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Oregon ICWA Data Capacity Assessment and Baseline Summary Report

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Oregon ICWA Data Capacity Assessment and Baseline Summary Report

Executive Summary

The Oregon Judicial Department (OJD) is working to strengthen its ability to monitor implementation of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and support continuous improvement in ICWA court practices. This report assesses the current capacity of the Odyssey case management system to capture and report ICWA-related compliance practices and outcomes and identifies opportunities to strengthen that capacity over time.

The assessment included a review of existing reports, Odyssey data fields, mapping of available data to key ICWA compliance indicators, consultation with OJD data staff, and identification of data gaps and opportunities for enhancement. In addition, baseline analyses were conducted using currently available data to provide a snapshot of ICWA-related compliance practices and outcomes.

Key Findings

- **Oregon has a strong foundation for ICWA data.**

Odyssey currently captures several important ICWA-related indicators, particularly those tied to court actions and findings, including ICWA applicability determinations, active efforts findings, Tribal participation in hearings, and time to ICWA identification. These data provide a meaningful starting point for monitoring ICWA court practices and establishing baseline measures.

- **Important ICWA practices are not yet captured in structured data.**

Core ICWA procedural steps, however (including inquiry, Tribal notice, placement decisions, and aspects of required findings), are not consistently captured as structured, queryable data. In many cases, this information exists only in narrative fields or case documents, limiting the ability to analyze these practices systematically across cases.

- **Data quality and consistency limit current use of available data.**

Even where data elements currently exist, variability in data entry practices and the absence of standardized definitions make it difficult to assess completeness and reliability. As a result, it is not always possible to determine whether missing data reflect gaps in practice or gaps in documentation and/or data entry.

- **Administrative data alone cannot fully capture ICWA implementation.**

Important aspects of ICWA compliance practice (e.g., the quality of Tribal engagement, the substance of active efforts, and decision-making related to placement) cannot be fully measured using administrative data alone and require supplemental data collection methods.

- **Baseline findings highlight both strengths and limitations.**

Baseline data indicate early identification of ICWA cases (median of one day from petition filing), increasing documentation of active efforts findings over time, and Tribal participation in hearings. Additionally, however, the baseline highlights inconsistencies and gaps in data collection, indicating that current results serve only as general guidelines rather than complete assessments of ICWA

practice. Findings summarized in this report should be viewed as a foundation for ongoing data gathering and reporting improvements.

Key Takeaways

- Oregon courts have already built a **meaningful and usable foundation of ICWA data** within Odyssey.
- Important ICWA practices for improving outcomes—**early identification, Tribal engagement, and placement**—are **not yet fully captured in structured data**.
- **Data quality is the critical next step**—improving consistency and understanding missing data will significantly increase the value of existing data in Odyssey.
- Current data (with attention to quality and consistency) may be sufficient for **baseline reporting and trend monitoring**, but not yet for **comprehensive evaluation or linking practice to outcomes**.

Recommendations

The findings point to a clear and practical path forward. Strengthening ICWA data capacity does not require a single system overhaul, but a focused set of improvements:

1. Strengthen data quality and consistency

- Improve consistency in data entry across courts
- Develop clear data definitions, coding guidance, and data dictionaries
- Monitor data completeness and identify missing or inconsistent data over time

2. Expand a targeted set of high-priority data elements

- Add structured fields for ICWA inquiry and Tribal notice
- Standardize Tribal affiliation data
- Improve capture of placement information and active efforts detail

3. Make better use of existing data

- Develop and track a small set of ICWA performance indicators
- Use data at the court and county level to support continuous quality improvement
- Examine trends and variation in existing indicators over time

4. Use supplemental methods to understand practice

- Conduct targeted case file review to supplement notice and active efforts information
- Use court observation to assess inquiry and hearing practices
- Engage Tribal partners and court participants to better understand how ICWA is implemented in practice

5. Prioritize feasible, high-impact improvements

- Focus first on improvements that are both achievable and meaningful (e.g., Tribal affiliation, inquiry, notice)
- Consider piloting enhancements in ICWA Courts before broader implementation

Oregon has a strong foundation for improving its ICWA data system. The Odyssey system already collects several important indicators of ICWA compliance practice. The work now needs to focus on improving the quality and consistency of existing data and how it's used, as well as enhancing selected ICWA indicators.

With these improvements, Oregon can develop a data system that moves beyond a basic snapshot and closer to a comprehensive and reliable picture of how ICWA is being implemented in Oregon, and that can be used not only to track compliance, but also to improve practice and outcomes for Tribal children and families.

Introduction

The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) establishes minimum federal standards governing the removal and placement of Indian children in child welfare proceedings. The law requires courts to determine whether a child involved in a proceeding is an “Indian child,” ensure timely notice to Tribal Nations, rely on testimony from qualified expert witnesses before certain court actions may occur, and prioritize placements that maintain children’s connections to their families, Tribes, and culture.¹

Courts across the country increasingly recognize the importance of using administrative and court data to monitor implementation of ICWA requirements. Data systems can help courts understand whether key practices, such as timely ICWA identification, Tribal participation in proceedings, and documentation of active efforts, are occurring consistently across cases.

The Oregon Judicial Department (OJD) has taken several steps to support this effort, including the development of ICWA Court initiatives and guidance materials to support courts in using administrative data to monitor their practices. These efforts reflect a broader recognition that data can play a critical role in supporting transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement in ICWA implementation.

Despite these advances, many jurisdictions encounter challenges when attempting to use administrative data to evaluate ICWA practice. Case management systems are often designed primarily for case processing and documentation rather than program monitoring or evaluation. As a result, some important ICWA practices may be documented within case files but not captured in ways that allow for systematic reporting or analysis.

This project was undertaken to assess OJD’s current data capacity for monitoring ICWA compliance using the Odyssey case management system and to identify opportunities for strengthening and supplementing that capacity over time.

Assessment of Current ICWA Data Capacity in Odyssey

Methods

This section describes the methods used to assess the current capacity of the Odyssey case management system to support monitoring of ICWA compliance and ICWA court practices. The assessment was designed to address the following project tasks:

- Review existing data documentation and system structure
- Map Odyssey data fields to ICWA compliance indicators
- Identify gaps in currently available data
- Assess the feasibility of measuring additional ICWA-related indicators (Task 2.2.5)

The assessment was conducted in four primary phases: (1) review of existing data documentation, (2) mapping of data fields to ICWA indicators, (3) structured consultation with OJD data staff, and (4) identification of data gaps and feasibility assessment.

¹ Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, Pub. L. No. 95-608, 92 Stat. 3069 (codified as amended at 25 U.S.C. §§ 1901–1963).

1. Review of Existing Odyssey Data Fields and Documentation

The first phase of the assessment involved a review of available documentation describing ICWA-related data elements currently collected in the Odyssey case management system. The purpose of this review was to understand what ICWA-related information is currently captured, how those data elements are structured within the system, and how they are used in court operations and reporting.

Because the project team did not have direct access to the Odyssey system or case-level data, the assessment relied on documentation and consultation with OJD staff responsible for managing and reporting Odyssey data. This review focused on identifying:

- Which ICWA-related practices and findings are captured as structured data?
- Which information is recorded in narrative or document form?
- Which aspects of ICWA implementation are not currently represented in the system?

2. Mapping Odyssey Data Fields to ICWA Compliance Indicators

Following the documentation review, Odyssey data elements were systematically mapped to key ICWA compliance indicators. The purpose of this mapping was to determine whether existing data fields could be used to measure core ICWA requirements and ICWA court practices and what enhancements might be needed.

Indicators were organized into ICWA practice domains based on statutory requirements and commonly used ICWA monitoring frameworks. These domains included:

- Inquiry and Identification
 - Tribal membership and affiliation
 - Tribal intervention
 - Tribal Notice
- Required Legal Findings
 - Active efforts findings
 - Serious emotional damage / imminent harm findings
 - Qualified Expert Witness Participation
- Placement
 - Placement preference findings
 - Placement type
- Tribal Participation in Court Proceedings
- Transfer to Tribal Court

In addition, the assessment explored the availability of selected outcome-related indicators commonly used in ICWA performance assessment, including:

- Time to permanency
- Case outcomes (e.g., reunification etc.).

