



# **Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe**

## **477 Master Plan**

### **CCDF Portion**

**October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2025**

**FY22-FY25**

**43408 Oodena Drive, Onamia, MN 56359**

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**Tammy Wickstrom, Executive Director**

## **Child Care**

Child care is a barrier for many participants obtaining and retaining work. The Tribe is committed to increasing child care support for families using child care assistance and by developing childcare that can be used by families in the 477 program. TANF families who are working or in school will have priority for child care assistance and child care openings. To support this, the Tribe will be including CCDF funding in the P.L. 102-477 program. By including CCDF in this plan, families will be able to access multiple services in a one-stop shop approach. Families will be able to access child care assistance, training, employment, transportation, cultural activities, TANF, and job training through one program leading to seamless integration and ease of access.

Agencies involved in the delivery of CCDF services include: Aanjibimaadizing, Mille Lacs Early Education, Mille Lacs Band Public Health, Nei Ia Shing Clinic, Indian Health Service, and any other agencies deemed relevant to services.

## **CCDF Funding**

The Tribe will be including Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) funding in this 477 plan to increase funding support and decrease administrative burden for families and the Tribe. CCDF will be administered with joint interagency cooperation between Aanjibimaadizing and Mille Lacs Early Education.

The budget will provide services that include, but are not limited to, staff to provide wraparound childcare services in District 1, District 2 and the District 3 Aazhoomog area. Supplies and training for staff will be provided. Renovation of current spaces will be provided if needed. A budget and notification of those services will be provided before renovations begin. Wraparound child care is child care that is be provided before and after Head Start/Early Head Start, in all districts. Planning will begin to provide childcare in the Hinckley area due to the MLBO housing expansion in this area. As a small allocation Tribe, the program may offer direct services in center-based care and support for relative care. Respite care is not included in CCDF funding.

All funding will be administered by the MLBO Aanjibimaadizing program. Direct services and staff supervision will be provided by Mille Lacs Early Education which includes Head Start, Early Head Start, and Childcare. All childcare will be licensed by the MLBO Title 8 Statutes with the Nay Ah Shing School Board as the governing body. License copies will be kept by Mille Lacs Early Education. All safety requirements of Head Start Program Performance Standards, CCDF regulations and MLBO Title 8 will be followed. Both program's requirements will be spelled out in a service agreement that is approved by the MLBO Commissioners on the Administrative Policy Board (APB), or by written application. The services and how they will be provided will be further detailed in both program's policies and procedures. This is an evolving process with referrals made for students and families to access services. Parents will be able to

apply for 477 services at MLBO Head Start and Child Care centers leading to a reduction in paperwork and time for clients accessing multiple services.

Administrators for CCDF will be:

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## **Integration and Delivery**

The following rules will be set and established by the Tribe: eligibility rules and policies, the sliding fee scale, and payment rates. These items will be agreed upon by both Aanjibimaadizing and Mille Lacs Early Education (MLEE). MLEE will establish program policies and procedures that align with the most stringent standards from Head Start, Early Head Start, CCDF regulations and Mille Lacs Band Statute Title 8. MLEE has a policy regarding the protection of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) that will be followed by both programs. Mille Lacs Early Education does participate in the State of Minnesota Quality Rating System (QRIS) and has the highest level of rating-4 stars.

Child care referrals may be made by either lead agency, or by the State of Minnesota Child Care Aware system. Child care assistance will be administered by Aanjibimaadizing and can be applied for at the same time as the application for child care services. The application will allow clients to coordinate child care services, child care assistance and other services available under the MLBO P.L. 102-477 program. Priority for child care will be given to parents who are on TANF, working, or enrolled in schooling or training programming. To achieve seamless integration between child care and P.L. 102-477 services, some staff will be dually trained by each program to allow a one-stop enrollment procedure for families. This integration will promote the goals of both programs and the four purposes of TANF.

MLEE staff and families will have training funds provided by Aanjibimaadizing. Families may have one set of goals with their 477 plan and may use those goals on their Head Start Family Partnership agreements. This will allow both programs to assist parents in meeting their goals more easily. Information will be exchanged, with parent consent, to allow ease of access to Aanjibimaadizing services. Regular staff meetings will be held to assist children, families, and staff access services to improve lives and increase self-sufficiency.

Families may also apply for child care assistance through the county and the state of Minnesota, but not receive both county and Tribal child care assistance.

### *Coordination of Services*

MLEE also oversees Head Start and Early Head Start. The program provides breakfast, lunch, and snack under the CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program). Mille Lacs Early Education (MLEE) coordinates its calendar and transition services with Nay Ah Shing Tribal Schools. Public Law 102-477 funding will provide child care assistance training opportunities, supportive services, education, and cash assistance for families in need. MLEE provides Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) with the local school districts in all Mille Lacs, Aitkin, and Pine counties.

The Ne Ia Shing clinic is run by the MLBO and provides physicals, immunizations, and dental exams for children as needed. Indian Health Service (IHS) provides health and safety training, and inspections of all classrooms and kitchens. MLBO is using an alternative approach to center inspection. IHS is operated under the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Staff are trained for building inspections and use a detailed checklist. The BIA defines the qualifications for the Inspectors. The BIA also determines the inspection tool. There is one inspector for the 11 Tribes within the State of Minnesota. The inspections are done at minimum once per year.

MLEE works with MLBO Public Health to coordinate trainings, referrals for families, and other services including tests for hemoglobin levels. Health services are provided onsite several times per year. Referrals are also made for families needing additional services related to health. All children are required to have current immunizations to attend licensed child care in Minnesota. Immunization status will be monitored throughout the year. Children attending MLBO licensed child care must also have a current physical. Additional coordination of services is done with Family Services, the Wraparound Program and other MLBO programs when needed.

All Tribal departments and tribally owned businesses actively support early education programming. Local grants and regular meetings connect the departments with state, local, and private partners including, but not limited to: the Initiative Foundation, Minnesota Head Start Association, MN Timberwolves and others. MLEE will participate in regional child care resource and referral surveys and systems. Child care is only available on the reservation for MLBO members and members of other federally recognized tribes.

