

Connections:

Tribal Child Support News

Connecting Stories, Sharing Insights



**NATIONAL TRIBAL
CHILD SUPPORT
ASSOCIATION**

Welcome to **Connections: Tribal Child Support News**, the official newsletter of the National Tribal Child Support Association. This publication serves as a platform to share legislative updates, highlight program successes, announce upcoming conferences, and spotlight innovative efforts from tribal child support programs across the nation. Our goal is to connect, inform, and inspire by providing meaningful insights and resources to support the work of tribal programs in strengthening families and communities. Through **Connections**, we aim to celebrate progress, foster collaboration, and keep you updated on the latest developments in tribal child support services.

A New Chapter for NTCSA

PRESIDENT - SANDY CLOER

Welcome to Connections: Tribal Child Support News! The NTCSA Board of Directors have been looking for different outlets to keep everyone up to date on what is happening and current events in tribal child support programs. We decided that one way would be to put together a newsletter.

We want to invite everyone to send in your program highlights as well as any staff spotlights you would like for others to be aware of.

There are 63 tribal child support programs, and I am sure there are things you are doing that would be of interest to other tribal child support programs. We want to share your achievements! We want to hear your ideas on how you made your programs successful or if you want to share lessons learned!

We will publish our newsletter bi-annually. To share highlights or events, please email them to ntcsa4children@gmail.com and include "Newsletter" in the subject line to ensure they reach the right committee.

I also would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone of our **24th NTCSA Conference** which will be held **June 15-19, 2025**. We will be in Albuquerque, NM at The Clyde Hotel. Please visit our website for all the details and get your reservations made today.

Thank you for all you do for our tribal children, and I hope to see you in Albuquerque.

NEW

In this newsletter
you can expect:

Celebrating
Excellence

Conference
Updates

Supporting Our
Communities

Opportunities &
Reminders

Program
Highlights

Make An Impact

Bill Woods Receives National Honor for Dedication to Tribal Child Support

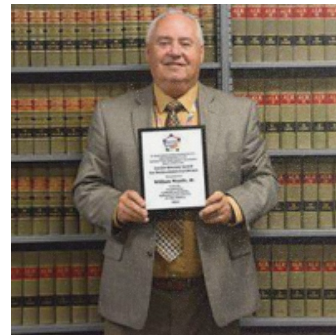
Mountrail County attorney Bill Woods was recently honored with the Lucille Dawson Award for Professional Excellence by the National Tribal Child Support Association. As reported in the **July 3, 2024 edition of the Mountrail County Promoter**, this award recognizes his outstanding service on the NTCSA Board of Directors and his dedication to improving outcomes for tribal children.

Woods, who serves as the Staff Attorney for the Tribal Child Support Office in New Town, has played a key role in advancing tribal child support programs nationwide. His work has contributed to significant policy changes, including the upcoming shift to 100% federal funding for tribal child support programs—an effort aimed at expanding resources and services for tribal families.

Reflecting on his career, Woods emphasized the importance of ensuring child support payments directly improve the lives of children,

helping with everyday needs like birthdays, school supplies, and family support. He also highlighted the shift from a statistics-driven approach to a more holistic system that prioritizes family well-being, employment opportunities, and support services.

Woods was recently elected Vice President of the NTCSA Board of Directors, furthering his commitment to enhancing child support programs for tribal communities across the nation.



Well-Deserved Recognition

Kudos to the **Cherokee Nation Office of Child Support Services** for earning the Platinum Program Award at the 2024 WICSEC conference! This prestigious honor recognizes a child support program that consistently sets the standard for excellence in every aspect of service. WAY TO GO!



Join Us at The Clyde Hotel

For several years, the National Tribal Child Support Association has proudly held its annual training conference at tribally owned facilities, honoring the commitment to supporting Native communities. However, this year marks a change as we gather at The Clyde Hotel in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Named after former New Mexico Governor Clyde Tingley, the hotel carries a legacy of public service and advocacy. Tingley and his wife, Carrie, were passionate about children's healthcare, and he dedicated his leadership to improving public welfare.

