

Relative Search
and
Native American Inquiry and Referral (NAIR)



Department of Children Youth and Families (DCYF)
Centralized Relative Search / Native American Inquiry Unit

Debbie Gomi, MSW
Program Manager
(360) 899-6773
Debbie.Gomi@dcyf.wa.gov

Kelly Lutes
Social Services Specialist Supervisor
(360) 429-3022
Kelly.Lutes@dcyf.wa.gov

RELATIVE SEARCH

Brief History

- 2010 unit created and started in Region 3 (Snohomish, Skagit, Whatcom, San Juan and Island county)
- 2012 a second unit created in King County
- 2014 Statewide Centralized Services unit created serving 47 counties and over 1800 casework staff.
- 2018 unit currently has a total of 13 staff which includes
 - 1 Statewide Program Manager
 - 1 Social Services Supervisor
 - 8 Social Services Specialist
 - 3 Clerical Staff
- Additional 6.5 positions authorized by the legislature will begin in a few months.

Relative Search is a federal requirement as well a benefit and best case plan for all children. We want children to live with people they already know when possible; they can maintain their personal and cultural identity; encourages families to rely on their own resources and strengths; and relatives participate as a responsible and integral member of the child and family support team.

Within thirty days of out of home placement a relative search will be conducted and relative letters will be sent out to all relatives within three degrees of the child. The relative is directed to contact the search specialist first. The specialist can assist the family in determining their relationship and desire to become part of the team and a resource.

When a relative respond either in writing or via the phone and is interested their name and contact information is documented and provided to the caseworker and supervisor to follow up.

If the relative is interested in placement of the child the Assigned Caseworker will complete a background check to determine appropriateness of placement considerations.

This is a small portion of a two day training provided by the University of Washington / School of Social Work / Alliance for Child Welfare Excellence

What does it mean by “All Relatives”



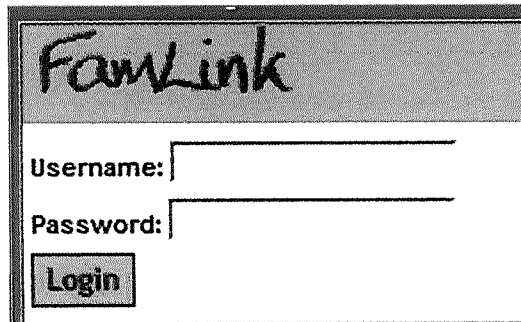
- **RCW 74.15.020** was enacted to expand the definition of relative in Washington State and to include suitable person(s) who have a pre-existing relationship with the child or the family. The intent of the law is to provide more placement options for children in care and opportunities for permanency.

It's the Law and Policy

The requirement for conducting a Relative Search is supported by Federal law (Public Law 110-351, Fostering Connections to Success). This law requires the Department to notify all the relatives when a child is placed in care.



Where We Get Our Information



aces.online





STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES
900 East College Way, Suite 200 • Mount Vernon WA • 98273-5687

«Todays_Date»

«Relative_Name»
«Street_Address»
«City», «State» «Zip»

Case Number:

Regarding: «Children»

Dear

I am a relative search specialist for Children's Administration in Washington State. We are required by law to identify and contact relatives when a child has been removed from the custody of their parents or legal guardian.

The names of the parents for the above named children are: «Parents»

Since the information about the child(ren) is confidential, I ask that you respect their privacy by not sharing information from this letter.

Children's Administration recognizes and values the importance of relationships between children and their extended family. We must include relatives when looking at the needs of children in our care and ask able family members to participate in the planning and care of a child. Some of the options you have under federal and state law include participating in the planning, care, placement and well-being of the child. Examples of your involvement could be sharing family history, identifying other relatives, providing visits, making phone contact, or writing letters.

Attached to this letter is an information sheet about relative placement and supporting a child in other ways during a Children's Administration case. There is also a form that requests information about you or other relatives who may be interested in being part of the child's life. Please note that having options to participate in the planning and placement of a child may be lost by not responding to this notice. You are invited to reply by using the return envelope to send the completed form or you can contact me directly if you have questions about this letter.

