

**NEWS RELEASE** | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | Feb. 4, 2022

## **2022 Indian Child Welfare and Wellness Conference to be held virtually Feb. 16-17**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The 2022 Indian Child Welfare and Wellness Conference, titled “ICWA...The Healing Journey Continues,” will be held virtually Feb. 16-17.

Hosted by the Native American Training Institute (NATI), in partnership with the North Dakota Department of Human Services’ Children and Family Services Division, the conference features experts on the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and wellness topics and offers training for professionals on motivational interviewing and ethics.

“We would like to welcome everyone to our virtual conference. Although we wish we could all be together, we are doing our part to maintain a safe and healthy community,” said NATI Executive Director Gillian Plenty Chief. “We hope to provide an amazing virtual experience with some great presentations to further the knowledge of our partners and participants. Please join us as our ‘Healing Journey Continues,’ and we come together to strengthen ICWA as professional teams!”

The conference will begin Feb. 16 at 8:30 a.m. Central Time, with an opening prayer, drum flag song and welcome, followed by an opening keynote address titled “ICWA 101,” by nationally recognized expert Judge William Thorne from 9 to 11:15 a.m. Opening-day programming will also include a personal story, a session on Motivational Interviewing: Supporting Reasons to Change,” featuring Melanie and Todd Sage; and a wellness program, “Reawakening Warriors,” by Dereck Stonefish. A night session led by Deb Dewitz titled, “Ethics: Many Layers of Child Welfare,” will be held from 6 to 8 p.m.

Day two of the conference begins with an opening prayer and welcome between 8:30 and 9 a.m. CT, followed by a 9 to 10:30 a.m. session, “Truth, Justice, and Healing: Indian Boarding Schools and ICWA,” and the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition featuring Deborah Parker and Dr. Samuel Torres. At 10:45 a.m., DHS Children and Family Services Division team members will share information about their continuous quality improvement program, quality assurance outcomes in child welfare and the Kinship ND program that can aid relative caregivers.

Afternoon sessions on Feb. 17 include, “Resilience: A Better Approach to Juvenile Justice,” by Judge Thorne at 1 p.m., and the closing keynote session, 2:45-4:45 p.m., “Actualizing ICWA in North Dakota, from Ideal to Real,” featuring Matt Gebhardt of Casey Family Programs/ ND ICWA Partnership. The ICWA Champion Award will be presented at 4:45 p.m. followed by drum group, closing remarks and the final star quilt drawing.

All session times are in Central Time and can be accessed by computer, smart phone or smart device using the Zoom app. Registrants will receive a conference link via email prior to the event.

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## ICWA Conference is Feb. 16-17

### Registration details

People can register until Feb. 15. Registration is \$150 and includes two daily sessions and one evening session. Individuals can, if they prefer, register for the ethics evening session only for \$50, or register for specific days for \$75 per day. The foster parent, student and elder conference registration rate is \$60. The registration form and all conference details are online at [www.nativeinstitute.org](http://www.nativeinstitute.org).

Three drawings for star quilts will be held during the conference. Individuals must be present online to win.

For questions, contact NATI by phone at (701) 255-6374, fax (701) 255-6394, or email at [info@nativeinstitute.org](mailto:info@nativeinstitute.org). Cancellations must be received in writing by Feb. 11.

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