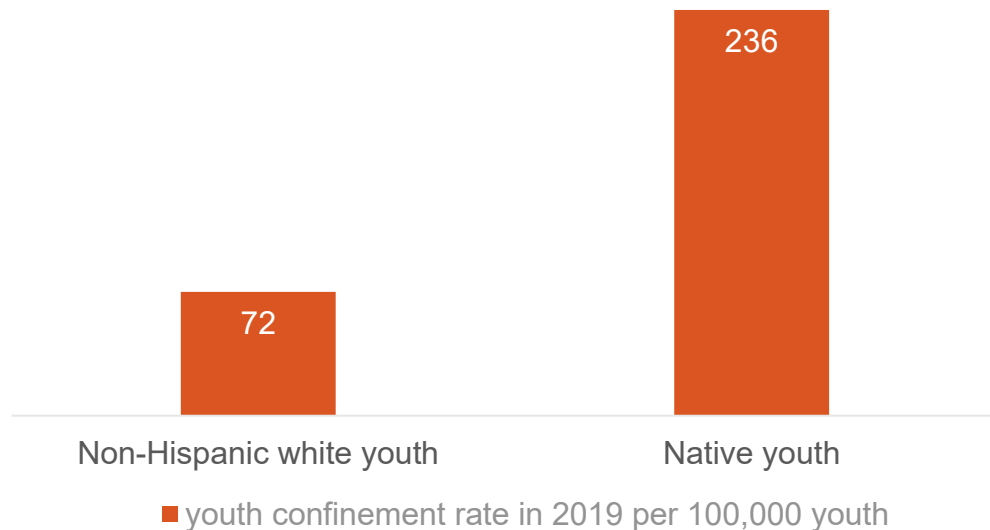
For Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander youth who entered foster care in FY 2020, the top reasons reported were neglect, parental drug abuse and physical abuse.

Parental death, as a reason for removal, is high compared to other populations.

SOURCE: AFCARS public use file FY2020v1; n=606

Overrepresented in Juvenile Justice

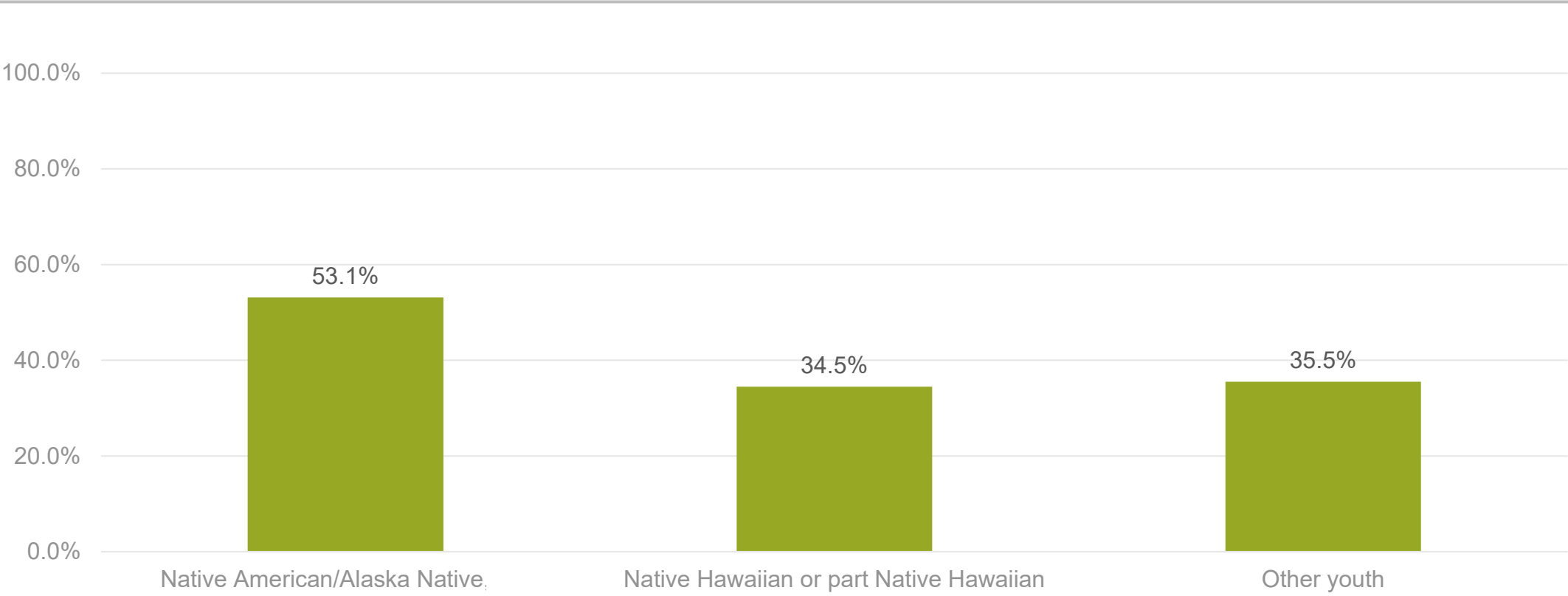
Nationally, native youth were **three times more likely to be confined** than their white peers (2019)



