

Northwest Community Action
Community Assessment
Updated April, 2017

Northwest Community Action, Inc. provides Head Start and Early Head Start services to families in Marshall, Roseau, Kittson and Lake of the Woods counties in the Northwestern corner of Minnesota. Our service area is bounded on the west by North Dakota and on the north by Manitoba and Ontario. Within this area of 6500 square miles, reside over 32,000 people. Communities range in size from 50 to 2600 people.

Historically, this area has depended primarily on agriculture as the primary economic base. Largely this remains true, but the number of people directly involved in farming has dropped significantly as farms grow larger. (Minnesota Extension Service) During the last 30 years, the growth of other large industrial employers has been healthy although slowing in the past year. Marvin Windows employs over 2500 full and part-time people on swing shifts and Polaris Industries has 1200 employees. The impact of the Seven Clans Casino business as well as the resort industry on employment is also a factor. However, many of the jobs, particularly the latter are lower paying, part-time or seasonal jobs. The economy has slowed and hiring has leveled off. School enrollment, overall, has declined but is now stabilizing in area school districts in our service area. (2016 School Enrollment Data)

Unemployment ranges from 4.8-10.8% in our 4 counties and is above the state average of 4.2%. (MN Workforce Center) When available, entry level job rates often are low at \$12/hr and lower at the casino and resorts. Many of the jobs are part-time. The families we serve increasingly are those laid off or working part-time. However the majority of clients have both parents working or in a single parent family with that parent working. 59% of our families use at least part-time childcare, but much of that is furnished by other family members or friends. Families with infants however are an exception and moms are less likely to work outside the home, at least for the first couple of years of the child's life. (HSPiR) Families are also reluctant to change childcare arrangements unless there is evidence of poor, insufficient care. Also impacting families is the low rate of sliding-fee childcare assistance. Those factors speak to our reliance on centerbase options and fewer home visits in our 3-5 year old program. With fewer parents at home, but childcare more costly, providing added center time, continuing with full days where space is available and adding days assists the parents by reducing their childcare costs as well as transportation cost. (HS Survey) With those trends continuing, Northwest needs to continue to provide and expand center time for Head Start children that meets both children's and parents' needs. Northwest's Headstart costs remain stable since the added time is in school rooms that are contributed by each school district. However, as school districts ramp up their preschool facilities for longer dosage programs, additional facility space for Headstart to increase time/dosage for our children is limited.

There is strong support for local education. Citizens support their local, small school consistently in tax matters as well as good programming. There are 1984 children under 5 in our service area. Estimated number of children income eligible for our programs is 298, (MN Dept of Ed, School Census, Agency/CDF). Data tends to show more eligible children in the 0-2 age range than in the 3 to 4 year olds group. In our programs, 84% are Caucasian, 2 % Native American, 3% Asian, 10% Bi-Racial, .7% Black and 4% Hispanic (HS/EHS PIR). The percentages of minorities in the general population are about 20% of those shown. Our recruiting needs to continue to focus on finding and serving these relatively low numbers of ethnic minorities.

Each of the 11 school districts in our Head Start service area provide Early Childhood Family Education services but not in each community. Additionally, the focus is on providing School Readiness for 4 year olds so there is less opportunity for the parents of infants and toddlers. The two additional school districts in our Early Head Start Service Area provide similar services. They all also provide services for children, ages 0 to 5, and their families but those opportunities are fewer. 50% of our enrolled families also participate in their school district's program. Each school district also provides EC Special Education to those children that qualify. In each instance, Northwest collaborates with those community programs with each area's program designed to meet local needs. The common result of these collaborations is an integrated, mainstreamed center with staff from each agency providing services. Given the low numbers of children and enrollment projected to continue to remain low, it is important to continue to build on our efforts to share programming, staff, training, and other services. Flexible solutions for each community will be necessary. Those solutions may need to include specific local combinations that address the need for services for a small number of participants in conjunction with the local school partner are necessary. However in two communities that we last served in 2012 and 2013, Lancaster and Hallock, we can identify only 4 children that would be income eligible for Head Start. After discussions with staff, Northwest's Governing Board and the Policy Council, the decision was made to not offer HS Centers there again this coming year. Policy Council approved. Given the number of working parents and their interests as previously stated, a Home-Base option is not an option for our 3-5 year old program. Northwest's own data analysis from TSG along with findings with the state wide project quality assessment and school readiness, show excellent developmental growth.