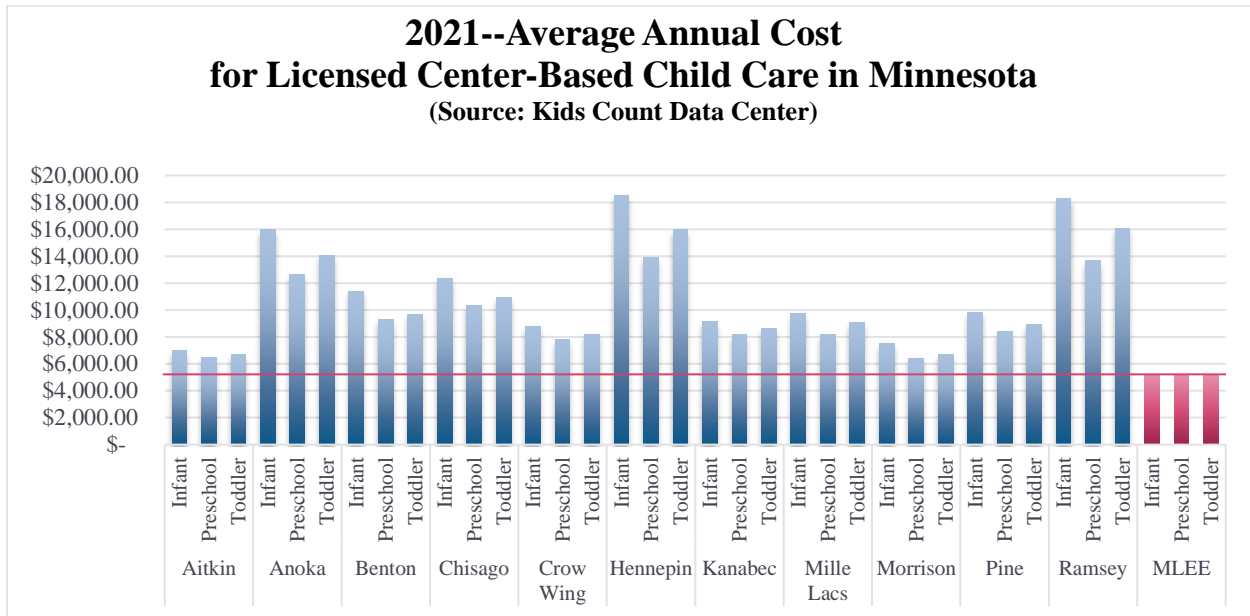
### *Public Hearing for CCDF*

A Public Hearing Notice was posted on the MLBO and Aanjibimaadizing Facebook pages in March 2022. This notice was also sent out to all staff with an MLBO email account. Flyers were posted at Aanjibimaadizing (see attached). The meeting was held on April 7, 2022, after 20 days of notice. A meal was offered to all who attended the meeting at the District 1 Aanjibimaadizing building. A PowerPoint was used to discuss CCDF. Public comments and questions were kept as a record by the program.

### *Child Care Payment Rates*

Minnesota has some of the highest child care rates in the country. The majority of child care providers are in the Twin Cities/Metro area. The rates for both center-based and FCC care are

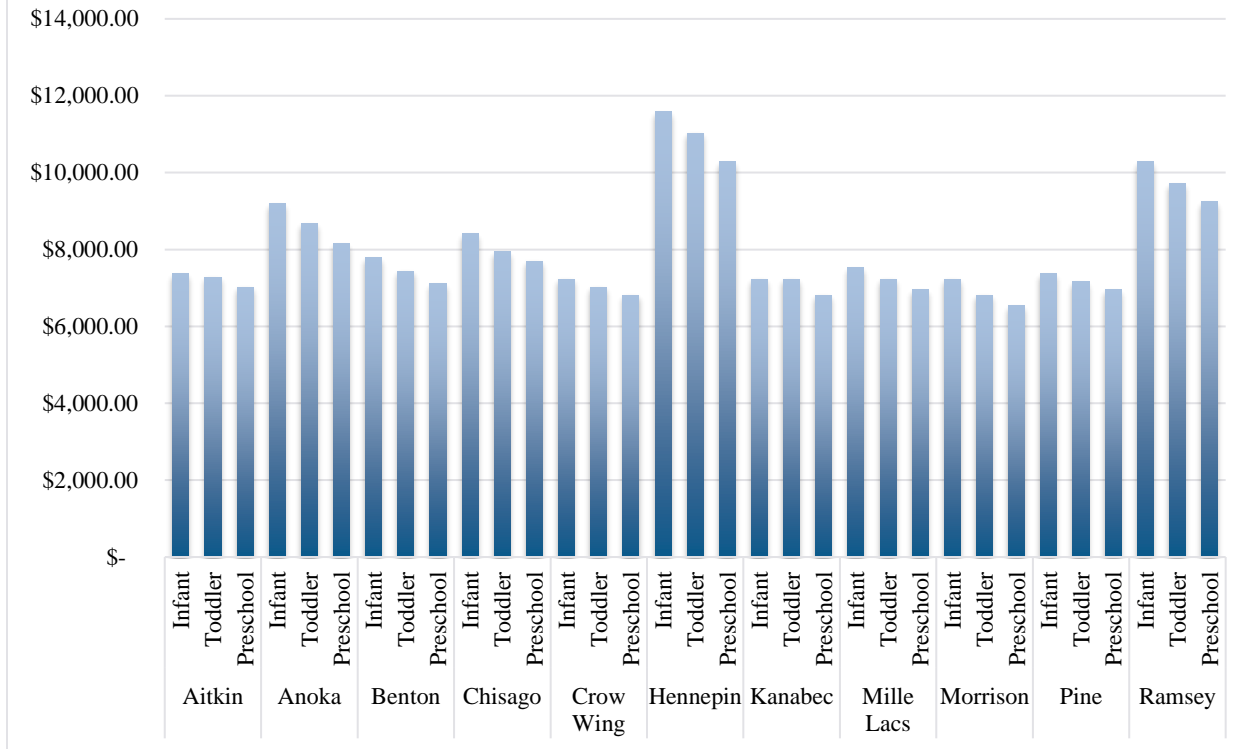
higher in the Metro area. However, wages are also higher in the metro area. The chart below is taken from the website Kids Count: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, in March 2022, regarding data from licensed center-based care for infants, preschool and toddler aged children in 2021; in addition, data from licensed family-based child care is also shown.



