

# STATE OF THE NATION

2025  
ADDRESS



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**MICHAEL FAIRBANKS**  
Chairman



**MICHAEL LAROQUE**  
Secretary/Treasurer



**HENRY GEORGE FOX**  
District I Representative



**EUGENE SOMMERS**  
District II Representative



**LAURA LEE ERICKSON**  
District III Representative

WHITE EARTH NATION  
**BUSINESS COMMITTEE**



# FINANCE DIVISION

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Finance Division manages and protects the Tribe's financial resources to ensure funds are used responsibly, transparently, and in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. With a team of 27 professionals, the Division supports tribal programs, services, and operations through strong financial management, reliable internal controls, and ethical financial practices.

### WHAT THE FINANCE DIVISION DOES

#### Accounts Payable

- ▶ Processes payments to vendors and service providers while ensuring purchases comply with tribal policies, contracts, and approval requirements.
- ▶ In FY25, the Accounts Payable team processed a total of 53,108 invoices and issued 20,876 checks. This activity also included 81 COVID/Nelson minor checks.

#### Accounts Receivable

- ▶ Manages the Tribe's incoming revenues by issuing invoices, tracking multiple revenue sources, applying payments, and monitoring outstanding balances to ensure accurate revenue reporting.

#### Purchasing

- ▶ Oversees the procurement of goods and services for the Tribe, ensuring that purchases are cost-effective, properly authorized, and compliant with applicable regulations.
- ▶ A total of 23,485 purchase orders were reviewed by the Purchasing Division in FY25.

#### Payroll

- ▶ Ensures tribal employees are paid accurately and on time, including the administration of payroll taxes, benefit deductions, and required reporting.
- ▶ Payroll processed around 29,682 timesheets during fiscal year 2025, not including payroll advances or supplemental checks.
- ▶ Payroll now manages the employee non-benefit deductions.

#### Grant Management

- ▶ Provides financial oversight of grants and other restricted funding to ensure funds are spent on allowable purposes, properly documented, and reported in compliance with funding requirements.
- ▶ The Finance Coordinators completed and submitted:
  - 351 monthly financial reports
  - 230 quarterly reports
  - 30 annual reports
  - 20 final reports
- ▶ Daily monitoring of grant expenditures to assist programs with allowability in relation to the applicable governing regulations and funding sources.
- ▶ 21 grant reviews were conducted by the awarding agencies during the year.

#### Cash Management

- ▶ Oversees cash flow and banking activity to ensure funds are available for operations while safeguarding tribal financial assets through strong controls.

#### Budget Management

- ▶ Coordinates the development and monitoring of the Tribe's annual operating and capital budgets, supporting leadership and departments with financial analysis and forecasting.

#### Contract and Construction Management

- ▶ Supports the financial oversight of contracts and construction projects by ensuring agreements are properly executed, expenditures align with contract terms, and payments are processed in accordance with approved budgets, timelines, and funding requirements.
- ▶ Please see report of contracting projects.

#### Internal Audit and Compliance

- ▶ Reviews financial processes and internal controls to identify risks, support accountability, and recommend improvements to strengthen financial operations.
- ▶ Three internal audits were conducted during FY2025.
- ▶ Monthly grant monitoring was completed to assist programs with staying on track with grant objectives and spending.
- ▶ Provided various programs with recommendations to comply with federal and state regulations as well as Tribal policies.
- ▶ Grant drawdowns were moved up from quarterly to monthly to comply with the DOGE heightened security surrounding the request for funds and the allowability in relation to each grant.

### External Audits

- ▶ Coordinates and supports audits conducted by independent auditors to verify financial statements, compliance with regulations, and proper use of tribal and grant funds. Provides follow-up on recommendations to ensure continuous improvement and transparency.
- ▶ Regularly submits audits on time with minimal significant deficiencies noted.

### Inventory and Fixed Assets

- ▶ Tracks and safeguards tribal inventory and capital assets, ensuring accurate records, proper use, and compliance with applicable requirements.
- ▶ During FY25, approximately 882 assets were purchased. In accordance with 2 CFR 200 requirements, physical inventory counts of equipment must be conducted at least once every two years and reconciled to inventory records. Currently, 96.36% of our programs are in compliance with this requirement.

### Insurance and Risk Management

- ▶ Manages insurance coverage and claims to protect tribal assets and reduce financial and operational risk.
- ▶ Insurance coverage is maintained at 100%, with our carrier adjusting coverage throughout the fiscal year to reflect asset changes at no additional premium once the annual rate is bound. Monthly asset reviews ensure all newly purchased assets are promptly added to insurance, while claims are processed efficiently with adjusters assigned within 48 hours and an average resolution time of 30 days, barring external delays such as body shop backlogs. Risk mitigation efforts include proactive property inspections and corrections, regular fleet maintenance, use of safer vehicle technology, and access to defensive driving training.

### Our Commitment

The Finance Division is dedicated to careful management of tribal resources, transparent financial practices, and teamwork with varying departments. By maintaining prudent financial management and responsible practices, the Division helps sustain tribal programs, infrastructure, and long-term growth.

# SHOOTING STAR CASINOS MAHNOMEN & BAGLEY

## FY2025 FINANCIAL REVIEW

	FY2025	FY2024	FY2023
<b>SSC REVENUE</b>	<b>\$103,981,464</b>	<b>\$104,132,125</b>	<b>\$98,866,608</b>
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$90,464,481</b>	<b>\$81,269,149</b>	<b>\$77,405,651</b>
<b>OPERATING INCOME</b>	<b>\$13,516,983</b>	<b>\$22,862,976</b>	<b>\$21,460,957</b>
<b>NON-OPERATING REVENUE EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$1,504,563</b>	<b>\$1,708,449</b>	<b>\$893,743</b>
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>\$15,021,546</b>	<b>\$24,571,425</b>	<b>\$22,354,700</b>
<b>EBITDA PROXY FOR CASH GENERATED</b>	<b>\$22,027,758</b>	<b>\$30,966,068</b>	<b>\$28,615,796</b>
<b>PAYROLL &amp; FRINGE BENEFITS</b>	<b>\$38,181,181</b>	<b>\$32,097,797</b>	<b>\$30,582,693</b>

During FY2024 and 2025, Shooting Star invested \$19.5 million in capital spending to maintain, improve and update our facilities.

In that same two-year period, Shooting Star has distributed over \$35 million to the White Earth tribal government, fulfilling a key mission of the gaming operations.

The renovation of the gaming floor, which started in 2023, will be complete in the Summer of 2026.

Our guest service program (The Star Experience) was rolled out in FY2025.

# ADDITION, REMODEL, & IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

## **OSHKI MANIDOO – DOSING CLINIC REMODEL & ADDITION**

The Oshki Manidoo Dosing Center Remodel & Addition consisted of the remodel of an existing one-story, 4,500 SF clinical dosing center, located at the Oshki Manidoo Campus in Bemidji, MN. The work included new interior finishes, ceiling work, and new wall construction. The new addition was approximately 1,580 SF of new construction, consisting of additional office spaces required to better serve clients. EAPC Architects Engineers was the project architect. Work was performed by Christensen Construction of Bemidji, MN.