Sincerely,

«Signature», Relative Search Specialist

Children's Administration

«RSS_Phone»

E-mail: «RSS_Email»

Relative Search Unit (360) 429-3007

Information Regarding Relative Placement/Support

Q1: I don't know if or how I am related to a child who is in need of foster care so what should I do?

A1: If you don't know how you might be related to a child, please contact the relative search specialist. They will be able to help you understand how you're related.

Q2: I am interested in being a placement resource for the child. What will I need to do?

A2: To ensure a safe and suitable home for a child placement, the following is required:

- Each person age 18 and older living in the home must pass a national background check.
- A caseworker will complete an initial home visit to ensure the health, safety and well-being of a child.
- A Home Study will be completed to assess each caregiver's abilities to meet the needs of the child.

Q3: A household member has criminal history. Does that mean I would not be approved?

A3: Criminal history is reviewed carefully to determine child safety. Some crimes are permanently disqualifying, but others can be considered. This can occur through looking at factors such as: how much time has passed, the age you were at the time of offense, your life as it is today, and other objective factors.

Q4: If I reside out of state, could I still be chosen for placement?

A4: There is a process in place that allows relatives who reside in another state to be considered for placement. This is called the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children, and can be explained in more detail by the child's assigned social worker.

Q5: If approved for placement and the child comes to live with me, what support is available?

A5: There are different supports available for relatives who are approved to have a child in their care.

- Relatives can become a licensed foster parent, and while this is not required to have a child placed in your care, there is a financial benefit to becoming licensed. As a licensed foster parent, you qualify for foster care reimbursement, which is often higher than other financial aid available if you are unlicensed.
- Relatives who choose not to become a licensed foster parent can apply for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) to access financial supports and benefits.
- Foster children may be eligible for the "Passport to College Promise Scholarship" program if they meet certain criteria. This was created in 2007 to help students from foster care attend and succeed in college.
- A licensed relative who later becomes the permanent placement through a guardianship may be eligible for a subsidy through Washington's Relative Guardianship Assistance Program.

Q6: I am unable to be a placement. Are there other ways I can help?

A6: There are many ways relatives can offer support to a child or parent if you cannot be a placement option. Please consider whether you could:

- Provide transportation for the child to visit parents, siblings or extended family.
- Provide respite (short break) for foster parents or other relatives caring for the child.
- Help provide background information or family medical history for the child.
- Help provide family pictures so we can make a picture book for the child, his/her family, or the extended family.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and please do not hesitate to call or write with any questions.

Relative Inquiry

OFFICE

Please return in envelope provided within 10 days

If you need additional space to provide relative information, please use the back of this page.

CASE NAME	CASE NUMBER	PARENT'S NAME(S)
CHILD(REN)'S NAME(S)		CA WORKER'S NAME
		RESPONDING RELATIVE

1. I wish to be a placement option or provide support in the following ways:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help with visits | <input type="checkbox"/> Supervising visitations | <input type="checkbox"/> Providing transportation for: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Placement now | <input type="checkbox"/> Placement in the future | <input type="checkbox"/> Child(ren) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Respite care | <input type="checkbox"/> Staying in contact with child(ren) | <input type="checkbox"/> Parents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I do not wish to help at this time. | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (provide family / medical information): | | |

How are you related to the child (check a box below)?

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Maternal (Mother's side) | <input type="checkbox"/> Paternal (Father's side) | <input type="checkbox"/> Step Relative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grandparent | <input type="checkbox"/> Aunt / Uncle | <input type="checkbox"/> Cousin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (explain in comments box below) | | <input type="checkbox"/> Not related |

Comments:

NAME AND TELEPHONE NUMBER (WITH AREA CODE) OF PERSON SUBMITTING FORM	EMAIL ADDRESS
--	---------------

2. Other family members who may be willing to help:

NAME	RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD(REN)	EMAIL ADDRESS
ADDRESS	CITY STATE ZIP CODE	TELEPHONE NUMBER (AREA CODE)
NAME	RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD(REN)	EMAIL ADDRESS
ADDRESS	CITY STATE ZIP CODE	TELEPHONE NUMBER (AREA CODE)
NAME	RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD(REN)	EMAIL ADDRESS
ADDRESS	CITY STATE ZIP CODE	TELEPHONE NUMBER (AREA CODE)