This chart shows that MLEE provides the cheapest child care available. The MLEE rate is calculated at full-time child care at 50 hours per week. Most families only pay for 22 hours a week due to Head Start and Early Head Start time being free of charge. MLEE is significantly cheaper than other child care in the counties. These rates allow equal access for all participants regardless of eligibility for child care assistance. These rates make it easier for 477 plan participants to afford child care. The closest child care center to Onamia, MN charges \$7 an hour for drop off child care and \$3.15 per hour for regularly enrolled children. MLBO may pay or reimburse child care based on enrollment. A quality measure may also be paid to providers to support emergency situations as determined and defined by Federal, State, or Tribal government.

## 2021-Average Annual Cost for Licensed Family-Based Child Care in Minnesota

(Source: Kids Count Data Center)



This plan will use State of Minnesota Eligibility Annual Income Levels to determine co-payments. The Plan’s 477 income disregards will apply for MLBO members and members of federally recognized Tribes.

Families at or below the Annual Income Entrance Level determined by the state of Minnesota will not pay a co-payment. Families with income between the Annual Income Entrance Level and an Annual Income Level at 67% will pay a 3% co-payment of the child care bill, or \$15, whichever is less. Families with income between the Annual Income Level at 67% and the Annual Income Level at 85% will pay a 10% co-payment of the child care bill. Families will be asked to pay a co-payment of no more than 10% of their income. Families must pay their co-pay in order to maintain eligibility for child care assistance. Families whose income is less than 100% of the poverty level, or on TANF, will not be required to pay a co-pay. Foster children may not be required to pay a co-pay.

### *Co-payment Annual Income Levels*

<b>Family Size</b>	<b>Annual Income Entrance Level</b>	<b>Annual Income Level at 67% SMI</b>	<b>Annual Income 85% SMI Exit Level</b> (during eligibility or redetermination period)
2	\$36,096	\$51,457	\$65,281
3	\$44,589	\$63,564	\$80,640
4	\$53,083	\$75,671	\$96,001
5	\$61,576	\$87,779	\$111,361
6	\$70,069	\$99,886	\$126,721

No family with assets over \$1,000,000 may receive funds from CCDF. No family income over 85% of the State Median Income will qualify for child care assistance. MLBO may elect to waive co-payments in a time of emergency.

Co-payments will be waived for the first years of this plan--10/1/2022 through 9/30/2024, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the burden it has placed on families.

For purposes of this plan, we will base our market rate survey on state data.

Households receiving child care assistance must:

- Participate in authorized activities including work, looking for work or attending school.
- Cooperate with child support requirements for any children who have a parent living outside of the home.
- Choose and eligible child care provider.

The number of hours your child care benefit covers is determined by your:

- Work, training or school schedule
- Child’s school schedule
- Other factors including travel time

Most families have to pay a portion of the child care cost, called a copayment. The copay amount is based on your family’s size and income.

***Eligibility***

Parents will be informed about how to apply for services at the MLBO child care center sites, community meetings, and at the 477 offices. Eligibility is based on 477 requirements, provider requirements, and income eligibility. The co-pay is determined by using the sliding fee scale, which will be reviewed and updated annually using federal poverty guidelines. A copy of the sliding fee scale is attached. Parents will be eligible for services for 12 months and then must reapply. Families whose income is less than 100% of the poverty level, or defined as at-risk, will not be required to pay a co-pay for child care.

### *Indian Child/Indian Reservation Service Area*

“Indian child” shall be defined as a child who is enrolled, or can show enrollment as far back as maternal or paternal parent, in a federally recognized tribe, and who is residing on or near the Mille Lacs reservation and/or our service area. These children would be a descendent of an enrolled MLBO member.

For the purposes of this grant, the agency shall follow the service area of the 102-477 plan which includes: Aitkin, Pine, Mille Lacs, Crow Wing, Benton, Morrison, Kanabec and Chisago county. See “Service Area for the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe 477 Plan” map. Families living in these counties may be Mille Lacs Band Members, Mille Lacs Descendants or members of other federally recognized tribes. Child care assistance may be provided for participants in: Anoka, Hennepin, and Ramsey counties who are Mille Lacs Band Members or Descendants only. Center-based child care services will be provided in: Mille Lacs, Aitkin, and Pine counties by Mille Lacs Early Education (MLEE), the tribally operated center.

### *Child Count*

A comprehensive child count was completed in March 2022 and included Tribal enrollment data, local school data and census data. The child count for children under the age of 13 is included as Attachment 1. The number of children under the age of 13 listed on the count is 943.

### *Parental Complaint Process*

MLEE has a Parent Grievance Procedure included in the Parent Handbook. All parents/guardians will be given the Parent Handbook upon enrollment of their child in the program. The public may request a Parent Handbook. Complaints or grievances are to be given to the Early Education Director or District Coordinator. A meeting will be held to discuss the situation and possible resolution. If the problem is not resolved to the satisfaction of the parent, they may take the complaint to the Commissioner of Education, and/or the Nay Ah Shing School Board. The grievance policy is available upon request. Complaints are recorded and kept with the Early Education Director. It may be discussed with outside parties’ subject to confidentiality policies regarding employees and enrolled children with a substantiated written request. Parents may also use the Aanjibimaadizing Grievance Procedure for issues related to child care assistance and eligibility.