## **WHITE EARTH TRIBAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT – BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADMIN WING REMODEL**

The White Earth Tribal Health Department – Behavioral Health Admin Wing Remodel was a minor interior remodeling to improve the flow of clientele and increase confidentiality within the south wing of the Tribal Health Building. The project consisted of carpentry, flooring, mechanical, and electrical work. Bevins Enterprises of Ogema, MN, and Design 2 Sell of Detroit Lakes, MN performed the work on this project. White Earth Builders served as Construction Manager.

## **WHITE EARTH TRIBAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT – FLOOD REPAIRS & RENOVATION**

In Spring of 2024, the lower-level of the White Earth Tribal Health Department experienced flooding due to a broken pipe. While the facility underwent construction to repair the portions of the building that were damaged by water, the program decided to also upgrade the finishes in the upper-level and fitness area. This project consisted of the demolition of water damaged walls and flooring, carpentry, drywall, acoustical ceiling tile replacement, paint and electrical work. Work was performed by White Earth Facilities, Bevin's Enterprises, F-M Flooring, K & D Electric, Comstock Construction, CoBuilt Construction, Hoban's Plumbing & Heating, and Design 2 Sell. White Earth Builders and the White Earth Contracting Department served as construction manager for the project.

## **CIRCLE OF LIFE ACADEMY – DEFICIENCIES**

The White Earth Contracting Department assisted the Circle of Life Academy in the correction of several building deficiencies throughout the Facility. The work included the replacement of existing concrete slabs and walk-ways, installation of new commercial grease hoods in two classrooms, the installation of new doors and frames, and new flooring in the entry vestibule and corridor. Work was performed by Gordon Construction, Ellingsons Plumbing Heating, A/C & Electrical, and F-M Flooring. The White Earth Contracting Department served as Construction Manager.

## **WHITE EARTH HEALTH CENTER – EXPANSION & RENOVATION**

The White Earth Health Center – Expansion & Renovation project consisted of approximately 35,800 SF of renovated spaces, and 34,700 SF of new construction to the south of the

existing facility. This project included the renovation or addition of the following departments; Primary Care, Lobby, Pharmacy, Dental, Physical Therapy, Lab, Business Offices, Behavioral Health, and Imaging. Work was performed by Ace Electric & Lighting, The Caulkers Co, Cons Masonry, Gordon Construction, Henry Schein, Herzog Roofing, I'll Tile & Stone, Multiple Concepts Interiors, Nova Fire Protection, Peterson Sheet Metal, RC Smith, Red River Glazing, and Skold Companies. The facility was designed by EAPC Architects Engineers.

## **ELDER HOME REPAIR – PHASE II**

The Elder Home Repair – Phase II project consists of the remedying of miscellaneous issues in the homes of Tribal Elders in need. Work has included but is not limited to; new asphalt shingles, siding; windows, doors, furnaces, water heaters, etc. Individuals receiving assistance through this program were selected by Tribal Leadership, and vetted through an application process. Work has been performed by numerous local contractors.

## **NAYTAHWAUSH CHILD CARE – SITE IMPROVEMENTS**

The Naytahwaush Child Care – Site Improvement project included new asphalt parking lot paving to better serve the childcare staff and clients. Also included in this project was a new concrete pad, dumpster enclosure and bearproof dumpster to deter the resident black bear! Work was performed by Gordon Construction of Mahnomen MN. White Earth Builders served as construction manager.

## **PINE POINT ICW REMODEL**

The Pine Point ICW Office located at the Pine Point Community Center underwent minor interior remodel to improve the flow of clientele and increase confidentiality within the spaces. Work was performed by John Annette Construction. White Earth Finance – Contracting Department served at construction manager.

## **WHITE EARTH FISHERIES DEPARTMENT – REMODEL & FILTRATION SYSTEM UPGRADES**

The White Earth Fisheries Department at Ice Cracking Lake received interior remodel work to the existing hatchery building, office spaces, and garage to better serve the program. The water filtration system was also upgraded to reduce iron saturation in the holding tanks for fry. Work consisted of carpentry, new flooring and interior doors, concrete, mechanical & electrical upgrades. The garage received spray foam insulation and a new heating system. Work was performed by Ellingson Plumbing Heating A/C & Electrical, Bergstrom Electric, Gordon Construction, Advanced Foam Solutions, Bessler Electric, and Lindsay's Crystal Pure Water. White Earth Builders served as construction manager.

## **WHITE EARTH CHILD CARE – MODULAR RELOCATION & REMODEL**

The existing White Earth Child Care building was relocated to the east of the new White Earth Child Care Facility to serve as the library. The interior was remodeled to accommodate this new use. New flooring was installed, drywall patching, new paint throughout, and minor mechanical and electrical upgrades. Work was performed by Gerke Structural Movers,

Bevins Enterprises, Ellingson Plumbing Heating A/C & Electrical, Gordon Construction, Hoban's Plumbing & Heating, and I'll Tile and Stone. Construction Management services were provided by the White Earth Finance — Contracting Department.

### **NAYTAHWAUSH MOMS/MATS WATER DAMAGE REPAIRS**

In February 2025, the MOM/MATS Facility in Naytahwaush suffered water damage from a sprinkler head leak. Drywall, paint, and acoustical ceiling tile repairs were performed by Saw & Fixed It Remodeling. White Earth Builders served as construction manager.

### **WHITE EARTH FAMILY TREATMENT — OUTPATIENT KITCHEN REMODEL**

The White Earth Family Treatment — Outpatient Kitchen Remodel was a complete renovation and equipment upgrade to an existing commercial kitchen, located within the main facility at the White Earth Family Treatment campus near Strawberry Lake. Work was performed by Bessler Electric, Bevin's Enterprises, Dick's Plumbing & Heating, Gordon Construction, and Multiple Concepts Interiors. Horizon Equipment provided the new kitchen equipment. YHR Partners provided the project design, and White Earth Finance — Contracting Department served as the construction manager.

## **DEMOLITION PROJECTS**

### **ELBOW LAKE BOYS & GIRLS CLUB — DEMOLITION**

In Spring of 2023, the existing Elbow Lake Boys & Girls Club experienced water damage due to a broken pipe, which resulted in a significant mold issue. The existing building was demolished in preparation for the new facility, arriving in Spring of 2026. Work was performed by Gordon Construction of Mahnomon, MN. White Earth Builders served as construction manager.

### **206 & 210 MAIN STREET MAHNOMEN — DEMOLITION**

The existing dilapidated buildings located at 206, and 210 Main Street in Mahnomon, MN were demolished in preparation for potential future development.

