Relative Search
and
Native American Inquiry and Referral (NAIR)

Department of Children Youth and Families (DCYF)
Centralized Relative Search / Native American Inquiry Unit

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Social Services Specialist Supervisor
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Kelly.Lutes@dcyf.wa.gov
RELATIVE SEARCH

Brief History

- 2010 unit created and started in Region 3 (Snohomish, Skagit, Whatcom, San Juan and Island county)
- 2012 a second unit created in King County
- 2014 Statewide Centralized Services unit created serving 47 counties and over 1800 casework staff.
- 2018 unit currently has a total of 13 staff which includes
  - 1 Statewide Program Manager
  - 1 Social Services Supervisor
  - 8 Social Services Specialist
  - 3 Clerical Staff
- Additional 6.5 positions authorized by the legislature will begin in a few months.

Relative Search is a federal requirement as well a benefit and best case plan for all children. We want children to live with people they already know when possible; they can maintain their personal and cultural identity; encourages families to rely on their own resources and strengths; and relatives participate as a responsible and integral member of the child and family support team.

Within thirty days of out of home placement a relative search will be conducted and relative letters will be sent out to all relatives within three degrees of the child. The relative is directed to contact the search specialist first. The specialist can assist the family in determining their relationship and desire to become part of the team and a resource.

When a relative respond either in writing or via the phone and is interested their name and contact information is documented and provided to the caseworker and supervisor to follow up.

If the relative is interested in placement of the child the Assigned Caseworker will complete a background check to determine appropriateness of placement considerations.

This is a small portion of a two day training provided by the University of Washington / School of Social Work / Alliance for Child Welfare Excellence
What does it mean by “All Relatives”

- **RCW 74.15.020** was enacted to expand the definition of relative in Washington State and to include suitable person(s) who have a pre-existing relationship with the child or the family. The intent of the law is to provide more placement options for children in care and opportunities for permanency.
The requirement for conducting a Relative Search is supported by Federal law (Public Law 110-351, Fostering Connections to Success). This law requires the Department to notify all the relatives when a child is placed in care.
Where We Get Our Information

[Images of various websites and organizations]

Washington State Department of Health
Department of Corrections
Facebook
FamLink
Google
LexisNexis
Welcome to Barcode
aces.online
whitepages
ancestry.com
SEMS Division of Child Support
STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES
900 East College Way, Suite 200 • Mount Vernon WA • 98273-5687

<<Todays_Date>>

<<Relative_Name>>
<<Street_Address>>
<<City>>, <<State>> <<Zip>>

Regarding: <<Children>>

Dear

I am a relative search specialist for Children’s Administration in Washington State. We are required by law to identify and contact relatives when a child has been removed from the custody of their parents or legal guardian.

The names of the parents for the above named children are: <<Parents>>

Since the information about the child(ren) is confidential, I ask that you respect their privacy by not sharing information from this letter.

Children’s Administration recognizes and values the importance of relationships between children and their extended family. We must include relatives when looking at the needs of children in our care and ask able family members to participate in the planning and care of a child. Some of the options you have under federal and state law include participating in the planning, care, placement and well-being of the child. Examples of your involvement could be sharing family history, identifying other relatives, providing visits, making phone contact, or writing letters.

Attached to this letter is an information sheet about relative placement and supporting a child in other ways during a Children’s Administration case. There is also a form that requests information about you or other relatives who may be interested in being part of the child’s life. Please note that having options to participate in the planning and placement of a child may be lost by not responding to this notice. You are invited to reply by using the return envelope to send the completed form or you can contact me directly if you have questions about this letter.

Sincerely,

<<Signature>>, Relative Search Specialist
Children’s Administration
<<RSS_Phone>>
E-mail: <<RSS_Email>>

Relative Search Unit (360) 429-3007

RELATIVE INQUIRY
DSHS 27-134 (REV. 06/2018)
Information Regarding Relative Placement/Support

Q1: I don’t know if or how I am related to a child who is in need of foster care so what should I do?
A1: If you don’t know how you might be related to a child, please contact the relative search specialist. They will be able to help you understand how you’re related.

Q2: I am interested in being a placement resource for the child. What will I need to do?
A2: To ensure a safe and suitable home for a child placement, the following is required:
- Each person age 18 and older living in the home must pass a national background check.
- A caseworker will complete an initial home visit to ensure the health, safety and well-being of a child.
- A Home Study will be completed to assess each caregiver’s abilities to meet the needs of the child.

Q3: A household member has criminal history. Does that mean I would not be approved?
A3: Criminal history is reviewed carefully to determine child safety. Some crimes are permanently disqualifying, but others can be considered. This can occur through looking at factors such as: how much time has passed, the age you were at the time of offense, your life as it is today, and other objective factors.

