

Native American Rights Fund

Indigenous Peoples' Rights

<https://www.narf.org/native-american-rights-fund-praises-new-rules-indian-child-welfare/>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing



Earlier this week, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) published [final regulations](#) intended to improve uniform application and compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (ICWA). Congress passed ICWA in response to the alarmingly high percentage of Indian children being removed, often unwarranted, from their families. The Act is designed to protect the best interests of Indian children and promote the stability and security of Indian families. ICWA's implementation, though, was left to the individual states, and in the decades since its passage, state courts have interpreted and implemented the law in [differing fashions](#). [These regulations](#) will finally ensure uniform application of the federal law meant to keep Indian children and their families together, said [John Echohawk, Executive Director of the Native American Rights Fund](#). The prior approach to ICWA's implementation, having fifty separate states read the law fifty different ways, was inconsistent with Congress's intent to create uniform standards for Indian children and families involved in child custody proceedings. [These regulations](#) will provide clear, consistent rules for child placement decisions that will result in better, more reliable outcomes for Native children.

Highlights of the [new regulations](#) include:

NARF is a partner in the ICWA Defense Project with the [National Indian Child Welfare Association](#), the [National Congress of American Indians](#) (NCAI), and the [ICWA Appellate Project](#) at Michigan State University College of Law. The ICWA Defense Project's statement in support of the new regulations is available [here](#).

Boulder, CO [\(303\) 447-8760](#)

Anchorage, AK [\(907\) 276-0680](#)

Washington, DC [\(202\) 785-4166](#)