## **NEW CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS**

### **JACK HAW MEN'S ACUTE CARE — GENERATOR**

The Jack Haw Men's Acute Care — Generator project included the supply and installation of a complete generator system to serve as back-up power for the Jack Haw Men's Acute Care Campus. This campus serves up to 32 clients, housed in two resident cabins. There are two additional buildings including an administration cabin with kitchen and gathering spaces, as well as offices for support staff. This work was performed by Bergstrom Electric, of Grand Forks, ND. The facility was designed by YHR Partners. White Earth Builders served as construction manager.

### **WHITE EARTH TRANSIT FACILITY**

The White Earth Transit Facility is a new 16,300 SF pre-engineered metal building being constructed to house the White Earth Transit Authority operations. The project includes a large garage to house transit buses, space to perform servicing, and a wash bay. The staff area will contain offices, breakroom, meeting room, dispatch center, and transit waiting area. A groundbreaking ceremony was held in May of 2025, and the project is scheduled to be completed in Summer of 2026. Work is being performed by Ace Electric & Lighting, Bevins Enterprises, Con's Masonry, Clarity Glass, Dow Acoustics, Escape Fire Protection, First City Caulking, Gordon Construction, Haataja Contracting, I'll Tile & Stone, North Country OH Door, N/S Corporation, Richard Dingman Inc, and Shannon's Inc. The facility was designed by EAPC Architects Engineers. White Earth Builders is serving as construction manager.

### **WHITE EARTH CHILD CARE FACILITY**

The White Earth Child Care Facility is a newly constructed childcare facility in the village of White Earth, to serve the community's youth. The facility is approximately 10,000 SF, and consists of classrooms, offices, meeting rooms, and common spaces. Work was performed by Bergstrom Electric, Bevins Enterprises, Clarity Glass, Con's Masonry, Design 2 Sell, Dick's Plumbing & Heating, Dow Acoustics, First City Caulking, Gordon Construction, ML Beasley Roofing, Multiple Concepts, Nova Fire Protection, and Skold Companies. The facility was designed by DSGW Architects, and construction management services were provided by the White Earth Finance — Contracting Department.

### **ELDER TINY HOMES — DISTRICTS I, II, & III**

The Elder Tiny Homes project included constructing tiny home villages throughout the White Earth Reservation to house Tribal Elders. There were 10 tiny homes set in the village of Rice Lake, four in White Earth, six in Naytahwaush, and two in the village of Pine Point. The manufactured homes were constructed by Dynamic Homes of Detroit Lakes. Sitework, concrete, and button-up procedures were performed by Gordon Construction, Rigid Excavating, A2 Excavating, Lee Plumbing & Heating, Pemberton Homes, Clark's Electrical, Bergstrom Electric, and Hoban's Plumbing & Heating. White Earth Builders served as construction manager on the project. These homes have been occupied through an application process that is administered by property manager Optima Development.

### **WHITE EARTH FAMILY TREATMENT — FOUR PLEX(S)**

The White Earth Family Treatment — Four Plex(s) project consisted of the new construction of two single-story, slab-on-grade Four Plex units to serve as temporary housing for up to eight families receiving services at the White Earth Family Treatment campus near Strawberry Lake. Work was performed by Bessler Electric, Bevins Enterprises, Clarity Glass, Co-Built Construction, First City Caulking, Gordon Construction, Lee's Plumbing & Heating, and Ramsey Flooring. The facility was designed by YHR Partners, and White Earth Builders served as the construction manager.

## FUTURE PROJECTS IN DESIGN/ PRE-CONSTRUCTION PHASE

RIDGEWAY APARTMENTS	Bemidji, MN
JOINT FORESTRY & WILDLAND FACILITY	Naytahwaush, MN
CALLAWAY BOYS & GIRLS CLUB	Callaway, MN
ELBOW LAKE BOYS & GIRLS CLUB	Modular Building
WHITE EARTH FAMILY TREATMENT OUTPATIENT FACILITY ROOF RENOVATION	Ogema, MN
OSHKI MANIDOO WOMEN'S & CHILDREN'S LODGE	Bemidji, MN
WHITE EARTH WITHDRAWAL MANAGEMENT FACILITY	Mahnomen, MN
NAYTAHWAUSH FOOD SHELF REMODEL	Naytahwaush, MN
NATURAL RESOURCES OFFICE	Naytahwaush, MN
CLIFTON PLACE THIRD FLOOR & ROOF REMODEL	Minneapolis, MN



# KEY ENROLLMENT & FINANCIAL STATISTICS



The White Earth Nation is the largest of the six bands under the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe in geographical size and population. The Enrollment and Vital Statistics team is available to assist individuals who are already enrolled or are seeking enrollment into the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe.

### Enrollment Coordinator

- ▶ **Shannon Heisler (Tribal Affiliation, enrolled White Earth member):** As the Enrollment Coordinator for the White Earth Nation, Shannon assists members and applicants in the largest of the six Minnesota Chippewa Tribe bands by population.

### Membership

- ▶ **Total Members (March 18, 2026):** 16,884, with 1,166 minors.
- ▶ **Recent Growth:** 175 new members added from October 2024 through January 2026.
- ▶ **Descendant Fees:** White Earth RBC waived fees for Descendancy from January 2026 through July 12, 2026, resulting in over 200 completed descendant requests.

### Payments

- ▶ **Safety & Health Payments:** \$300 payments were issued to 8,176 members in December 2025.
  - **Nelson Timber Payments:** For minor members enrolled by October 2012, upon turning 18, with completion by 2030.
  - **ARPA Minor Payments:** For those minor members enrolled by July 2024, upon turning 18, with completion by 2042.

# INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT



**MAIN PHONE** 218-983-4658

**EMAIL** [whiteearth.helpdesk@whiteearth-nsn.gov](mailto:whiteearth.helpdesk@whiteearth-nsn.gov)

**SUPPORT SITE** [helpdesk.whiteearth.com](http://helpdesk.whiteearth.com)

**MONTE BELLANGER**  
IT DIRECTOR  
White Earth Nation, Tribal Affiliation  
Enrolled Member of White Earth Nation

**SCOTT SCHERMERHORN**  
IT MANAGER  
White Earth Nation, Tribal Affiliation  
Descendant of White Earth Nation

**DIVISION** White Earth Nation IT Department

**ADDRESS** 35500 Eagle View Rd, Ogema, MN 56569

**LOCATION** White Earth RTC Building (IT Garage)

**HOURS OF OPERATION** Monday – Friday  
7:30am – 4:30pm + (On-call for 24/7 programs)

**DIRECTOR** Monte Bellanger

**CONTACT** [Monte.Bellanger@whiteearth-nsn.gov](mailto:Monte.Bellanger@whiteearth-nsn.gov)

**PHONE** 218-983-4658

The White Earth Nation Information Technology (IT) Department provides technology services and support for Tribal Government divisions, Tribal Health, and Urban offices. Our mission is to ensure that all technology systems are secure, reliable, and aligned with the needs of White Earth Nation so programs can effectively deliver services to Tribal members and the community.

