

**NEWS RELEASE** | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | February 19, 2021

## **Indian Child Welfare and Wellness Conference will be held virtually Feb. 23-25**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The Native American Training Institute will host the 20th annual North Dakota Indian Child Welfare and Wellness Conference, Feb. 23-25, virtually. The conference theme is “ICWA is Family Preservation (Anyone Can Do It).” It will feature expert-led sessions on topics related to child welfare issues, juvenile justice, culture and health and wellness.

The conference will begin Feb. 23, with a pre-conference evening session led by ICWA expert Judge William Thorn from 6 to 8 p.m. Central Time, titled “ICWA 101 – After Safety...the Next Step.”

The first full day of the conference begins Feb. 24 at 8:30 a.m. Central Time, with a welcome, opening prayer and drum flag song, followed by the opening keynote address: “Preserving Family; Preserving Culture,” by Matt Gebhardt of Casey Family Programs.

The opening day will also features sessions on culture: contemporary overview of North Dakota indigenous people; child welfare: balancing bias; an update on the Safety Framework Practice Model the state of North Dakota has implemented; and a session titled: “The Waiting is the Hardest Part: Advocating for ICWA While Waiting for Brackeen.” Deb DeWitz will lead an updated ethics training session titled, “The Many Layers of Child Welfare Ethics: Unique and Honest Look,” from 6 to 8 p.m. CT.

On Feb. 25, Candace Baker will share a personal story at 9 a.m. Central Time, followed by a wellness presentation on herbal medicinal alternatives, a session on juvenile justice: dual status youth and an update on the Family First Prevention Safety Act. Sheldon Spotted Elk of the National Council for Juvenile and Family Court Judges will give the closing address at 2:30 p.m. Central Time, on “ICWA Courts: Positive Impact for Indian Children and Families.” The ICWA Champion Award will be presented at 3:30 p.m. followed by closing remarks.

A movie, “Blood Memory,” will play during scheduled lunch breaks each day. There will also be a drawing for a star quilt on Feb. 24 and 25. Individuals must be present online to win.

Details about speakers and sessions can be found online at <https://nativeinstitute.org/north-dakota-indian-child-welfare-and-wellness-conference> and on the Native American Training Institute’s Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/nativeinstituteND>.

Continuing education units are available for licensed social workers who attend all approved sessions.

People can register until Feb. 23. Registration for the three-day conference is \$150, which includes daily and evening sessions. Individuals can also, if they prefer, register for night sessions only for \$50 or can register for specific days for \$75 per day. The foster parent, student and elder conference registration rate is \$60.

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For questions, contact the Native American Training Institute at 701-255-6374 or [info@nativeinstitute.org](mailto:info@nativeinstitute.org).

The conference is hosted by the Native American Training Institute in partnership with the North Dakota Department of Human Services' Children and Family Services Division.

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**MEDIA CONTACTS:**

Heather Steffl | 701-328-4933  
[hsteffl@nd.gov](mailto:hsteffl@nd.gov)

LuWanna Lawrence | 701-328-1892  
[lklawrence@nd.gov](mailto:lklawrence@nd.gov)