### *Quality Activities*

The Plan will require a minimum of 9% of each year’s fiscal allotment for quality activities. Quality activities may include, but are not limited to: staff training, parent training and/or education, activities to increase parental choice, and activities designed to improve the quality and availability of child care. MLEE does an annual program self-assessment to learn about the quality of care currently offered. Parent surveys and community surveys are also completed on an annual basis. MLEE requires all staff hired to obtain a Child Development Associate credential (CDA) relative to the age group they work with. Aanjibimaadizing will support this process with additional funding. In addition, all MLEE staff receive the following training:



prevention of infectious diseases, medication administration, shaken baby syndrome/abusive head trauma, transporting children safely, family engagement, nutrition, language/literacy, curriculum development and instruction, safe sleeping/prevention of sudden infant death, prevention and response to emergencies due to food and allergic reactions, handling and storage of hazardous materials and bio-contaminants, CPR/First Aid, access to physical activity, child development, and caring for children with special health or developmental needs.

Aanjibimaadizing may pay a quality measure to child care providers during a time of emergency to ensure quality and continuation of care.

The Tribe is not required to provide a consumer statement for parents.

### *Health and Safety*

MLEE has an approved Emergency Preparedness plan that includes procedures for evacuation, relocation, shelter-in-place, lockdown, reunification with families, continuity of operations, accommodations of infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children with chronic medical conditions. MLEE provides a yearly orientation to meet all health and safety requirements in August. New Staff are trained upon hire.

All staff are required to be certified in CPR and First Aid. The program will meet the 11 health and safety requirements for Providers in the following ways (please note that FFN or relative care are exempt, but may be offered these services):

1. Prevention: Immunizations are required at enrollment and monitored throughout the year. Classroom cleaning schedules are in place at the centers. Training opportunities are offered for providers regarding handwashing and other prevention techniques.
2. Prevention of sudden infant death and safe sleep practices: These trainings are held at the centers at a minimum of once per year. 477 may also offer these trainings once per year. All infants are placed on their backs to sleep and other safe sleep practices are done at Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe licensed child care. FFN may be exempt from these requirements.
3. Administration of medication and parental consent: Centers have policies in place that align with Caring for Our children and the local clinics. 477 may also offer this training once per year. FFN may be exempt from these requirements.
4. Prevention and response to emergencies and allergic reactions: Centers have policies in place that align with ‘Caring for Our Children’ and the local clinics. 477 may also offer this training once per year. Emergency planning may be offered by the 102-477 program annually to family child care and FFN providers. FFN may be exempt from these requirements.
5. Building and physical premises safety: MLEE has procedures in place to ensure the health and safety of both children and staff, including hand washing, diapering, exclusion, and cleaning procedures. With regard to child-handling, infants under the care of MLEE are required to be placed on their backs to sleep, and if they roll over while sleeping they are left

in that position. Child play areas are checked/cleaned daily in order to search for any broken/hazardous play objects or areas which have become dirty through use. If any problems are documented, then notice is given to Maintenance staff or MLEE management. Classrooms are also cleaned daily and as needed. A cleaning checklist is completed daily for the classroom and turned in at the end of the month. Other health and safety components include trainings in multiple areas for staff, families, and children, including: First Aid/CPR, Shaken Baby, Sudden Infant Death, Nutrition, Healthy Foods, and Movement, as well as other trainings identified by surveys or data. There is an eye wash station located in the laundry room in case of eye-contamination accidents. Monthly fire drills, bi-annual tornado drills, tri-annual bus safety evacuations, and bi-annual lock-down drills are completed in the program, and MLEE also has an Emergency Preparedness plan. The MLBO as a whole also has an emergency services plan. Centers are inspected by Indian Health Service under the Bureau of Indian Affairs at minimum annually. Centers are defined as any indoor or outdoor space associated with the care of children licensed by the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. State licensed providers are inspected by the state at least once per year. FFN providers would be exempt. FFN may be exempt from these requirements.

6. Prevention of shaken baby, abusive head trauma, and child maltreatment: Centers have policies in place that align with ‘Caring for Our Children’ and the local clinics. 477 may also offer this training once per year. FFN may be exempt from these requirements.
7. Emergency Preparedness and response: Centers have policies in place that align with ‘Caring for Our Children’ and the local clinics. MLBO has a Tribal Emergency Plan to offer services offsite in a limited capacity, if required. FFN would be exempt. Both Emergency Plans are available upon request. FFN may be exempt from these requirements.
8. Health and Safety trainings are provided annually, typically in August. FFN providers are exempt, but may be included in the August trainings. New staff at the MLBO center-based child care centers are provided this training within 90 days of start time. FFN may be exempt from these requirements.
9. Handling and Storage of hazardous materials and appropriate disposal of bio-contaminants is done in the center. Hazardous materials are stored in locked cabinets. Bio-contaminants are disposed of in bio containment bags and labeled. All staff wear gloves and follow disinfectant procedures. FFN may be exempt from these requirements.
10. Child care does not transport children except for possible field trips. Then transportation follows the State of Minnesota laws and Head Start Performance Standards. Children under age 5 wear a harness and a bus monitor would ride the bus. FFN may be exempt from these requirements.
11. All providers who work and are licensed in the State of Minnesota Licensed, tribally licensed, or Family, Friend and Neighbor must maintain First Aid and CPR certification.

12. Annual training is provided for all providers on the recognition and reporting of child abuse and neglect in cooperation with Mille Lacs Band Family Services. Staff report all suspected child abuse and neglect to Mille Lacs Band Family Services. FFN may be exempt from these requirements.
13. There are policies and procedures in place for MLBO center-based care that address Head Start Performance Standards, Caring for Our Children, and MLBO Title 8 health and safety standards. FFN may be exempt from these requirements.
14. Health and Safety requirements are monitored at MLBO on a quarterly basis by the Early Education Department and at a minimum, annually by Indian Health Service. Family Child Care and State Licensed Child Care is monitored by the State annually. FFN may be monitored by the program annually. FFN may be exempt from these requirements.