Operated by Heritage Hotels & Resorts, The Clyde Hotel is a beautifully restored historic landmark, recently renovated to blend modern comfort with its rich past. Known for its deep respect for cultural preservation and community engagement, Heritage Hotels & Resorts provides a setting that reflects both history and hospitality. We look forward to welcoming you to this unique and inspiring venue for the **24th Annual NTCSA Training Conference**.



Bringing Joy



Children Receive Gifts from Shoshone-Bannock Casino Hotel Employees

LYNETTE DIXEY

The Shoshone-Bannock Tribes Title IV-D Child Support Services Program received Christmas presents for fifty (50) families enrolled in the Tribal Child Support Program. Gifts were donated by the Shoshone Bannock Tribes Casino Hotel staff. Colista Matsaw, Shoshone-Bannock Casino Hotel Gaming Manager, contacted the Tribal Child Support Services Program Manager, Lynette Dixey, and offered to give gifts to families in need. A list of ages with gender, for 50 families, was given to the Gaming Manager. This included children and the custodial parent. Matsaw stated that the list was given to each of the departments within the Casino and the employees unselfishly purchased gifts, from their own pockets, for the families. The department employees also generously wrapped the gifts. Matsaw stated that this was one way the Casino could give to the community. Tribal Child Support employees delivered gifts to the families. The children and parents expressed much gratitude and were happy, and some surprised, to receive the unexpected gifts. The Tribal Child Support Program is very grateful for the thoughtfulness of the employees of the Shoshone-Bannock Casino Hotel and the Gaming Manager.

Scholarship Applications Being Accepted NOW!



NTCSA is accepting applications **NOW** for the Jerry Sweet Scholarship for Tribal Children. Scholarship awards are limited to students who are, or have been, beneficiaries of a federally funded tribal child support program and will be entering their first year of college or vocational training.

Deadline is MAY 16, 2025.

2025 Scholarship Essay Theme:

"In what ways can you soar to greater heights while preserving our cultural heritage."

The scholarship application can be found by visiting www.supporttribalchildren.org/scholarship

Flappers & Fedoras



A Roaring Twenties Conference Banquet

- A celebration of the glitz and glamour of the 1920s, an era known for jazz, speakeasies, and Art Deco elegance
- Think Gatsby-style extravagance, lively music, and a touch of vintage sophistication
- For Ladies: flapper dresses, feathered headbands, pearls, gloves, beaded handbags, t-strap heels
- For Gentlemen: three-piece suits, pinstripes, fedoras, bow ties, suspenders, pocket watches
- Whether you dress to the theme or not, we look forward to celebrating with you at an unforgettable banquet.



IIM Encumbrances - The Elusive Pot of Gold

WILLIAM WOODS



I come from Irish roots, and as a descendent from the “McBride” family of Ireland, I am, and most are familiar with, the storied rainbow myth - that there's a pot of gold at the end of every rainbow. Not only that, but that the pot of gold is guarded by a tricky leprechaun.

This is a tale of my adventure to find a similar pot of gold at the end of a rainbow; and yes, I was met by tricky leprechauns along the way. This tale starts many years ago when I was attending a session focusing on child support and the efforts to collect the same in Indian Country. The presenter was asked about trying to get monies from delinquent obligors through the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). The response was that such efforts are not worth pursuing and the BIA is not required to deliver over to child support offices trust income from assets the federal government has in IIM accounts.

IIM accounts, as they are more formally known, Individual Indian Monies Accounts, are accounts in which the Secretary of the Interior creates in each person's name, who receive income from trust assets, and are held for the exclusive benefit of the individual Indian beneficiary.

I decided that I was not going to take such assertion on face value, but intended to do a little digging and maybe I could dig up a pot of gold. When I arrived back at my office, I started a little digging and used the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) as my shovel. Honestly, it didn't take much digging to discover the provisions of 25 CFR Part 115 - Trust Funds for Tribes and Individual Indians, more specifically Subpart E. 25 CFR § 115.601, which sets forth the circumstances to restrict an IIM account through an encumbrance. The BIA may restrict your IIM account if the BIA receives an order from a court of competent awarding child support from your IIM account.

There I was, staring at the specific reference to child support, directing me to the end of the rainbow, and let me set about digging up various pots of Gold. But, I had forgotten that these pots of gold we guarded by a tricky leprechaun. In our case, we had to deal with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and their reluctance to cooperate.