3. Structured Data Inventory and Consultation with OJD Staff

To support the mapping process, OJD staff completed a structured data inventory (spreadsheet) documenting the ICWA-related data elements currently available in the Odyssey system. This tool served as the primary reference for assessing data availability, structure, and usability.

For each data element, the spreadsheet documented:

- Availability (Yes/No):
 - Whether the element is currently captured as structured data in Odyssey
- Data Type:
 - Whether the element is recorded as a structured field, coded value, or narrative/comment field
- Notes on Data Availability and Reliability:
 - Whether the data are included in existing reports
 - Known limitations or inconsistencies in data entry
 - Whether the data could be added or modified
 - Whether tracking would require changes to business processes

In some cases, OJD staff indicated that data elements could be derived or tracked, but only with additional queries, system adjustments, or manual review.

Following completion of the spreadsheet, the project team conducted consultation discussions with the OJD data analyst to clarify findings, assess feasibility of additional data collection, and better understand system constraints and opportunities.

4. Identification of Data Gaps and Feasibility Assessment

Using the documentation review, data mapping, and structured consultation, the project team then identified:

- Which ICWA indicators are currently measurable using Odyssey data?
- Which indicators are partially available but limited by data structure or consistency?
- Which indicators are not currently captured?

In addition, the team assessed the feasibility of expanding data capacity, including whether additional indicators could be supported through:

- Refinement of existing data fields
- Addition of new structured fields
- Changes to data entry practices or business processes

This analysis informed the identification of data gaps and the development of recommendations to strengthen ICWA data capacity within the Odyssey system.

Assessment of Current ICWA Data Capacity in Odyssey

Findings

Data Mapping Assessment Overview

The completed ICWA Data Elements spreadsheet provides a structured inventory of ICWA-related information currently available within the Odyssey case management system. For each ICWA indicator examined, the spreadsheet documents whether the information is captured in Odyssey, how it is stored, and whether it can be reliably queried for reporting. This allowed the project team to systematically assess both the strengths and limitations of the existing administrative data. See Table 1 (p. 9) for a summary.

Overall, the mapping process showed that Odyssey captures several key ICWA-related court findings and participation indicators, particularly those tied to discrete actions taken at hearings. These include ICWA applicability determinations, participation of Tribal representatives, and certain judicial findings related to active efforts and placement preferences. Because these elements are recorded through structured fields linked to hearings or judicial findings, they can be aggregated to generate basic indicators of ICWA court activity.

At the same time, the mapping process highlighted important gaps in how ICWA practices are captured. Several key steps in the ICWA process (including inquiry into potential Tribal affiliation, notice to Tribal Nations, and documentation of placement decisions) are not consistently recorded in structured fields. In many cases, this information appears only in narrative comments or case documents. For example, Tribal affiliation may be entered in free-text fields rather than standardized dropdown options, and some ICWA-related court actions are not coded in a way that distinguishes them from non-ICWA events (e.g., motions to transfer jurisdiction may not distinguish between transfers to Tribal court and transfers to another state or county). These limitations affect the reliability of administrative data for monitoring ICWA practices across jurisdictions.

Overall, Odyssey allows basic tracking of some ICWA court activities, but more data fields, standardization, and extra collection methods are necessary for effective ICWA compliance monitoring.

The sections that follow summarize the findings from the data mapping assessment in more detail by identifying:

- measures that are currently captured in structured Odyssey data
- measures that are partially captured or difficult to analyze
- measures that are not currently captured as structured data

Measures Currently Captured in Odyssey

Several ICWA-related indicators are currently captured as structured data fields within Odyssey and can be used to generate basic measures of ICWA court activity. These include:

- ICWA applicability findings
- participation of Tribal representatives in hearings

- active efforts findings (active efforts were made, active efforts were not made, active efforts were not required) by hearing
- court findings related to good cause to deviate from placement preferences

These indicators provide a foundation for generating baseline measures and monitoring certain aspects of ICWA court practice.

Measures Partially Captured or Difficult to Query

The assessment also identified several ICWA-related data elements that appear to be recorded within case records but are not easily accessible for systematic analysis or not consistently entered into the system. These include:

- Tribal affiliation information recorded in narrative fields
- whether a qualified expert witness was present at a hearing
- findings that placement complies with preferences (recently implemented and not yet consistently recorded)
- motions related to transfer to Tribal court (trackable but not uniquely coded and require additional review)
- Tribal motions to intervene (not consistently entered)

When information is recorded in narrative fields or general event categories rather than structured data fields, it becomes difficult to aggregate or analyze consistently across cases. Accessing this information would require supplemental data collection methods, such as case file review or in depth data processes that include reviewing and counting/coding cases manually in the administrative system.

Measures Not Currently Captured

Several key ICWA compliance indicators are not currently captured as structured data fields in Odyssey. These include:

- whether ICWA inquiry occurred and when
- evidence of service of the petition to the Tribe
- timeliness of notice to Tribal Nations
- placement type and placement changes over time
- documentation of Tribal consultation in case planning
- detailed information about services provided as part of active efforts

Because these elements are not captured in structured data fields, they cannot currently be analyzed systematically using Odyssey administrative data.

Implications for Monitoring ICWA Practice

These findings indicate that Odyssey currently supports some monitoring of ICWA compliance practices. But while some core indicators can be tracked, many important ICWA practices cannot be measured using administrative data alone. These limitations are common in administrative data systems that were originally designed for case management rather than performance monitoring or evaluation. The findings also highlight opportunities to strengthen ICWA data capacity through system enhancements, improved reporting practices, and supplemental data collection strategies.

Table 1. Overview of ICWA Compliance and Outcome Measures Assessed

Measures	Definition	Available in Odyssey	Data Quality	Limitations
Inquiry and identification	Whether inquiry was made Finding by child that ICWA applies	Not captured Currently captured		There are cases that do not have a finding that ICWA does or does not apply.
Tribal membership and affiliation	Tribal affiliation	Partially captured/difficult to query	Not consistently entered by sites	Tribe is entered into a comment field in Odyssey and not consistently entered. Unable to query in a meaningful way.
Tribal Intervention	Indication that tribe motioned or requested or intervention	Currently captured	Not consistently entered	Currently working to improve data entry
Tribal notice	Evidence that notice was provided Date of notice to tribes	Not captured		
Active efforts findings	Event code that finding made and finding type (effort made/not required/not made)	Currently captured	Some missing/inconsistently entered	Hard to extract by hearing; not specific to prevent removal or finalize permanency May be multiple findings per case; Findings may be in pdf of orders but not accurately put into Odyssey for extraction
Serious Emotional Damage/Imminent Harm Findings	Percentage of cases with a removal where the court made a finding of serious emotional damage or imminent harm	Not captured		
Qualified expert witness participation	Whether a QEW was at a hearing	Currently captured	Not consistently entered	Currently working to improve data entry.
Placement preference findings	Finding by the court at hearings that placement preferences were followed	Currently captured		Newer data entry process, so no current data to assess quality and limitations.

Measures	Definition	Available in Odyssey	Data Quality	Limitations
Placement type	Placements of the child across the life of the case. Dates in current placement setting by placement type.	Not captured		
Tribal participation in court proceedings	Whether the tribe is present at ICWA court hearings by hearing and across the life of the case	Currently captured		Does not necessarily distinguish between tribal representative and tribal attorney without additional efforts
Transfer to Tribal court	Whether the case was transferred to tribal court	Currently captured	Entered in inconsistent manner	Motions to transfers may not have a designation of tribal transfer and require additional steps to identify for reporting
Time to Permanency	Calculated from petition filing date and case closure date (median and average days to permanency)	Currently captured		Since guardianship cases do not close when guardianship/permanency is established, these data only reflect time to guardianship with additional data processes
Permanency Outcomes	Outcomes for children who exit foster care.	Captured through API process with DHS		Not court data so no control over categories of outcomes

Key ICWA Practice Indicators Associated with Outcomes

Across the research reviewed, several ICWA practice indicators were consistently associated with case outcomes.

ICWA Implementation and Compliance: Several studies examined a composite measure of ICWA implementation, defined as the proportion of required ICWA legal elements present in a case (Summers, 2025, unpublished report). These elements include a judicial finding that ICWA applies, documentation of active efforts findings, timely notice to the Tribe, findings related to imminent physical damage or harm (when applicable); and presence of qualified expert witness (QEW) testimony.

