

ICWA *in Practice:*

ATTEND 1 OF 3 SESSIONS:

June 11th	10:00 – 11:30 AM
June 16th	1:30 – 3:00 PM
June 30th	1:30 – 3:00 PM



SESSION DESCRIPTION

This session explores how culturally grounded practice transforms the implementation of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) from a compliance task into the heart of effective, trauma-informed family work. Drawing from lived experience and real-world ICWA Family Preservation practice, presenters from the Native American Training Institute will share practical tools and stories that highlight collaboration between Tribes, child welfare systems, and families.

Participants will learn how ICWA Family Preservationists serve as Tribal Authorized Representatives –bridging cultural understanding and active efforts to keep Native children safely connected to their families, communities, and cultures. Through case examples, data insights, and discussion, this session reframes “the hard cases” as opportunities for partnership and healing rather than intervention.

By centering cultural safety, relationship-first practice, and a systems-accountability lens, attendees will leave with concrete strategies for reducing unnecessary removals, strengthening trust, and ensuring that ICWA is not seen as extra work—but as the right work.

North Dakota Board of Social Work continuing education units available. Cameras are mandated to be on to receive credits.

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CLICKING HERE**



Meet the ICWA Preservationist Trainers...

McKayla Gates, MSW

McKayla Gates is a proud enrolled member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe from Fort Yates, North Dakota. She serves as an ICWA Family Preservationist for Burleigh County. Having grown up within the communities she now serves, McKayla brings both lived experience and professional dedication to supporting Native children and families. She holds a Master of Social Work degree and is passionate about ensuring Native voices are heard while advocating for equitable treatment, culturally responsive services, and opportunities that strengthen Native families and communities.

Alayna McConnell

Alayna McConnell is an enrolled member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and serves as an ICWA Family Preservationist for the Dickinson area. Having grown up within the child welfare system herself, and later becoming a state licensed foster provider, Alayna brings both professional and lived experience to her work supporting Native families. Alayna is passionate about strengthening Native families and improving culturally responsive practices within child welfare systems. Her work focuses on ICWA advocacy, active efforts, family preservation, and building collaborative relationships and partnerships that support the well-being of Native children and communities.

Gabriella Lilley

Gabriella Lilley is an enrolled member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians. She currently serves as the ICWA Family Preservationist for Grand Forks County. With a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and a minor in political science from the University of North Dakota, where she will also begin pursuing her Juris Doctor this fall, Gabriella's work is driven by a passion for advocacy, strengthening communities, and ensuring Native families feel supported and seen.

Training is provided in partnership by UND's Children and Family Services Training Center and the Native American Training Institute through grant funding from the North Dakota Department of Health & Human Services, Children and Family Services Section.



Please direct questions to CFSTC:
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