Our office is located within the boundaries of the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation, and our reservation is home to the Three Affiliated Tribes – comprised of the Manda, Hidatsa, and Arikara people. We had numerous tribal

members who were not fulfilling their child support obligations. A portion of these tribal members have ownership rights in tracts of land which are held in trust. These lands have production value for agricultural purposes, such as crop production or cattle grazing, and from mineral rights underneath the tracts. I needed to find out which of our obligors had such ownership interests.

So, I think, I will write a few letters to the BIA and they will let us know if this person has an active IIM account, with funds being paid into the account, then out into the pockets of the obligor. I initially submitted a list of over 200 obligors. I was met with a response that all IIM account information is confidential and privileged information and the BIA would not comply with my request. So, I think, ok you little leprechaun, I will show you and I filed my first Subpoena Duces Tecum to the BIA demanding the BIA to come to Tribal Court and bring with you the records to establish IIM income from Trust assets. I also throw in a Discovery Request, just to add some stress and pressure to the BIA.

This does get the leprechaun's attention, in the form of a letter from United States Department of the Interior, Office of the Solicitor, advising me that the Department does not allow its employees to testify or to produce Department records either upon request or by subpoena {43 C.F.R. § 2.81 (b)}. I was informed that the Department may consider the request for information if the same is requested thru 43 C.F.R Part 2, Subpart H. and 43 C.F.R. §§ 2.80(a) (4) and 2.83. These regulations are in accordance with the case of *Unites States ex rel. Touhy v. Ragen*, 340 U.S. 462(1951).

This tricky leprechaun has given me a quest I must fulfill to get the gold, as I needed to create a written request (Touhy Request) and submit the same. I followed the procedure to the letter, including setting forth that no testimony was sought, identifying the employee maintaining the records, describing the records sought; showing the records are not available from any other source; showing the records can be used in lieu of the employee's testimony; and explained my compliance with section 2.88. Here you go you tricky leprechaun, I thought, as I mailed off the Touhy Request in February, 2014 to the local Office of Special Trustee, the Regional Fiduciary Trust Administrator, and the Attorney-Advisor with the Office of the Solicitor. Crickets, Crickets, Crickets. I heard nothing from any person at the Department of the Interior.

Over the next few years, I broke a lot of shovels trying to dig up these pots of Gold. I thought, no way was this tricky leprechaun going to win. How can a Department clearly ignore my request and how could anyone in the Office of Child Support or in elective office stand for it? Picked up another shovel and sent letters out, even went to see if the local legal services office would litigate the matter on behalf of low income parents who were not receiving child support, or to obtain a Writ of Mandamus. I wrote to both North Dakota Senators, and the deputy Bureau Director in DC. I challenge you to try and find that tricky leprechaun's name and address. I complained to our Regional Program Manager, the Tribal Child Support Liaison and the Commissioner from 2016 and into 2019.

They say the squeaky wheel gets the grease, (backstory upon request) and I think I finally wore down some officials, because I received calls and e-mails from the Office of the Solicitor – Division of Indian Affairs in August, 2019. I provided all the same documents, as I had back in 2014, and waited as the tricky leprechaun continued to process my request to honor the Touhy Request. Four months I waited, Crickets, Crickets, Crickets... I finally requested the name of the supervising attorney so that I could file a complaint, including asking what state bar association he/she was admitted to, intending to file an ethics complaint. I got an e-mail back that same day from the Assistant Solicitor, agreeing to look into the matter, and asking again for a copy of the February 5, 2014 letter from their office, which initially instructed me to file a written Touhy Request. Guess what? We received the requested information and were staring at a pot of Gold.

However, this fairy tale did not end just yet with happily ever after. Our office began actual encumbrance processing of cases in the Fort Berthold Tribal Court – a Court of Competent Jurisdiction, which is a Court based upon Black's Law: "One having power and authority of law at the time of acting to do the particular act." We have subject matter jurisdiction & personal jurisdiction over the obligor, and quasi in rem over property within the geographical area, trust property within the reservation. We filed Motions, supported by Affidavit; sent out proper Notices, for due process considerations, and presented the motions in court, before a Tribal Judge. We obtained certified copies of Orders and delivered the Orders to the local BIA Superintendent. "Thank-you – we will take our pot of Gold in the form of a government check, please".

