



# White Earth Reservation Tribal Council

## INDIAN CHILD WELFARE

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February 6, 2017

Dear Legislators,

This letter is offered in support of White Earth's testimony provided February 08, 2017 related to our American Indian Child Welfare Initiative. To recap, White Earth exercises exclusive jurisdiction over child welfare matters on the Reservation over a three-county territory. Last session we demonstrated an unmet need of \$1.6 million to operate the child welfare Initiative. We were awarded a one year increase in this amount by the legislature and were asked to return in 2017 to request continuation funding. We request \$1.6 million as continuation funding to cover our unfunded needs. In return, we estimate that we save the three counties at least \$5 million dollars in child welfare costs.

In support of this request, White Earth gathered statistics from SSIS demonstrating the increased needs since the original funding appropriation. The original funding appropriation was based on 2004 brass codes and there has never been an ongoing sustainable increase. Increased statistics from 2011-2016:

In 2011 White Earth received 394 child welfare intakes, 251 maltreatment reports, 80 of which were through child protection services, 13 voluntary. There were 218 adults plus 255 children served for a total of 473 clients open for case management. There were 193 cases opened for assessment and case management.

**In 2016 White Earth ICW received 932 child maltreatment intakes, 292 assessments, 37 Voluntary cases were opened at the start of the year, with 36 of them new, 22 of those cases were successfully closed, and 51 Voluntary Cases remain open currently. There were 398 adults served, 485 children served for a total of 883 clients open for services. There are currently 222 open cases for assessment and case management.**

**Highlights for 2016 include a total of 119 children reunified, and 86 children on a trial home visit with parents. There were 44 customary adoptions completed. Twenty-seven children did not enter care nor receive court involvement with the new Prevention Program Giizhawaaso. In partnership with the White Earth MOM's program we prevented several babies being born positive for opiates (heroin) and kept additional children with their families. Together, a total of 110 children prevented from Out of Home Placement and Child Protection services through intervention services.**

White Earth had a significant amount of IV-E cases pulled for the Federal Audit this year, with additional Tribally licensed foster care cases pulled in county audit cases. White Earth as an Agency, as well as our Tribally licensed foster homes – passed the IV-E audit.

White Earth, through the Indian Child Welfare Initiative, has provided high quality, culturally specific services to a large number of Tribal families. Creative new programming has allowed the Tribe to



intervene in child welfare matters and avoid out of home placements, while safely maintaining children at home with their parents. These culturally specific programs have been more widely accepted and impacting. We encourage the appropriation from 2016 to be ongoing to sustain the excellent work performed by White Earth, reduce the financial burden to the three local counties.

If there are any questions related to this information please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Respectfully,

Laurie York, Director,  
White Earth Indian Child Welfare

