



UTTERKA NAU NAAWAK
TOGETHERNESS, STRONG ROOTS
PASCUA YAQUI TRIBE 2025 ICWA REPORT



2024-2028

TRIBAL COUNCIL



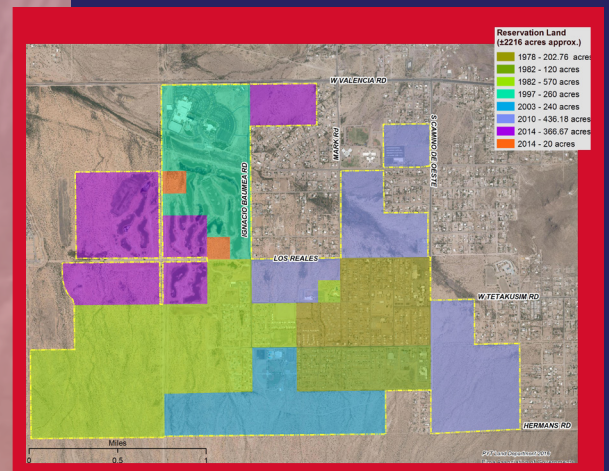
The Pascua Yaqui Tribal Council is an elected body that serves a four year term. The current Council took Office in June 2024. The Council selects four of its members to serve in Executive roles that include a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. Council members also serve on various government operations through face-to-face, regularly scheduled meetings with Division/ Department Directors and key staff.

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Julian Hernandez, Chairman | Gloria Alvarez Gomez, Council member |
| Peter S. Yucupicio, Vice Chairman | Andrea Gonzales, Council member |
| Thomas J. Cupis, Treasurer | Francisco Munoz Jr., Council member |
| Rosa Soto Alvarez, Secretary | Jose-Enrique Saldana, Council member |
| Rolando Flores, Council member | Irene Sanchez, Council member |
| Herminia Frias, Council member | |

The Yaqui people have inhabited many parts of North America, from northern Mexico and the southern United States from Arizona, west to California and north to Colorado since 500 AD. The Yaquis' main territorial base is located along the Rio Yaqui in Sonora, Mexico and consists of eight original pueblos: Benem, Huiviris, Rahum, Potam, Vicam, Torim, Bacum, and Cocorit. The name Yaqui was given to the "Yoeme" (the Yaqui word for "People"), by the Spanish who called the Yoeme Haiki (Yaqui), which is the Yoeme word for "speech."

In 1964, a bill was passed for the transfer of two hundred and two acres of desert land to the Yoeme where they could maintain their tribal identity. Many Yoeme moved to this new land, now the Pascua Yaqui Reservation, located seven miles west of I-19, south of Valencia Road. The Pascua Yaqui Tribe gained federal recognition as an Indian Tribe on September 18, 1978 and passed its first Constitution in 1988. On October 14, 1994, Congress adopted Public Law 103-357, recognizing the Pascua Yaqui Tribe as a "Historic Indian Tribe," possessing all sovereign rights of an Indian Tribe.

Annual celebrations include Tribal Recognition Day on September 18 and the Easter ceremonies, which start each year on Ash Wednesday and continue through the Lenten Season.



ICWA MISSION STATEMENT

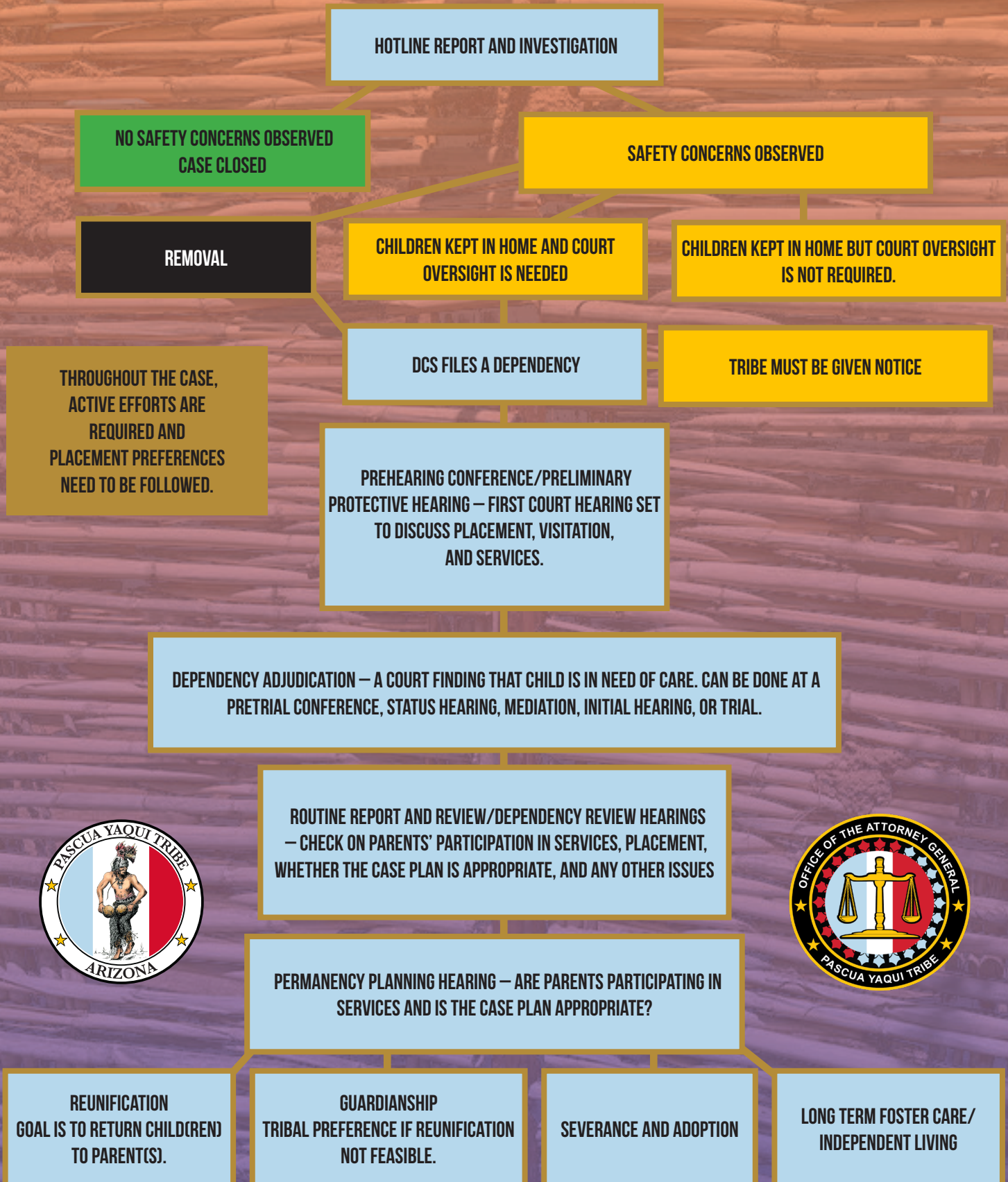
The Pascua Yaqui Tribe recognizes that our Yaqui children are our future. Together in genuine partnership with families, our community, and other governmental agencies we strive to provide support for children and families in reaching their full potential. Our vision is to strengthen families and promote the well-being of our children through prevention, intervention, education and advocacy.