This “average ICWA implementation” measure reflects the extent to which required ICWA practices are documented within a case.

Across studies, higher levels of ICWA implementation were associated with:

- longer time to permanency
- higher likelihood of relative permanency outcomes
- reduced likelihood of termination of parental rights

Timing of ICWA Identification; Timing of ICWA identification emerged as a key factor across studies (Summers, 2025, unpublished report).

- Shorter time to ICWA confirmation was associated with shorter time to permanency (any outcome) and shorter time to reunification

These findings underscore the importance of early identification of ICWA cases.

Tribal Engagement and Participation: Tribal presence and engagement in court proceedings were consistently associated with case outcomes (Summers, 2023).

- Tribal presence at the first hearing was associated with:
 - shorter time to return home
 - increased likelihood of reunification
- Sustained Tribal presence across the life of the case was associated with:
 - reduced likelihood of termination of parental rights (Summers, 2025, unpublished report)

Hearing Participation: Participation of key parties at early hearings was also associated with improved outcomes.

- Parent (particularly mother) presence at the first hearing was associated with higher likelihood of reunification (Summers, 2023; Summers 2025, unpublished reports)

Additional Findings: Some findings varied across jurisdictions (Summers, 2025, unpublished reports). For example:

- Qualified expert witness (QEW) testimony was associated with longer time to permanency in some analyses
- Shorter time from petition filing to notice was associated with longer time to reunification in some cases

These findings likely reflect differences in case complexity and local implementation practices.

Alignment of Key Indicators in the Research with Odyssey Data Capacity

For each of the indicators identified in the research above, the project team assessed whether the relevant data elements are currently captured in Odyssey, partially captured, or not captured in structured, queryable form. See Table 2.

Table 2. Availability of ICWA Practice Indicators from Research in Odyssey

ICWA Practice Indicator	Associated Outcome(s) in the Research	Availability in Odyssey	Notes / Limitations
Time to ICWA identification/confirmation	Shorter time to permanency and reunification	Captured	Time from petition filing to ICWA finding is captured but may not reflect the tribal confirmation of ICWA.
Tribal presence at first hearing	Shorter time to return home; increased likelihood of reunification	Captured	Participation may be recorded inconsistently
Tribal presence across case	Reduced likelihood of termination of parental rights	Captured	Requires aggregation across hearings
Parent presence at first hearing	Increased likelihood of reunification	Captured	Dependent on consistent recording
ICWA notice (timing and receipt)	Shorter time to notice associated with longer time to reunification	Not captured	No structured notice tracking
Placement preference compliance (based on placement data)	Increased likelihood of relative permanency; reduced likelihood of TPR	Not captured	Requires placement data not available in structured form
Qualified Expert Witness (QEW) presence	Associated with longer time to permanency in some analyses	Partially captured	Presence only; does not capture qualifications or legal sufficiency; Inconsistently documented

The indicators most strongly associated with improved outcomes, particularly early ICWA identification, Tribal presence, and placement-related practices, are not currently fully captured as structured data in Odyssey. While the system captures selected court-level indicators, limitations in data structure and consistency restrict the ability to examine relationships between ICWA practices and outcomes using court administrative data alone.

Summary of Data Capacity and Key Gaps

The data capacity assessment finds that Oregon courts have already laid important groundwork toward creating a system that can measure ICWA compliance implementation using Odyssey. Already the courts are capturing meaningful ICWA-related data within Odyssey for indicators such as active efforts findings, Tribal participation at hearings, and time to ICWA identification, providing important baseline data that can be used for reporting purposes as well as understanding trends over time and program and practice evaluations.

Nevertheless, there are clear gaps in the data currently available for monitoring ICWA compliance and practice. First, Odyssey generally captures discrete court activities and decisions more effectively than the processes that lead to those actions. Most steps of the ICWA compliance process, for example, including inquiry, Tribal notice, and placement decision-making, are not yet documented in structured queryable fields. Instead, they often exist only in narrative fields or physical case documents that would require supplemental data collection efforts (like file review) to access.

In addition, there is variability in how data elements are entered into Odyssey, and standards have yet to be established for data elements critical to ICWA like Tribal affiliation, participation, and placement. Without consistent standards and processes for data collection, it is difficult to know when data are missing or incomplete. The result is a system where the data needed to measure aspects of ICWA practice most closely tied to achieving positive ICWA implementation outcomes (i.e., early identification, Tribal involvement, and placement) are either absent or incomplete. As such, while administrative data can provide a window into certain elements of ICWA practice for descriptive monitoring purposes, they cannot yet be used to produce a robust baseline, conduct evaluation or connect how practice may impact outcomes. Clearly Oregon has built a good foundation, but additional focus on data quality will help the state realize the full potential of the Odyssey case management system. This includes a deeper examination into missing/incomplete data, improved consistency of data entry going forward, and a system for monitoring data quality on an ongoing basis.

In sum, the data capacity assessment revealed that Oregon courts are in a strong position to build upon their existing baseline of ICWA data. By making thoughtful improvements to how data are collected and recorded, using existing data fields more consistently, and focusing on enhancements to a few key ICWA indicators, Oregon can turn its current system from a helpful starting point into a robust tool that not only meaningfully supports ICWA compliance measurement but also evaluation of ICWA practice and outcomes.

Recommendations for Strengthening ICWA Data Capacity

Consultation with OJD staff, together with the assessment of Odyssey's current data capacity, identified several opportunities to strengthen ICWA compliance data capacity through potential system updates, improved reporting practices, and enhanced data collection approaches.

The findings of this assessment point to a clear and practical path forward for strengthening ICWA data capacity in Oregon. **The state has already established a strong foundation of ICWA-related data**

within Odyssey. The next phase of work should focus on strengthening that foundation by strengthening the use of existing data elements, improving data quality assurance and consistency, enhancing the structure and standardization of data fields, improving reporting and integration across systems, and expanding the scope of data captured within the system

To summarize the key areas for action, Table 3 presents a high-level overview of recommended strategies for strengthening ICWA data capacity, including improvements to data fields, reporting practices, and supplemental data collection approaches.

Table 3 Summary of Recommendations for Strengthening ICWA Data Capacity

Area of Improvement	Key Actions	Examples / Applications
Build on existing foundation	Increase awareness of available data and its challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify how often there are missing data related to active efforts or tribal participations • Determine whether active efforts findings are being entered appropriately • Compare data from case orders to Odyssey event codes
Strengthen Data Quality	Identify and enhance data quality assurance practices	<p>Examples of practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish clear data entry protocols and documentation for ICWA-related fields • Develop a routine data review or validation process including discussion with professionals to identify why data are not being entered as expected
Priority Improvements to Odyssey Data Fields	<p>Add structured data fields for key ICWA processes</p> <p>Focus on a small number of high-impact, feasible changes.</p>	<p>Priority improvements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • structured fields for documenting ICWA inquiry • structured tracking of Tribal notice • standardized Tribal affiliation data fields • expanded documentation of active efforts findings
Reporting and Monitoring Improvements	Develop and track a core set of ICWA performance indicators	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • time from petition filing to ICWA identification • Tribal participation in hearings • qualified expert witness participation • active efforts findings • placement preference compliance

		Regular reporting on these indicators could support continuous quality improvement across ICWA courts.
Supplemental Data Collection Strategies	Use additional methods to capture aspects of practice not available in administrative data; Supplemental data collection can complement administrative data and provide additional insight into ICWA practices.	Supplemental data collection methods may be necessary to understand how ICWA is implemented in practice. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • targeted case file review to gather information on notice and findings not yet entered into Odyssey • court observation to explore inquiry practices and active efforts discussions of services provided • interviews or surveys of Tribal representatives and state court professionals to explore Tribal engagement

The sections that follow expand on action items, with a particular focus on strengthening the use of existing data and improving data quality as a foundation for future enhancements.

Build on the Existing Foundation

Oregon already has access to several high-value ICWA indicators that can support monitoring and improvement efforts, including active efforts findings, Tribal participation in hearings, and time to ICWA identification. These measures provide meaningful insight into ICWA court practice and can serve as a practical starting point for ongoing monitoring and continuous quality improvement efforts. **Rather than expanding data collection immediately, the first step is to better understand and use existing data.** This includes examining variation across courts, identifying patterns over time, and assessing how consistently these indicators are recorded.

Improving how existing data are used represents an important opportunity to strengthen ICWA data capacity without requiring major system changes. This may include:

- Identifying missingness in the currently available data (e.g., consider conducting a small sample file review to explore how often variables are in orders and not entered into structured Odyssey fields)
- clarifying expectations for when and how ICWA-related data elements should be entered
- improving consistency in the use of event codes and participant roles for currently available data indicators
- increasing awareness of how existing data fields support reporting and monitoring

Strengthen Data Quality and Confidence in the Data

Before expanding data collection, it will be important to strengthen confidence in the data that are already available. This includes **developing a clearer understanding of the extent of missing or incomplete data and ensuring that data are entered consistently across courts.**

Key strategies include:

- assessing the completeness of key ICWA indicators (e.g., percentage of cases with recorded findings or participation)
- identifying patterns of missing or inconsistent data across courts or over time
- establishing clear data definitions through ICWA-specific data dictionaries
- developing standardized coding guidance and examples
- providing targeted training on ICWA data entry
- implementing routine monitoring and feedback on data quality

When used together these steps will help ensure that available data can be interpreted with confidence and used to support decision-making.

Priority Improvements to Odyssey Data Fields

Once data quality has improved, Oregon can expand its ability to monitor ICWA implementation by **strengthening a focused set of high-priority data elements**, including ICWA inquiry, Tribal notice, Tribal affiliation, placement, and more detailed active efforts findings. These additions are important not simply because they are missing, but also because they represent key decision points in ICWA cases that are currently difficult to assess using administrative data. Capturing these elements in a structured format would allow courts to better understand how ICWA requirements are being implemented in practice.

Tribal affiliation information, for example, is currently recorded in free-text or comment fields rather than through standardized selections. While free-text entry allows flexibility in documenting Tribal affiliation, it can make statewide reporting difficult because entries may vary across cases and jurisdictions. Standardizing Tribal affiliation through dropdown lists or coded fields would significantly improve the reliability of reporting by Tribe or region. While technically feasible, this type of change would require coordination across courts and agreement on standardized data entry practices.

In addition to Tribal affiliation, the assessment identified opportunities to improve the structured capture of **placement information** using existing functionality within the Odyssey system. While Odyssey includes a placement tab that can be used to document placement type and changes over time, this functionality is not currently used in a consistent or standardized way that supports statewide reporting.

As a result, key ICWA-related placement indicators (e.g., placement type at removal, placement changes over time, and time to placement in a preferred ICWA placement) are not currently available as structured, queryable data. This limits the ability to assess placement stability and evaluate compliance with ICWA placement preferences based on actual placement information, rather than solely on judicial findings.

Improving the use of the placement tab to systematically capture placement data could significantly strengthen the court’s ability to monitor ICWA practice. This could include structured entry of:

- placement type at removal (drop down menu)
- placement changes over time
- dates of placement changes
- identification of placements that meet ICWA preferences (drop down menu)

Implementing more consistent use of placement data would likely require:

- development of standardized placement categories aligned with ICWA placement preferences
- clarification of roles and responsibilities for entering placement data
- updates to data entry protocols and workflows
- training for court staff and system users
- consideration of piloting enhanced placement tracking within ICWA Courts to assess viability (see section below on piloting in ICWA Courts)

While the underlying system functionality exists, meaningful use of placement data would depend on consistent data entry practices and alignment with court workflows.

Given resource and system constraints, not all enhancements can be implemented at once. Prioritizing a small number of high-impact, feasible improvements (e.g., standardizing Tribal affiliation and adding structured fields for inquiry and notice) can provide early gains while laying the groundwork for more comprehensive data improvements over time. *To support planning for these enhancements*, key data elements were assessed based on their importance for ICWA monitoring and the relative level of effort required for implementation (in consultation with the OJD analyst). This information can help guide sequencing of future improvements. A summary of these considerations is provided in Table 4.

It is important to note that implementation of changes to the system will require coordination with court leadership and administrative staff, collaboration with information technology and data teams, training for systems users, and alignment with broader systems priorities. Any changes to a case management system will take time to implement and may take significant time before data is of sufficient quality for reporting.

Table 4. Estimate of Effort to Add Missing Measures /Improve Reporting Capacity in Odyssey			
Measure Not Currently Captured in Structured Form	Why It Matters for ICWA Monitoring	Estimated Effort	Implementation Considerations
Tribal attorney presence (standardized reporting)	Improves measurement of Tribal participation and representation	Low	Likely achievable through refinement of existing codes and reporting logic

ICWA inquiry (whether conducted; date)	Core ICWA compliance requirement; critical for early identification	Medium	Requires new fields and changes to court data entry processes
Standardized Tribal affiliation (dropdown / coded field)	Enables reliable reporting by Tribe; reduces duplication	Medium	Requires standardized list, coordination with Tribes, and updated data entry protocols
Placement type at removal and placement changes over time	Central to ICWA placement preference monitoring and stability analysis	Medium-High (pilot) / High (statewide)	Function exists but not used; requires new data entry practices, training, and possible phased rollout
ICWA notice (sent, receipt, timing)	Core ICWA compliance requirement; necessary for legal sufficiency	High	Requires new fields, workflow changes, and additional staff data entry burden
Detailed active efforts categories (e.g., prevention vs reunification)	Allows meaningful interpretation of active efforts findings	Medium	Requires expansion of existing fields and training on use
Serious emotional/physical harm finding	Required ICWA legal standard for removal/TPR decisions	Medium-High	Requires new structured field and clear guidance on when to enter
Emergency removal / imminent harm finding	Required ICWA legal standard for emergency removal	Medium-High	Similar to above; requires field creation and workflow integration

Consider expanding ICWA data capacity through targeted pilot efforts within ICWA Courts. Given the operational considerations associated with adding new data elements, piloting enhanced data collection in a smaller number of courts may provide a practical approach to testing feasibility prior to broader implementation.

ICWA Courts may be well-positioned for such efforts due to their focus on ICWA practice and higher volume of ICWA cases. Pilot efforts could include expanded tracking of placement information, as well as additional data elements related to inquiry, notice, or Tribal participation.

Pilot efforts could support:

- refinement of data definitions and categories
- identification of workflow and data entry challenges
- assessment of staff burden and training needs
- evaluation of data quality and usefulness for reporting

Findings from pilot sites could inform decisions about whether and how to scale enhancements statewide.

Reporting and Monitoring Improvements: Use Data for Continuous Quality Improvement

Strengthening ICWA data capacity is not only about collecting more data, but also about using data in a consistent and intentional way. Oregon can build on its current foundation by **developing a small set of ICWA performance indicators, such as those related to identification, participation, and key findings, that are tracked over time and used to inform practice.**

The focus should be less on the number of indicators and more on consistent use, ensuring that the same measures are tracked regularly, reviewed at the court or county level, and used to identify areas for improvement. Regular reporting on these indicators (particularly at the county level) can support continuous quality improvement efforts, help courts identify areas for improvement, and track progress over time.

Improving reporting capacity may involve:

- refining existing event codes and categories
- developing ICWA-specific queries
- creating standardized reporting formats or dashboards

These improvements could support more consistent monitoring of ICWA indicators and improve the usability of existing data for decision-making and oversight.

Supplement Administrative Data to Understand Practice

Court administrative data alone cannot fully capture ICWA implementation. To better understand how ICWA is applied in practice, Oregon should continue to use supplemental methods such as:

- Ongoing data sharing with the child welfare agency through an application programming interface (API) for outcome data
- Discussions with the child welfare agency to determine if an ICWA variable can be added to the statewide agency child welfare data dashboard to explore ICWA cases practice and outcomes in the state
- targeted case file review (e.g., to supplement notice while waiting on Odyssey changes and/or to identify nature and scope of active efforts provided in cases)
- court observation (e.g., to ensure inquiry is happening at the first hearings in cases, to explore how active efforts are being discussed, and to determine how tribes are being engaged in the process)
- interviews with court staff and Tribal representatives/partners (e.g., about practices, including challenges, and scope and nature of tribal engagement)

These approaches provide important context for interpreting administrative data and can help explain patterns that are not visible in system-based measures alone, particularly in areas such as Tribal engagement, active efforts, and decision-making related to placement. These methods may also be useful for examining areas not yet captured in Odyssey, such as the timing and quality of inquiry and notice, or the nature and scope of active efforts in individual cases.

