



Introducing Your Parent Center to American Indian Communities

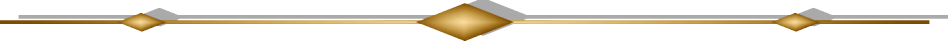
This fact sheet is written expressly for Parent Centers and suggests several “first steps” you can take to identify and connect with Native communities within the region served by your Center.

This fact sheet has been adapted from *EPICS Guide to Effective Outreach in American Indian Communities*.

The product was developed by NAPTAC and is now available at the Center for Parent Information and Resources, at:
<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/naptac-tier2-outreach/>

Introducing Your Parent Center to American Indian Communities

Does your Parent Center cover a service region that includes one or more Native American or Alaska Native communities (AI/AN)? If so, this fact sheet is written for you, especially if your Parent Center is planning to gear up outreach to Native families or wishes to revitalize prior connections with Native communities. Here are some suggestions for “first steps” in approaching and building relationships or strengthening partnerships with AI/AN communities.



Beginnings are very important, and the manner in which you approach a Native community should be planned and researched with an understanding of the tribal community you wish to enter. Many Native American cultures have a rich oral tradition and prefer sharing information by word-of-mouth. *Verbal* communication, with written communication as back up, is typically the best way to access a community.

Relationships are based on mutual respect and trust. Many programs and services have come to Indian reservations promising great things, only to disappear after gathering the data and information they need. Sometimes the connection collapses because it relied almost entirely on the outreach efforts of one staff person, who leaves. All this is to say, Native people are wary—and weary—of newcomers making big promises that don’t pan out. Understand this historical perspective as you enter; don’t be surprised if you meet with a cautious reception. It takes time and truth and reliability to build trust.



How To Start?

Yes, those first steps in relationship-building are often difficult. For a Parent Center the first question may even be “what Native communities are around here?” NAPTAC is delighted to offer suggested first steps to Parent Centers who wish to learn more about and conduct outreach to the Native communities in their service regions.

- ◆ **Locate the tribal community** in your state with which you wish to connect.
If you do not know the location of tribes in your state or their tribal names, you can consult:

The Tribal Leaders Directory | Provides contact information for each federally recognized tribe. <https://www.bia.gov/bia/ois/tribal-leaders-directory/>

500 Nations: Tribes by State

http://500nations.com/tribes/Tribes_State-by-State.asp

Maps of United States Indians by State

<http://www.native-languages.org/states.htm>

Once you've identified the tribal community with which you wish to connect:

- ◆ **Call the tribal office** to get the name, address, and mailing address of the tribal president, governor, or chairperson. Write to the tribal leader about your interest in visiting and identify how the community will benefit. Be sure to ask how your Parent Center might meet with the community to hear what *their* needs and concerns are.

You might also get in touch with any or all of the following groups as a way to initiate contact, exchange information about what your Parent Center has to offer Native families, and identify next steps.

- ◆ **Contact the tribal staff** in education, vocational rehabilitation, principals, Head Start programs, and local early intervention programs. *Note:* Sometimes the names of these individuals or tribal points-of-contact will be listed on the tribal community websites or on the websites of social service agencies of interest.
- ◆ **Contact health care service providers from Indian Health Services (IHS)** offices, clinics, and public health programs. (This includes providers such as doctors, nurses, community health representative, WIC staff, or the behavior health specialist.) *Note:* For a list of IHS offices, visit the IHS website at: <https://www.ihs.gov/locations/>
- ◆ **Contact child welfare** programs in your state. Connect with human services staff there, such as social workers and Indian child welfare workers. *Note:* For information about the Indian Child Welfare Act: <https://www.nicwa.org/>
- ◆ **Others to consider contacting** to connect with Native representatives or staffers: community health services, Title VI parent advisory committees, Indian Education Committees, Interagency Coordinating Councils. Contact a committee chairperson to learn when the next meeting will take place, and ask to be included on the agenda.

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