Hiaak Pahkua Motchaala Nau Ho'arakame, Itom yoemia taa hu'uneiya. Ito vetchi'ivo am haptia nokitune'epo into nau nana'anapo siimem nau welisia, Itom vatoraata. Yaura vetana hoara'apo itom utte'amak hunaman yeu toha'u waka hiapsamta tu'l vatoita itom yoemiam vetana. Navuhti vicha au suawamta into waka vem emo mahtatevone'epo waa hinamiamake.

La Tribu Pascua Yaqui reconoce que nuestros niños son nuestro futuro. Existe una colaboración única entre familias, nuestra comunidad y entre otras agencias gubernamentales, y juntos hacemos el esfuerzo de proveer el apoyo para los niños y familias en realizar su potencial. Nuestra visión es de fortalecer las familias y promover el bien estar de nuestros niños a través de prevención, intervención, educación, y abogacía.



DEPENDENCY PROCESS IN THE STATE OF ARIZONA





HISTORY AND PURPOSE OF INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT

Indian families living on reservations lost at least one child to the foster care system. Child Welfare agencies were often ignorant, indifferent of or insensitive to cultural differences in child rearing and parenting practices and, as a result, many unnecessary, and unwarranted, foster and adoptive placements were made. As stated by Choctaw tribal chief, Calvin Isaac, during US Senate testimony prior to the passage of ICWA, "One of the most serious failings of the present system is that Indian children are removed from the custody of their natural parents by non-tribal governmental authorities who have no basis for intelligently evaluating the cultural and social premises underlying Indian home life and child rearing. Many of the individuals who decide the fate of our children are, at best, ignorant of our cultural values and, at worst, have contempt for the Indian way and convinced that removal, usually to a non-Indian household or institution can only benefit an Indian child." In response to this testimony and other overwhelming evidence from Indian communities that the loss of their children meant the eventual destruction of Indian culture Congress passed the Indian Child Welfare Act in 1978.

ICWA was enacted to protect the best interests of Indian children and to promote the stability and security of Indian tribes and families. It established minimum Federal standards for the removal of Indian children and provides guidelines for the placement of Indian children in foster or adoptive homes which reflect the unique values of Indian culture. ICWA protects the interests of both Indian children and tribes. In the context of child welfare law, protecting the interests of a tribe in its children is unique. An underlying premise of ICWA is that Indian tribes have sovereign rights and legal powers with respect to Indian children and have a vital legal role to play in determining whether Indian children should be separated from their families and culture. The Act recognizes the authority of both tribal and state courts to make decisions regarding the welfare, care, custody and control of Indian children. The Act also provides assistance to Indian tribes in the operation of tribal child and family service programs.

CITATION: MONTANA DPHHS. "ICWA HISTORY AND PURPOSE." [HTTPS://DPHHS.MT.GOV/CFSD/ICWA/ICWAHISTORY](https://dphhs.mt.gov/cfsd/icwa/icwahistory)



PASCUA YAQUI TRIBE

RESOLUTION NO. C03-84-25

RESOLUTION OF THE PASCUA YAQUI TRIBE CREATING THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT (ICWA).

- WHEREAS**, pursuant to the Constitution of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe, Article VI, Section 1(n), the Pascua Yaqui Tribal Council is empowered to create committees and to define their powers; and
- WHEREAS**, pursuant to the Pascua Yaqui Tribal Code, Title 2, Chapter 1-4, Subchapter C, Section 120(A), the Pascua Yaqui Tribal Council is empowered to create Special and Ad Hoc committees with a defined scope, membership, and duration; and
- WHEREAS**, Special Committees must be established by Tribal Council Resolution and are comprised only of Tribal Council Members which investigates and reports on specific matters (2 PYTC § 1-4-30); and
- WHEREAS**, when a matter requires temporary assistance to the Tribal Council, and is appropriate to Committee efforts, the Chair of the Tribe, with the approval of the Tribal Council, may form such Special or Ad Hoc Committee and shall designate (1) the Chairperson of the Committee, (2) the specific purpose and tasks to be completed by the Committee, and (3) the duration of the Committees activities: (2 PYTC § 1-4-120); and
- WHEREAS**, Special Committees are composed of three to five members who shall serve a two-year term, however, there is no limit to the number of terms that a committee member can serve on a committee (2 PYTC § 1-4-130(A)-(B)); and
- WHEREAS**, the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), was enacted by Congress in 1978 to protect the best interests of Native American children, to promote the stability and security of tribes and families, and to prevent the unjust removal of Native children from their communities; and
- WHEREAS**, the Pascua Yaqui Tribe acknowledges the importance of ICWA and remains steadfast in its commitment to protecting the rights of Yaqui children and families; and
- WHEREAS**, the Office of the Attorney General represents the Pascua Yaqui Tribe through Tribal Council, and the creation of a Special Committee on ICWA will expedite work and will facilitate transparent, and open communications; and
- WHEREAS**, the Pascua Yaqui Tribal Council has determined that the creation of a Special Committee on the Indian Child Welfare Act will be in the best interest of the Tribe, titled "Special Committee on ICWA"; and
- WHEREAS**, the purpose of the Special Committee on ICWA will be to define the needs of the ICWA community, identify available resources, create a plan to assist Pascua

1

| 7474 S Camino De Oeste Tucson, AZ 85757 | 520.883.5000 | 520.883.5014 | www.pascuayaqui-nsn.gov |

RESOLUTION NO. C03-84-25

RESOLUTION OF THE PASCUA YAQUI TRIBE CREATING THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT (ICWA).

PASCUA YAQUI SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT
ROSA SOTO ALVAREZ, TRIBAL SECRETARY -CHAIRPERSON
COUNCILWOMAN GLORIA ALVAREZ, IRENE SANCHEZ, ANDREA GONZALES
AND COUNCILMAN JOSE-ENRIQUE SALDANA WILL SERVE
AS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

PASCUA YAQUI TRIBE

RESOLUTION NO. C03-85-25

RESOLUTION OF THE PASCUA YAQUI TRIBE PROCLAIMING JUNE 15TH AS ICWA DAY TO HONOR THE INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT AND AFFIRM THE TRIBE'S COMMITMENT TO THE PROTECTION OF PASCUA YAQUI CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND CULTURE.

- WHEREAS**, the Constitution of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe, Article VI, Section 1 (o) authorizes the Tribal Council "to develop and adopt ordinances, resolutions, rules and regulations to protect and promote the peace, health, safety and general welfare of the Pascua Yaqui people and to facilitate the conduct and operation of the tribal government;" and
- WHEREAS**, the Pascua Yaqui Tribe is a sovereign nation committed to the protection and well-being of its children, families, and cultural heritage; and
- WHEREAS**, the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), enacted by Congress in 1978, was established to protect the best interests of Native American children, to promote the stability and security of tribes and families, and to prevent the unjust removal of Native children from their communities and culture; and
- WHEREAS**, ICWA recognizes and affirms the inherent sovereign authority of Tribal Nations over the welfare of their children, ensuring that Pascua Yaqui children remain connected to their families, culture, and traditions; and
- WHEREAS**, ICWA establishes minimum federal standards for the removal and placement of Indian children and affirms the importance of tribal authority in child welfare matters, ensuring that Indian children are placed in homes that reflect the unique values and traditions of their culture; and
- WHEREAS**, the continued implementation and enforcement of ICWA are vital to the preservation of Indian tribes and the well-being of Indian children, providing them with a sense of identity and belonging that is essential for their development and success; and
- WHEREAS**, the Pascua Yaqui Tribe acknowledges the historical trauma caused by the separation of Native children from their families and remains steadfast in its commitment to protecting the rights of Yaqui children and families; and
- WHEREAS**, the Tribal Council recognizes and honors the resilience and strength of Indian tribes, families, and children, and commit to supporting the principles and practices established by ICWA; and
- WHEREAS**, on June 15, 2023, in the case of *Haaland vs Brackeen*, the United States Supreme Court decided to uphold and reaffirm the importance of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) by a vote of 7-2 where Justice Neil Gorsuch stated in his concurrence, "In adopting the Indian Child Welfare Act, Congress exercised that lawful authority to secure the right of Indian parents to raise their families as they please; the right

| 7474 S Camino De Oeste Tucson, AZ 85757 | 520.883.5000 | 520.883.5014 | www.pascuayaqui-nsn.gov |

RESOLUTION NO. C03-85-25

RESOLUTION OF THE PASCUA YAQUI TRIBE PROCLAIMING JUNE 15TH AS ICWA DAY TO HONOR THE INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT AND AFFIRM THE TRIBE'S COMMITMENT TO THE PROTECTION OF PASCUA YAQUI CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND CULTURE.

RESOLUTION NO. C03-86-25

RESOLUTION OF THE PASCUA YAQUI TRIBE PROCLAIMING SEPTEMBER 30TH AS EVERY CHILD MATTERS DAY AND ORANGE SHIRT DAY.

PASCUA YAQUI TRIBE

RESOLUTION NO. C03-86-25

RESOLUTION OF THE PASCUA YAQUI TRIBE PROCLAIMING SEPTEMBER 30TH AS EVERY CHILD MATTERS DAY AND ORANGE SHIRT DAY.

- WHEREAS**, the Constitution of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe, Article VI, Section 1 (o) authorizes the Tribal Council "to develop and adopt ordinances, resolutions, rules and regulations to protect and promote the peace, health, safety and general welfare of the Pascua Yaqui people and to facilitate the conduct and operation of the tribal government;" and
- WHEREAS**, Congress introduced legislation to establish the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policy in the United States on September 30, 2021, the National Day of Remembrance for U.S. Indian Boarding Schools. The Act may be cited as the "Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act" and established the first formal investigation of Indigenous boarding schools in the U.S. through the creation of a Federal Truth and Healing Commission . . . (U.S. Congress. S.2907 - *Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act*, 117th Congress, 2nd session. 2022, reintroduced S.761, 119th Congress, 1st Session, 2025); and
- WHEREAS**, assimilation and "civilization" processes against Native Americans, such as the Indian Boarding School Policies and Practices, were adopted by the United States to strip American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children of their Indigenous identities, beliefs, and languages; to assimilate them into non-Native culture through federally funded and controlled Christian-run schools, which had the intent and, in many cases, the effect, of termination, with dire and intentional consequences on the cultures and languages of Indigenous Peoples; and
- WHEREAS**, between 1819 and the 1960s, as many as 100,000 American Indian and Alaska Native children were removed from their homes and families, and placed in Indian boarding schools far from their homes, which were operated by the federal government and churches, where the children were punished for speaking their native language, stripped of traditional clothing, hair and all things and behaviors reflective of their native culture, and
- WHEREAS**, the United States Indian Boarding School policy's deliberate intent was to separate Native American children from their families, cultures, communities, and Tribal Nations through removal and reeducation; and
- WHEREAS**, many of the children who were taken to Indian boarding schools did not survive, and of those who did survive, many never returned to their parents, extended families, or communities, and