3. Does the child(ren) have an existing relationship with you? Yes No
 With anyone listed above? Yes No
 If yes, please explain:

4. Does this child(ren) or parents have Native American ancestry / Indian heritage? Yes No
 If yes, please explain and list possible tribal affiliations:

Active Efforts v. Reasonable Efforts

Active efforts are different from “reasonable efforts”

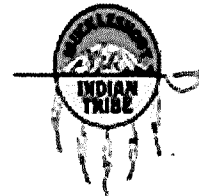
Reasonable	Active
Referral	Arranging services, transportation, helping family (extended family) engage
Managing Case	Proactively engaging in diligent casework, follow-up, visits, service provision
Meeting minimum policy standards	Creatively meeting the needs of the family involved (e.g., more face-to-face contact than required by policy)
Mainstream service provision	Culturally appropriate service provision
Updating tribe/tribal social worker	Seeking service and case management suggestions and actively co-case managing where tribe has available personnel

NATIVE AMERICAN INQUIRY REFERRAL (NAIR) PROCESS

Caseworkers must identify a child as Indian early in the case activity. Early intervention is necessary to ensure that the Indian child is not traumatized by placement that are culturally inappropriate or must be interrupted at a later date to comply with the Indian placement requirements of ICWA.

- Caseworkers when interacting and investigating a case should inquire into the child's Indian status from Intake to case closure. As soon as a caseworker is notified of potential tribal affiliations the worker has 10 days per policy to submit a referral to the NAIR unit.
- Caseworker is to gather information on the child's family ancestry.
- Create a Family Ancestry Chart (FAC) in FamLink.
- Identify all potential tribal affiliations, even if the child is a member of one tribe.
- The NAIR worker will review the FAC submitted by the worker and add any additional information we are able to obtain through our numerous state and national data bases.
- After the NAIR worker identifies completes the FAC and identifies all the tribe's inquiry letters are sent to all tribes/bands/nations that have been identified for the child. All responses from the tribes are returned to the NAIR unit.
- Only a tribe can determine a child's membership status. It is critical to provide the tribes with as much information as possible so they can determine eligibility.
- If the tribe responds that the child is a member or eligible for membership the caseworker must:
 - ✓ Immediately contact the identified tribe
 - ✓ Collect necessary information to provide legal notice
 - ✓ Send or ensure that legal notice is sent within the designated time period
 - ✓ If the tribe does not respond, legal notice for every future "Child Custody" proceeding must be sent.
 - ✓ Present verification to the court and the Attorney General's office.

Federally Recognized Tribes Washington State



Inquiry number: _____

Inquiry to Indian Tribe

Date: _____

Case ID Number: _____

To: **Tribe**
C/O
Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Person ID Number: _____

Name of Child: _____

Date of Birth: _____

FOLD

This agency recently received a referral regarding the above referenced child. We need your help to determine whether this child is subject to the provisions of the Indian Child Welfare Act 25 U.S.C. 1901. et seq. (and RCW 13.38) I have attached a family ancestry chart regarding the child's family members and Indian ancestry as identified by the family to help with this process.

The federal Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) defines an "Indian child" as an unmarried person under the age of 18 years who is either: (a) a member of a federally recognized Indian Tribe; or (b) eligible for membership in a federally recognized Tribe and is the biological child of a member of a federally recognized Indian tribe. 25 U.S.C. 1903(4).

To help establish whether this child is an Indian child for the purposes of ICWA, please answer the following questions:

1. Is the child a member of your Tribe? Yes No

Is the child the biological child of a member and eligible for membership? **(See attached Ancestry Chart.)**

Yes No

2. Mother's Name: _____ Mother's Birth Date: _____

Is the mother of the child a member of your Tribe? Yes No

3. Father's Name: _____ Father's Birth Date: _____

Is the father of the child a member of your Tribe? Yes No

4. For purposes of case planning by the CA worker if the child is a member or the biological child of a member and eligible for membership does:

a. The Tribe plan to formally intervene in this case? Yes No

b. The Tribe plan to participate in case planning which may include placement, court involvement, specialized services, case reviews, culturally relevant events, etc.? Yes No

c. If yes, what services can the Tribe provide:

5. If the child is not an Indian child as defined by state and federal law, confidentiality requirements limit the extent to which CA can share information with the tribe. To the extent that the child and/or family have contact with the Tribe/s they have identified are you willing to be a resource for the case worker in their work with the family to develop culturally appropriate case planning, services or placement? Yes No

Please provide a contact name and number, for the agency, regarding this matter in the area below:

NAME	PHONE NUMBER (INCLUDING AREA CODE)
------	------------------------------------

Please provide the information requested below:

SIGNATURE OF TRIBAL REPRESENTATIVE	DATE		
PRINTED NAME OF TRIBAL REPRESENTATIVE	TELEPHONE NUMBER (INCLUDING AREA CODE)		
MAILING ADDRESS / STREET ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE

Your earliest response is appreciated. If you do not respond in a timely manner, the child may not be treated as an Indian child for legal or case planning purposes. If you need additional time or information in order to determine the child's Indian status, please immediately contact me at the address or telephone number listed below.

If the Tribe does not respond to this letter please be advised that case planning and court activities may proceed without Tribal participation.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or require further assistance.

NAME OF SOCIAL WORKER	E-MAIL ADDRESS		
MAILING ADDRESS / STREET ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE
TELEPHONE NUMBER (INCLUDING AREA CODE)	FAX NUMBER (INCLUDING AREA CODE)		

Family Ancestry Chart, DSHS 04-220, attached.

Indian Identity Request

The federal and state Indian Child Welfare Acts require that all Indian children be identified. To assist in this process all biological parents need to complete this form.

NAME OF CHILD	PERSON ID NUMBER	DATE OF BIRTH	CASE NUMBER
---------------	------------------	---------------	-------------

I, _____, and I, _____,
BIOLOGICAL MOTHER'S NAME
BIOLOGICAL / ALLEGED FATHER'S NAME

hereby acknowledge that _____ is of the following Indian ancestry:
NAME OF CHILD

Mother:

Indian ancestry: Yes No

Tribe(s): _____

Identity of the Tribe unknown

Father:

Indian ancestry: Yes No

Tribe(s): _____

Identity of the Tribe unknown

Name and relationship of person(s) other than parents providing information:

MOTHER'S SIGNATURE	DATE	FATHER'S SIGNATURE	DATE
--------------------	------	--------------------	------

Parent refused to sign
 Parent not available for signature

Parent refused to sign
 Parent not available for signature

CASE WORKER'S SIGNATURE	DATE	CASE WORKER'S NAME
-------------------------	------	--------------------

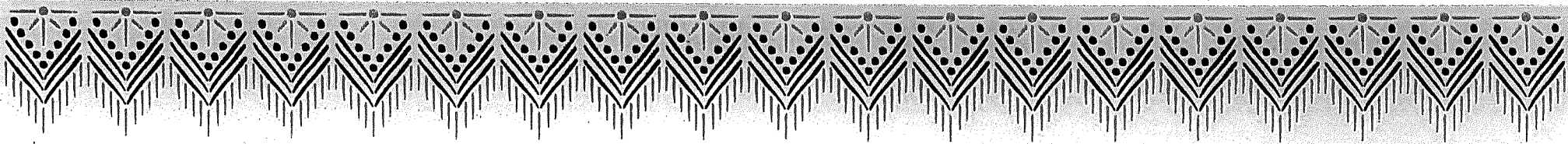
AGENCY STREET ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE
-----------------------	------	-------	----------

The CA caseworker must:

- Upload the completed form in FamLink.
- Complete the Family Ancestry Chart (#04-220) in FamLink, if one or both parents answer yes.
- Staff must email a Native American Inquiry Referral (NAIR) to CANativeAmericanInquiry@dshs.wa.gov within 10 working days.

