



# TRANSFORMING REVIEW TEAMS THROUGH TRIBAL PARTNERSHIP

TELLING STORIES TO SAVE LIVES



## Key Funding Partner

### Federal Acknowledgement

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# Objectives for Today

Three Main Goals



## UNDERSTAND



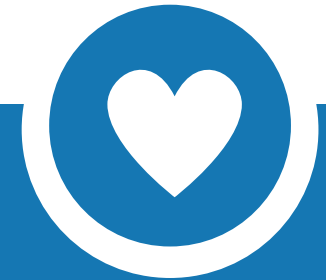
Understand the importance of tribal engagement in fatality review.



## IDENTIFY



Identify tribal-specific resources and partners.



## EXPLORE



Learn how to build trust and mutual respect to foster collaboration.

# Why Tribal Representation Matters

TRIBAL NATIONS IN THE U.S.



## OVERVIEW OF TRIBAL NATIONS

There are 574 federally recognized and over 400 non-federally recognized tribes in the U.S..



## JURISDICTIONAL AND HISTORICAL COMPLEXITIES

Most tribal nations are sovereign, meaning they have the authority to govern themselves. This sovereignty must be acknowledged and respected in any partnership.

# Disproportionality in AI/AN Children

## Factors Contributing to Gaps

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- Jurisdictional and historical complexities:
  - Collective emotional and psychological wounds: Centuries of forced relocation, the boarding school era, family separation and the loss of land, languages and community practices have had lasting impacts on AI/AN communities.
  - Geographic location: Many AI/AN communities are located in remote areas, making access to services and resources particularly challenging.



# UNDERREPRESENTATION IN FATALITY REVIEW

## The Impact

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- Incomplete understanding of risk and circumstance
  - Can miss essential factors contributing to the death, which leads to incomplete case analysis.
- Prevention recommendations miss the mark
  - Recommendations may be irrelevant, ineffective, or harmful.
- AI/AN fatality gaps are masked.
- Missed opportunities for healing and trust-building.





## Respecting Tribal Sovereignty

When reviewing the death of a Native child, it's not just about collecting better data; it's about honoring the authority of tribal nations.

We must approach this work with humility, recognizing that data about Native children belongs to their communities. Tribal approval and partnership are not optional; they're essential.

# ASSESSING THE LANDSCAPE

## Time for Reflection

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- Are tribal communities aware that your team is conducting reviews of Native children?
- Are there deaths where tribal affiliation is missing or misclassified?
- Are tribal partners invited to participate in your reviews?
- Have you built relationships with local tribal communities?
- What assumptions might we be making about Native families, communities, or systems?





# Common Gaps and Barriers

## Where Fatality Review Teams Can Start

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- Lack of awareness or understanding.
- Misclassification or missing data.
- Lack of data sharing agreements.
- Tribal mistrust.
- Lack of representation.

These gaps are not insurmountable, but they do require us to slow down, ask better questions, and build relationships rooted in respect and reciprocity. It's not just about getting a seat at the table; it's about creating space for tribal partners to co-lead the work.

# PUTTING TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT INTO PRACTICE

## Tips and Tricks for Creating Trust

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- Invite tribal representation to the review table
- Action: Build a seat that fits the person you're inviting, where their voice is valued.
- Example: A local fatality review team reached out to the Indian Child Welfare program of a nearby tribe and invited them to co-review cases involving Native children. Together, they developed a review process that honored tribal grieving timelines unique to the community.



# PUTTING TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT INTO PRACTICE

## Tips and Tricks for Creating Trust

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- Share review Findings with tribal partners
- Action: Connect with tribal leadership to share insights and brainstorm exciting prevention strategies together.
- Example: A local review team created a summary report of preventable infant deaths and shared it with tribal public health programs. This led to a collaborative safe sleep campaign that was adapted by the community and tribally led.



# PUTTING TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT INTO PRACTICE

## Tips and Tricks for Creating Trust

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- Advocate for tribal-led fatality reviews
- Action: If a tribe expresses interest, support them in developing their own review process. Offer technical assistance, share tools, and help identify funding opportunities, but let them lead.
- Example: A local coordinator connected a tribal health department with the National Center for Fatality Review and Prevention to explore starting a tribally led team. The state provided training and non-prescriptive support while the tribe developed its own protocol.



# KEY TRIBAL PARTNERS

## Who Are Your Tribal Partners?

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- Tribal health departments or Tribal health directors.
- Indian child welfare (ICW) programs.
- Tribal public safety and law enforcement.
- Tribal behavioral health and prevention services.
- Tribal education and Head Start programs.
- Tribal leadership and governance.
- Urban Indian organizations (UIOs).



# Real-World Examples of Key Tribal Partnerships

Demonstrating How Different Partners Add Value

## Urban Indian Organizations

In urban areas, Native families are often served by Urban Indian Health Programs, which can act as a bridge when tribal affiliation is unknown or when children live off-reservation.

## Tribal Law Enforcement

Coordination with these entities can provide critical scene information and help identify systemic issues or gaps in response



## Tribal Health Departments

These departments often have data, health priorities, and insights that are critical for understanding preventable child deaths.

## Tribal Leadership and Governance

Engagement with tribal leadership shows respect and aligns your efforts with tribal priorities



### Indian Child Welfare (ICW) Programs

They are responsible for implementing the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and may be located within the tribe's social services department.  
Link <https://www.bia.gov/bia/ois/dhs/icwa>



### Indian Health Service

A federal agency that may have data or insights.  
Link: <https://www.ihs.gov/>



### Tribal Epidemiology Centers (TECs)

These public health hubs serve specific regions and work on data sovereignty.  
Link: <https://tribalepicenters.org/>



### Urban Indian Health Institute (UIHI)

A leader in research and data related to urban Native populations. Link: <https://www.uihi.org/>



**NATIONAL AND  
REGIONAL RESOURCES**

# Strategies for Engagement

Clear, concise, correct, and courteous

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Steps to Build Relationships:

- Respect protocol (e.g., introductions, community visits).
- Attend tribal events.
- Utilize tribal liaisons.

Supporting Tribal-Led Fatality Review:

- Offer training, technical assistance (TA), and non-prescriptive support.
- Share adaptable tools and templates.
- Emphasize tribal self-determination.



# Key Takeaways

## For Fatality Review Teams

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- Representation matters in reviews.
- Tribes have unique resources that can enrich prevention efforts.
- Building trust is foundational.
- The National Center is here to support your team.





# OPEN DISCUSSION

How Can We Help You Today?



# RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Connection and Resources to Support Success

# National Center Office Hours

## Upcoming 2025 Sessions

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Date	Topic
8/19/2025	Meaningful Data Visualizations
9/16/2025	Tips and Tools for Engaging Partners in the Review Process
10/21/2025	Handling Conflicting Data
11/18/2025	Facilitating Difficult Conversations
12/16/2025	Interactive Meetings: Designing Live Icebreaker Dashboards



Visit [ncfrp.org/center-resources/office-hours/](https://ncfrp.org/center-resources/office-hours/)  
to register and view past sessions!

# Resources

## GUIDANCE FOR FATALITY REVIEW TEAMS



### **STRENGTHENING TRIBAL INVOLVMENT IN FATALITY REVIEW**

Resource to highlight the need for tribally-led fatality review and support, including Native voices in reviews.



### **AI/AN MODULES**

A three-part video series for fatality review teams to better understand Native American history, sovereignty, and partnerships.



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