A Pathway Forward for ICWA Data Capacity

- **Start where you are:** Leverage existing data on active efforts, Tribal participation, and time to identification to understand baseline patterns and trends across courts.
- **Prioritize data quality:** Use this report to identify where data are missing or entered inconsistently; develop clear definitions, guidance, and training.
- **Build data reliability and trust:** Track data completeness over time and provide feedback to ensure courts are consistently meeting expectations for data entry.
- **Scale up thoughtfully:** Add standardized data fields related to inquiry, notice, and placement once data quality has improved.
- **Use data to inform practice:** Monitor a set of priority indicators consistently and use data to support continuous quality improvement at the court and county level.
- **Leverage ICWA Courts:** Consider using ICWA Courts to pilot data collection enhancements and apply lessons learned before scaling up statewide.
- **Supplement administrative data:** Use case file review, court observation, and stakeholder feedback to better understand ICWA practice.

In Conclusion

Oregon is in a strong position to build on its existing ICWA data infrastructure. Several indicators currently captured in Odyssey already reflect important aspects of ICWA compliance practice. The work ahead is less about collecting new data and more about improving the quality, consistency, and use of existing data.

With focused efforts to strengthen data quality, expand a targeted set of priority indicators, and use data to support continuous quality improvement, Oregon can develop a complete and more reliable picture of ICWA implementation. Over time, this approach will support the use of data not only to monitor compliance, but also to strengthen practice and improve outcomes for Tribal children, youth, and families.

Baseline Findings Using Currently Available Data

This baseline data report is intended to establish a clear starting point for understanding ICWA court practice and outcomes. Consistent with best practices, baseline data includes: (1) trends over time, ideally spanning at least three years, to identify patterns and variation; (2) data on key ICWA compliance metrics (e.g., inquiry, notice, tribal engagement, active efforts, and placement preferences) to assess alignment with statutory and practice expectations; and (3) outcome data, presented with an appropriate comparison reference (e.g., statewide data or non-ICWA cases), to contextualize performance. While there are other ICWA-related data elements present in Odyssey, many of these fields were added recently and do not have enough data or stable data quality to generate reliable reports. As such, they are not included in this baseline but represent important opportunities for future analysis. This report therefore also includes recommendations to strengthen and expand the baseline over time, with the goal of supporting more comprehensive, accurate, and actionable reporting moving forward.

Using the ICWA-related data elements currently available in Odyssey, OJD staff generated aggregated outputs based on guidance from the project team. These outputs were reviewed and interpreted to provide baseline findings on selected ICWA compliance indicators and case outcome data. These baseline indicators provide an initial snapshot of ICWA-related court activity and establish a starting point for ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

The Baseline Summary

A baseline data snapshot is presented on **page 29**.

This baseline reflects a “snapshot in time” based on currently available data elements that have sufficient reliability for reporting. It is not intended to provide a comprehensive assessment of ICWA compliance or practice. Rather, baseline findings should be interpreted as directional indicators that help identify patterns and highlight areas for further review.

The **purpose of the baseline data** presented is to:

- **Provide a starting point:** Describe current ICWA-related court practices and outcomes using available Odyssey data
- **Guide future data development:** Identify which ICWA indicators can be measured now and where additional data development or system enhancements are needed
- **Support continuous quality improvement:** Enable courts and stakeholders to monitor changes in practice and outcomes over time and build capacity for evaluation.
- **Highlight data strengths and limitations:** Clarify where data are reliable, where they may be incomplete, and where caution is needed in interpretation

The snapshot on page 29 is intended to provide a high-level view of key indicators and should be interpreted alongside the detailed findings and data limitations described in the sections that follow.

Data Sources and Limitations

Since the baseline analysis focuses on ICWA compliance indicators that can currently be measured using existing administrative data fields, findings should be interpreted as **baseline indicators of data currently available**, rather than comprehensive measures of ICWA compliance. The baseline data explores available data for three years 2023-2025 to assess current practice. Data can be made available at the **county** level and can be reported to counties locally for their ICWA implementation CQI efforts. However, for the purposes of baseline, state level data were used to avoid small sample sizes that may skew results or raise confidentiality concerns.

Depending on the indicator, analyses were conducted at the case/child level or the hearing level. Indicators such as ICWA applicability findings and motions to transfer were analyzed at the case level, while indicators such as Tribal participation and active efforts findings were analyzed at the hearing level. We also examined case outcomes as ICWA assessments include both practice and outcome measures for review. The data also vary in whether they represent pending (currently open) cases, closed cases, or filings for the year. For some measures, the data gathered may not be the optimal measure for assessing ICWA practice, but rather the measure that already has a business process and easy way of extracting the information from the system.

Table 5. Data Elements Available for Baseline Analysis

ICWA Practice Area	Odyssey Data Element	Unit of Analysis	Notes
ICWA Identification	ICWA flag (comes from ICWA applies finding)	Case/child	Used to identify percentage of ICWA cases
ICWA Identification	ICWA applies/does not apply finding	Case/child level	Used to determine ICWA cases
Tribal participation	Tribal representative present	Hearing	Presence indicator
Active efforts (removal stage)	Active efforts finding	Hearing	Removal-related finding
Transfer/intervention	Motion to transfer / intervention	Case	Motion code-based

Baseline Findings by ICWA Practice Area

Presented below are baseline findings across key ICWA practice areas using the indicators that are currently available and sufficiently reliable within Odyssey. These findings provide a snapshot of how ICWA-related practices are reflected in existing administrative data and highlight patterns that may warrant further review. For each measure, the report describes why the measure matters, how it was defined for this analysis, and any data limitations or quality considerations that should be considered when interpreting the findings.

ICWA Identification

Why this measure matters: Early and accurate identification of children as Indian children is the gateway to all ICWA protections. If a child’s ICWA status is not identified—or is identified late—critical requirements such as tribal notice, involvement, and placement preferences may be delayed or missed entirely. Timely identification supports earlier engagement with Tribes, more informed

decision-making, and better alignment with both the legal requirements and the intent of ICWA to preserve family and cultural connections. This measure also reflects how consistently the court and parties are carrying out one of the most foundational responsibilities under ICWA. **Research shows a link between longer times to identification and longer times to permanency.**

How the measure was defined for this report: ICWA Finding. Data processes are designed to identify ICWA cases in several ways. When a finding is entered into the system that ICWA applies, this turns on an ICWA flag for the case. Table 6 illustrates the number of ICWA applicability **findings** made on the record. That is, for all children in care in how many had a finding in a given year (e.g., 2023) that ICWA applies or does not apply.

Data limitations and quality considerations: ICWA Finding. Although exact numbers are not possible given current data processes, it is clear that not all cases have a finding that ICWA does or does not apply. The findings may be in court orders but not accurately entered as an appropriate code into the Odyssey system. Alternatively, courts may not be documenting these findings on the record. With the current data available, it is not possible to make a definitive determination. Further, these counts may include duplicates. For example, the court may find that ICWA does not apply, and then later get new information and make a finding that ICWA does apply. So the number of cases may not be unique cases/children.

Table 6. ICWA Applicability Determinations in Sampled Cases

Measure	Number of Cases by Year			Average Across 3 Years
	2023	2024	2025	
Cases with an ICWA applies finding	103	143	159	135
Cases with an ICWA does not apply finding	1571	1808	2055	1811
Total Cases with a Finding	1674	1951	2214	1946

How the measure was defined for this report: ICWA Filings. Data were also provided on the number of filings per year from the data dashboard. From these data, we can see how many filings there were per year, and how many of those filings have an ICWA flag. We can then calculate the percentage of filings each year that were ICWA cases. Table 7 illustrates the total number of juvenile cases and ICWA filings (2023-2025). ICWA filings made up, on average, 5% of all filings for the last three years.

Data limitations and quality considerations: ICWA Filings. Juvenile cases filed does not mean that the child was removed from the home. If the child is not removed, it may not trigger ICWA. Further, to flag the case as ICWA, a finding must be made on the record and entered into the system. As a result, ICWA filings data may underrepresent cases if inquiry has not been made (making identification impossible) or if the finding has not yet been made.