Participation in the regions Interagency Early Intervention program for children 0-3, has been useful for Northwest and all other participants as well, for developing and carrying out child and family service plans. It also provides networking and sharing opportunities with other service providers. Continued support and cooperation with other partnering agencies is necessary for optimum services and efficiency.

Northwest's partnerships also include each county's Nursing Service. By contracting with each for health screenings for all enrollees, Northwest is able to utilize their community resources and information. This relationship assists Northwest in understanding community health goals and needs. The information as collected from all sources indicate that children and families are accessing necessary supports such as Free and Reduced Meals and the SNAP program so that their nutrition needs can be met. However, a survey of providers indicates that too often

families make poor choices about their food. Increased emphasis in this area is demonstrated in our T/TA plan. The health screening information also provides each family's own account of their family's eating and nutrition pattern. Again, families are reporting adequate nutrition however, other providers are seeing the need for better choices. Fluoride treatments are provided as part of our contracts.

Our data as well as Social Services' indicate that our families without homes consist of those who are temporarily living with friends or families (12%). Northwest's other services include assisting families into their own housing and we are successful in placing them. Our partner survey completed in March of 2014 also indicates a strong need for affordable housing. Current housing information continues to show that need continuing. New families will continue to have housing needs and Northwest needs to meet those needs as well as participate in new initiatives for funding affordable housing. Advocacy to link families to Food Stamp (SNAP) programs and Child Care Assistance need to be continued by Northwest.

County Nursing Services as well as our other community partners at schools and IEIC Committees assist Northwest with referrals and on-going support. They also are active recipients of Northwest's referrals. Community partners that provide family social services participate with Northwest on County Collaborative Committees and through their input have been able to better Family Outcomes as well as building relationships that are and will be important for families smoothly accessing their services. Continuing and building on these effective partnerships will continue to be a goal.

Community partners, staff members, parents and Policy Council members have throughout the past year provided input regarding the needs of families in our area and what responses could be effective.

Recommendations include continued center-base for Head Start enrollees in each school district except Lancaster and Hallock and on-going focus on family services in each existing site. Early Head Start recommendations include continuing with the Home-Base option model. Given the relative numbers of possible eligible children for EHS and HS enrollment, leaving the Head Start slots at 174 and Early Head Start slots at 80 works best for us.

April 2016

SERVICE AREA POPULATION

US Census

Kittson County	4,424
Marshall County	8,423
Lake of the Woods County	3,923
Roseau County	15,770
Total	32,540

POPULATION BY ETHNICITY/RACE COMPOSITION
Census/2014-2015 PIR,

	AREA	HS/EHS
Caucasian	93.3%	84.0%
American Indian	1.1%	2.0%
Asian	1.7%	3.0%
Black	0.3%	0.7%
Hispanic	2.6%	4.0%
Bi-Racial	1.0%	10.0%

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES
MN Workforce Center February 2016

Kittson County	5.8%
Marshall County	9.8%
Lake of the Woods County	4.5%
Roseau County	7.7%
MN	4.4%

EDUCATION LEVEL, HEAD START HEAD OF FAMILY
Minnesota Data/PIR 2015

	AREA	HS/EHS
No HS Grad or GED	3.9%	5.0%
HS Grad, GED, or higher	51.7%	44.0%
Some college, vocational, or AA degree	27.4%	43.0%
Bachelor's Degree or higher	17.0%	8.0%

HOMELESS FAMILIES
HUD, Agency 2015

Marshall, Roseau, Kittson, Lake of the Woods Counties	12.0%
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SINGLE PARENT HOUSEHOLDS
Census, Agency 2015 EHS/HS

All Counties (Kittson, Marshall, LOW, and Roseau)	40.0%
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MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS
LSS, Agency

Northwest Community Action Families, 2015	7.1%
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CHILDREN IN FAMILIES RECEIVING FREE OR REDUCED MEALS AND SNAP
MN DEPT OF EDUCATION 2015