Q4: If I reside out of state, could I still be chosen for placement?
A4: There is a process in place that allows relatives who reside in another state to be considered for placement. This is called the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children, and can be explained in more detail by the child’s assigned social worker.

Q5: If approved for placement and the child comes to live with me, what support is available?
A5: There are different supports available for relatives who are approved to have a child in their care.
- Relatives can become a licensed foster parent, and while this is not required to have a child placed in your care, there is a financial benefit to becoming licensed. As a licensed foster parent, you qualify for foster care reimbursement, which is often higher than other financial aid available if you are unlicensed.
- Relatives who choose not to become a licensed foster parent can apply for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) to access financial supports and benefits.
- Foster children may be eligible for the "Passport to College Promise Scholarship" program if they meet certain criteria. This was created in 2007 to help students from foster care attend and succeed in college.
- A licensed relative who later becomes the permanent placement through a guardianship may be eligible for a subsidy through Washington’s Relative Guardianship Assistance Program.

Q6: I am unable to be a placement. Are there other ways I can help?
A6: There are many ways relatives can offer support to a child or parent if you cannot be a placement option. Please consider whether you could:
- Provide transportation for the child to visit parents, siblings or extended family.
- Provide respite (short break) for foster parents or other relatives caring for the child.
- Help provide background information or family medical history for the child.
- Help provide family pictures so we can make a picture book for the child, his/her family, or the extended family.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and please do not hesitate to call or write with any questions.
Relative Inquiry

Please return in envelope provided within 10 days
If you need additional space to provide relative information, please use the back of this page.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CASE NAME</th>
<th>CASE NUMBER</th>
<th>PARENT’S NAME(S)</th>
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<tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHILD(REN)’S NAME(S)</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CA WORKER’S NAME</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONDING RELATIVE</th>
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</table>

1. I wish to be a placement option or provide support in the following ways:
- [ ] Help with visits
- [ ] Supervising visitations
- [ ] Placement now
- [ ] Placement in the future
- [ ] Respite care
- [ ] Staying in contact with child(ren)
- [ ] Providing transportation for:
  - [ ] Child(ren)
  - [ ] Parents
- [ ] I do not wish to help at this time.
- [ ] Other (provide family / medical information):

   How are you related to the child (check a box below)?
   - [ ] Maternal (Mother’s side)
   - [ ] Paternal (Father’s side)
   - [ ] Grandparent
   - [ ] Aunt / Uncle
   - [ ] Cousin
   - [ ] Step Relative
   - [ ] Not related

Comments:

NAME AND TELEPHONE NUMBER (WITH AREA CODE) OF PERSON SUBMITTING FORM

NAME

EMAIL ADDRESS

2. Other family members who may be willing to help:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD(REN)</th>
<th>EMAIL ADDRESS</th>
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<tr>
<th>ADDRESS</th>
<th>CITY</th>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>ZIP CODE</th>
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<th>NAME</th>
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</table>

3. Does the child(ren) have an existing relationship with you? ..... [ ] Yes [ ] No
   With anyone listed above? .......................................................... [ ] Yes [ ] No
   If yes, please explain:

4. Does this child(ren) or parents have Native American ancestry / Indian heritage? [ ] Yes [ ] No
   If yes, please explain and list possible tribal affiliations:
# Active Efforts v. Reasonable Efforts

Active efforts are different from "reasonable efforts."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasonable</th>
<th>Active</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Referral</td>
<td>Arranging services, transportation, helping family (extended family) engage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing Case</td>
<td>Proactively engaging in diligent casework, follow-up, visits, service provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting minimum policy standards</td>
<td>Creatively meeting the needs of the family involved (e.g., more face-to-face contact than required by policy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstream service provision</td>
<td>Culturally appropriate service provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updating tribe/tribal social worker</td>
<td>Seeking service and case management suggestions and actively co-case managing where tribe has available personnel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Alliance for Child Welfare Excellence

This document was created by the National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) and is included in the Native American Youth Training conducted by the Alliance for Child Welfare Excellence.
NATIVE AMERICAN INQUIRY REFERRAL (NAIR) PROCESS

Caseworkers must identify a child as Indian early in the case activity. Early intervention is necessary to ensure that the Indian child is not traumatized by placement that are culturally inappropriate or must be interrupted at a later date to comply with the Indian placement requirements of ICWA.