Table 7. Total Cases and ICWA Cases Filed by Year

Measure	2023	2024	2025
Total Juvenile Case Filed	2554	2499	2732
ICWA Filings	109	146	169
Percentage of Filings that were ICWA	4%	6%	6%

How the measure was defined for this report: Percentage with No ICWA Finding. As a proxy, consider the total juvenile cases filed per year in comparison to the total number of cases that have an ICWA finding (either does or does not apply). Table 8 illustrates the number of cases with no finding on record that ICWA does or does not apply. While not a hundred percent accurate, due to the calculations and the fact that findings could occur on the same case, this number serves as a good proxy for how many cases may not be making a required finding of ICWA applicability.

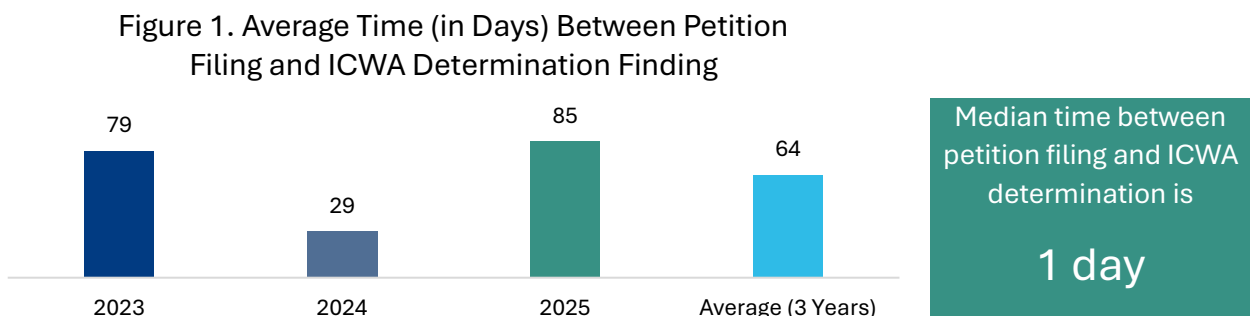
Data limitations and quality considerations: Percentage with no ICWA Finding. Because of how data are currently structured in Odyssey, findings are reported based on when they are recorded, rather than being linked back to the year in which a case was filed. This means the data can show how many findings were documented in a given year, but not how many cases filed in that same year ultimately resulted in a finding. For example, a finding recorded in 2024 may relate to a case that was filed in 2023. As a result, the number of findings in a given year cannot be directly compared to the number of filings from that year. While it is possible to identify the number of filings by year, linking those filings to subsequent findings would require additional data processing beyond current standard reporting. In addition, recent efforts to improve ICWA data collection and data entry practices may affect trends over time. Increases in reported findings may reflect improvements in data entry and documentation, rather than changes in underlying court practice.

Table 8. Percentage of Cases with No ICWA Finding on Record

Measure	2023	2024	2025
Cases Filed	2554	2499	2732
Cases with ICWA Finding (Applies/Does Not Apply)	1674	1951	2214
Percentage with no finding	35%	22%	19%

How the measure was defined for this report: Time to ICWA Identification. This measure was defined as the average and median time from petition filing until an ICWA finding (ICWA applies) was entered into the system.

Data limitations and quality considerations: Time to ICWA Identification. Average time to ICWA identification shows large variation over the three years. Exploration of the data revealed that this is due to cases with large outliers. Outliers are cases with unusually high or low values, and they can have a significant impact on averages. A small number of extreme cases may pull the average up or down, making the overall result appear higher or lower than what is typical for most cases. The median days between petition filing and ICWA determination findings is reported in Figure 1 to better understand the “typical” experience.



The median days between petition filing and ICWA determination was 1 day across all three years. In other words, 50% of ICWA cases had a finding that ICWA applies within 1 day of petition filing (likely at the first hearing on the case).

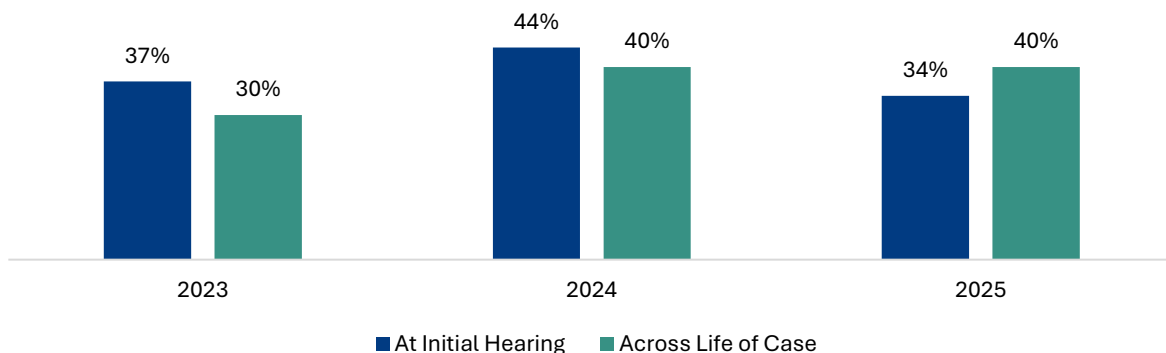
Tribal Participation in Court Hearings

Why this measure matters: Tribal presence at hearings is an important early indicator of whether Tribes are aware of and able to participate in court proceedings involving their children. It reflects initial access and opportunity for involvement, which is a necessary first step toward meaningful collaboration. However, presence alone does not capture the quality of engagement, the extent to which Tribal perspectives are incorporated into decision-making, or whether participation is timely and consistent across the life of the case. This measure is best understood as a foundational indicator that, when paired with additional information about participation and influence, can help assess the strength of state-Tribal collaboration in practice. **Research has shown a link between tribal presence at the first hearing and tribal presence across the life of the case and better outcomes for American Indian families.**

How the measure was defined for this report: For all hearings on a case that have been identified as ICWA, the percentage where a tribal representative (either tribal case worker or tribal attorney) was marked as present at the hearing. In addition, for all Shelter Care hearings (i.e., the initial hearing) on ICWA cases, what percentage had a tribal representative marked as present. As depicted in Figure 2, Tribal presence across the life of the case increased from 30% in 2023 to 40% in 2024 and 2025, averaging approximately 37% across the three-year period.

Data limitations and quality considerations: These data are only as good as the accuracy of people doing the data entry. If the tribe is not entered as a party present, then it would underestimate how often the tribe is present at the case. Further, because of the way the data are currently set up, additional resources would be required to sort through tribal presence to establish nuances such as whether it was a tribal representative or tribal attorney who was present at the hearing.

Figure 2. Tribal Presence at Initial Hearing and Across Life of the Case



Active Efforts Findings

Why this measure matters: Active efforts are a central requirement of ICWA and go beyond standard practice by requiring affirmative, thorough, and culturally appropriate actions to support families and prevent unnecessary removal or support reunification. Judicial findings about active efforts are one

of the primary ways courts ensure accountability for this standard. The presence and quality of these findings indicate whether the court is actively assessing whether meaningful efforts are being made to engage and support families. This measure reflects both legal compliance and the extent to which practice aligns with the intent of ICWA to keep families together whenever safely possible. **Research has shown no correlation between making an active efforts finding and permanency outcomes; it is theorized that this is because the findings are being made pro forma and may not accurately reflect the efforts being made with the families.**

How the measure was defined for this report: Finding Made at Shelter Care. For all cases with an ICWA flag, what percentage of Shelter Care hearings had an active efforts finding entered into Odyssey within 14 days after the hearing.

Data limitations and quality considerations: Finding Made at Shelter Care. Active efforts findings may be documented in the court record (e.g., in written orders that are scanned into Odyssey) but not consistently entered as structured data within the system. As a result, the absence of a recorded finding in Odyssey does not necessarily indicate that the finding was not made. There is some indication that data entry for active efforts findings is improving over time; however, continued quality assurance may be needed to ensure consistent and accurate reporting going forward.