| 7474 S Camino De Oeste Tucson, AZ 85757 | 520.883.5000 | 520.883.5014 | www.pascuayaqui-nsn.gov |

1789

1789 - The first law of Congress relating to Indians was the creation of the War Department.

1800'S

1819 - Indian Civilization Act of 1819.

1824 - Bureau of Indian Affairs established.

1850 - Majority of Arizona's Reservations were established between 1850 and 1920. (dispossession)

1879 - Carlisle Indian School is opened in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. (assimilation)

1887 - After the Apache Wars, surviving Apache children were forcibly removed from families and shipped by train to the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania.

1891 - The Phoenix Indian School opened in 1891. Arizona, as a state, had the second most Indian boarding schools, with as many as 51 schools.

1900'S

1947 - The Church of Latter-Day Saints begins the Indian Placement Program.

1948 - Native Americans secure the right to vote in Arizona.

1950 - Arizona desegregates schools.

1958 - Bureau of Indian Administration and Child Welfare League of America encouraged adoption of Native American children by non-Native families through the Indian Adoption Project.

1978 - Indian Child Welfare Act is adopted, establishing requirements for child welfare agencies when serving Native children and families.

1978 - Pascua Yaqui Tribe is federally-recognized.
1980 - Enactment of the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Amendments of 1980 establishes a new Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance entitlement program.

1985 - Title IV-E is amended to include a new Independent Living program to assist youth that age-out of the foster care system.
1989 - United States Supreme Court Decides Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians v. Holyfield.

1990'S

1990 - Resolution passed by the Pascua Yaqui Tribe to establish a foster care and home review committee.

1993 - Title IV-B is amended to create a new Family Preservation and Family Support program.

1997 - Adoption and Safe Families Act is enacted. It creates timelines for moving children to permanency, provides adoption bonuses for states, and continues the child welfare waiver demonstrations. The law also renames the Family Preservation and Family Support program to Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) and expands the use of funds to two additional categories of service: time limited reunification services and adoption promotion and support services.

1900'S

2002 - Pascua Yaqui Tribe adopted the Child Welfare Policy Act.

2002 - Pascua Yaqui Tribe begins to use Tribal attorney to represent in ICWA State Cases.

2002 - Pascua Yaqui Tribe develop ICWA Staff.

2004 - Resolution of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe Expanding the Definition of Eligibility for Membership solely for Indian Child Welfare Act Purposes passes.

2007 - Pascua Yaqui Tribe approves Tribe's membership in National Indian Child Welfare Act Association



2010'S

2013 - Pascua Yaqui Tribe Approved the Grant Acceptance of the 2013 Tribal Title IV-E Plan Development Grant Funding and Authorizing the Expenditure of Funds.

2013 - United States Supreme Court decides Adoptive Couple v. Baby Girl

2013 – Resolution of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe approving acceptance of a grant from the National Congress of American Indians to implement a pilot program for legal representation in the Child Welfare System.

2016 – Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) issues ICWA Guidelines and issues ICWA Regulations.

2016 - Resolution to authorize submission of Pascua Yaqui Plan for Title IV-E of the Social Security Act direct federal payments for foster care and adoption assistance.

2016 - Pascua Yaqui Tribe secures BIA Tiwahe funds to support ICWA attorney and Legal Assistant in Maricopa County, Arizona.

2017 - Pascua Yaqui Tribe Hosts Inaugural ICWA Conference.

2019 - Resolution authorizing the Tribe to participate in an amicus curiae brief in Brackeen V. Zinke to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, in support of appellant tribes' position of upholding the ICWA.

2019 - Pima County, Arizona begins ICWA Court.

2019 - Pascua Yaqui Tribe begins Title IV(e) implementation.

2020'S

2021 – Pascua Yaqui Tribe formalizes ICWA Unit within Office of the Attorney General.

2022 – Resolution of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe authorizing the Pascua Yaqui Tribe's participation in an amicus brief in Brackeen v. Haaland to the Supreme Court of the United States in support of upholding the ICWA.

2022 – ICWA Supervising Attorney and Attorney General of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe author and publish "ICWA – The Gold Standard: Golden Nuggets of Evidence from Arizona" in the Arizona State Bar Magazine.

2022 – Pascua Yaqui Tribe and Arizona Department of Child Safety enter into a Memorandum of Understanding for ICWA Cases
2022 – Maricopa County, Arizona begins ICWA Court

2022 - On June 22, 2021, Secretary of the Interior, Deb Haaland, announced the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative, directing the Department of the Interior to undertake an investigation of the loss of human life and lasting consequences of the Federal Indian boarding school system.

