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The Midwest Child Welfare Implementation Center (MCWIC) is one of five Child Welfare Implementation Centers established by cooperative agreement with the Children's Bureau in October 2008. Our role is to support and facilitate communication and networking across public child welfare systems, and to assist States and Tribes to develop and execute multi-year strategic plans for sustainable systems change to improve the quality and effectiveness of child welfare services. These changes will be focused on organizational culture, administration, and direct practice with children and families. Each Child Welfare Implementation Center is regionally-focused, serving two of the ten Federal regions. The MCWIC will work with the States and Native American Tribes in Region V (Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Minnesota) and Region VII (Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri, and Kansas).

MCWIC is a member of the Children's Bureau Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) Network and will work collaboratively with the Child Welfare National Resource Centers and other members of the T/TA Network that are also providing assistance to child welfare agencies. Our work will be guided by, but not limited to, the Child and Family Services Reviews findings, related Program Improvement Plans, IV-B Child and Family Services Plans and other strategic plans, and the System of Care framework. The MCWIC team will work with child welfare leaders and managers to:

- improve the quality and performance of child welfare services, based on organizational needs identified and prioritized by the child welfare agency;
- provide the expertise and resources needed to enhance, rather than duplicate, agency capacity to effectively implement and sustain systemic change;
- facilitate communication and peer-to-peer networking across State and Tribal child welfare systems;
- institutionalize child welfare principles, policies, and evidence-based or promising practice models; and
- build and disseminate knowledge about effective implementation in the child welfare field.

Our Core Team

MCWIC's project team members possess diverse backgrounds and expertise in child welfare and key supporting disciplines: social work, organizational behavior, law, psychology, sociology, and public health. Our team has experience in a wide variety of roles, such as trainer, prosecutor, policy analyst, guardian ad litem, Associate Tribal Judge, Indian Child Welfare Association liaison, program evaluator, educator, defense attorney, child protection worker and supervisor, agency administrator, psychologist, juvenile parole worker, and consultant. MCWIC is located at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Center on Children, Families and the Law (UNL-CCFL), a multidisciplinary center devoted to teaching, research and public service on issues related to child and family policy and services. In addition to the core project staff, our work will draw upon the extensive resources of the Children's Bureau's T/TA Network, other UNL-CCFL staff and faculty, and external consultants as appropriate, depending upon the requirements of the specific project proposals that are selected for implementation.

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MCWIC Activities and Resources for Agencies

- Coordinate and maintain regional *peer mentoring networks* through an internet peer networking platform, conference calls, videoconferencing, and peer site visits. These peer networks may be topic-driven, or focused on sharing implementation experiences, mutual aid and problem-solving.
- Perform *regional outreach* to States and Tribes to increase awareness of and access to the T/TA Network.
- Conduct *regional tribal child welfare gatherings* that bring tribal child welfare agency representatives together for facilitated, solution-based discussion as well as building peer-to-peer networks.
- Host three *regional forums* that focus on strategies for achieving systemic change, link States and Tribes to T/TA Network resources, develop peer networking opportunities, and assist with the implementation project proposal process. These forums will be targeted to agency managers, administrators and policy decision makers.
- Assist States and Tribes to develop, implement, and evaluate sustainable systemic change through *implementation projects*.

Approved Implementation Projects

Implementation projects will vary in scope and funding, depending upon agency needs and challenges, but each project must be of at least 24 months in duration. The following implementation projects have been approved by the Children's Bureau. Additional projects are currently in development.

- Indiana Department of Child Services – “Centralized Intake Unit”
The Indiana Department of Child Services will implement a centralized intake system through the development of competency-based training, integration of necessary technology, and facilitation of stakeholder involvement in the process. This centralized system will replace the current system of approximately 210 different phone numbers staffed by case managers, supervisors and contract employees located throughout the 92 counties in Indiana. The new system of centralized intake system will result in consistency and uniformity of practice, improved responsiveness to community stakeholders and professional providers, and improved tracking capability.
- Iowa Department of Human Services – “Partnering with Parents for System Change”
The Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) will institutionalize parent engagement strategies that integrate parents working directly with families as well as actively informing policy, practice and programs statewide. The Parent Partner program has demonstrated evidence of positive outcomes for children and families in other pilot jurisdictions in Iowa, and the implementation project will expand this program to other jurisdictions in the State. This program enlists parents with prior system involvement to serve as mentors for parents with children in care to support the completion of case plan goals, and educate parents regarding available services. This project will also help establish policy and practice informed by parents' insights based on their involvement with the Iowa DHS, by building a cadre of parents actively engaged in all levels of child welfare practice in Iowa.

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Approved Implementation Projects Continued

- Ohio Office for Families and Children – “New Technical Assistance Model”
The Ohio Office of Families and Children (OFC) and MCWIC will collaborate to develop and implement a new technical assistance model. This project is a part of Ohio's systemic effort to improve its child welfare outcomes, and will materially alter how OFC works with Ohio's county-administered child welfare offices. It will build Ohio's capacity to implement evidence-informed and promising child welfare interventions. The project consists of several distinct elements: a formal assessment of organizational culture and climate; development and installation of the technical assistance model; a rule review; implementation of organizational structural and functional changes to facilitate the new model; and ongoing fidelity monitoring.
- Wisconsin Department of Children and Families – “Best Outcomes for Indian Children”
The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (WDCF) and MCWIC will collaborate with Wisconsin's 71 county child welfare agencies and the eleven sovereign tribes in Wisconsin to improve outcomes for Indian children. The project includes developing child welfare practice principles, training materials, and standardized case practice tools designed to effectively implement the recently enacted Wisconsin Indian Child Welfare Act (WICWA). This collaboration will require increased communication and coordination between all internal and external stakeholders responsible for the welfare of Indian children in Wisconsin. WDCF has requested MCWIC assistance in facilitating this new partnership, which will effect systemic integration of the philosophical underpinnings of WICWA.

For more information, contact:

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