

Developing the Tribal Welfare Market

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The 12th National Child Welfare Data and Technology Conference was held from June 23, 2009, through June 24, 2009, in Bethesda, Maryland. The Conference focused on improving data through information technology within agencies, tribes and courts. One of the main focuses of the workshops was improving state data on Indian child welfare services.

In the past, tribes have not been afforded the same federal resources made available to states to develop the infrastructure necessary to collect and report child abuse and neglect data. There is no federal agency that oversees the gathering of Indian data, and the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect System (NCANDS) does not currently include data from American Indian/Alaskan Native child welfare services.

A step in the right direction occurred on October 7, 2008, when George Bush signed into law the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008. Part of this Act creates direct access for tribal governments to the Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance program. The legislation authorizes and appropriates \$3 million for each fiscal year beginning in 2009 for technical assistance to tribes regarding activities need to enhance the administration of tribal programs under Title IV-E. It also includes one-time start up grants of up to \$300,000 a year for up to two years for tribes seeking to apply to the federal government to operate the Title IV-E program.

Vendors interested in the tribal welfare market should become acquainted with the [National Indian Child Welfare Association](#). NICWA is a national nonprofit group that works to address the issues of child abuse and neglect through training, research, public policy, and grassroots community development. They also work closely with tribal and urban Indian child welfare programs to increase their service capacity, enhance tribal-state relationship, and provide training, technical assistance and information services. State Indian Child Welfare (ICW) Managers have also developed a network to support and develop Indian Child Welfare practices in the states, holding monthly teleconferences. ICW's goals are for uniform Indian child welfare data elements in state systems that would effectively promote state and tribal connections.