

Who Responded:

Survey e-mailed to over 1000 people connected with Indian Child Welfare. The e-mail was opened by 132 individuals, and complete responses were received from 79

1. Who do you work for? [Question Title]		
A Tribe		51%
A State Child Welfare entity		15%
A County Child Welfare entity		16%
The Courts		3%
A Tribal Support Group		0%
Other, please specify View Responses		15%
Total		100%

Point of Interest: Other respondents included District Attorney's, County Counsel's, Tribal Consultants, Law Schools, and State and Federal representatives.

Communication between Tribes and Counties:

2. Are you satisfied with current communication between Tribes and County Child Welfare Departments in your State?		
1 Not at all		13%
2 Slightly Satisfied		55%
3 Satisfied		26%
4 Very Satisfied		5%
Total		100%

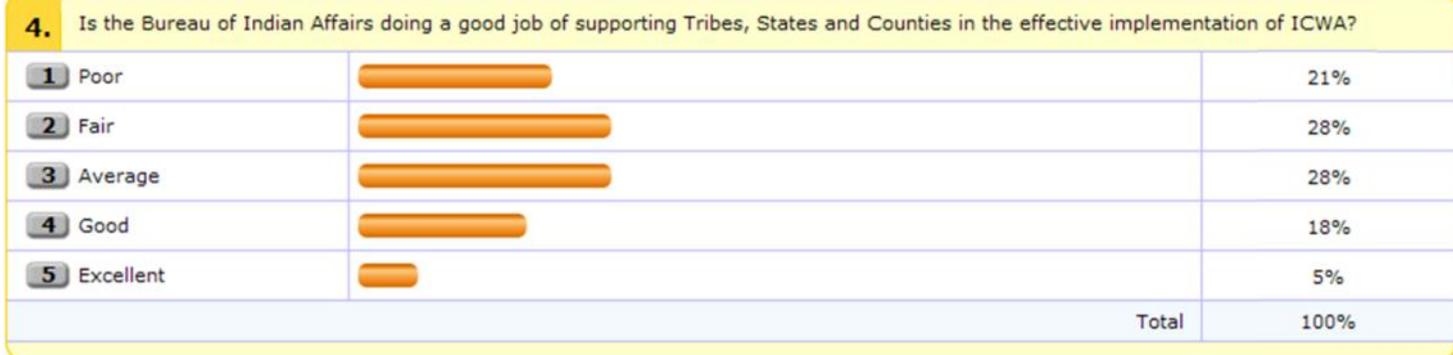
Point of Interest: The high and low scores were both double sided (both Tribe and County saying good and bad together), suggesting actual variability in communication effectiveness, rather than a perception by one party or another. The important point here is that communication can be very good if all parties commit to it. The heavy majority of respondents (68%) who were not at all or slightly satisfied, suggests that the majority of Tribes and Counties could work together to build a more effective communication process.

Is your State doing a good job supporting ICWA:

3. Is your State doing a good job of supporting Tribes and Counties in the effective implementation of ICWA?		
1 Poor		10%
2 Fair		23%
3 Average		47%
4 Good		14%
5 Excellent		5%
Total		100%

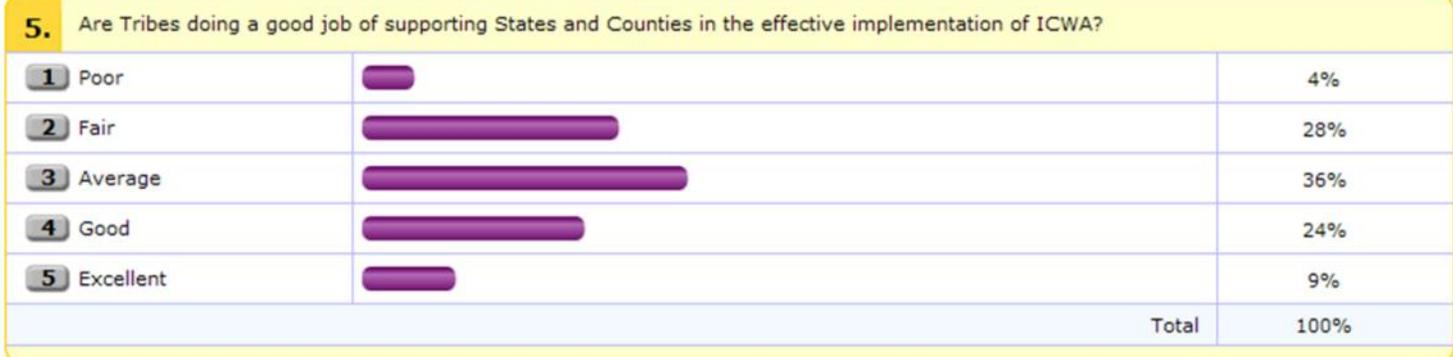
Point of Interest: All "excellent" scores were from Tribes, whereas "poor" was split nearly evenly between Tribes on one hand and State and County entities on the other. Numerous comments expressed the need for the States to support more training, and support to both Tribes and Counties.

