Denver Indian Family Resource Center

DIFRC Office
Lakewood, CO

Strategic Plan
Executive Summary

Facilitated and documented for First Nations Development Inc. by Indigenous Collaboration, Inc.
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SEVEN STARS COLLABORATIVE 2015
Current Environment Scan

DIFRC Client Data Show Serious Challenges to Family Stability

- 74% at or below poverty level
- 3.9 average family size
- 20% of intensive case management clients experience homelessness
- 89% of adults report traumatic experience
- 80% of adult females experienced domestic violence with most recent partner
- 100% of adults were victims of crime within the last 10 years
- 97% of families have been impacted by substance abuse

Environmental Scan: Positive Trends in Indian Child Welfare Practice

- 2015 ICWA BIA guidelines have clarified legal requirements for states
- Public agencies are more aware of ICWA; referrals of parents with very young children allow more opportunities for early intervention
- Trauma-informed, evidence-based care models are culturally-relevant and highly effective with American Indian clients
- DIFRC reunification rates for Indian families involved in child welfare system exceed state and national averages
- Increased availability of collaborative grant opportunities

Environmental Scan: Negative Trends that Impact Indian Child Welfare Practice

- Supreme Court recent decisions have failed to clearly uphold ICWA & tribal sovereignty
- Colorado state and county child welfare professionals are not consistently assessing for Native ancestry and applying ICWA standards
- Lack of affordable housing, increased substance abuse, and limited access to transportation continue to challenge families
• Funding challenges exist for DIFRC
  o DIFRC large federal grants are coming to a close; funding streams are inadequate
  o There appears to be increasing competition among community agencies for funding and service areas
  o Reimbursement-based funding is limited; counties not yet fully identifying and referring eligible families to fulfill fee-for-service contracts
  o Most current DIFRC board members have limited experience in fundraising

Environmental Scan: Advantages that Support DIFRC’s Success

• Colorado has a state ICWA Law that expands and strengthens federal requirements
• DIFRC has strong local, tribal and national reputation for unique expertise in Indian Child Welfare services and training
• DIFRC Executive Director and leadership team have significant experience with ICWA
• DIFRC has an all-Native board with strong and relevant legal, government, and practice expertise
• Staff and board have integrity, diverse strengths, and are passionate about agency mission that empowers families
• Staff have a strong, caring team spirit that is rooted in community and traditional cultural ways of being
• DIFRC service is inclusive to all self-identified Native clients regardless of enrollment status

Environmental Scan: Recent Accomplishments (Past 24 Months)

• DIFRC moved to a more welcoming environment in 2014; new location is accessible to public transportation
• DIFRC has found champions among key public decision-makers
• DIFRC Executive Director was selected to serve as ICWA expert on the Colorado State Human Services Board
• DIFRC reorganization clarified roles, streamlined internal procedures, and improved climate and morale
• All clinical staff has up-to-date training in current prevention and treatment models

• Intern program has been revitalized and increased organizational capacity

• Strong new funder and community relationships, county contracts, and tribal partnerships have increased revenue, training requests, and services referrals

• The Seven Stars Collaborative monthly meetings grew to include 42 community partners

• Clients self-referrals have increased, programs are at capacity and feedback is positive; in 2015, DIFRC served more than 400 people and 67 Native families

• 2015 Colorado Gives Day donations totaled $10,400 – surpassing previous years

• DIFRC has new marketing tools that show organizational pride

• Volunteer service and other in-kind donations have increased

• More qualified Native community members have expressed interest in Board service

• Child Welfare Executive Leadership Council board membership