- About 40% of Hawaii's youth population ages 10 to 17 are Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, **but about 80% of youths in pretrial detention are Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders.**

SOURCES: U.S. Census Bureau, State of Hawaii Family Courts

Native Youth and Homelessness



Percentage of young people who reported experiencing homelessness in the last six months.

SOURCE: The Annie E. Casey Foundation's Opportunity Passport Participant Survey, 2022, representing youth surveyed at 17 Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative® sites

What Needs to Change?



What Works?

Investment in Community-Based and Culturally Informed Support and Prevention

Nā Kama a Hāloa

- **Nā Kama a Hāloa is a community-based network** working since September 2018 to improve outcomes for Native Hawaiian children and families involved in the child welfare system.
 - The network weaves Native Hawaiian wisdom and perspective into the Hawaii foster care system.
- Network partners include:
 - young people and birth parents who have been in the child welfare system; and
 - public and private institutions and organizations that work in child welfare and serve the Native Hawaiian population.

Goal: Each Native Hawaiian child and youth (from birth to age 26) affected by the foster care system is connected to and can sustain a lasting network of healthy, supportive, and enriching relationships.

Strengthening Youth and Family Well-Being



- **Epic 'Ohana**

Community voice and collaboration to improve the well-being of children and parents involved in foster care and the child welfare system in Hawaii

- **HI H.O.P.E.S.**

Supporting older youth who are transitioning from foster care to adulthood

Hawaii Helping Our People Envision Success — HI H.O.P.E.S. — is the lead site partner in Hawaii for the Casey Foundation's Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative® for older youth in foster care



Youth and Family Engagement Achieves Results

- Examples of policy and practice changes, innovations and solutions:

| | |
|--|---|
| Hawaii's Foster Youth Bill of Rights | Established Pono Process, a youth-led process for addressing children's foster care grievances |
| Extended foster care to age 21 | Efforts to improve child welfare practices that keep siblings in foster care connected |
| Youth-led effort improves child welfare system's delivery of vital documents to teens who will emancipate from foster care | Innovations in practice that address the needs of birth parents and their connection to children in foster care |

Increasing Financial Capacity, Savings, Economic Stability



Opportunity Passport®

- Helps young people ages 14 to 24 become **financially capable, gain experience with banking** and acquire assets or **pay expenses that support their life goals.**
- Program components include financial education, personal bank account and matched savings.

Of 3,600 Opportunity Passport participants nationally, about 5% are Native Hawaiian (183 young people), 2% are American Indian and 1% are Pacific Islanders.

SOURCE: The Annie E. Casey Foundation's Opportunity Passport Participant Survey

Helping Older Youth Learn to Earn and Save

Matched savings may be used for approved purchases and expenses, such as:



- Education

- Tuition and fees
- Laptop
- Textbooks and supplies



- Housing

- First month's rent
- Security deposit
- Renter's insurance



- Vehicle

- Car, truck, bicycle
- Car insurance
- Title and registration fees

Assets to Outcomes: National Correlation

Opportunity Passport participants who purchase...

