

LUMBEE TRIBE OF NORTH CAROLINA

John L. Lowery | Lumbee Tribal Chairman



September 22, 2026

Subject: Coordination with the Lumbee Tribe for Assignment of Qualified Expert Witness (QEW)

The North Carolina Department of Human Services (NCDHHS) continues to collaborate with the Lumbee Tribe to ensure that Lumbee children are recognized and receive the protections afforded to them based on the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) of 1978. One of the requirements of ICWA is that the court must hear from a Qualified Expert Witness (QEW) before a child is placed in foster care and during any Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) proceedings. According to ICWA, any Federally Recognized Tribe must be the first point of contact when a QEW is needed in a case.

Beginning on 10/01/2026, all Local DSS agencies must coordinate with the Lumbee Tribe of NC when the need for a QEW arises. The Lumbee Tribe has developed a list of QEWs who are available to testify. It is the agency's responsibility to negotiate a fee with the QEW. This expense is IV-E reimbursable and can be claimed on the 1571. This process should also be documented in the child's record.

This process is intended to ensure appropriate assignment and coordination when ICWA applies. If for any reason the Lumbee Tribe cannot identify a QEW, the agency should contact the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) for assistance. Use this link to find help:

<https://www.bia.gov/bia/ois/dhs/icwa>

If the local agency has already enlisted a QEW that the Lumbee Tribe is not aware of, please notify the tribe immediately with this information. This new process allows the Lumbee Tribe to stay up to date with cases so they can assist every county in every possible way.

The ICWA Manager for the Lumbee Tribe is Victor Dial; he can be reached at 910-522-2190 or vidial@lumbeetribe.com/icwa@lumbeetribe.com

OFFICE OF THE LUMBEE TRIBAL CHAIRMAN

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Victor Dial". The script is cursive and fluid.

Victor Dial
Manager of Indian Child Welfare

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Celeste Hunt". The script is cursive and elegant.

Celeste Hunt
Interim Director of Health and Human Services

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Lowery". The script is cursive and stylized.

John L. Lowery
Tribal Chairman
Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina