



TLINGIT & HAIDA TRIBES

Tribal Family & Youth Services(TFYS) serves a widespread, multi-state citizen population (including 38,000 Tlingit & Haida citizens) and works across state and county systems. In 2025, Tlingit & Haida’s federal direct Title IV-E plan was approved, supporting the Tribe’s ability to directly administer child welfare services. As a QIC-WA tribal pilot site, TFYS leadership is using workforce data to pinpoint operational bottlenecks, prioritize investments, and build the infrastructure needed for consistent, high-quality services for children and families.

PROJECT GOAL

Strengthen TFYS workforce capacity using workforce analytics-balancing caseloads, building a consistent onboarding and training pathway, and advancing a Tlingit & Haida Child Welfare Practice Model.



“I don't think we're trained adequately. I think we're expected to know things and that's because we're not taught everything and we learn as we go. So that's really hard.” - TFYS Worker

KEY FINDINGS

Focus groups were conducted with seven workers and four supervisors across the service area. Key needs included caseload balance, stronger onboarding, and more consistent, tribally grounded practice supports.

- Caseload distribution disparities prompted TFYS to build a caseload distribution matrix that guides assignment decisions beyond case counts (e.g., case stage/complexity, high-profile cases, and worker skill level). Supervisors now use the matrix to make assignments more consistent and transparent, including tracking in-state (Alaska) versus out-of-state cases.
- Workers described feeling unprepared at hire, reflecting the absence of formal onboarding for child welfare roles. Tlingit & Haida has since developed a comprehensive, tribe-wide onboarding program (including history and culture) and is building a TFYS-specific onboarding pathway for child welfare workers and supervisors.
- TFYS leadership is strengthening data-informed supervision and staffing planning by tracking staffing structure alongside caseloads. This helped identify where positions had insufficient work and supported accountability conversations during weekly supervision-helping clarify role fit and align staffing with actual workload.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Workforce analytics supports actionable supervision and staffing decisions (e.g., aligning workload with capacity and reducing subjectivity in assignments) in a complex, multi-jurisdiction service environment.
- Standardized onboarding and ongoing training are “practice model infrastructure”-they help ensure consistent, high-quality practice across geography and varying state/local requirements.

NEXT STEPS

- Survey workers and supervisors to identify TFYS onboarding gaps and priority training needs.
- Finalize the TFYS child welfare onboarding curriculum and practice supports (including supervision tools tied to the caseload matrix).
- Implement evaluation tools for the onboarding program (pre/post checks, satisfaction surveys, and focus groups) and use findings to refine training and the emerging Tlingit & Haida Child Welfare Practice Model.