- **a vehicle** have 4.1 times higher odds of reporting adequate transportation for school and work
- **a vehicle** have 1.5 times higher odds of reporting employment
- **an education asset** have 3.7 times higher odds of reporting being in school
- **a housing asset** have 1.8 times higher odds of reporting stable housing



SOURCE: Opportunity Passport Data System, Asset Purchases ages 17 to 21, Opportunity Passport Participant Survey 2022

Cultivating Youth Empowerment and Careers



MA'O Organic Farms

- Social enterprise and workforce development program with mentorship and training for young people ages 17 to 24 to expand their postsecondary opportunities
- Emphasizes Native Hawaiian principles of collective service and responsibility, well-being, holistic health and agricultural sustainability
- Feeding community with locally grown produce and reducing dependence on expensive imports

Responding Appropriately When Young People Are Arrested

▪ **JDAI Network**

- JDAI® is a national network of juvenile justice reformers and professionals working to build better and more equitable local youth justice systems.
- Participating jurisdictions:
 - seek ways to **address the overrepresentation of Indigenous, Black and Latino youth in the legal system;** and
 - develop community-centered strategies that
 - **reduce forms of out-of-home placement**
 - **transform juvenile probation; and**
 - **expand the use of diversion.**

Hawaii participates in the JDAI network at the state level, coordinated by the **First Circuit Family Court.**

During planning in 2021-2022 for a new juvenile justice assessment center, partners gathered input from Native Hawaiian community members and youth who have been in the system.

Key Recommendations

Key Recommendations

1. Invest in prevention strategies that keep families together.

- **Expand the definition of “evidence-based practice” and invest in the capacity of American Indian and Native Hawaiian partners** who want to meet the rigorous research standards to qualify for federal funding.
 - Improve federal and local data collection and reporting for American Indian and Native Hawaiian youth, so communities and agencies will understand better how native children are faring and determine services that would benefit them.
 - Expand data collected on American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in the National Youth in Transition Data survey. It is the only national dataset on youth transitioning from foster care to young adulthood and those who have experienced both child welfare and juvenile justice.

Key Recommendations

2. In juvenile justice, improve federal and local data collection and reporting for all native children.

- When children and youth come into juvenile justice systems, identify their native heritage or tribal affiliation.
- Increase the use of diversion strategies that address youths' cultural needs, language and customs.
- Uniform protocols are needed for identifying native youth by tribal affiliation. These protocols should be developed by agencies in collaboration with tribes. ICWA legal standards for notification can be used and expanded to support a consistent notification process. The child's family members and tribal authorities should be promptly and properly notified when the child is arrested. Failing to notify could deny young people their rights as sovereign nation citizens.

Key Recommendations

3. Provide the necessary funding to strengthen programs that build economic and educational opportunity for young people, such as Opportunity Passport and MA'O Organic Farms.

4. Create a sustainable funding stream that supports the participation of young people with life experience as part of solving problems in juvenile justice and child welfare.



HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board



THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

*Developing solutions to build a brighter future
for children, families and communities*

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Addendum

We want to live in a world where...

All children and youth, from birth to age 26, and their families are safe, healthy, and equipped to thrive together in a just and equitable community — free of unnecessary involvement in child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

In addition to partnerships that build brighter futures for Native Hawaiian children, the Annie E. Casey Foundation provides technical assistance and resources to support several policy and practice initiatives led by American Indian tribes and organizations.

This addendum briefly describes work by tribal and community partners in:

- family well-being and child welfare;
- juvenile justice; and
- research, evaluation and evidence.

Thriving Families, Safer Children

- **Thriving Families, Safer Children** is a first-of-its-kind partnership engaging young people, families, national institutions, public agencies and philanthropic organizations in **rethinking child welfare systems, so they become family well-being systems.**
- Partners are working to create and enhance the social, health and economic conditions in their communities to:
 - reduce the use of family separations and group placements;
 - expand community-based practices and services that strengthen families; and
 - identify and address disparities to ensure that every family and community has what it needs to thrive.

White Earth Nation in Minnesota is one of 22 sites in the Thriving Families, Safer Children partnership. Also, Native American families are involved in Thriving Families at:

- **Nambe Pueblo Healthy Family Services** in New Mexico
- Nebraska Children/Bring Up Nebraska work with the **Winnebago Tribe**; and
- Kansas Children's Services League

White Earth Nation

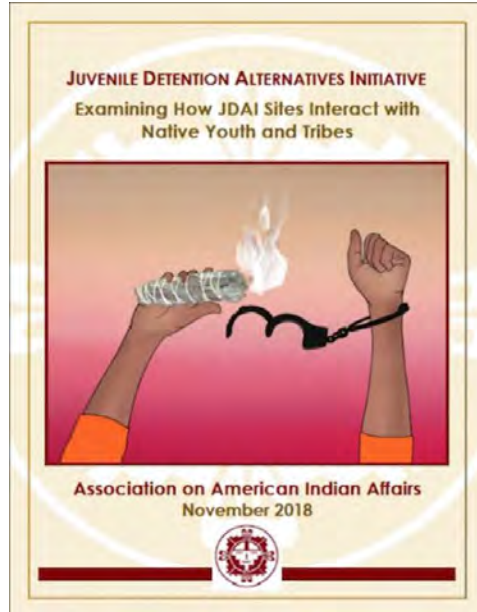
Thriving Families, Safer Children proposal seeks:

- Recognition of **culturally specific and tribal healing and intervention methods and practices** and seeks help establishing the evidence base for its traditional practices.
- **Improved access to voluntary recovery services for White Earth Nation families.** Most child welfare cases involve neglect and many of these involve addictions.
- Access to recovery services for pregnant women who are substance users, to **prevent separation of newborns from mothers.** White Earth Nation recognizes the rights of unborn children.
- A **universal curriculum for training social workers** to address child welfare disparities for White Earth Nation and others.

Harvesting Rice

As part of **White Earth Nation's** model recovery practices, families harvest wild rice to feed themselves, support themselves, participate in the community and set an example for their children for how to be financially stable. White Earth Nation's wild rice is a dietary staple and spiritual food.

Juvenile Justice Partnerships



- **JDAI Network**

- JDAI® is a national network of juvenile justice reformers and professionals working to build better and more equitable local youth justice systems. They seek ways to address the overrepresentation of Indigenous, Black and Latino youth in the legal system. Participating jurisdictions develop community-centered strategies that reduce forms of out-of-home placement, transform juvenile probation and expand the use of diversion.
- Participating sites include the **Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe**, Minnesota; **Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians**; and **Pueblo of Isleta**, New Mexico.

- **Association on American Indian Affairs**

- Partnership explores strategies to address the treatment of native youth in juvenile justice systems. Report published in 2018: *Examining How JDAI Sites Interact With Native Youth and Tribes*

Juvenile Justice Partnerships

- **Albuquerque Justice for Youth Community Collaborative**

With 26 community-based organizations and 27 community members with system experience, the collaborative is building a culturally grounded alternative that keeps youth out of institutions and instead “safe and supported by the capable hands of their own communities.”

- **U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention**

Through 2018, the Foundation and partners delivered federally funded technical assistance for detention reform. Since 2013, the Foundation, the Burns Institute and the **Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe**, Minnesota; **Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians**; and **Pueblo of Isleta**, New Mexico, as partners, have been seeking to:

- make existing detention reform strategies that are based on the U.S. court system more culturally relevant for tribal communities;
- develop community-centered alternatives for young people; and
- build a peer-to-peer support network for tribal leaders.

Research, Evaluation, Evidence and Data Partnerships



■ Family Spirit

- A culturally informed home-visiting program supporting Indigenous mothers and young children and incorporating communities' child-rearing teachings.
- Family Spirit was created in a partnership of the Johns Hopkins Center for Indigenous Health and the **Navajo, White Mountain Apache and San Carlos Apache tribes** in 1995, with early support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- The curriculum has been used in 155 communities in 24 states.
- With a recent grant announced by the LEGO Foundation, Family Spirit will expand in the United States and will be implemented in Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Research, Evaluation, Evidence and Data Partnerships

Wa' Kan Ye' Zah

- Little Holy One

- **Little Holy One**

- Wa'Kan Ye'Zah evidence-based practices draw on tribal identity and culture to improve the mental health and parenting capacities of young parents and reduce risk factors for youth substance abuse and suicide.
- Participants include **Assiniboine and Sioux** parents and caregivers and their children who are enrolled in Head Start at Fort Peck Reservation, Montana.

Resources

- National Indian Child Welfare Association. (2022, Nov. 22). *The state of American Indian and Alaska Native children and families report (Section 5, Child Welfare)*. Portland, OR.
<https://www.nicwa.org/latest-news/state-of-american-indian-and-alaska-native-children-and-families-report/>
- State of Hawaii Department of Human Services, Social Services Division. (2022, June 30). *State of Hawaii Data Booklet, Annual Progress and Services Report, FFY 2023*.
<https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/ssd/files/2022/06/A-Hawaii-Data-Booklet-APSR-FFY-2023-Final-2022-06-20-1.pdf>
- The Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center. <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/>
- The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative.
<https://www.aecf.org/work/child-welfare/jim-casey-youth-opportunities-initiative>
- The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI).
<https://www.aecf.org/work/juvenile-justice/jdai>