### *Child and Adult Ratio*

The ratio for infants under the age of 15 months is one adult to 4 babies. The ratio of toddlers age 15 months to 33 months is one adult to 7 toddlers. The ratio of preschool children ages 33 months to 5 years is one adult to 10 children. The ratio for school age children is one adult to 12 children. The ratios are defined in MLBO Title 8. During Early Head Start time, the ratio for children under the age of 3 is one adult to 4 children.

### *Background Checks*

The Tribe is doing an alternative approach to background checks because the Tribe does not access the State-based child abuse and neglect registry and Federal systems. FFN providers are exempt from background checks, but may complete the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension background check if the family requests. Staff at the tribally licensed centers must complete a background check that includes fingerprints sent to the FBI and state authorities, a national sex offender registry check, and criminal history check. Staff working at state licensed centers follow state background check requirements. Employees at the tribal centers also sign a Code of Conduct that states no child will be left alone and other safety standards for care. FFN is exempt from the Code of Conduct. The MLBO only licenses centers on Reservation land. The State of Minnesota licenses family child care centers on the reservation and center-based child care centers off the reservation, and these providers follow Minnesota licensing guidelines.

### *Applications*

To receive child care assistance funds, families must apply to become an Aanjibimaadizing client. They may do this at any Aanjibimaadizing Office, MLEE, or online at <https://aanji.org/>.

To receive quality improvement funding, child care providers serving Mille Lacs Band children may contact the Executive Director or the Operation and Compliance Manager for an application.

### *Early Childhood Goals*

The Plan will support MLEE's goals which are listed below.

- Increase Family Engagement and collaboration in the area of school readiness and completion of family goals, documenting family engagement in usable and relatable ways.
- To have all MLEE children be current with all health requirements.
- Improve Staff recruitment and retention as well as on-boarding processes and trainings to ensure quality services for children and parents enrolled in Mille Lacs Early Education.
- Improve the aggregation and analysis of data and monitoring systems to better inform staff, families, and community, as well as facilitate program management.
- Improve CLASS scores through observation, training, curriculum fidelity and Practice Based Coaching.

Child Care options include: licensed center-based care, licensed family child care and friends & family care. These options may all be available for child care assistance, if they are licensed and/or meet safety standards.

### **CCDF Waivers**

The Tribe has requested a waiver for parent co-payments through September 30, 2024.

The Tribe will not be included in a consortium at this time.

### **Issues and Barriers**

#### *Transportation*

In a January 2019 survey, at least 25% of the respondents did not have a valid driver’s license. Due to the rural location of the reservation land, driving to a job is basically a requirement. The lack of a reliable vehicle is also a barrier for participants. There is also a group of clients that have a driver’s license, but it is not valid due to owing back child support and/or traffic fines. The Urban office location has some public transportation options.

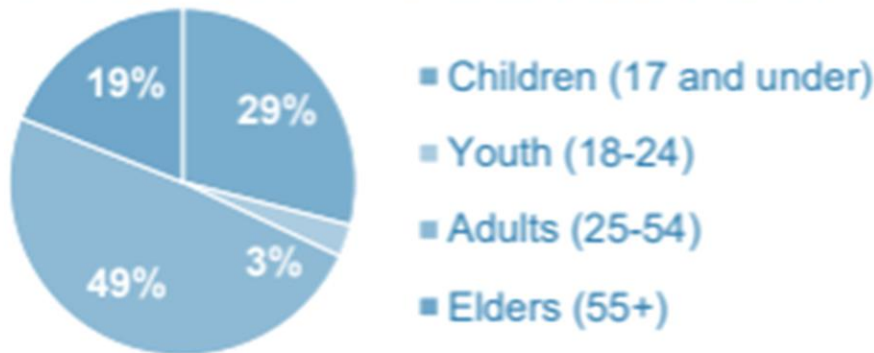
#### *Housing*

The numbers of homeless families and children have been increasing, even with the MLBO building new single-family housing. The majority of families live on Mille Lacs Band Reservation or Trust lands.

Homeless data is from the 2018 report “Homelessness on Minnesota American Indian Reservations”. The 2021 Reservation study was postponed due to COVID-19 pandemic.

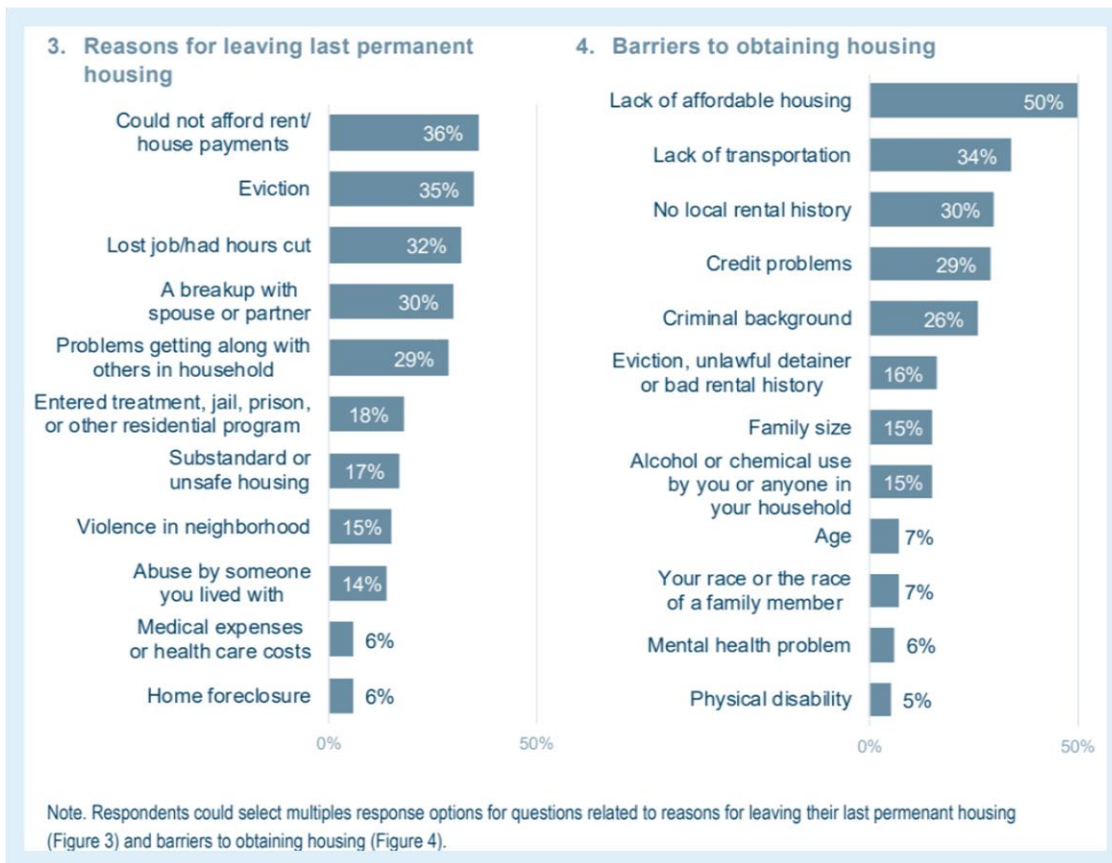
Wilder Research conducted research on “Homelessness on Minnesota American Indian Reservation--Findings from the 2018 Minnesota Reservation Homeless Study,” (April 2020) and shared the following data.