Family Ancestry Chart
To Assist Tribe(s) To Determine Membership Eligibility

			GREAT GRANDFATHER
		PATERNAL GRANDFATHER	Tribe(s)
		Tribe(s)	Date and Place of Birth
		Date and Place of Birth	GREAT GRANDMOTHER
CASE NAME	FATHER		Tribe(s)
	Tribe(s)		Date and Place of Birth
	Date and Place of Birth		GREAT GRANDFATHER
CASE NUMBER	Father's Aliases	PATERNAL GRANDMOTHER	Tribe(s)
CHILD PERSON ID NUMBER		Tribe(s)	Date and Place of Birth
APPLICANT (Child's Name)		Date and Place of Birth	GREAT GRANDMOTHER
Tribe(s)			Tribe(s)
Date of Birth			Date and Place of Birth
Place of Birth			GREAT GRANDFATHER
		MATERNAL GRANDFATHER	Tribe(s)
	MOTHER	Tribe(s)	Date and Place of Birth
	Tribe(s)	Date and Place of Birth	GREAT GRANDMOTHER
INFORMATION SOURCES	Date and Place of Birth		Tribe(s)
	Mother's Maiden Name		Date and Place of Birth
PREPARED/REVISED BY	Mother's Married Name(s)		GREAT GRANDFATHER
	Mother's Aliases	MATERNAL GRANDMOTHER	Tribe(s)
DATE PREPARED OR REVISED		Tribe(s)	Date and Place of Birth
DATE SENT TO BIA/TRIBE(S)		Date and Place of Birth	GREAT GRANDMOTHER
			Tribe(s)
			Date and Place of Birth



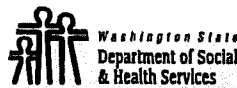
*We are a sovereign people,
we value our different ways,
learned from
our grandparents,
whose ceremonies we follow,
whose languages we speak,
whose customs we honor.
You will know
our separate identities
by the style of our life.*

- Author Unknown

Local Indian Child Welfare Advisory Committee (LICWAC)

If you are an Indian person there are laws and policies that protect you. The preservation of Indian families and tribes is provided by:

1. The federal Indian Child Welfare Act (1978)
2. The Washington State Indian Child Welfare Act (2011)
3. Juvenile Court Act RCW 13.34
4. Washington Administrative Code



Transforming lives

DSHS 22-194 (Rev. 2/15)



Local Indian Child Welfare Advisory Committee

Why We Exist

The Local Indian Child Welfare Advisory Committee (LICWAC) was established by the Department of Social and Health Services at the request of Washington state Indian tribes and Recognized American Indian Organizations (RAIO) to address the separation of Indian children from their communities.

What We Do

The LICWACs serve in an advisory capacity to Children's Administration (CA) case workers and supervisors by recommending culturally appropriate case plans and services for Indian families. LICWACs offer assistance in the case management of these cases with respect to the special needs and rights of Indian children and their families. LICWAC recommendations are included in the court report as an attachment for those cases in the court system.

Who We Are

LICWAC members must be American Indian/Alaska Native/First Nations people or non-Indian people appointed by a tribe or an RAIO who are familiar with the special needs of Indian children and community resources. LICWAC members are approved by the Regional Administrator. Members must formally register as volunteers of the Department, which includes passing a background check.

Resources

This includes all services the families are eligible for and entitled to. Efforts are made to use all relevant Tribal and/or urban Indian services available including:

- Membership Inquiry with federally recognized Tribes
- Health and Social Services
- Education
- Counseling

Engaging Tribes and Families

The state of Washington recognizes the unique cultural and sovereign status of American Indian/Alaskan Natives.

State and federal laws require caseworkers follow specific steps when working with an Indian child and their family who are or may be affiliated with a federally recognized Tribe.

As a parent, Indian custodian or caregiver, you are also encouraged to participate at every level of case planning for your child.

LICWAC Liaison

- or -

Indian Child Welfare Program Consultant

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

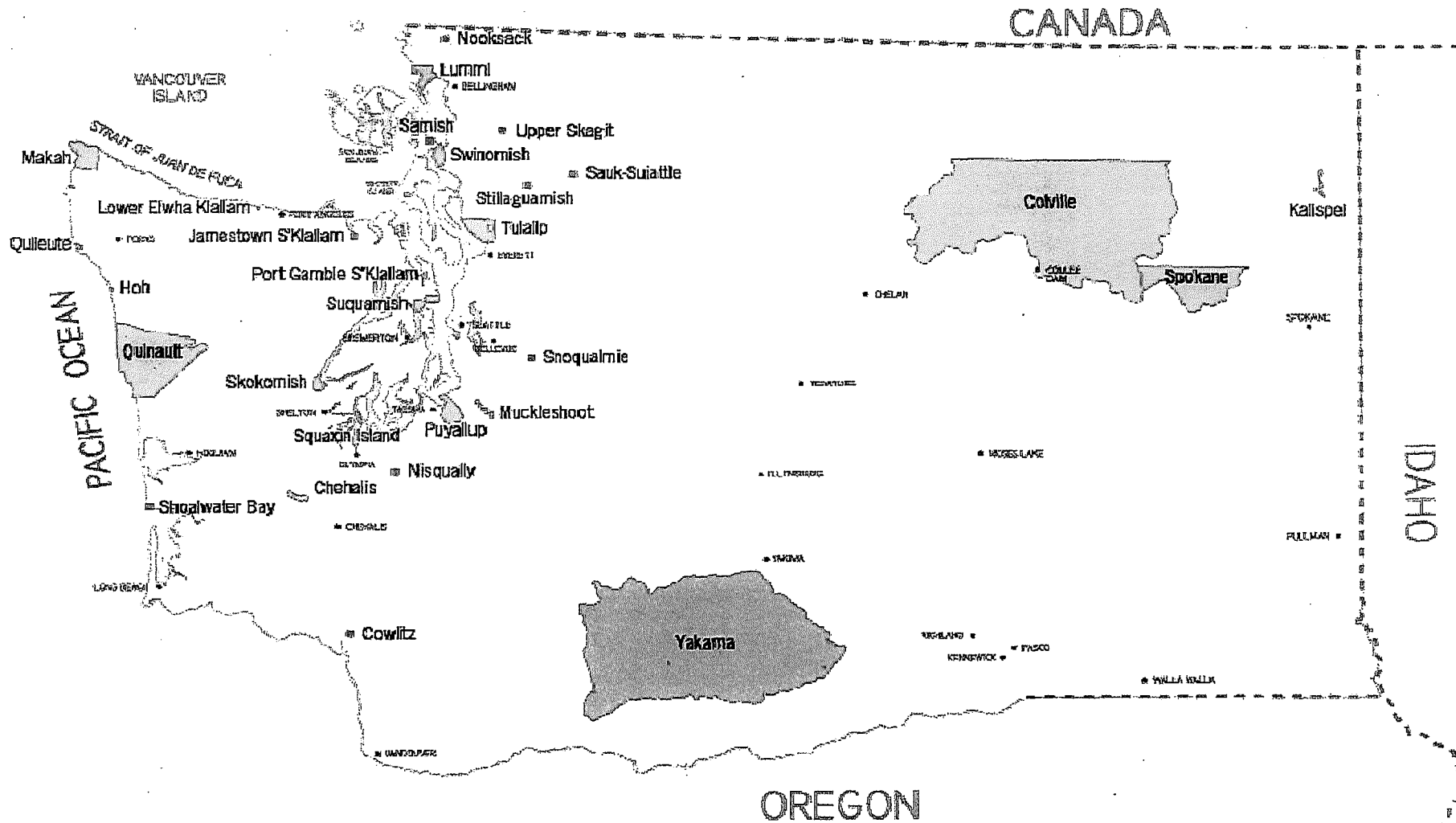
Email: _____



Confidentiality (Privacy)

Children's Administration staff and Local Indian Child Welfare Advisory Committee members must keep all information confidential and private, as required by law.

Tribal Nations in State of Washington



Relative Search / NAIR Yearly Summary

Relative Search	2016	2017
Referrals received from Caseworkers and FamLink report	5440	4643
Number of Relative Search letters sent on behalf of DCYD children	60,164	119,823
<u>Responses from relative letters:</u> Telephone call and E-mails	3460	9904
Positive for Placement Interest	2089	3729
Positive for Family Support	1421	3307
Family expressed that they are unwilling or unable to help	Data not collected	1463

Native American Inquiry and Referral	2016	2017
Referrals received	5201	4978
Total First letters sent	16,207	19,389
Total letters resent (2 nd letters) @ 60 days due to no response from Tribes	3728	6722
Total letters resent (3 rd letters) @120 days due to no response from Tribes applicable to in state tribes only.	191	489
<u>Search Results:</u> Children who were determined to be members	188	261
Children who were determined to be eligible for membership	413	465
Children who were determined to be descendants	139	185