The IT Department installs, manages, and maintains all information technology systems across the Nation. This includes network infrastructure, servers, computers, mobile devices, applications, and cloud services. IT also provides cybersecurity, information security oversight, helpdesk services, and end-user support for all Tribal divisions. All technology purchasing, including computers, printers, servers, and core systems, is coordinated through the IT Department to ensure security, compatibility, and cost efficiency.

The IT Department is structured into functional areas including Helpdesk & End-User Support, Applications, Systems & Infrastructure, Networking, and Cybersecurity. In addition to supporting Tribal Government and Health, IT works collaboratively with other Tribal entities to provide guidance, modernization support, and training when possible. The department also assists with technology education and training for Tribal members upon request.

## BY THE NUMBERS

- ▶ **Number of users supported:** 1,256 + users supported
- ▶ **Number of devices managed (computers, phones, tablets):** 2,000 + managed devices
- ▶ **Number of sites or buildings supported:** 41 sites / buildings

## IT DIVISION UPDATE

- ▶ Continued network infrastructure upgrades across Tribal buildings, including upgraded switches, wireless access points, and improved network segmentation
- ▶ Modernized systems and server infrastructure, increasing system reliability, performance, and disaster recovery readiness
- ▶ Strengthened cybersecurity posture through expanded multi-factor authentication, device compliance enforcement, conditional access policies, and ongoing security monitoring
- ▶ Reviewed and improved internet service plans across multiple Tribal facilities to reduce costs while increasing available bandwidth and reliability
- ▶ Deployed the White Earth Nation Mobile App on both iOS and Android platforms to improve access to Tribal information, updates, and services
- ▶ Expanded development of electronic forms (e-forms) to make it easier for Tribal members and programs to submit applications and requests, reducing paperwork and improving efficiency
- ▶ Continued development of IT governance, cybersecurity, and data protection policies to support Tribal data sovereignty, compliance requirements, and long-term sustainability
- ▶ Provided ongoing IT support and modernization assistance to Tribal programs, health services, education, housing, and other affiliated Tribal entities

## HELPDESK ACTIVITY FOR 2025

KPI	VALUE
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESOLVED TICKETS	2,861
AVERAGE RESOLUTION TIME	16.70 h
AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME	19.52 h
AVERAGE WORK EFFORT TO RESOLVE TICKETS	38.00 min
BACKLOG OF TICKETS	48
% OF TICKETS RESOLVED WITHIN TARGET TIME	84.36 %
% OF TICKETS RESOLVED BY 1ST LINE SUPPORT	2.07 %
FIRST TIME RIGHT RESOLUTION	94.81 %

### LOOKING AHEAD

The IT Department will continue focusing on modernization, cybersecurity, and Tribal data sovereignty while building systems to support program growth, grant funded initiatives, and Tribal self determination. Priorities moving forward include expanding digital services, strengthening redundancy and disaster recovery, finalizing IT policies, and ensuring technology remains a strong foundation for White Earth Nation operations.

### IT STAFF

- ▶ **Monte Bellanger:** IT Director
- ▶ **Scott Schermerhorn:** IT Manager
- ▶ **Don Heisler:** Tribal Health IT Manager
- ▶ **William Stone:** Interim Senior IT Technician
- ▶ **Emily Olsen:** IT Technician
- ▶ **Sheldon Burnette:** IT Technician
- ▶ **Brad Riggle:** IT Technician
- ▶ **Zander McGrath:** Helpdesk Specialist
- ▶ **Dylan McArthur:** Helpdesk Specialist
- ▶ **Ian Stech:** Applications Analyst
- ▶ **Dennis Hisgun Jr:** IT Project Coordinator
- ▶ **Jesse Fain:** Systems Administrator
- ▶ **Keith Frohman:** Network Administrator
- ▶ **Jacob McGrath:** Security Administrator
- ▶ **Susie Snetsinger:** Computer Management Analyst in NTW
- ▶ **Digide Johnson:** Urban Office IT

# HEALTH DIVISION

## 2025 PROGRAM REPORT



## FAMILY, COMMUNITY, AND CLINICAL SERVICES

The White Earth Tribal Health Division is committed to improving the health and well-being of the White Earth Nation through comprehensive, culturally grounded, and community-driven services. Our division delivers a wide range of programs that support individuals and families across the lifespan — from prenatal care and early childhood services to elder support, emergency response, public health, and long-term care.

Guided by Anishinaabe values and a holistic understanding of wellness, Tribal Health works to promote prevention, strengthen access to care, and respond to the diverse and evolving needs of our community. Through collaboration, innovation, and dedicated staff, the division strives to reduce health disparities, enhance quality of life, and ensure that services are delivered with respect, dignity, and cultural integrity.

This report highlights the scope, impact, and achievements of Tribal Health Division programs. It reflects the collective efforts of our teams to support healthy families, resilient communities, and a stronger future for the White Earth Nation.

### TRIBAL HOME VISITING PROGRAM (NFP & PAT)

The Tribal Home Visiting Program provides family-centered support to families residing on the reservation from the prenatal period through kindergarten entry. Services are delivered through Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) nursing visits and Parents as Teachers (PAT) home visiting services.

During the reporting period, the program served 161 families and 167 children, completing 2,285 home visits, including 2,110 NFP visits and 175 PAT visits. The program celebrated 16 family graduates, reflecting sustained engagement and progress toward family stability and child well-being.

### SMART MOVES PROGRAM

Smart Moves is a family-based wellness program promoting healthy lifestyle habits, nutrition

education, physical activity, and parent support. A six-week pilot served five children from three families, followed by a 12-week session completed by eight children from four families.

### **ANGER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

The Anger Management Program delivered 178 sessions and engaged 173 unduplicated individuals. 24 participants successfully completed the full 10-week curriculum.

### **TRIBAL PUBLIC HEALTH**

White Earth Nation Tribal Public Health is dedicated to protecting and promoting the health of the community through prevention-focused, culturally grounded, and community-driven approaches. The mission of Tribal Public Health is to promote *wiikwazom* (wellness), prevent *gibichichige* (disease), and protect *gagawendan* (health) in a way that honors Anishinaabe culture, values, and ways of knowing.

Over the past year, Tribal Public Health recorded more than 20,000 visits to fitness centers and physical activity programming, supporting community members in maintaining active, healthy lifestyles. Services extended beyond physical activity to include 29 podiatry clinics, addressing foot health and mobility needs that are critical for chronic disease management and overall wellness.

Tribal Public Health hosted and supported numerous large-scale community events, including MMIWR and Heart Health events, Women's and Men's Night Out, and a Diabetes Conference, creating opportunities for education, awareness, and community connection. Health education efforts also reached youth through the delivery of Our Health Is Sacred teachings in three schools, reinforcing prevention messages and healthy behaviors early in life.

On average, Tribal Public Health coordinated approximately 15 community events per month across multiple sites. These activities included lifestyle and disease prevention classes, farmers markets, the Great American Smokeout, cooking classes, family-focused events such as movie nights, diabetes education activities, and sewing clinics. These offerings support both physical and social well-being while strengthening community engagement.