**Ages of the 125 people experiencing homelessness and near-homelessness on Mille Lacs, October 2018 (N=125)**



This data reflects that there is a higher percentage (49%) of adults, ages 25-54, who are experiencing homelessness or near homelessness followed closely by children ages birth-17 (33%).

Also from “Wilder Research,” respondents were asked about reasons for leaving last permanent housing and barriers to obtaining housing. Here is the data from those questions.



Due to the homelessness issues at Mille Lacs, Aanjibimaadizing provides transitional housing named Zakab Biinjina, meaning peace within, in partnership with Mille Lacs Band Housing as a support service to assist families to self-sufficiency. Aanjibimaadizing provides this housing as a supportive service that includes lower rental and utility payments with required case management to improve client outcomes. Housing is considered a basic need to family stability and requires support from the program for clients to become successful at their goals.

Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe (MLBO) operates a women’s shelter for abused women and a homeless shelter at the Mino-Bimaadiziwin hotel. Additionally, there are multiple generations often sharing housing which is a culturally appropriate practice. Even with the aforementioned services, there is a housing shortage on the reservation.

### *Food Desert*

According to the “Minnesota Department of Health—Food Access: Access to Health and Affordable Food,” (5/1/2019)—Focus on Health Equity: American Indian Communities & Tribal Nations, between 2012 and 2014 in Minnesota, one in three American Indian new mothers reported being ‘food insecure’ one year before their baby was born. Specifically, for tribal nations in Minnesota, all of the Red Lake Reservation area qualifies as a food desert, and large percentages of White Earth, Leech Lake, Mille Lacs, and Bois Forte Reservations areas are also considered food deserts. Traditional (indigenous) foods have provided nutrition and promoted health to tribal and American Indian communities for generations and strategies to improve food access for tribes need to be planned and implemented in partnership with tribal and American Indian communities. <https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/communities/titlev/foodaccess.pdf>

According to the website, “The Annie E. Casey Foundation,” a food desert is defined as “*geographic areas where residents have few to no convenient options for securing affordable and healthy foods — especially fresh fruits and vegetables. Disproportionately found in high-poverty areas, food deserts create extra, everyday hurdles that can make it harder for kids, families and communities to grow healthy and strong.*” <https://www.aecf.org/blog/exploring-america-food-deserts>

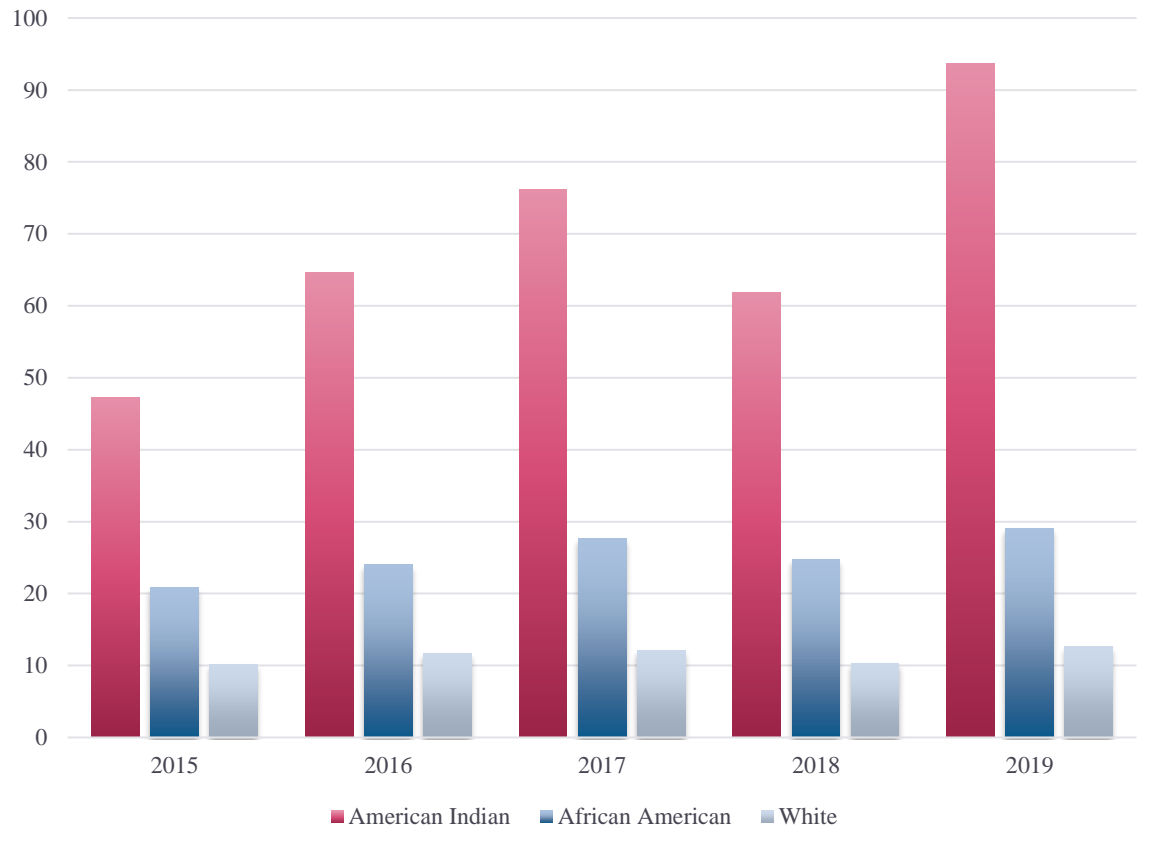
The majority of Aitkin and Pine counties are also considered food deserts, which is exacerbated due their size and geographic isolation.