Not so fast, our tricky leprechaun had other thoughts. We received a copy of a Memorandum Letter that was distributed to All BIA Regional Directors; The Director, Office of Tribal Services' and Director, Office of Trust Funds Management from the Deputy Commissioner of Indian Affairs. The subject line of the letter dated November 9, 2001 was "Child Support Awards and Encumbering Individual Indian Money Accounts.". The Memorandum informed BIA officials nationwide that the "BIA will not honor back child support ordered claims against an IIM account". Based upon the contents and directions of this memorandum letter, our office was informed that the local agency would not honor the certified copies sent to them. This is proving to be one determined tricky leprechaun, protecting the pot of Gold.

The next step was to grab another shovel and keep digging, as I could not give up. Research was conducted and I came across an Order from a Court that I did not even know existed. The Office of Hearings and Appeals, Interior Board of Indian Appeals had issued a decision on October 31, 2002, (tricky leprechauns must have been out trick or treating). The case – **Victoria J. Pretty Paint v. Rocky Mountain Regional Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs** (33 IBIA 177) involved an appeal of a denial of back child support payments from an obligor's IIM account. The denial cited the November 9, 2001 memorandum letter as support for the denial. The Court found nothing in 25 C.F.R. Part 115 that restricts the payment of back child support awards from the IIM account. The pot of Gold was now again there for the taking.

Hold up there a bit, if you want to go searching for this pot of Gold on your own. I need to caution everyone looking into encumbering IIM accounts. There is an administrative procedure built into 25 C.F.R. Part 115 and each needs to be fully complied with. It starts with verifying your Court is a Court of Competent jurisdiction. The BIA may not recognize a State Court Order to encumber. Best advice is to get the Order from the Tribal Court where the trust assets are located. Second consideration, you will need to school or teach your local BIA office of the procedures and the law, as the aforementioned 2001 memorandum letter seems to re-surface from time to time. The next constant consideration is need for patience; as your office will need to rely on the BIA to follow the Part 115 requirements, including notice, and ability to challenge the decision to restrict, based upon undue hardship. All BIA hearing are conducted without notice or appearance by child support,

but are recorded and obligors can have an attorney to represent them. We have a procedure in place and there is an approved form for an obligor to fill out to consent to the sums to be taken from their accounts. Obligor who have encumbrances put in place, and no funds are payable to them for several months, may choose to turn over funds to child support, so the remainder can be released from the IIM account to them.

It has been a long journey, learned a lot, lost some to the tricky leprechaun, won some in the long run. We have gotten some pots of Gold – payable in US treasury checks. However, we have not received some pots of Gold that we are still waiting on. By the way, as to our last Touhy Request. Crickets, Crickets, Crickets...

Go Raibh Maith Agaibh – (thank-you)



Mescalero Apache Tribal Child Support Office: Engaging with Our Community

KATERI CERVANTES

The Mescalero Apache Tribal Child Support Enforcement Office (MATCSEO) takes great pride in being an active part of our community. Over the past few years, we have participated in a variety of outreach activities that have brought joy to families and strengthened community ties.

In 2023, during the Mescalero Apache Tribe's 150th Sesquicentennial Commemoration parade, our team showcased our spirit and creativity by participating in the float competition. Our dedication and effort paid off as we proudly took home 1st place in our float division, receiving an award for our achievement.

Continuing our tradition of involvement, we participated in the 2024 Labor Day Parade Celebration. Once again, our team's enthusiasm and commitment were recognized as we secured 3rd place, earning yet another award.

Beyond parades and celebrations, MATCSEO is dedicated to supporting community events that bring smiles to children and families. Each year, we contribute to the Annual Community Easter Hunt, a cherished event that brings children together for a fun-filled day of activities. As part of our contribution, we donate a prize for an assigned age division and generously fill 1,000 Easter eggs with candy, ensuring a delightful experience for the young participants.

Our office is honored to engage with the community in these meaningful ways. We look forward to continuing our outreach efforts and finding new opportunities to support and celebrate the families we serve.

NTCSA TRAINING CONFERENCE T- SHIRTS AVAILABLE!



Official conference t-shirts are available for **\$25** when preordered by **May 12th**. All preordered shirts must be picked up at the conference.