2023 – United States Supreme Court decides Brackeen v. Haaland

2025 – Pascua Yaqui Tribe's Tribal Council establishing The ICWA Sub Committee

2025 – Pascua Yaqui Tribe Declaring June 15th as ICWA DAY



COLLABRATIVE DEPARTMENTS

Office of the Attorney General

The Office of the Attorney General (“OAG”) represents the Tribe in all Indian Child Welfare Act matters in state courts. The OAG receives about 650 notices from various states a year. For every notice that is received we create and submit an ICWA enrollment verification to determine the child(ren’s) and/or parent(s) eligibility status. Once eligibility confirmation is received from the Tribe’s Enrollment Department on eligibility status, our Assistant Attorney Generals will intervene in the case. If eligibility is not confirmed, a Non-Intervention Letter will be mailed. Every month the Assistant Attorney Generals Mr. Domingo DeGrazia, and his legal assistant compile a report on the status of all ICWA cases.

Social Services – Children Services

The Children’s Services Program-Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Unit under the Social Services Department strives to achieve this mission by providing support and guidance to families in any state child welfare system through case management services; consultation, collaboration and coordination with state child welfare agencies and courts; education on cultural teachings and ICWA; and advocating for Yaqui children and their families in and out of court. The ICWA unit works in conjunction with the Office of the Attorney General to prevent the breakup of Tribal families during state investigations and team decision making meetings, to place children with family or in Yaqui homes when removals occurs and to advocate for reunification services.

Enrollment

In collaboration with Senior Enrollment Research Specialist ICWA, in order to serve as a liaison between the Office the Attorney General and Tribal Social services. The Senior Enrollment Research Specialist ICWA concentrates on providing Enrollment verification and vital tribal information for child welfare cases. The Specialist conducts a thorough review of all enrollment databases in order to not only verify whether the child is enrolled but also to link that child to family members which information is then reported on a Kinship report. The Kinship Report is vital in the placement of children in the child welfare system. When the child is an enrolled tribal member, the specialist will also issue a Certificate of Indian Blood for the child to show tribal affiliation. The Specialist initiates the Application for Membership as well as request the Birth Certificate from Arizona’s Department of Vital Records for eligible children. In doing so, we are looking to enroll eligible children more quickly so that they can remain connected with their culture and maintain a sense of identity.

ENROLLMENT DATA

Pascua Yaqui Tribe's Enrollment Department Tribal CPS and ICWA Processed Verifications and Applications October 2024 – June 2025

Below you will find the table summary of requests tracked for ICWA Verification purposes for the months of October 2024 – June 2025. As you can see in the summary the Total Non-Member Requests for the months below were four hundred nine (409) and Total Member Requests were twenty-one (21). The requests are the number of children for which a search was conducted on our Enrollment databases.

MONTH	TOTAL NON-MEMBER REQUEST	TOTAL MEMBER REQUEST	TOTAL
OCTOBER 2024	40	2	42
NOVEMBER 2024	42	0	42
DECEMBER 2024	61	2	63
JANUARY 2025	54	2	56
FEBRUARY 2025	29	4	33
MARCH 2025	65	10	75
APRIL 2025	34	1	35
MAY 2025	51	0	51
JUNE 2025	33	0	33
Monthly totals	409	21	430

The table below shows the number of applications received from October 2024 – June 2025 which involve applicants who are either identified as Tribal CPS or ICWA. There was a total of 0 applications processed for those identified as ICWA and a total of 1 application were processed for Tribal CPS children.

Enrollment Applications Received	Total
ICWA	0
TRIBAL CPS	1
Total Applications YTD	1



USING CHARACTERS FROM THE PASCUA YAQUI ICWA CHILDREN'S BOOKS
THE ENROLLMENT DEPARTMENT HAS CREATED A CARD GAME TO
HELP PROMOTE HAIKI LANGUAGE LEARNING.



ICWA SUCCESS STORIES

Victor Cortez

My name is Victor Cortez. I'm going to tell you a little about my story of how I came and how I'm in the cultural now. I was a newborn baby when I went to foster care. I did have siblings that were also put in. I had six sisters and two brothers. They were place with me. I'm glad for the ICWA law because it brought me back to my community and my people and the cultural. Being a part of the cultural, I'm a deer dancer and, it took practice and like to know everything that I do is like very special because um it like holds a lot and like just the the backstory of it like how it all started from like way back and like the songs and, it just, I really feel connected with it when I'm there, because it's a beautiful the culture that we do and I'm glad to be in it. My Tata had told me stories about it and how it all worked. Ever since I was a kid, I have been going to practice. They would have liked little practice, and I said I want to try this out and try that. And I just fell in love with it. I fell in love with how the deer dancing moves and like all the songs. It was like, there's a lot to it that comes with it. I feel that something in my heart is just like it touches it right there and like I feel connected with the music and all the instruments that are played well that are right there playing and just the sound gets me going and like moving certain ways. Without ICWA, my life would be, umm I don't even know. It's probably somewhere out there. I wouldn't be with my family. I wouldn't know the culture or like everything that it brought to you. I wouldn't be with my sisters. So I'm happy that ICWA, with everything has it done for me and how it brought everybody together and my family. Because of ICWA, I'm connected with my people and my ancestors.

Sarah Cortez

Hi, my name is Sarah Cortez.

I am 15 years old. I was about two months when I went into foster care. I did have siblings when I, when I was in the foster care system, I had a sibling before. We were all placed in the same home. Our mom, well, we call her our mom because she took us in. We look up to her as a mom. I do participate in the culture. I do. I have three more years left. I learned about the culture when I was two. I would say I would look up to my brother. When he started doing it, I slowly got into it. It is very important to me just because I know where I grew up and what's my culture, what is my culture and what you know who I am. I say that's very important to me because if I didn't know I was Yaqui, I don't know what I would know I am. If it wasn't for ICWA, I would not be with my siblings. I wouldn't know my culture and I wouldn't know where I belong. I would be lost. I would be somewhere in California. Some kids don't know where they're from and what their culture is, and I feel like by them knowing where they come from and what their culture is, they could look up to their culture as that and show everybody like what their culture is about.