### *Chemical Use and Abuse*

There is significant alcohol and chemical abuse among Mille Lacs Band Families. This was listed as one of the major concerns on recent community surveys. Opioid use has been on the rise, in addition, there have been several deaths this past year linked to alcohol and drug use.

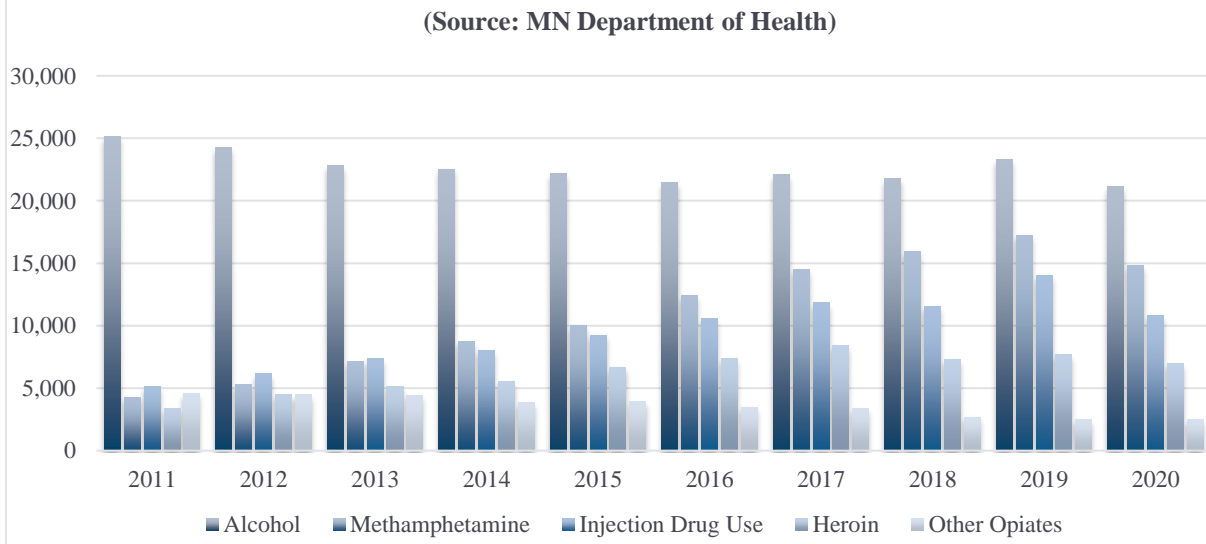
## Opioid Overdose by Race

(Source: MN Department of Health)



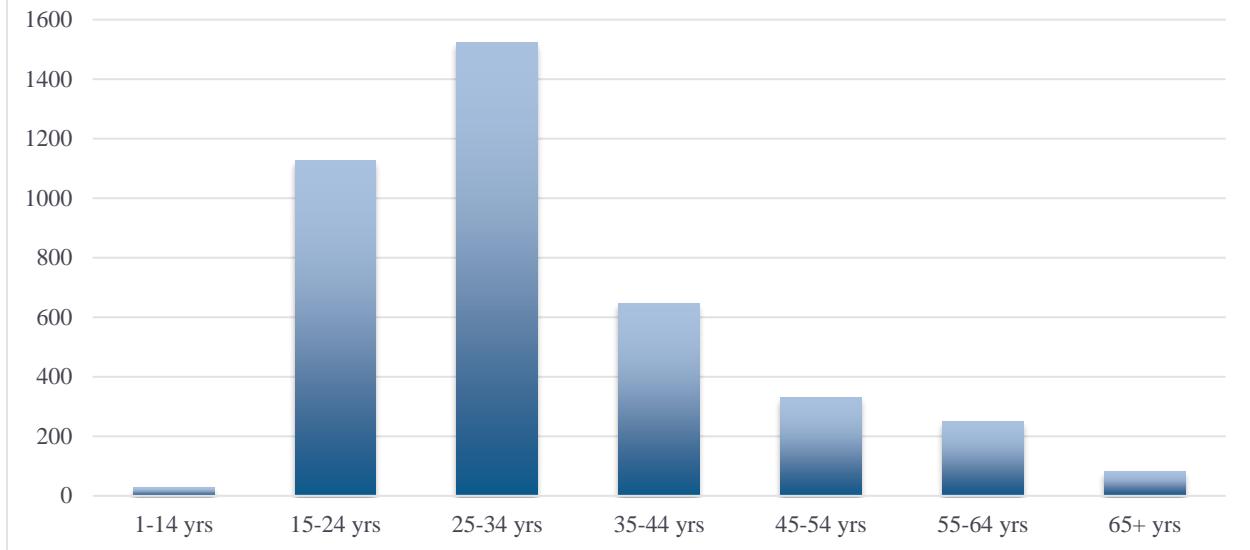
## Substance use disorder treatment for adults in Minnesota

(Source: MN Department of Health)