Bureau of Indian Affairs Effectiveness:



Point of Interest: 77% of respondents thought that the BIA was, at best, doing an average job of supporting ICWA. “Poor” scores were evenly split between Tribes and State / County entities . 3 Tribes believe the BIA is doing an “excellent” job , which is somewhat offset by a number of comments from various parties, unsure of how the BIA assists in the effective implementation of ICWA.

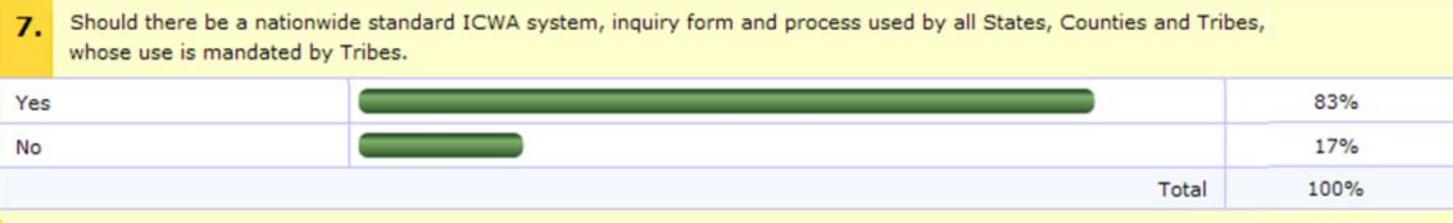
Are Tribes doing their part:



Point of Interest: In this response there is a significant difference between the responses of Tribes and County/State entities, with Tribes positively skewed by one whole step in our scoring system, (Counties /States on average score Tribes one step lower than Tribes score themselves). The main comments from this section discussed lack of resources in Tribes, Training and staff turnover .

**** Question 6 asked for comments on the previous 3 questions ****

Should there be a Nationwide Standard for implementing ICWA?:



Point of Interest: The lack of consistent handling in ICWA cases across the US is extremely apparent, and an overwhelming majority of all groups believe that there should be is a nationwide system, inquiry form and process. Even within those saying “no” to a standard system, many believe that there should be national best practice standards and forms actively promoted to all entities.

A common online system so all parties could look at the same ICWA information?:

8. Would it help resolve the applicability of ICWA in a particular case if States, Counties and Tribes could all look at the same information on the case online.

Yes		87%
No		13%
Total		100%

Point of Interest: Even stronger support for an online system, than for standard processes, with all parties frustrated at the current lack of information sharing, and the timing issues both ways, (information/notices going to Tribes, and responses from Tribes. An obvious issue is security of data in the system, who would have access and under what circumstances. Comments suggest a pilot would be appropriate to establish the feasibility.

What incremental services are needed to support ICWA?

9. We are working on Ayazuta's future development, to better serve States, Counties and Tribes what would be most useful:

Adding Tribes that are not Federally Recognized to our contacts database		38%
Adding Canadian Tribes to our contacts database		26%
Adding a comprehensive list of Indian support resources, according to zip code		84%
Other, please specify		12%

Point of Interest: Respondents could check more than one entry. The request for a comprehensive list of Indian support resources by ZIP code was almost unanimous amongst Tribes, Counties, States and all other agencies. The need was expressed from all corners of the US, and the heartland. "Other" entries included adding Mexican Tribes and online access to legal resources,

What do you think?, a selection of answers:

10. We at Ayazuta.com believe that we can radically improve ICWA compliance by making it easier for Social Workers and Tribes to engage each other, initially by having accurate contact information, later by automating some of the clerical steps in the Notice process. We believe that this will allow Social Workers and Tribes to spend more time focusing on the best outcome for the Indian Child. What are your thoughts:

Ayazuta Note: These are all opinions expressed as a response to this question, we have only edited comments to remove the potential for identifying the participant. **No editing of meaning has been done!**

- ◆ I think it would be very helpful, especially for staff that only work with ICWA occasionally as then none of the steps would be missed.
- ◆ Agreed
- ◆ I think it is an effort worth continuing. Accurate information can enhance the whole process leading to better relationships between state and tribal social workers, use of culturally based services, and an increase in ICWA compliant placements for youth.
- ◆ Sounds like this would be a great improvement.
- ◆ I agree, although making it affordable in these tough financial times will be a challenge.
- ◆ The state/county social worker should contact the tribe immediately by phone upon receiving a report so that tribe can be involved at the earliest possible point in a case.