So what the ICWA law helped me with was getting my siblings together with me, showing me where I come from. So what it helped me achieve in my life was like me being around with my siblings, me talking to them, communicating. And me being in my culture, like participating. I feel like culture is so important to me just because I know who I am and where I come from. And I feel like culture is more important because not only are we doing it for ourselves, but we're doing it for our people. We do it for everybody around, not for us only, but for everybody else.

ICWA SUCCESS STORIES

Desiree Valenzuela

So, when I was nine, I moved from living with my mom to living with my dad and my stepmom. And when I was 13, September of that year, my mother passed away. And then a few months later, January 1st of 2018, my dad passed away and so I was living with my stepmom. And all of those months up until July, we were living with her and trying to figure out whether or not I was going to go into foster care or if she was going to be able to adopt me. And with the advocacy of my tio and my tata, my mom was able to adopt us and have a state with her. So, when my my dad passed away, my dad was very culturally centered, so we would always be at the cultural events, Cuaresma, and my stepmom really wanted to keep that with us, because it was something that I grew up with, and you know, something that I was able to connect to with my dad and with my mom. I grew up doing those things, and I grew up you know, culturally involved. So, it was definitely important for me to feel that connection, to know that I was connected to my parents, even though they weren't here. When I was 14, my mom put me into, you know, more programs. So I was in youth group, I was in teen court for Guadalupe, and then I ran for Junior Miss Pascua Yaqui, and I received the title for first attendance of 2018-2019. And I just continued to stay culturally involved, as well as paying attention in school. So that year was a struggle, but you know I definitely had a lot of successes as far as you know youth participation in the culture. I feel as though if my stepmother hadn't adopted me, it would have been very difficult. I know that I would have wanted to foster care because my other family members are not able to be able to take care of other children. I know that I come from a community that is, you know, in poverty and struggling. So, you know, it was definitely just a struggle to even find a place as far as in in community group homes, I would say. So I definitely don't think that I would have been in the same situation of where I am right now, as far as you know, Miss Pascua Yaqui being in Youth Council and you know all of those.





ICWA SUCCESS STORIES

ABIGAIL MATUS

Hi, my name is Abigail Matus. I like to go by Abby.

I'm 24 and grew up in Guadalupe, Arizona. I was young when I got adopted, and I am so grateful that I was adopted.

So it was just me and my younger sister, and then my older brother, Martine, and my two younger two sisters. Bran and Bianca, I guess they were together with a different family. So, we were separated at some point and I don't remember, if ICWA wasn't alive or where it's at today. I wouldn't know that I have a brother or her twin sisters because it was just me and my younger sister, so I wouldn't know them and I wouldn't know that I have a beautiful culture, a beautiful like tribe. I wouldn't know. I would. I'd be lost actually.

So ICWA is important to keep families together, to keep the kids, young kids, like together with their families. Cause like being pulled out of your culture and your tribe. It's a scary thought. Uh So like, so I'm glad we were brought back together.

The guy that got a hold of our case, like our adoption case, there's the family that I was with, the white family, they were so close to adopting us, like super close. Until this guy, he comes along, he's like, Hey, what's what's up with this? You know, they're outside of their, outside of their like culture, outside of their family, like, you know. So he gets a hold of our case and I don't know how. Like God bless him. But I guess. I don't know. This is hard. And the guy I forgot his name. I want to give a thank you to that guy, but I wouldn't know who I am today and what my culture is and like my tribe, what I am. Like my tribe is such a beautiful tribe. And I like who I am now. I like where I'm at. I'm like, I'm proud to be here.

I'm a photographer and I like to, I'm barely starting up my business. And this past year, back in December, I had a like a fundraiser.

It was like a little event. I wanted to do like a small session. And so I was like, oh, Christmas is coming up, why not? Like take pictures for the families.

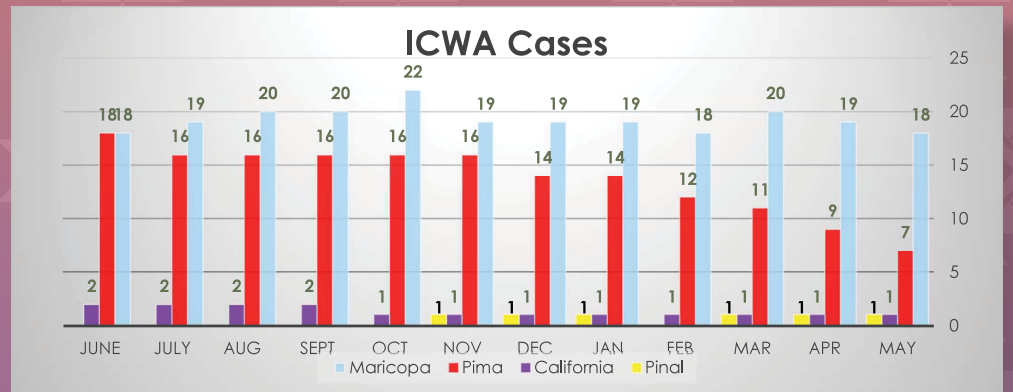
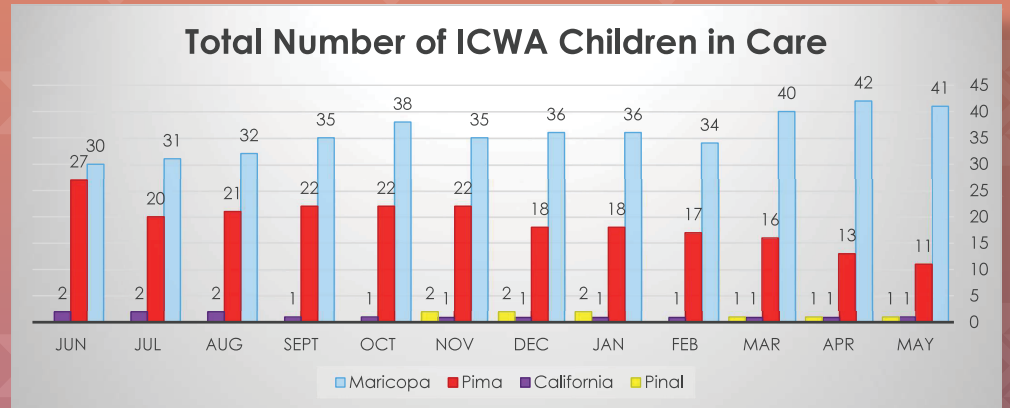
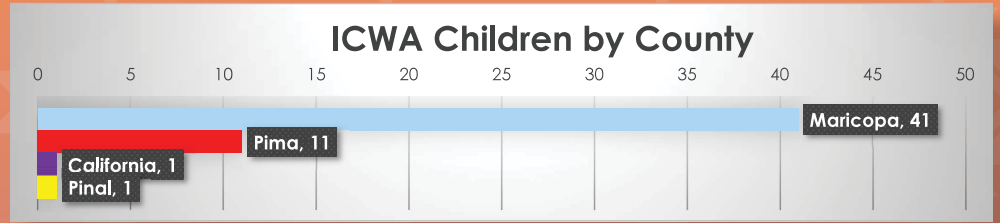
I'll take pictures for the community and then send my money, all the money that I make, send it to like a foster care, like or yeah, foster homes or adoption places. And so that's what I did. So I had like a little fundraiser event. I brought vendors out and then I had my little setup with my pictures. I did like 25 pictures or like 10 pictures for like \$25. So like the money that I made wasn't a lot also 'cause it being my first year doing something like this. I didn't get the money that I thought I would make, but it was enough to, like, send out to the foster homes and adoption systems. I was thinking about the kids, like, and the kids who are in it. Like, they're not going to get, like, the Christmas that I'm going to get. So I thought it would be nice to, like, give back my money to them.