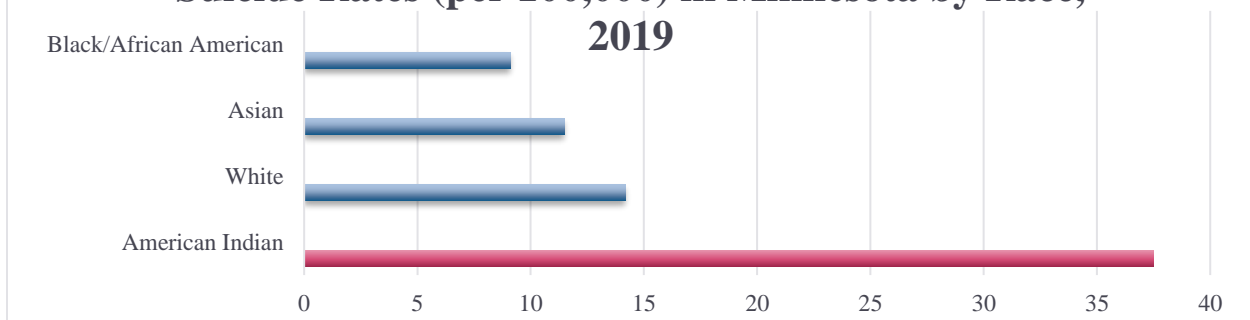
## 2020--Ages 15-34 years with ER visits for opioid-involved overdoses

(Source: MN Department of Health)



Opioid use for American Indians in the State of Minnesota is double or triple the rates of other races and ethnicities. The age rates of those affected are highest in the population aged 15-34. This is an epidemic that is affecting MLBO clients. Besides opioids, the rates for other substance abuse disorders and treatments is high. The program is committed to working in partnership with health care agencies and substance use disorder (SUD) clinics to assist clients in addressing their needs.

## Suicide Rates (per 100,000) in Minnesota by Race, 2019



Almost all substance use disorders are associated with increased suicide risk. We see this in suicide data from the Minnesota Department of Health. In addition, mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and self-harm are impacting the population we serve, with incredibly high rates noted in youth in Mille Lacs and Pine Counties. Working with the State of Minnesota and other MLBO departments, we have developed a Suicide Prevention Task Force to bring awareness to this issue, specifically to the agencies that work with our youth and adult clients.



### *Health Professional Shortage*

The health professional shortage can increase the length of time it takes children and clients to be seen for appointments and follow-up care. According to the Minnesota Department of Health, Mille Lacs and Pine counties are designated as low-income Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA). Aitkin, Mille Lacs, and Pine counties are designated as Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas. The MLBO has two full-time dentists working at the Indian Health Service clinic.

### *Mental Health*

Many of the clients have experienced historical trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) which negatively impact their ability to obtain and retain employment. The program continues to train on trauma and ACEs. Aanjibimaadizing will establish partnerships or referrals to assist clients as needed.

### *Criminal Backgrounds and Re-entry*

A significant number of participants have criminal background issues that impact their employment. The 477 plan will work to reduce recidivism and increase job readiness. Individualized plans and resources will be used to assist clients with re-entry. Connections with parole agents, national resources and businesses will be made to find opportunities for clients.

### *Graduation Rates*

Minnesota Public Radio published statistics with 2018 graduation rates. American Indian students had the lowest graduation rates in the state at 51% compared with an 83.2% overall graduation rate in the State of Minnesota. Per a survey completed by Aanjibimaadizing in January 2019, approximately 25% of respondents did not have a GED or high school diploma.

## **Menu of Services (other services than those listed here may be provided)**

- A computer lab is available in all service districts for clients to create a resume, job search, access educational programming, and for placement testing.
- Resume writing, mock interviews, and application assistance is available with program instructors. The program is hiring additional instructors to assist in District 2, District 3, and the Urban area.
- Transportation may be provided, if staffing allows. The program may purchase vehicles to transport clients to address barriers. The development of a transportation system is a goal where a regular transportation system is established, or ride sharing between clients can be done.
- Small business development assistance.
- Entrepreneurial development.
- The program participates in career fairs.
- Subsidized employment opportunities are located in all service areas.
- Support services to help clients obtain and retain employment.

- Zakab Biinjina supportive housing.
- Multiple educational and training opportunities that promote obtaining a job, retaining a job, educational advancement, and career advancement.
- Ojibwe resources may be used by participants in the program, schools and community.
- Cultural activities and support including by not limited to: sewing, beading, dance and drum, wild rice harvest, maple syrup harvest, respect for elders, service to the community, and language.
- The program offers trainings, or provides mini-conferences to address employment issues, classes, and skill development.
- TANF, or cash assistance to families in need.
- Ge-Niigaanizijig Youth program for youth age kindergarten to age 20.

The Program is open to all clients and actively recruits. Aanjibimaadizing has an office in the Urban area, District 1, District 2 and District 3. Youth Services are provided in District 1, District 2, District 2a, and District 3. The offices welcome walk-in clients. Clients can also call or email. Aanjibimaadizing has information on the MLBO website and an informational Facebook account. Community meetings may be attended to promote the program.

## **Partners**

The Program is actively recruiting new partners at every opportunity. There are several departments within the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe (MLBO) that serve primarily similar clients including: MLEE, Mino-Bimaadiziwin hotel, Community Support Services, Public Health, MLBO Housing Department, Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures, MLBO Tribal Offices, and Family Services.

In January 2022 during the State of the Band address, the Chief Executive gave the directive to eliminate ‘red tape’ among MLBO tribal departments and to coordinate our services with other Tribal programs, thus decreasing the amount of time that participants spend completing applications. This became an Aanjibimaadizing goal. In addition, having a streamlined system will maximize funding and help our families in becoming self-sufficient and community leaders.

Aanjibimaadizing will also partner with the Grand Casino, the local schools, Wewinabi Inc. (the non-gaming business office), local community agencies, small businesses, non-profits, and large corporations in all service area counties to ensure relationships are built to network and for our clients to have a sense of community.