

**MEDICINE MOON INITIATIVE TO IMPROVE  
TRIBAL CHILD WELFARE OUTCOMES  
Cooperative Agreement # 90-CA-1712**

***FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN***

Introduction

The Medicine Moon Initiative (MMI) To Improve Tribal Child Welfare Outcomes builds upon the ten year planning and development efforts of the Tribal Nations of North Dakota (ND) to improve the well-being of native children residing on the Fort Berthold, Standing Rock, Spirit Lake, and Turtle Mountain Indian Reservations. Overwhelmed by the critical needs of families, lack of resources, limited tribal programs services and supports, and the stark and dismal well-being statistics of tribal children identified in a 1993 North Dakota Legislative Study of the Well-being of North Dakota Children; tribal stakeholders began a long journey to improve services and supports for families residing on ND reservations. The Medicine Moon Initiative to Improve Tribal Child Welfare Outcomes Through System of Care builds on those past planning efforts as well as the experience of the Sacred Child Project, a graduated Center for Mental Health Services service grant, which introduced the System of Care and wraparound process to the Tribal Nations of North Dakota. The principles and values of a System of Care are culturally-congruent and/or complementary to traditional tribal values of the Tribal Nations, who are collaborating on the MMI. We believe the SOC and the wraparound process hold great promise for Native families who are involved with child welfare.

**VISION STATEMENT:**

*As one people, we will heal within ourselves and within our communities through our original cultural teachings and values.*

**MISSION STATEMENT:**

*The mission of the Medicine Moon Initiative (MMI) is to build upon our strengths and resources to lay a foundation for a comprehensive, culturally-appropriate System of Care that will heal and assist families to meet their individual and unique needs to achieve safety, permanence, and wellness for North Dakota Native American children and youth.*

**STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY AND VALUES:**

*It shall be the philosophy of the Medicine Moon Initiative to promote a comprehensive, culturally-competent system of care with these core values:*

- a.) child centered and family focused with the voice of children, youth and families guiding the delivery of services and supports provided;
- b.) community-based, with services, supports, management and decision making responsibility at the community level; and

- c.) **culturally-competent, with agencies, programs, and services responsive to the unique culture of the community and individual families.**

#### **GUIDING PRINCIPLES:**

*The guiding principles of the ND tribal child welfare and system of care shall be as follows:*

- a.) **comprehensive array of services and supports that address the child and family's physical, emotional, social, cultural and educational needs;**
- b.) **individualized services and supports based on the unique needs, preferences and potential of each child and family;**
- c.) **services and supports will be provided to children and families within the least restrictive, most normative environment that is clinically and culturally appropriate;**
- d.) **families and surrogate families should be full participants in all aspects of the planning and delivery of services;**
- e.) **children and families should receive coordinated, integrated services and supports from child and family serving agencies;**
- f.) **children and families should be provided with case management and wraparound process to ensure that multiple services are delivered in a coordinated and therapeutic manner to meet their changing needs;**
- g.) **early identification and intervention for children and families should be promoted by the system of care in order to enhance the likelihood of positive outcomes;**
- h.) **children involved with the child welfare system should be ensured smooth transitions to the adult service systems as they reach maturity;**
- i.) **the rights of children and families should be protected, and effective advocacy efforts for children and families involved with the child welfare system should be promoted; and**
- j.) **children and families should receive non-discriminatory services and services should be sensitive and responsive to cultural differences and special needs.**