



**Media Contact:**

Olivia Biggs

740.304.4413

[Olivia.Biggs@nursefamilypartnership.org](mailto:Olivia.Biggs@nursefamilypartnership.org)

## **NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICE FOR NURSE-FAMILY PARTNERSHIP AND CHILD FIRST LAUNCHES INDIGENOUS WISDOM COUNCIL**

### **Innovative Council to Enhance Cultural Responsiveness and Community Engagement in Home Visiting Programs**

**DENVER, COLO.** (July 15, 2024) — The National Service Office (NSO) for Nurse-Family Partnership® and Child First proudly announces the establishment of its inaugural Indigenous Wisdom Council. This new initiative brings together esteemed individuals from diverse Indigenous communities to guide and enrich NSO’s work in tribal communities by exchanging knowledge, advocating for the betterment of Indigenous communities and promoting culturally appropriate practices and policies related to home visiting.

The creation of the Indigenous Wisdom Council is integral to the National Service Office for Nurse-Family Partnership and Child First’s commitment to cultural responsiveness, community engagement and the overall success of NSO programs in Indigenous communities.

“The National Service Office for Nurse-Family Partnership and Child First knows each Indigenous community carries sacred ancestral knowledge that only they will deeply comprehend,” said Rebekah Dunlap, Tribal Consultant for the NSO. “The NSO aims to enhance their services with historically marginalized families by increasing Indigenous relations and representation within the NSO, leading to a greater level of engagement to strengthen and expand tribal home visiting.”

In a national effort to honor and elevate Indigenous wisdom, NSO is thrilled to introduce the members of its newly formed Indigenous Wisdom Council. Comprised of distinguished representatives from diverse Indigenous communities from various

geographical regions, the council members bring a deep understanding of Indigenous culture, traditions and practices related to family health.

Shydelle Cavener (Kānaka 'Ōiwi) of Ada, Oklahoma, serves as a Tribal Home Visitor through Research and Public Health for the Chickasaw Nation.

Karla Decker (Dakota) from Bemidji, Minnesota, brings 18 years of experience as a Nurse-Family Partnership nurse. She offers a wealth of knowledge as a former Senior Tribal Nurse Consultant in Minnesota.

Gwendolynn Gabbert (Athabascan/Inupiaq/Iroquois) of Anchorage, Alaska, is an experienced Nurse-Family Partnership nurse with seven years of service.

Angelina Hernandez (Dine'/Navajo, Hopi and Latina) of Minneapolis, Minnesota, boasts 25 years of involvement in Indian Education. She specializes in Indigenous curriculum development, interventions, and racial equity in the Minneapolis area.

Sanoë Marfil (Kānaka 'Ōiwi) of O'ahu, Hawai'i, serves as Chief Program Officer at INPEACE, a Native Hawaiian nonprofit organization grounded in community and focused on strengthening Hawai'i's education systems.

Gladys Rowe (Muskego Inniniw) is a member of Fox Lake Cree Nation in Northern Manitoba and currently resides on the occupied lands of the Duwamish and Suquamish peoples in Washington State with her family. She is a Scholar, Filmmaker, Poet, Author, Facilitator, Researcher, and Evaluator who takes an interdisciplinary approach to her work.

Jessica Whitehawk (Winnebago/Sioux) of Washington state, is the founder of Ttawaxt Birth Justice Center, providing invaluable support to pregnant individuals and their families in the Yakama Nation.

For the next two years, this cohort of members on NSO's Indigenous Wisdom Council will work together to ensure NSO's programs are culturally informed and responsive through their wealth of experience, expertise and passion.

The NSO is committed to addressing principles and practices that cause inequality and is committed to promoting anti-racism, anti-oppression, diversity, equity and inclusion in its research, education and operations. Please join the National Service Office for Nurse-

Family Partnership and Child First in welcoming these inspiring members to the council as they offer invaluable guidance and insights to positively impact the organization's collective efforts.

###

### **About the National Service Office for Nurse-Family Partnership and Child First**

The National Service Office (NSO) is the central, unified operational structure for two evidence-based programs: [Nurse-Family Partnership](#) and [Child First](#). In 2020, what was formerly the NSO solely for Nurse-Family Partnership joined forces with Child First, a merger empowering two proven, evidence-based models to share complementary expertise, infrastructure and integrated support services. The resulting unified entity works to ensure that health care, early childhood development and the mental health of the entire family are delivered in proven ways to achieve long-term positive outcomes.