A **limited number of shirts** will be available at the conference for **\$30**, but sizes are not guaranteed.

Proceeds support the Jerry Sweet Educational Scholarship for Tribal Children, helping kids who have benefited from tribal child support services pursue their education.

Visit our website to get yours!



Experience the Gateway to the 19 Pueblos of New Mexico

NTCSA invites you to a special cultural evening at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, on **Monday, June 16th, 2025 from 5:00 to 7:00 PM**. The center will open exclusively for our group, offering a unique opportunity to explore Pueblo history, art, and culture.

Shuttle Service:

For your convenience, White Earth Nation is generously providing shuttle transportation from The Clyde Hotel to the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center and back. The shuttle will depart the hotel at 5:00 PM and return at 7:00 PM. If you prefer to drive yourself, you're welcome to do so - just be prepared to pay admission upon arrival.

Admission:

- \$1 for tribal members
- \$11 for non-tribal members
- *Cash payment will be collected before boarding the shuttle.*

What to Expect:

- Enjoy a guided tour or explore at your own pace.
- Browse arts and crafts vendors in the courtyard.
- Please note: *The gift shop and restaurant will be closed during our visit.*

Sign Up for Shuttle Service by May 16, 2025!

Shuttle sign-up is available on our website under the conference tab. Join us for a special evening experiencing the vibrant history and culture of New Mexico's Pueblo communities!

Stay Connected on the NTCSA Member Discussion Board

Did you know that as a current NTCSA member, you have access to our online **Member Discussion Board**? It's a great space to connect with other tribal child support professionals across the country!

You can:

- Ask questions and get advice from fellow programs
- Share updates about your program
- Post helpful resources or news you think others should know
- Spark conversations and share ideas that can benefit all of us

To access the discussion board:

1. Make sure your NTCSA membership is current
2. Sign into the website
3. Navigate to the Members tab
4. You'll be able to view past discussion threads, post new topics, and even revisit materials from previous conferences

Whether you're looking for support, want to highlight something your program is doing, or just have a quick question—**this is your space**. We encourage you to check it out and join the conversation!

Board Nominations



Nominations for President and several Board Member seats **open April 16** and **close May 16, 2025**.

Serving on the NTCSA Board of Directors is an honor that requires commitment and teamwork throughout the year. To be an eligible nominee, you must have an active Individual Membership. If elected, you will serve a two-year term following the meeting in which you were voted into service.

If you're passionate about the work we do and want to help lead the way — consider running or nominating someone you believe in.

The nomination form can be found by visiting <https://supporttribalchildren.org/nomination-form/>

Award Nominations



Help us recognize outstanding work in Tribal Child Support! Each year at the NTCSA Annual Conference, we honor individuals and programs making a difference.

Nominations are open April 16 – May 16, 2025

Award categories include:

- Lucille Dawson Award for Professional Excellence
- Partnership Award
- Judge's Award
- Outstanding Tribe Award
- Lisa Skenandore Award for Excellence in Leadership

To nominate someone, complete the NTCSA Award Nomination Form on our website. Let's celebrate those who go above and beyond!

Board Member Spotlights

WILLIAM E. WOODS JR. (BILL)



Bill Woods is the Staff Attorney for the Three Affiliated Tribes Division of Child Support in North Dakota, where he's worked for the past 15 years. He previously served as the Tribal Prosecutor and has practiced law on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation for over 40 years. Bill currently serves as Vice President on the NTCSA Board of Directors. He earned his law degree from the University of North Dakota and began his legal career in private practice focusing on tribal law. In his current role, Bill helped grow the program's annual collections to nearly \$2 million and continues to advocate for the financial well-being of tribal children.

In the Office

What do you enjoy most about working in Tribal Child Support? *Helping improve the lives of tribal children by making sure support is provided and programs grow stronger year after year.*

What's an accomplishment you're proud of? *Fighting for and securing Cobell payments for tribal children through tribal resolutions and legal advocacy—even when the odds were stacked against us.*

What advice would you give someone new to the field? *Be persistent, stay committed to the mission, and never underestimate the difference you can make.*

Off the Clock

Favorite sports team? *Dallas Cowboys*

Favorite vacation? *Cruising the Caribbean*

Go-to karaoke song? *"Baby Likes to Rock It" by The Tractors*

Favorite dessert? *Key lime pie*

Dream dinner guest? *Abe Lincoln—with Marilyn Monroe as a close second*

JEN MCFAGGAN



Jen McFaggan is a member of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate (Lakota Sioux) tribe. She is the Program Technical Specialist for Lac Courte Oreilles (LCO) Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians Child Support Services in northern Wisconsin. She is the backup for the financial specialist, assists with training of new staff and with questions and concerns for current staff, and also works with grants for LCO. She is currently serving on the Board of Directors for the NTCSA as Treasurer and she is also on the Board of Directors for ERICSA. Jen has an Associate's Degree in Business Management.

In the Office

What do you enjoy most about your work? *I enjoy helping families across the country with financial assistance and sometimes even moral support.*

What's something you wish more people knew about Tribal child support programs? *Being in a tribal program, a lot of states don't realize that we have*

limited access to some programs; we're working on it, but it still may take a while.

Off the Clock

What TV show, movie, or book have you rewatched or reread the most? *I have watched the TV show Friends too many times to count, and the movie JFK is my go to movie.*

What's a hobby or activity you enjoy? *I enjoy golfing (we don't keep score), and I enjoy watching the Minnesota Twins.*

Dream vacation destination? *I would love to visit Aruba or Italy.*

Go-to karaoke song? *My daughter and I will always sing California Dreamin' by the Mamas and Papas.*

SANDY CLOER



Sandy Cloer is the Division Director for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) Tribal Child Support, TANF, and Representative Payee programs. She holds a business degree from Winsalem College and spent 18 years working in child support for the State of North Carolina before joining EBCI in 2009 to help develop its program. Her experience serving EBCI families as a state child support agent and working in Cherokee Tribal Court helped shape the foundation of their child support, TANF (established in 2012), and Representative Payee (launched in 2015) programs. She oversees 17 including a process server and clerk to the Cherokee Tribal Court. Sandy has served on the NC Child Support Council Board, is a past Secretary of the National Tribal Child Support Directors Association, and is the current NTCSA President. She is also a proud mother of two, Michelle and James.

In the Office

What do you enjoy most about your work? *I love being able to help families become more financially independent.*

What's one accomplishment you're proud of in your career? *I am very proud that I was able to help EBCI establish their own program. I helped write the federal plan.*

What is your guiding motto or philosophy? *I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget How You Made Them Feel.*

Off the Clock

What TV show, movie, or book have you rewatched or reread the most? *I love the movie Hidden Figures.*

What's a hobby or activity you enjoy? *I like gardening.*

Favorite food or comfort meal? *Comfort food is chicken and dumplings.*

Dream vacation destination? *I would love to go to London and Paris.*

If you could have dinner with any famous person (past or present) who would it be? *I would love to have dinner with Franklin Roosevelt.*

What's your go-to karaoke song? *Midnight Train to Georgia by Gladys Knight & The Pips!*

Help Make This Year's IG Fair a Success!

The **Intergovernmental Fair** is a great opportunity for attendees to connect, collaborate, and share information with one another. Hosting a table lets you **showcase your program, exchange ideas, and build valuable relationships.**

Visit the conference tab of our website to pre-register for your table by **May 15th**. You'll be provided a 6ft skirted table and 2 chairs, but if you need additional accommodations, feel free to reach out to our conference coordinator, Michelle Rutues, at rutues.michelle@gmail.com.

We look forward to seeing you there!



24th Annual NTCSA Training Conference

Who Can Benefit:

- Tribal, State, and Federal Child Support Program Staff
- Tribes considering child support start-up status
- Family Court, Judges, Attorneys, and Paralegals
- Tribal Leadership
- ICWA, TANF, and DV Specialists

What's In It For You:

- Gain insights that can strengthen your program & community impact
- Create Partnerships
- Improve skills & best practices
- CLE's
- Celebrate your hard work
- Bridge Tribal and State gaps
- Learn how to start a child support program with 100% federal funding

Thank You to Our 2025 NTCSA Sponsors

Sponsorship opportunities are still available!

Visit our website to learn how you can support the 2025 NTCSA Training Conference.



NATIONAL TRIBAL CHILD
SUPPORT ASSOCIATION

FOLLOW US:



www.supporttribalchildren.org

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