Additional programming included weekly *Baaga'adowewin* activities, a Premier Lacrosse League community trip, archery programming, multiple health fairs, Elder painting workshops, community entertainment events, and a Community Picnic Bike Program. Tribal Public Health also collaborated with multiple programs to provide canoe and kayak safety training, National Night Out, and other community-based safety and wellness initiatives.



To enhance hands-on and interactive health education, Tribal Public Health utilized inflatable brain, heart, lung, and colon exhibits, bringing these tools directly into communities across the reservation. These exhibits provided accessible, engaging education on chronic disease prevention and overall health in a way that resonates with community members of all ages.

Tribal Public Health has successfully completed and submitted all required documentation for Public Health Accreditation and is currently awaiting final approval. This milestone represents a significant achievement and reflects the department's commitment to excellence, accountability, and continuous quality improvement. Once finalized, accreditation will further strengthen public health services on the White Earth Reservation by enhancing program quality, increasing access to resources and funding opportunities, strengthening partnerships, and supporting sustainable, high-quality health initiatives for generations to come.

### **WHITE EARTH AMBULANCE SERVICES**

White Earth Ambulance provides 24-hour emergency medical services, staffing two ambulances around the clock. The department employs 25 staff members and responds to an average of 90 emergency 911 calls per month.

### **TRIBAL HOME HEALTH SERVICES**

White Earth Tribal Home Health provides essential, community-based clinical services that support individuals and families in remaining safe, healthy, and independent in their homes. Services focus on assessing health needs, coordinating care, and delivering skilled nursing and supportive services across the White Earth Reservation.

Home Health nurses provide in-home assessments, skilled interventions, care coordination, and health education, working closely with caregivers, primary care providers, and community partners to promote continuity of care and overall well-being. These services are especially critical for Elders, individuals with chronic conditions, and those with limited access to transportation or clinical settings.

Tribal Home Health maintains a caseload of approximately 281 clients, supported by a multidisciplinary clinical team of 23 Registered Nurses (RNs) and four Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs). Over the past year, the program received 122 referrals, reflecting ongoing demand for in-home nursing services.

Over the past year, RNs completed 11,480 skilled nursing visits, while LPNs completed 1,326 visits, totaling 12,806 skilled nursing visits. These visits included chronic disease management, medication administration and monitoring, wound care, post-hospital follow-up, and health education. Missed visits (688 total) were primarily due to weather or client availability; in all cases, primary care providers were notified and visits were rescheduled to ensure continuity of care.

Home Health Aide services provide vital daily living support to clients who require assistance to remain safely in their homes. The program maintained a caseload of approximately 46 clients and completed 1,395 home health aide visits. These services help reduce caregiver burden, support independence, and prevent unnecessary hospitalizations or long-term care placement.



Tribal Home Health also provides school nursing services through four dedicated staff, serving students in Waubun-Ogema-White Earth, Mahnomen, and Circle of Life Academy (COLA). School nurses and aides support student health through assessment, care coordination, chronic condition management, and response to acute health needs.

Through skilled nursing, home health aide services, and school-based care, Tribal Home Health plays a critical role in:

- ▶ Supporting safe aging in place
- ▶ Reducing avoidable emergency department visits and hospitalizations
- ▶ Strengthening coordination between clinical, home-based, and community services
- ▶ Increasing access to care for individuals with mobility, transportation, or health barriers

Tribal Home Health is a cornerstone of the White Earth Tribal Health Division, providing compassionate, high-quality care that brings essential health services directly to community members in their homes.

**COMMUNITY HEALTH REPRESENTATIVE (CHR) / TRANSPORTATION**

The CHR/Transportation Program improves access to medical care through transportation and health support services. From October 2024 through December 2025, staff traveled 438,195 miles, completed 5,703 contacts, and conducted 5,567 home visits.

**ELDER NUTRITION PROGRAM (ENP)**

ENP supports Elder wellness and social connection through culturally meaningful events. In 2025, approximately 320 Elders attended the Annual Picnic and over 430 Elders attended the Christmas Celebration.

**HARM REDUCTION SERVICES**

Harm Reduction services play a vital role within the White Earth Tribal Health Division by reaching community members who may not otherwise engage in traditional health systems. By prioritizing dignity, choice, and nonjudgmental support, the program reduces barriers to care and fosters long-term engagement with health and wellness services.

The welcoming and culturally responsive environment cultivated within Harm Reduction spaces allows clients to build trust with staff, which often serves as an entry point to additional Tribal Health and community-based services. This relationship-based approach supports early intervention, improves follow-through with referrals, and strengthens overall care coordination across the Tribal Health system.

Harm Reduction also contributes to workforce resilience and system responsiveness. Through close collaboration with Wellness Mental Health Practitioner, Harm



Reduction supports both clients and Tribal Health staff in navigating complex situations, ensuring individuals receive appropriate support while staff have access to consultation and assistance when addressing challenging cases.

By combining safety-focused services, cultural connection, wellness integration, and continued engagement during periods of transition — including incarceration — the Harm Reduction Program enhances continuity of care, strengthens community trust, and supports healthier outcomes for individuals and families.

**LONG-TERM SERVICES & SUPPORTS (LTSS)**

The Long-Term Services & Supports (LTSS) Team at White Earth Tribal Health plays a critical role in supporting Elders and adults with disabilities by ensuring access to in-home and community-based services that promote safety, independence, and quality of life.

Following statewide changes implemented by the State of Minnesota, the former Personal Care Assistance (PCA) program transitioned to Community First Services and Supports (CFSS). Throughout this transition, the LTSS Team has actively worked to educate members about the new CFSS program, explain how changes impact services, and assist individuals in connecting with consultation service providers. Staff continue to provide ongoing education, answer questions, and support members in communicating with consultation providers to ensure continuity of care and minimize service disruption.

LTSS staff completed a total of 347 assessments, which included both new service referrals and annual reassessments for current clients. Assessments were conducted for individuals receiving services through Medical Assistance programs such as PCA/CFSS and waiver services, as well as for community members receiving services through White Earth Nation regardless of pay source. This includes individuals receiving services such as Life Alert and Meals on Wheels through White Earth Nation programs, including contract health clients.

In addition to assessment activities, LTSS staff completed 210 face-to-face visits with clients. These visits occur outside of formal assessments and reflect the hands-on, relationship-based nature of LTSS services. Face-to-face visits include, but are not limited to:

- ▶ Delivering supplies or equipment
- ▶ Installing or troubleshooting Life Alert units
- ▶ Assisting with financial or service-related paperwork
- ▶ Responding to requests for additional services
- ▶ Supporting clients with phone calls related to CFSS compliance or health coverage questions
- ▶ Conducting wellness check-ins and follow-up support

Together, LTSS staff completed a total of 557 client encounters during this period, demonstrating a high level of direct engagement and individualized support.