- Caseworkers when interacting and investigating a case should inquire into the child’s Indian status from Intake to case closure. As soon as a caseworker is notified of potential tribal affiliations the worker has 10 days per policy to submit a referral to the NAIR unit.
- Caseworker is to gather information on the child’s family ancestry.
- Create a Family Ancestry Chart (FAC) in FamLink.
- Identify all potential tribal affiliations, even if the child is a member of one tribe.
- The NAIR worker will review the FAC submitted by the worker and add any additional information we are able to obtain through our numerous state and national data bases.
- After the NAIR worker identifies completes the FAC and identifies all the tribe’s inquiry letters are sent to all tribes/bands/nations that have been identified for the child. All responses from the tribes are returned to the NAIR unit.
- Only a tribe can determine a child’s membership status. It is critical to provide the tribes with as much information as possible so they can determine eligibility.
- If the tribe responds that the child is a member or eligible for membership the caseworker must:
  - Immediately contact the identified tribe
  - Collect necessary information to provide legal notice
  - Send or ensure that legal notice is sent within the designated time period
  - If the tribe does not respond, legal notice for every future “Child Custody” proceeding must be sent.
  - Present verification to the court and the Attorney General’s office.
Federally Recognized Tribes Washington State
This agency recently received a referral regarding the above referenced child. We need your help to determine whether this child is subject to the provisions of the Indian Child Welfare Act 25 U.S.C. 1901 et seq. (and RCW 13.38). I have attached a family ancestry chart regarding the child's family members and Indian ancestry as identified by the family to help with this process.

The federal Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) defines an "Indian child" as an unmarried person under the age of 18 years who is either: (a) a member of a federally recognized Indian Tribe; or (b) eligible for membership in a federally recognized Tribe and is the biological child of a member of a federally recognized Indian tribe. 25 U.S.C. 1903(4).

To help establish whether this child is an Indian child for the purposes of ICWA, please answer the following questions:

1. Is the child a member of your Tribe?  □ Yes  □ No
   Is the child the biological child of a member and eligible for membership?  (See attached Ancestry Chart.)  □ Yes  □ No

2. Mother's Name: ____________________________  Mother's Birth Date: ________________
   Is the mother of the child a member of your Tribe?  □ Yes  □ No

3. Father's Name: ____________________________  Father's Birth Date: ________________
   Is the father of the child a member of your Tribe?  □ Yes  □ No

4. For purposes of case planning by the CA worker if the child is a member or the biological child of a member and eligible for membership does:
   a. The Tribe plan to formally intervene in this case?  □ Yes  □ No
   b. The Tribe plan to participate in case planning which may include placement, court involvement, specialized services, case reviews, culturally relevant events, etc.?  □ Yes  □ No
   c. If yes, what services can the Tribe provide:
5. If the child is not an Indian child as defined by state and federal law, confidentiality requirements limit the extent to which CA can share information with the tribe. To the extent that the child and/or family have contact with the Tribe/s they have identified are you willing to be a resource for the case worker in their work with the family to develop culturally appropriate case planning, services or placement?  □ Yes  □ No

Please provide a contact name and number, for the agency, regarding this matter in the area below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>PHONE NUMBER (INCLUDING AREA CODE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Please provide the information requested below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIGNATURE OF TRIBAL REPRESENTATIVE</th>
<th>DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRINTED NAME OF TRIBAL REPRESENTATIVE</td>
<td>TELEPHONE NUMBER (INCLUDING AREA CODE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAILING ADDRESS / STREET ADDRESS</td>
<td>CITY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your earliest response is appreciated. If you do not respond in a timely manner, the child may not be treated as an Indian child for legal or case planning purposes. If you need additional time or information in order to determine the child's Indian status, please immediately contact me at the address or telephone number listed below.

If the Tribe does not respond to this letter please be advised that case planning and court activities may proceed without Tribal participation.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or require further assistance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME OF SOCIAL WORKER</th>
<th>E-MAIL ADDRESS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MAILING ADDRESS / STREET ADDRESS</td>
<td>CITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TELEPHONE NUMBER (INCLUDING AREA CODE)</td>
<td>FAX NUMBER (INCLUDING AREA CODE)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Family Ancestry Chart, DSHS 04-220, attached.
The federal and state Indian Child Welfare Acts require that all Indian children be identified. To assist in this process all biological parents need to complete this form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME OF CHILD</th>
<th>PERSON ID NUMBER</th>
<th>DATE OF BIRTH</th>
<th>CASE NUMBER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I, ____________________________, and I, ____________________________, hereby acknowledge that ____________________________ is of the following Indian ancestry: ____________________________

**Mother:**
- Indian ancestry: ☐ Yes  ☐ No
- Tribe(s): ____________________________
  - ☐ Identity of the Tribe unknown

**Father:**
- Indian ancestry: ☐ Yes  ☐ No
- Tribe(s): ____________________________
  - ☐ Identity of the Tribe unknown

Name and relationship of person(s) other than parents providing information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOTHER'S SIGNATURE</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>FATHER'S SIGNATURE</th>
<th>DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Parent refused to sign</td>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Parent refused to sign</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Parent not available for signature</td>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Parent not available for signature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CASE WORKER’S SIGNATURE  DATE  CASE WORKER’S NAME