In addition, while ICWA requires the court to make findings related to active efforts, the system does not currently distinguish between findings related to efforts to prevent removal and those related to efforts to achieve permanency. This limits the ability to examine how different types of active efforts are reflected in court practice.

Figure 3. Percentage of Shelter Care Hearings With Active Efforts Findings

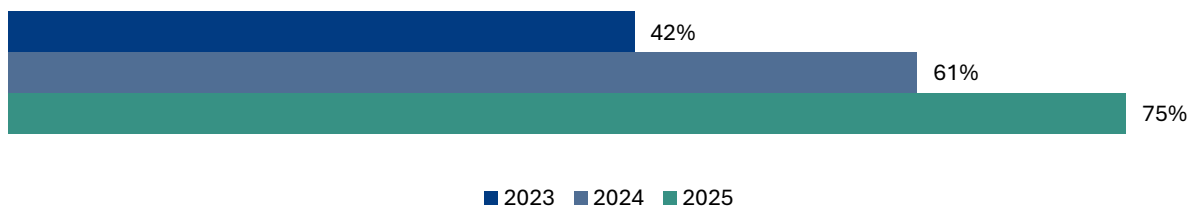


Figure 3 illustrates the percentage of Shelter Care hearings in which an active efforts finding was recorded *within 14 days*. As shown, the percentage increased over time, from 42% in 2023 to 61% in 2024 and 75% in 2025. These findings should be interpreted in the context of ICWA identification timing. While the median time to determine that a case is subject to ICWA is one day (see Figure 1 above), this also means that in approximately 50% of cases, ICWA status is not confirmed until after the initial Shelter Care hearing. In those cases, the court may not yet know that ICWA applies at the time of the hearing. As a result, the absence of an active efforts finding at Shelter Care may reflect the timing of ICWA identification, rather than a lack of court action.

How the measure was defined for this report: Type of Active Efforts Finding. For all hearings in a given year with an active efforts finding indicated on the record, how many had a finding that active efforts were made and how many had a finding that active efforts were not made.

Data limitations and quality considerations: Type of Active Efforts Finding. Active efforts findings may be made at any hearing across the life of a child welfare case, and a single case may have multiple findings recorded over time. As a result, the counts presented reflect the number of findings, not the number of unique cases. In addition, the data do not identify how many cases never receive an active efforts finding. Identifying this would require additional data tracking or business processes beyond current reporting capabilities.

Table 9. Active Efforts Findings at Hearings (by Finding Type)

Measure	2023	2024	2025
Finding: Active efforts were made	378	612	701
Finding: Active efforts were not made	3	8	5

As shown in Table 9, most recorded active efforts findings indicate that active efforts were made. Across all three years, findings that active efforts were not made were rare, representing only a small number of recorded findings relative to those indicating that active efforts were made. These results should be interpreted with caution. Because the data reflect recorded findings rather than unique cases, and do not capture cases in which no finding was made, the findings cannot be used to assess the overall rate of compliance with active efforts requirements. In addition, improvements in data entry over time may influence the number of findings recorded, independent of changes in court practice.

ICWA Case Outcomes

Why this measure matters: In addition to measuring ICWA compliance metrics, using available data to examine outcomes on ICWA cases is important in baseline measures. Outcome data, including time to permanency and permanency outcomes, is critical to include in a baseline because it answers the question: *What are current practices producing?* Compliance with ICWA requirements is necessary, but on its own it does not show whether children are achieving timely, stable, and appropriate permanency. By examining outcomes alongside practice measures, the baseline provides a clearer picture of system performance and creates a foundation for evaluating whether changes in practice lead to meaningful improvements for children and families over time.

How the measure was defined for this report: Case outcomes were defined in two ways. The first is time to permanency. This measures the time between petition filing (or removal of the child) and case closure (or achievement of permanency) in days. The second metric illustrates, for all cases closed (achieving permanency) in a given year, what percentage exited care to a specific outcome (e.g., reunification).

Data limitations and quality considerations: Data from these metrics were pulled from different sources. Court data were used to identify time to permanency for ICWA cases, but currently available agency data publicly available in the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) dashboard were used for time to permanency statewide. In addition, the data on case outcomes for ICWA cases comes from an API data sharing agreement with the agency. The statewide data are also agency data reported and available through contextual data.

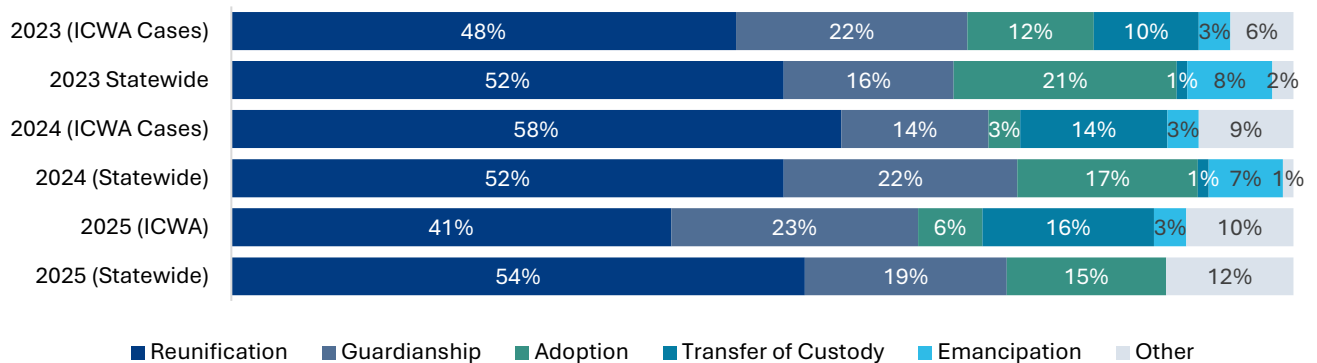
Outcomes of ICWA Cases

Table 10. Average and Median Time from Petition Filing (or Removal) to Permanency

Measure	2023	2024	2025
Average time to permanency (days)	1242	1800	1288
Median time to permanency (days)	647	923	425
Median time to permanency statewide	655	612	–

Achievement of Permanency Outcomes

Figure 4. Oregon Statewide Outcomes for ICWA Cases Compared to All Child Welfare Cases



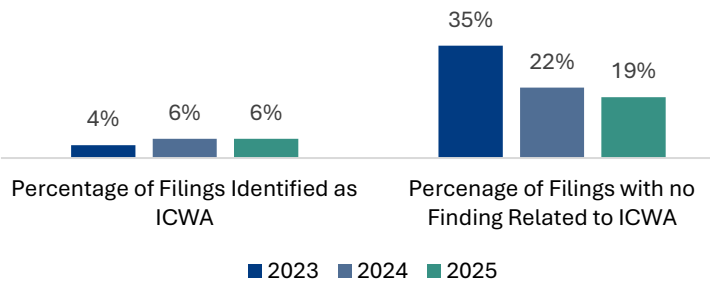
As depicted in Table 10, time to permanency varied across the three-year period, with median time increasing in 2024 before declining in 2025, while average time remained consistently higher than the median, indicating the influence of longer-duration cases. Table 8 shows that compared to statewide medians, ICWA cases had similar timelines in 2023 and longer median times in 2024. Figure 4 illustrates that ICWA cases have more “other” outcomes which includes transfers to the tribe and fewer adoptions that cases statewide).

A summary [baseline data snapshot](#) is presented on page 29, bringing together key ICWA indicators across practice areas and outcomes. This snapshot is intended to provide a high-level view of current patterns in ICWA-related court activity using available Odyssey data.

The snapshot should be interpreted as a descriptive overview rather than a comprehensive assessment. It highlights trends and variation across indicators, while reflecting the same data limitations and considerations described throughout this section. As such, it is best used to identify areas for further review, support ongoing quality improvement efforts, and inform future data development.