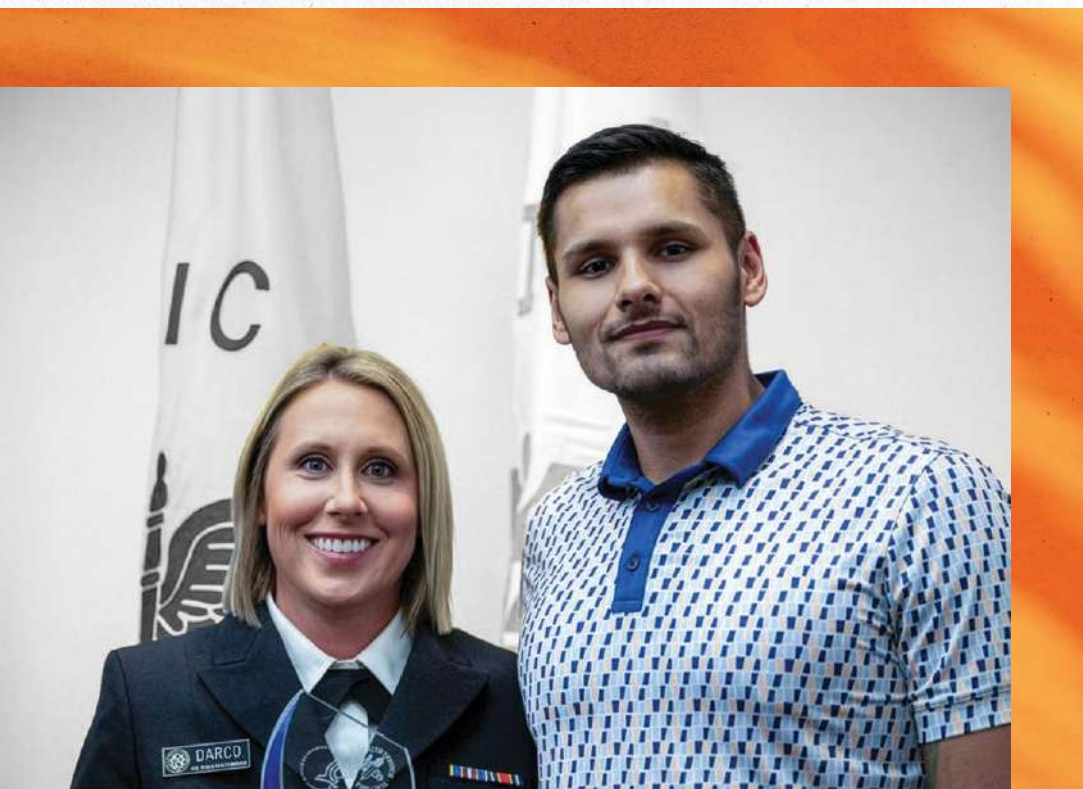
Through advocacy, education, and consistent outreach, the LTSS Team helps ensure members receive the services they need to remain safely supported in their homes and communities.

#### **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES**

White Earth Tribal Health maintains an internal IT Department supporting electronic health records, network infrastructure, system security, and staff technical support.


#### **LEADERSHIP RECOGNITION**

Lindsi Darco, White Earth Tribal Health Director was recognized by the Bemidji Area Indian Health Service with the Director's Award for exemplary service and leadership.



# HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION

2025 HIGHLIGHTS



The Human Resources Division remained focused on promoting a culture of care, wellness, and a healthy work environment to improve the employee experience. It is Human Resources' goal to take care of our employees so they in turn take care of our Tribe, our communities, and our people.

#### **HUMAN RESOURCES STATS**

- ▶ 1225 Employees
  - 72% of our workforce is Native American
  - 28% of our workforce is Non-Native
- ▶ Out of 1225 employees, 125 of our employees are at a Director/Manager Level
  - 82.5% of our leaders are Native American
  - 17.5% of our leaders are Non-Native

This is important that we lead the way in ensuring we are promoting our Native Preference Policy and employing our people.

These numbers are a true reflection that in comparison to other Tribal Nations we again are the frontrunners.

## LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Directors and Managers have had training with a Leadership 11:11 Series to include:

- ▶ Professionalism
- ▶ Employee Performance Statements
- ▶ Active Listening Skills
- ▶ Leading Effective Meetings
- ▶ Time Management
- ▶ Project Management
- ▶ Departmental Investigations
- ▶ Onboarding New Employees
- ▶ Conflict Resolution and Mediation
- ▶ Rewards and Recognition
- ▶ Workplace Harassment
- ▶ Cultural Sensitivity Training
- ▶ Financial Counseling
- ▶ Safety Training-Incident Reporting
- ▶ Healthy Workplace Boundaries
- ▶ Accountability
- ▶ Chain of Command
- ▶ Stay Interview Training
- ▶ Rebuilding Native Nations
- ▶ Generational Differences in the Workplace
- ▶ Wage Analysis Training
- ▶ Golden Rules of Leadership Training
- ▶ Customer and Client Service

## EMPLOYMENT

- ▶ Wage Surveys to ensure competitive wages
- ▶ Focus on Growth and Development by tiering job descriptions for upward mobility within Divisions
- ▶ Regular HR Auditing
- ▶ Focus on accuracy of records
- ▶ Department specific onboarding

## PILOT PROJECTS AND POLICY UPDATES

- ▶ Policy Handbook Completion and in final stage of review and approval

## HR EMPLOYEE'S COMMITTEE AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- ▶ Cultural Committee
- ▶ Benefits Committee
- ▶ Fisheries Committee
- ▶ White Earth Housing Authority
- ▶ White Earth Rediscovery Board
- ▶ MMCDC
- ▶ White Earth Investment Initiative
- ▶ Tribal Utility Commission

# WHITE EARTH LAND SETTLEMENT ACT OF 1985



## AS AMENDED (WELSA)

In 1995, the White Earth Tribal Council would acquire the allowable duties for the implementation of the WELSA Act. Although, the program has remained physically in proximity of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), it was due to those duties that criss-cross with the BIA and the access to Federal Files.

The WELSA Department monthly responsibilities include the completion of Post-Taking-of-Land and Pre-Taking-of-Land (Trust) Heirship Determination (probates), Monetary Compensation Disbursements, and assessment of Valid Claims.

The Office of Hearings and Appeals (OHA) is the authorized representative for the Secretary of the Interior. OHA has the purpose of hearing, considering, and deciding matters within the jurisdiction of the Department involving hearings, appeals, and other review functions of the Secretary. The decedent's heirs are determined under the Minnesota inheritance laws of intestate succession in effect on March 26, 1986.

A notable accomplishment in the year 2025 was the proficiency of the WELSA Staff to issue Compensation Award Letters to 2,729 Claimants. This is significant because the Office of Hearings and Appeals (OHA) did not issue any Final Orders (Final Orders initiate the payment process). OHA did not issue Final Orders due to the Government Shutdown and New Probate Regulation Appeal Periods.