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- ◆ Accurate information does definitely help, but you need to assist with finding ways to engage State and Tribal workers. What we do here at the ***** office is meet 2 times a month with State CPS and foster care workers to discuss cases. This has helped to be on the same page and to share information regarding the family/children and culture. The Tribe initiated these meetings and the State child welfare office (DCFS) has been meeting with us regularly.
- ◆ Amen better leverage
- ◆ Bless you, your glass is half full!
- ◆ We talked about exploring a similar program in MI utilizing the Court Improvement Program's Data Collection and Analysis Grant. This is a step in the right direction!
- ◆ Yes focusing on the best interest of an Indian Child is important because their lives are always depending on family support.
- ◆ This sounds great to me. I believe automation would certainly help
- ◆ I agree this should be helpful.
- ◆ I agree
- ◆ This would be a great start
- ◆ Agree with your ideas. I am not a service provider but legal advisor to those who are. If we can streamline and simplify notice, we will have overcome 90 per cent of my County's ICWA-related issues.
- ◆ I began using computers in the tribal office in 1999. There are many tribes without access to the internet or the resources to pay for this automated process. State workers need to learn the law, and comply, the state attorney's need to learn the law and comply. The ignorance of history and tribes is astonishing. Also the use of a Native willing to testify against another tribe to become an "expert" of convenience needs to cost the state money (the only thing the state understands is the loss of money) and the courts that allow this "expert" testimony should have an article written about that judge and their lack of ICWA understanding.
- ◆ I feel that effective communication between Social Workers and tribes will be able to benefit children and this will have a positive impact on the assistance given to Indian children.
- ◆ Add in self addressed envelopes to tribes, some tribes are small and have problems dealing with the demands fiscally that ICWA creates, when responding.
- ◆ I am in total agreement. With the state of NV, tribes are very distant and isolated, and we need to come together.
- ◆ I agree. The current notification w/certified mail is laborious, inefficient, and does not comply with our state timelines.
- ◆ The reality is that sometimes States are not willing to work at ICWA and sometimes Tribes do not work collaboratively with States or do they pursue their cases actively
- ◆ This is a great idea. As I said before- The problem in some counties in Iowa lies with the Courts.. Any ideas on how to change their concept of "interpretation"???
- ◆ Help! Some of our Indian Children are not getting the help they need.
- ◆ Sounds great
- ◆ Often times Counties and State Adoptions don't include the tribe in all planning or concurrent planning. Having accurate contact information and automating some of the steps in the notice process would be beneficial.
- ◆ I believe the Tribes would welcome the new system but the State is something different.
- ◆ At a national level, that could work - independently, States would develop processes according to tribal consensus in developing a system. Some States SACWIS (State Automated Child Welfare Information Systems) do have built in procedures for notice, and again it depends on how much effort is given by State agencies to develop the processes or programs.
- ◆ The support resources "list" should be a relational database... like Amazon.com's "suggested" reading/purchases... based on what services other social workers/court professionals used in similar cases (state, tribe, age of youth, zip code etc.)
- ◆ I agree whole heartedly. Thank you for your efforts.

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- ◆ This is very good news. At present, so much time is lost in the initial stages because all of the basic information needs to be researched, reviewed and added to the individual databases. Having access to accurate information from the initial stages would be very helpful and efficient.
- ◆ It's a great idea. Also, most social workers come in with an "attitude" that the western way is the answer, and anything short of that is unacceptable. I would like to see them "educated" in the native perspective regarding housing situation, cultural practices, food, and that it doesn't change when natives move to urban areas. They are still carrying on their traditional ways, perhaps not in the way the (SW, state) expects.
- ◆ Agreed, the focus should be on the child.
- ◆ I think this is a great idea and if our budgetary problems weren't the way they is then I think our state could get involved.
- ◆ Agree, because we will be on top of the case together and knowing what is happening in up-coming scheduled hearing, etc.
- ◆ The courts have to be involved and in agreement too.
- ◆ That is a good starting point. Again, driving home the point that it is a tribe who determines who is an Indian, and not the state courts, is a key part that is missing.
- ◆ That would be great - Noticing is always an issue with ICWA
- ◆ Great idea.

11. We would like to conduct a survey about ICWA twice a year, the same frequency as our Tribal ICWA Contact checking, to show how compliance is improving (or otherwise), what other questions do you think we should be asking and tracking the results of?

We are pulling together another survey that will be released in the next 2 weeks or so based on the responses to this question. The questions in this survey and the next will then be repeated every 6 months to see how ICWA compliance is progressing across the Nation and Nations in North America. If you have read this far in this survey, our hope is that you will take part in the next , we look forward to hearing from you.

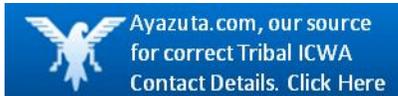
Help us spread the word:



Tribes: add this link button to your administration website



Users: add this link button to your website



Copies of the raw data from this survey, without personal identifying information is available in CSV / Spreadsheet format for a small fee, e-mail to support@ayazuta.com



Why Ayazuta?

We have spent 3 years researching ICWA compliance issues, and developing solutions for Tribes, States and welfare organizations. We can help you increase ICWA compliance, reduce costs, and improve outcomes for Indian Children. **Ayazuta has, and will continue to evolve as a community driven design, based on benefits to the Native American Child, the Tribe and the Case Worker.**