ICWA Day at the Arizona State Capitol brought together Native American Tribes and Nations from across Arizona to recognize the benefits ICWA has brought to Tribal communities. Attendees met with state lawmakers for a discussion about the children and families helped by ICWA, and the challenges within the foster care system. ICWA Day at the Capitol set the stage for continuing conversations about the future of ICWA laws in Arizona.

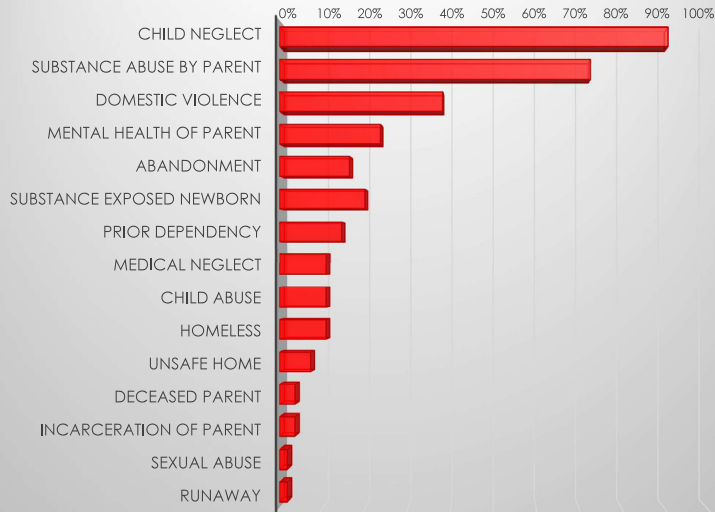




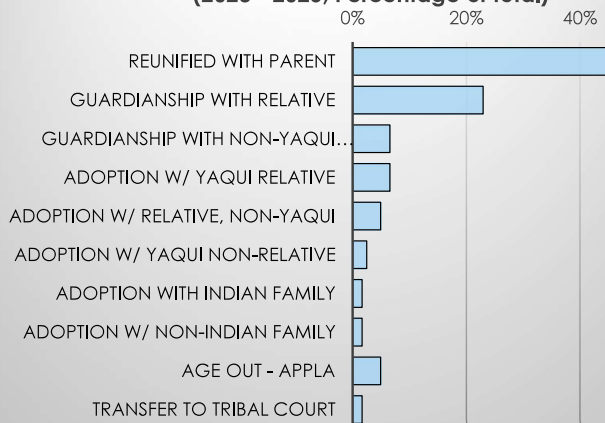
ICWA STATUS REPORT DATA



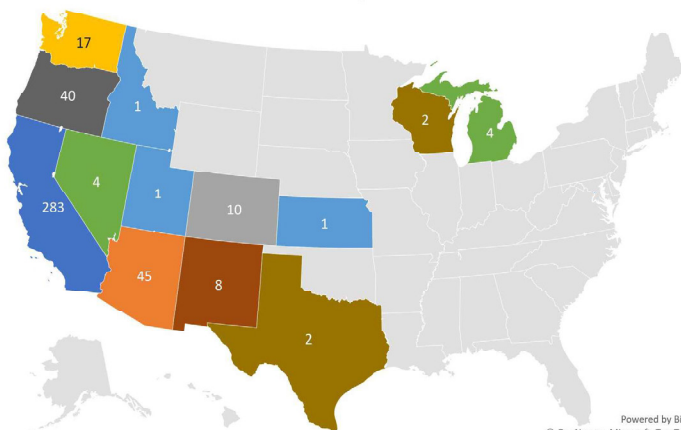
ICWA - Reasons for Removal
Percentage of occurrence in all cases June 2019 - May 2025



ICWA Case Conclusions
(2023 - 2025; Percentage of total)



ICWA Verification Requests
Oct 2024 - May 2025



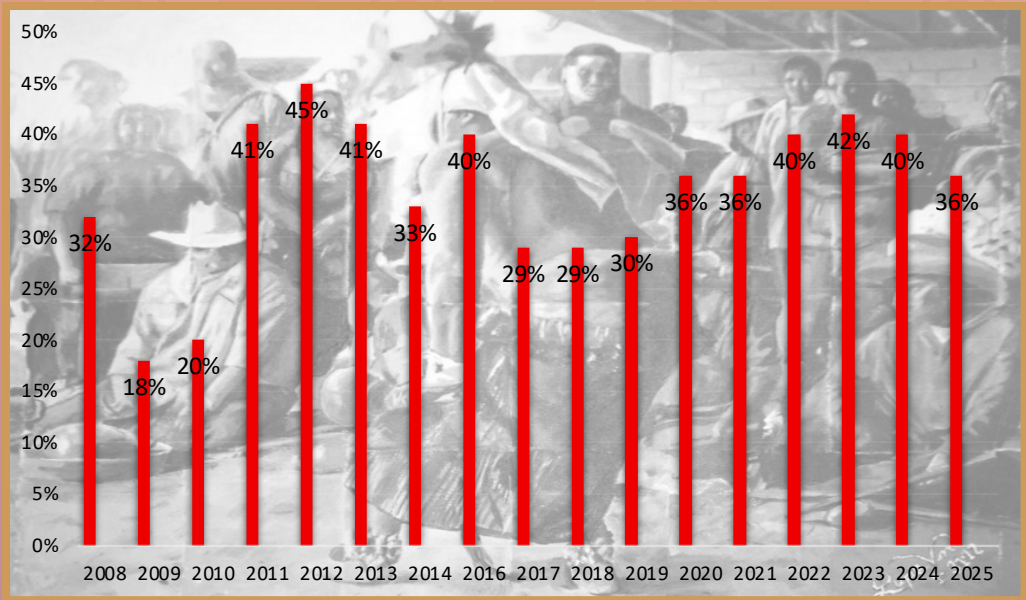
Powered by Bing
© GeoNames, Microsoft, TomTom





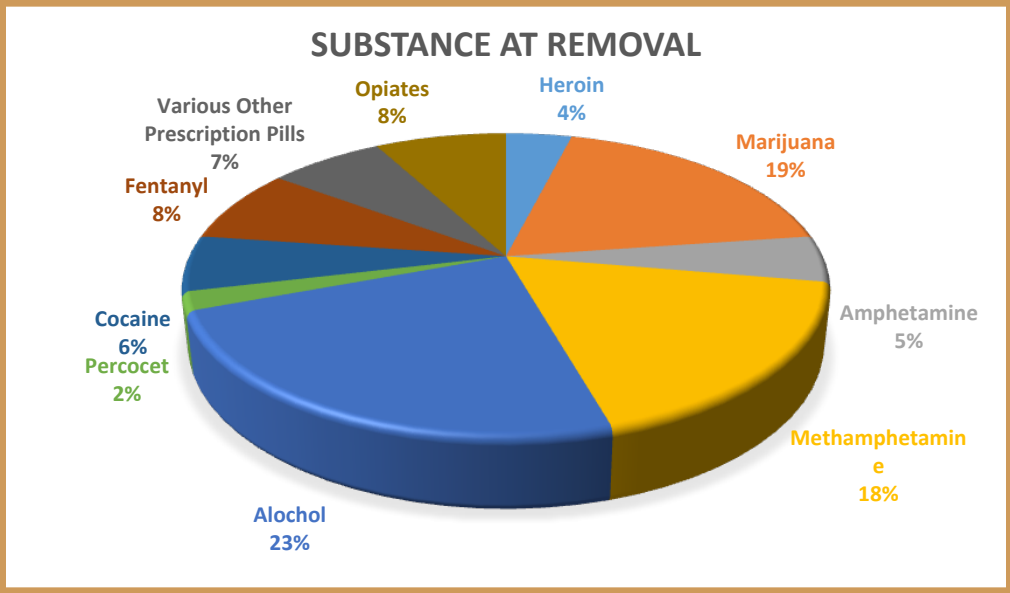
REUNIFICATION STATISTICS

Pursuant to the inherent sovereign authority of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe, the Tribe established family reunification as the top permanency preference for Yaqui children. The Pascua Yaqui Children’s Code places a strong priority on reunification of children with their parents and does not allow for termination of parental rights. While valuing reunification is clearly important, some children currently are unable to return to their parents. Moreover, by applying active efforts, the ICWA Team, Pascua Yaqui Social Services, and State Juvenile Courts have successfully placed many children back with their parents. The chart below demonstrates that applying active efforts can help prevent the breakup of the Indian Family.



SUBSTANCE AT REMOVAL

Per the open dependency cases between March 2024 through March 2025 we have identified multiple substances used at the time of removal of the child(ren). We have found that 30% of our open dependency cases have been associated with using alcohol at the time of removal.





OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

Oscar J. Flores

Attorney General
(520) 883-5111

Jeanne Shirly

Pima County
ICWA assistant attorney general
(520) 883-5119

Marissa Quiroz

Office Manager/ ICWA Paralegal
(520) 883-5113

Alonzo Corral

Maricopa County
Assistant Attorney General - ICWA
(480) 755-2506

Domingo DeGrazia

ICWA Supervising Attorney
(520) 883-5108

Christopher Molina Jr.

ICWA Data Entry Clerk
(520) 883-5109

SOCIAL SERVICES

Michael Pries

Director of Social Services
(520) 879-5621

Frances Amedee

ICWA Social Worker
Maricopa County
(480) 798-2002

Melissa Higuera

ICWA Social Worker
(520) 879-5675

ENROLLMENT

Marisela Nunez

Enrollment Director
(520) 879-6231

Vivian Ortiz

Enrollment Research Specialist
(520) 879-6240

Vivian G. Orantez

Assistant Enrollment Director
(520) 879-6239

RACHEL FLORES

Enrollment Research Specialist
(520) 879-6242



PASCUA YAQUI TRIBE OF ARIZONA

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
7777 S. Camino Huivisim, Bldg. C
Tucson, Arizona 85757