The WELSA Staff were diligent in their efforts to research and make assessments to proceed toward payments. The use of existing and available Final Orders resulted in numerous payment entries for several levels of inheritance.

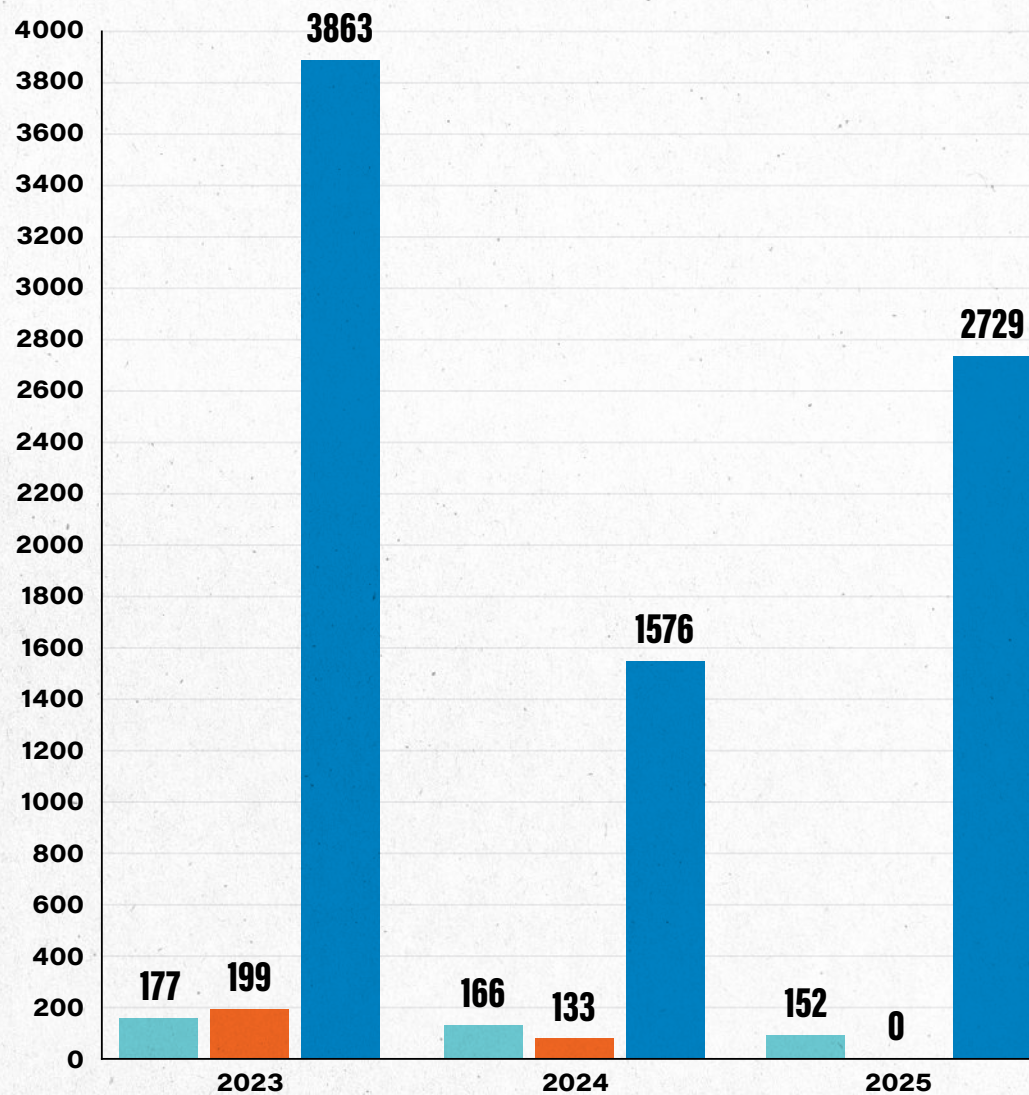
The WELSA Data Graph demonstrates productivity for the WELSA department for the last three years. As the employees strive to improve productivity through new or updated procedures, it is always in the best interest for descendants of original White Earth Allotees.

This will conclude the 2025 WELSA Report.

Miigwech!

# WELSA DATA

■ Probate/OHA 
 ■ OHA/Final 
 ■ Claimants



## PROBATE/OHA

The WELSA Probate Technicians have completed & issued to the Office of Hearings & Appeals (OHA).

## OHA/FINAL

The number of Final Orders issued by the Administrative Judge. Final Orders are legal decisions that determine an heir in an estate.

## CLAIMANTS

An individual/heir entitled to inherit from one or more heirship levels. For example; you may inherit from both parents and your sibling (who is single without issue). So you would be considered a claimant to three separate heirship levels.

# PUBLIC SAFETY DIVISION 2025 OVERVIEW



The White Earth Public Safety Department remains one of the most essential components of safety and stability for the White Earth Nation. In 2025, the department responded to:

- ▶ 18,813 calls for service
- ▶ 10,660 calls handled directly by White Earth Police Officers
- ▶ 56.6% of all calls for service managed by WEPD

These calls ranged from routine assistance to the most serious emergencies, demonstrating the department's critical role in protecting the community.

Across all agencies, **4,041 police cases** were recorded in 2025.

White Earth Police handled **2,996 cases**, representing **74%** of all law enforcement activity on the reservation.

## PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL

Public Safety is staffed by:

- ▶ 22 Police Officers
- ▶ 6 Dispatchers
- ▶ 2 Officer Support Personnel
- ▶ 2 DMV Staff
- ▶ 1 Animal Control Officer
- ▶ 34 Security Division Personnel

These individuals provide essential services across every community within the White Earth Nation.

## DRUG ENFORCEMENT & LIVES SAVED

Significant narcotics seizures in 2025 included:

- ▶ 281.8 g cocaine
- ▶ 2440.775 g fentanyl powder
- ▶ 878 fentanyl pills
- ▶ 1413.23 g methamphetamine
- ▶ 39.96 g other narcotics
- ▶ 105.5 narcotic dosage units

The fentanyl seized equates to over **244,078 potentially lethal doses**.

Even if only one percent reached the community, more than **2,000 fatal overdoses** could have occurred.

Estimated street value of all drugs seized: **\$689,308**.

#### **In 2025, Public Safety removed:**

- ▶ **27 firearms** from circulation
- ▶ **\$123,443.00 in U.S. currency** seized or entered as evidence

These actions disrupted criminal activity and reduced threats to community safety.

#### **ANIMAL CONTROL DIVISION**

The Animal Control Division, staffed by one officer, continued to support community health and safety:

- ▶ **500+ animals** served through clinics
- ▶ **42 pallets** of pet food distributed
- ▶ **350 animals** placed with rescue partners
- ▶ Hosted the **Indigenous Animal Health & Wellbeing** Gathering with national participation

#### **DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLE (DMV)**

DMV staff processed:

- ▶ **5,903 transactions**
- ▶ **\$215,052.55 in revenue**

DMV staff also traveled across the state to provide licensing and registration services to enrolled members unable to travel to White Earth, ensuring access to essential services for all members.