<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>FREE/REDUCED MEALS</u>	<u>SNAP</u>	<u>All Counties</u>
KITTSON	37.2%	8.9%	33.0%
LOW	54.3%	18.6%	
MARSHALL	44.1%	11.9%	
ROSEAU	35.7%	11.4%	

CHILDREN AGES 0-4 LIVING BELOW THE POVERTY LEVEL
CDF/MN DEPT OF EDUCATION/NW Head Start Local Data

All Counties (Kittson, Marshall, LOW, and Roseau) (15%) 298

2015 AGES 0-4: CENSUS/SCHOOL DISTRICT

KITTSON COUNTY		<u>0-2</u>	<u>0-4</u>	<u>K-12</u>
Hallock		61	101	263
Karlstad		42	70	181
Lancaster		<u>36</u>	<u>59</u>	154
	Total	139	230	
MARSHALL COUNTY				
Grygla		36	60	158
Newfolden		89	149	387
Warren		102	170	443
Stephen/Argyle		<u>73</u>	<u>122</u>	316
	Total	300	501	
LAKE OF THE WOODS COUNTY				
Baudette		105	176	457
ROSEAU COUNTY				
Badger		59	98	254
Greenbush/Middle River		92	154	400
Roseau		267	445	1,156
Warroad		<u>228</u>	<u>380</u>	997
	Total	646	1,077	
ALL COUNTIES TOTAL		1984		

SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN PER SCHOOL DISTRICT, PRE-K

KITTSOON COUNTY

Hallock	2
Karlstad	5
Lancaster	<u>1</u>
Total	8

MARSHALL COUNTY

Grygla	3
Newfolden	5
Warren	7
Stephen/Argyle	<u>4</u>
Total	19

LAKE OF THE WOODS COUNTY

Baudette	5
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ROSEAU COUNTY

Badger	4
Greenbush/Middle River	5
Roseau	11
Warroad	<u>17</u>
Total	37

ALL COUNTIES TOTAL 69

HEADSTART FAMILIES UTILIZING SOME CHILDCARE 2015 59%

There are no childcare centers in our service area. All childcare is in family childcare homes. Included in those is family and relative care.

Additional programs serving Head Start eligible children and their families include all schools in our service area. All districts provide EC:SE, EC:FE and School Readiness programs although not in every location.

13 school buildings are present in this service area but there no comprehensive 0-2 programs in our communities nor are there childcare centers. Public schools offer limited programming for 4 year old children independent of Head Start. No additional Early Childhood development programs are available. The trend in population is a plateau with the majority of parents of eligible children being employed at lower wage and/or part time jobs. Childcare funding assistance remains low but steady.

Parents and community partners were surveyed in the spring of 2014 to gain their input on needs regarding education, health, nutrition and social service needs. All feel strongly about maximizing center time for Head Start age children both for developmental reasons and costly childcare. Additionally, partners also identified a continued and growing need for full child and family services for children 0-2 and their families along with employment options, affordable housing and nutrition/food education. Detailed data is included in our Community Assessment.

While there are no major changes in the demographic statistics in our communities, schools in two small towns continue to present a problem after several years of declining population. The number of their available eligible 3 and 4 year olds has declined to the point that providing a program will present challenges. Middle River and Grygla are the two communities.

We are planning to continue to serve these communities under Section 645(a)(2) [42 U.S.C. 9840] regarding participation in Head Start programs. Each community has under 1000 people, has no pre-school program other than Head Start, each is in a designated medically underserved area, Marshall (Middle River, Grygla) County, and are geographically isolated from other pre-school programs. MUA map uploaded separately. The nearest alternative available to each is in excess of 20 miles away with no public transportation available. While recruiting is not complete, we expect from past experience that over 50% of the families to be served will be eligible under current eligibility requirements.

Operating under this section will allow us to continue to provide services to those communities. Other communities are moving in a similar pattern, but there are at least school programs available in those communities though limited.

As we look at the Community Assessment, we see that the remaining communities and school districts have a proportionate share of need. Consequently even with slightly increasing unemployment, we have sufficient slots to serve in our communities both in Head Start and Early Head Start.