

The background of the slide is a photograph of a sunset or sunrise. The sky is filled with soft, colorful clouds in shades of blue, orange, and yellow. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright glow. In the foreground, there is a dark silhouette of a landscape, possibly a hill or a field. A cross is visible on the horizon line to the right.

Chippewa Cree Tribe TANF and Child Welfare Initiative

Elaine Topsy, TANF Director

Rocky Boy Reservation

- The Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation is located in north central Montana was established by an Act of Congress in 1916. It is the home of Chief Rocky Boy's Band of Chippewa and Chief Little Bear's Band of Cree Indians. An estimated 3,600 people reside on the Rocky Boy's Reservation, 3,500 are American Indian. One of every four residents is under the age of 18 years and 50% fall between 18 and 62 years of age. Total enrolled members is 6,973.

Differential Response

- The Tribal Human Services Department is responsible for responding to abuse and neglect referrals. The child welfare begins with referrals of neglect.
- The disintegration of the family plagues the Tribe with serious effects on the community as well as the physical and well being of children.
- The Department began implementing DR September 2010 and had already implemented Family Preservation program services. The Department has a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with all stakeholder agencies. The MOA allows the Department to refer clients to other departments and services.

Differential Response (continued)

- The Department has not had any challenges or barriers implementing DR. Many families have been helped through traditional and customary methods unique to the Chippewa Cree Tribe. DR has brought many families together whereas before children were removed from their homes. The Chippewa Cree Traditional Circle of Elders known as the Peacemakers are utilized as a resource for traditional means of resolving disputes in accordance with the Tribe's traditions and customs.
- Extended family such as grandparents play a huge role in family values and parenting.

Peacemakers

- Chippewa Cree Tribe's Traditional Peacemakers
- The Chippewa Cree Tribal Business Committee approved the Traditional Peacemakers in 2009 and are utilized for traditional adoptions, child protection matters, traditional/cultural intervention for families in crisis.
- Peacemakers are tribal elders who were nominated, trained by the tribal attorney, and recognized by the Chippewa Cree Tribal Court.

Traditional Peacemakers

- Traditional Circle – established in 2009
- Peacemakers – Advocates appointed by the Chippewa Cree Tribal Council.



Guiding Principles for the Chippewa Cree Traditional Circle

- Prayers - Kah-ki-si-mo-in
- Respect – Mah-nah-chi-mo-in
- Be Kind to One Another – Ke-ti-mah-ke-to-in
- Relations – Wah-ko-to-in
- Compassion – Ki-si-wah-ti-so-in
- Help One Another – We-chi-i-to-in
- Spiritual Love – Ki-si-ko-sah-ke-to-in

Family Crisis Intervention

- Healing program for the whole family.



TANF and Child Welfare March and April 2012

- Parenting – Positive Parenting – 8 to 20 participants per class
- Home Visits – 20
- Phone contacts – 30
- Transportation – 24
- Healing to Wellness – weekly
- White Sky Hope Center – weekly
- Rocky Boy School – orientation
- Box Elder School – orientation
- Workshops – 2
- Parents – 78
- Swim trip – 492 parents and children

Rocky Boy and Box Elder Schools Peacemakers and Staff



Rocky Boy Schools and Box Elder Schools – Peacemakers and Staff



TANF and Child Welfare Program Collaboration

- Collaboration with TANF and Child Welfare:
- TANF case managers refer at-risk TANF clients to Child Welfare case manager.
- Child Welfare case manager conducts home visit with TANF client and completes safety assessment of home.
- Child Welfare case manager attends tribal court staffing and Chemical Dependency Center staffing, also contacts schools for children's attendance and progress. Human Service Department staffing are held weekly.
- Goal is to keep TANF family on assistance with intensive case management and wrap around services.

Fatherhood and Motherhood



Healthy Choices, Prevention, Self-Sufficiency Activities



Best Practices

- Co-locating staff in same building
- Communication and sharing information
- Teamwork of program staff
- Peacemakers
- Committed staff
- Staff training with identified goals
- Clear and specific procedures
- Family Strengthening class
- Positive Chippewa Cree Parenting class
- Family Resource Center
- MOU with Departments/Programs

Other Considerations

- Physical disabilities
- Alcohol and Drugs – all TANF clients including caretakers are tested for substance abuse
- Mental Health
- Domestic Violence
- How can program relationships be improved
- Cultural/Traditional beliefs/practices