AGENCY STREET ADDRESS  CITY  STATE  ZIP CODE

The CA caseworker must:
- Upload the completed form in FamLink.
- Complete the Family Ancestry Chart (#04-220) in FamLink, if one or both parents answer yes.
- Staff must email a Native American Inquiry Referral (NAIR) to CANativeAmericanInquiry@dshs.wa.gov within 10 working days.
# Family Ancestry Chart

To Assist Tribe(s) To Determine Membership Eligibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PATERNAL GRANDFATHER</th>
<th>GREAT GRANDFATHER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tribe(s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Date and Place of Birth</td>
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<tr>
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<th>PATERNAL GRANDMOTHER</th>
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<th>INFORMATION SOURCES</th>
<th>GREAT GRANDMOTHER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date and Place of Birth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Maiden Name</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Married Name(s)</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PREPARED/REVISED BY</th>
<th>GREAT GRANDFATHER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Aliases</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DATE PREPARED OR REVISED</th>
<th>GREAT GRANDMOTHER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date and Place of Birth</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DATE SENT TO BIA/TRIBE(S)</th>
<th>GREAT GRANDMOTHER</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date and Place of Birth</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**CASE NAME**

**CASE NUMBER**

**CHILD PERSON ID NUMBER**

**APPLICANT (Child’s Name)**

**Tribe(s)**

**Date of Birth**

**Place of Birth**

**Father’s Aliases**

**DATE PREPARED OR REVISED**

**DATE SENT TO BIA/TRIBE(S)**

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**DSHS 04-220 (REV. 10/2015)**
If you are an Indian person there are laws and policies that protect you. The preservation of Indian families and tribes is provided by:

3. Juvenile Court Act RCW 13.34

We are a sovereign people, we value our different ways, learned from our grandparents, whose ceremonies we follow, whose languages we speak, whose customs we honor. You will know our separate identities by the style of our life.

—Author Unknown
Local Indian Child Welfare Advisory Committee

Why We Exist
The Local Indian Child Welfare Advisory Committee (LICWAC) was established by the Department of Social and Health Services at the request of Washington state Indian tribes and Recognized American Indian Organizations (RAIO) to address the separation of Indian children from their communities.

What We Do
The LICWACs serve in an advisory capacity to Children's Administration (CA) case workers and supervisors by recommending culturally appropriate case plans and services for Indian families. LICWACs offer assistance in the case management of these cases with respect to the special needs and rights of Indian children and their families. LICWAC recommendations are included in the court report as an attachment for those cases in the court system.

Who We Are
LICWAC members must be American Indian/Alaska Native/First Nations people or non-Indian people appointed by a tribe or an RAIO who are familiar with the special needs of Indian children and community resources. LICWAC members are approved by the Regional Administrator. Members must formally register as volunteers of the Department, which includes passing a background check.

Resources
This includes all services the families are eligible for and entitled to. Efforts are made to use all relevant Tribal and/or urban Indian services available including:
- Membership Inquiry with federally recognized Tribes
- Health and Social Services
- Education
- Counseling

Engaging Tribes and Families
The state of Washington recognizes the unique cultural and sovereign status of American Indian/Alaskan Natives.

State and federal laws require caseworkers follow specific steps when working with an Indian child and their family who are or may be affiliated with a federally recognized Tribe.

As a parent, Indian custodian or caregiver, you are also encouraged to participate at every level of case planning for your child.

LICWAC Liaison
- or -
Indian Child Welfare Program Consultant

Name: __________________________
Address: _________________________
Phone: __________________________
Email: __________________________

Confidentiality (Privacy)
Children's Administration staff and Local Indian Child Welfare Advisory Committee members must keep all information confidential and private, as required by law.
Tribal Nations in State of Washington

Alliance for Child Welfare Excellence

allianceforchildwelfare.org
### Relative Search / NAIR Yearly Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relative Search</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Referrals received from Caseworkers and FamLink report</td>
<td>5440</td>
<td>4643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Relative Search letters sent on behalf of DCYD children</td>
<td>60,164</td>
<td>119,823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responses from relative letters: Telephone call and E-mails</td>
<td>3460</td>
<td>9904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive for Placement Interest</td>
<td>2089</td>
<td>3729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive for Family Support</td>
<td>1421</td>
<td>3307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family expressed that they are unwilling or unable to help</td>
<td>Data not collected</td>
<td>1463</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Native American Inquiry and Referral</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Referrals received</td>
<td>5201</td>
<td>4978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total First letters sent</td>
<td>16,207</td>
<td>19,389</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total letters resent (2nd letters) @ 60 days due to no response from Tribes</td>
<td>3728</td>
<td>6722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total letters resent (3rd letters) @ 120 days due to no response from Tribes</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>489</td>
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<tr>
<td>Search Results:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children who were determined to be members</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>261</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children who were determined to be eligible for membership</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children who were determined to be descendants</td>
<td>139</td>
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