

# Our Children, Our Sovereignty, Our Culture, Our Choice

*As leaders, it is time to determine our destiny where our children are concerned. We must ensure states comply with ICWA and respect tribal sovereignty. We must also ensure our tribe is clear about our rights and responsibilities when it comes to ICWA. As tribal communities, we must take a stand and participate fully in child welfare matters that threaten our identity, our sovereignty, our culture, and our future. How do we want our children's cases handled? How do we ensure that states respect our sovereignty and follow ICWA?*

Here are four actions recommended by tribal leaders and tribal child welfare experts that tribal leaders can take to address these questions:



**1**  
Develop or update children's codes and ensure policies and procedures are in place to support and protect children and families.

**3**  
Ensure our staff, advocates, attorneys, and expert witnesses are informed and effective when advocating for our children.



**2**  
Be at the table! Make sure there is tribal presence and representation.

**4**  
Know our rights in ICWA cases.



For more information on this topic, view our publication, "Our, Children, Our Sovereignty, Our Culture, Our Choice:

ICWA Guide for Tribal Government and Leaders" at <https://tinyurl.com/ycha93hr> or download the app for iOS and Android.

Contact the Capacity Building Center for Tribes at [info@cbc4tribes.org](mailto:info@cbc4tribes.org) or 1-800-871-8702.