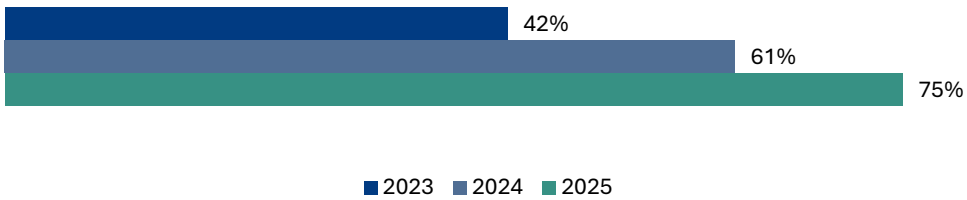
ICWA Compliance Metrics

Identification as an ICWA Case

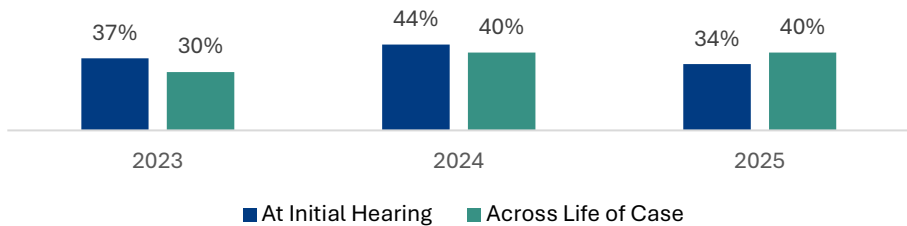


Median time between petition filing and ICWA determination is **1 day**

Percentage of Shelter Care Hearings With Active Efforts Findings within 14 Days (ICWA Cases)

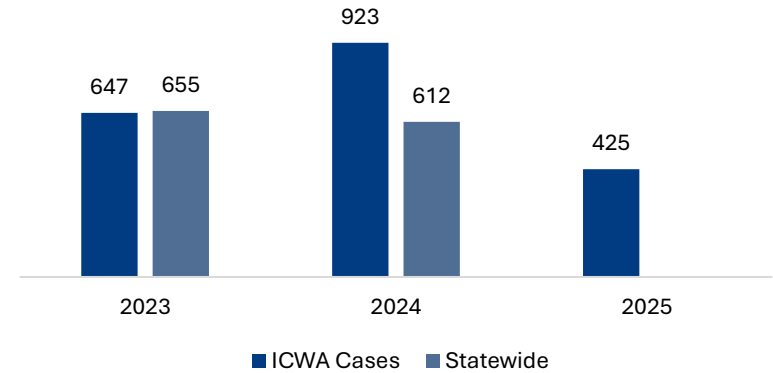


Tribal Presence at Initial Hearing and Across Life of the Case

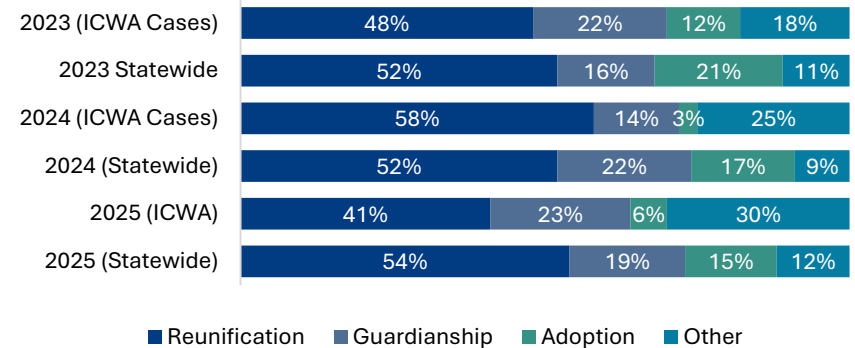


ICWA Permanency Outcomes

Median Days to Permanency



Oregon Outcomes for ICWA Cases Compared to Statewide Child Welfare Cases



²While a data snapshot highlights key trends at a glance, its limited context means it offers an entry point for understanding and not a full explanation of what the data means.

Interpretation of Baseline Findings

The Oregon baseline data provide an important starting point for understanding both ICWA court practice and the state's current administrative data capacity. Baseline data serve a critical role in setting the stage for identifying priority data needs, informing future evaluation efforts, and establishing a reference point for monitoring changes in both practice and outcomes over time, while also surfacing data quality strengths and limitations. Findings suggest several areas of strength, including very early identification of ICWA cases (with a median of one day from petition to ICWA determination), increasing documentation of active efforts findings on the record over time, and outcome patterns that reflect lower rates of termination of parental rights and adoption compared to statewide trends. At the same time, the baseline highlights important gaps in data capture and consistency, reinforcing the need for targeted improvements to ensure that future analyses can more fully assess how ICWA practices influence outcomes for children and families.

Baseline Data Reporting for the Future

There are data available in Odyssey that can be used to enhance currently available baseline data. These either represent new variables or enhanced data quality/data entry efforts underway and meant to increase the availability of reliable data going forward for ICWA reporting. Below is a list of potential variables and suggestions for measurement when data quality is achieved.

As previously discussed, improvements in ICWA data capacity depend not only on system enhancements, but also on consistent data entry practices and ongoing quality assurance processes. Several of the data elements identified below in Table 9, for example, are now available in Odyssey, but are not yet consistently captured in a way that supports reliable reporting. For the purposes of future baseline reporting, the readiness of these measures depends on the extent to which data are entered consistently and can be interpreted with confidence.

In general, data may be considered sufficiently reliable for reporting when:

- data elements are consistently entered across cases and courts
- coding practices are clearly defined and applied uniformly
- missing or incomplete data are limited and understood
- observed trends are more likely to reflect changes in practice than changes in data entry

Improving Baseline Data Reporting Identify Missing or Incomplete Data

- Review the percentage of cases or hearings with a recorded value for a given indicator
- Identify fields with a high proportion of blank, "unknown," or default values
- Compare related data elements (e.g., cases with ICWA applicability but no corresponding findings or participation recorded)
- Examine unexpected patterns or sudden changes in reporting over time that may reflect data entry issues rather than practice changes

Support Consistent Data Entry

- Enhance training on data entry protocols
- Develop data dictionaries that define ICWA-related data elements and how they should be recorded
- Standardize coding guidance and examples for common scenarios
- Clarify roles and responsibilities for data entry across court staff
- Provide routine feedback to courts on data completeness and consistency

As reflected in Table 11, many of the measures described below represent areas where data availability is improving, but where continued quality assurance efforts, such as training, validation, and monitoring of data completeness, will be necessary before these indicators can be used for routine analysis

Table 11. Potential Future Data Collection with Available/New Odyssey Fields

Data Element	Current Challenges	Suggestions for Analysis/Reporting
Qualified Expert Witness Participation	QEW participation in hearings is available but currently not entered consistently. OJD is working to improve the data entry process.	Report the percentage of ICWA hearings in which a qualified expert witness was documented as present, and where possible, distinguish hearings resulting in removal or termination decisions. Note that findings reflect recorded participation and may underestimate actual QEW involvement due to inconsistent data entry.
Placement Preference Findings	<p>Data on placement preferences findings is too new for reporting. The code was created recently and OJD is working on this. Further, the data are not yet consistently entered, so there is a QA process in place to improve data collection.</p> <p>Orders to deviate from placement preferences have been tracked but are limited in the system. Currently it shows there is 1 order to deviate from placement preferences in each 2023 and 2024 and 3 orders to deviate from placement preferences in 2025. However, it is unclear if these low numbers are data entry issues.</p>	Report the percentage of ICWA cases and hearings with a documented judicial finding regarding compliance with placement preferences, including any findings of good cause to deviate.
Tribal Intervention	The data on tribal intervention on a case are not consistently entered into the system and OJD is working to enhance data collection.	Report the number and percentage of ICWA cases with a recorded motion or request for tribal intervention. Acknowledge that rates likely underrepresent actual intervention due to inconsistent capture in the case management system.
Motions to Transfer to the Tribe	Data on motions to transfer to tribal court are currently entered into the system but require extensive review of the data because the codes for motion to transfer must be reviewed by case to determine if the transfer is to the tribe or another jurisdiction.	Report the number and percentage of ICWA cases with a motion to transfer jurisdiction, and the proportion resulting in transfer where outcomes can be determined. Clarify that identification of tribal transfer

Data Element	Current Challenges	Suggestions for Analysis/Reporting
		<p>motions may require case-level review due to non-specific coding. Report by tribe when tribal affiliation data are available.</p>
Tribal Affiliation	<p>Currently data on tribal affiliation are available in a comment field. These data were noted to not be reported consistently. OJD is working to create a master list variable so parties can select tribe.</p>	<p>Report on number and percentage of ICWA cases by Tribe.</p>