

## Mission

The Mission of the Native American Affairs Program is to provide services and to raise awareness of the socioeconomic plight of American Indians through advocacy to enhance the well-being and preservation of American Indian tribes, communities, and families.

## Vision

The Michigan Department of Human Services will build effective collaborative and cooperative relationships with Indian Country to address human services issues that are identified by Michigan's American Indians.

### Michigan Department of Human Services Office of Native American Affairs

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Quantity: 0  
Cost: 0  
Authority: DHS Director

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DHS-Pub-184 (8-11)



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## Tribal sovereignty

The U.S. Supreme Court, in numerous decisions beginning in 1831, recognized that Indian nations were independent sovereign nations within the borders of the United States.

As members of Indian tribes, Indian people are citizens of independent sovereign nations as well as citizens of the United States and the state in which the individual resides.

A unique, irrevocable trust and political status is created that is not applicable to any other racial or ethnic group.

## outreach

Native American Affairs/Indian Outreach plays an integral part in the delivery of services to North American Indian communities/tribes by providing:

- Leadership
- Advocacy
- Consultation
- Training
- Technical assistance
- Direct services through Indian Outreach Workers

## service elements

Native American Affairs/Indian Outreach is organizationally located within the Office of Interagency and Community Services at the DHS Central Office in Lansing.

Indian outreach workers (IOWs) consist of 12 workers located in the counties of:

- Baraga
- Chippewa
- Delta
- Gogebic
- Isabella
- Kent
- Luce
- Mackinac
- Marquette
- Menominee
- Van Buren
- Wayne

## service activities

- Provide and/or assist with meeting the mandates of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978.
- Liaison with state courts.
- Tribal consultation.
- Coordinate/assist with the implementation of services for all department programs, in addition to services provided by other state, federal and local programs.
- Provide training to state employees, customers and the general public regarding cultural competence and Indian child welfare.
- Advocate on behalf of American Indians throughout all levels of government and among the general public.
- Provide direct services to individuals and their family members or family that self-identifies as an American Indian.

## overview

Native American Affairs/Indian Outreach delivers a broad range of services to Michigan's American Indian population of approximately 130,000 and DHS field staff, including: policy and program development; resource coordination; advocacy; training and technical assistance; coordination of efforts to ensure implementation of applicable state and federal laws [including the federal Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)] pertaining to American Indians; and Tribal consultation.

In addition, Native American Affairs/Indian Outreach coordinates statewide efforts to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of American Indian children and families in Michigan, including:

- Tribal/state partnerships
- Urban Indian partnership
- Michigan Tribal Child Care Task Force
- Child Welfare Training Institute, ICWA training
- Regional Indian outreach worker meetings
- State Court Administrator's Office (SCAO) Court Improvement Program (CIP) Committee on Tribal inclusion

## statistics

In 2010, about 230 American Indian children received child welfare support services.

In 2009, about 250 American Indian children received child welfare support services.

In 2008, DHS provided service to about 11,000 American Indian unduplicated emergency assistance clients.

In 2007, DHS served about 300 American Indian children through child welfare programs.