#### **GRANT FUNDING**

Two major grants strengthened Public Safety operations in 2025:

- ▶ **\$250,000 De-escalation Grant**
  - Provides training for officers, security staff, and other personnel
- ▶ **\$898,501 Equipment Grant**
  - ▶ Supports the purchase of squad cars and essential police equipment

These grants enhance readiness, training, and long term safety.

#### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Public Safety staff participated in a wide range of community events throughout 2025, reinforcing trust and strengthening relationships across the reservation. Along with other divisions, WEPD attended community picnics, powwows, and National Night Out gatherings, showing our continued commitment to being present, accessible, and engaged. Community policing remains a core belief of WEPD, and these events reflect our dedication to building strong, lasting partnerships with the people we serve.

- ▶ **Donuts with a Cop:** Officers visited elementary schools, handed out donuts, read with students, and built positive relationships with youth.
- ▶ **Bike Safety Events:** Youth received safety education, and drawings were held for bicycles and helmets.
- ▶ **National Night Out – Full Day Event:** Officers and dispatchers visited every community, handed out root beer floats, and held youth prize drawings.
- ▶ **Powwow Engagement:** Officers attended powwows across the reservation, providing security and engaging with community members through friendly games of cornhole or bags.
- ▶ **Community Picnics:** We attended along with all divisions' community picnics, spending time with families and community members in every district. These gatherings gave Public Safety staff the chance to answer questions, listen to concerns, and build positive relationships. We believe in community policing, and these picnics help keep our officers visible, approachable, and connected to the people we serve.
- ▶ **Community Safety Presentations:** Topics included drug awareness, internet safety, elder protection, and emergency preparedness.
- ▶ **School & Youth Program Support:** Officers attended school sports, youth programs, and after school activities, serving as mentors and positive role models.
- ▶ **Community Walks & Visibility Patrols:** Increased foot patrols at events and gatherings helped deter crime and create opportunities for positive engagement.

These activities demonstrate Public Safety's commitment to building relationships, supporting youth, and strengthening the social fabric of the White Earth Nation.

#### **CLOSING STATEMENT**

The White Earth Public Safety Department remains a cornerstone of safety, stability, and community well-being. Through thousands of calls for service, major drug and firearm seizures, lifesaving interventions, and meaningful community engagement, Public Safety continues to protect families, support communities, and uphold the sovereignty of the White Earth Nation.



# BEHAVIORAL HEALTH



White Earth Behavioral Health (WEBH) is continuing to grow into a strong, tribally guided system of care that supports healing, resilience, and long-term well-being for our relatives. Our work is grounded in Anishinaabe teachings and values, guided by harm reduction and dignity-centered care, and carried forward through local leadership and accountability. Many of these services are delivered and strengthened through our Tribe's ongoing service responsibilities and systems work connected to our Title I (638) relationship with Indian Health Service (IHS) supporting local control and a coordinated approach to care that reflects our community's needs.

## **A YEAR OF SERVICE, STABILITY, AND GROWTH**

In 2025, WEBH's team of over 400 employees supported more than 2,859 clients through mental health services, substance use disorder treatment, recovery support, cultural services, crisis response, and community-based outreach. This number represents more than service volume reflects relatives choosing to seek support, staying connected, and building steps toward wellness. It also reflects staff showing up every day across programs and communities to keep care consistent, accessible, and culturally grounded.

Our services are intentionally built as a continuum. That means WEBH is not just one program or one building. It is a coordinated system that supports people at different points in life whether someone needs help right away during a crisis, ongoing outpatient counseling, structured substance use treatment, recovery supports, family-based services, or cultural connection that strengthens identity and belonging.

## **YOUTH AND FAMILY SUPPORTS THAT BUILD STRONG FUTURES**

Youth services remained a major part of our work. The White Earth Boys & Girls Club continued to serve youth across seven communities. In one reporting snapshot, the program reached 940 registered youth, maintained an average daily participation of 140, and served 1,962 youth during the month. This type of reach matters because stable, healthy activities for youth support prevention, connection, and resilience, especially when families are facing stress, grief, or transitions.

Building on youth engagement work, WEBH also launched the Warriors of Wellness (WOW) program, a culturally grounded family wellness initiative designed to strengthen youth resilience, identity, and healthy life skills. Warriors of Wellness brings youth and their parents or guardians together through structured sessions that incorporate cultural teachings, community connection, and behavioral health education focused on prevention, wellness, and positive decision-making. The program complements the work of the White Earth Boys & Girls Club by creating additional opportunities for youth and families to learn, grow, and stay connected to culture and community supports. Together, these efforts help create safe spaces where young people can build confidence, strengthen relationships with family and culture, and develop tools that support long-term wellness and leadership in our communities.

WEBH also continued youth behavioral health programming connected to Circle Back Center and Juvenile Healing to Wellness/DIY services. These services support youth and families through culturally grounded education, coordinated supports, and connections with schools and courts when needed.

## **MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AND CRISIS RESPONSE**

Mental health and crisis services continued to provide steady access to care. Mental health services include crisis intervention, counseling, assessments, case management, and clinical supports such as psychiatry and telehealth, along with services for children and adults. These services help relatives manage depression, anxiety, trauma, grief, family stress, and other concerns while staying connected to community life.

In one month (January snapshot), Mental Health provided 2,681 appointments/visits, and the crisis team completed 18 crisis assessments. In another month (November snapshot), Mental Health provided 2,427 appointments/visits, with 16 crisis assessments, plus additional crisis supports. These numbers show that relatives are using services and that WEBH is maintaining capacity to respond when people need support quickly.

## **SUBSTANCE USE TREATMENT, RECOVERY SUPPORT, AND MOUD**

White Earth Recovery & Treatment Services (formerly WESA) continued offering outpatient and intensive outpatient programming across five locations, along with assessments, treatment coordination, peer support, advocacy, and culturally integrated recovery practices. WEBH also continued strengthening MOUD/MAT engagement through structured group programming and recovery supports that help people stay connected over time.

The overall focus is to make it easier for relatives to enter care, to reduce gaps between services, and to support long-term recovery not just short-term stabilization.

## **HARM REDUCTION-BASED SERVICES AND OVERDOSE RESPONSE**

Harm reduction efforts remained a core part of how WEBH keeps people safe and connected to care. In one reporting snapshot (October), WEBH trained community members and distributed naloxone to 262 relatives. This work saves lives and helps families and communities respond quickly while also linking people into treatment and recovery supports.

## **CULTURAL SERVICES AND TRADITIONAL HEALING AS A FOUNDATION**

One of WEBH's greatest strengths is that culture is not "extra." Culture is part of the system of care. The Culture Program supports Anishinaabe teachings and practices through ongoing ceremonies and gatherings that strengthen balance, identity, and Mino-bimaadiziwin (living the good life). In one reporting snapshot (October), cultural programming reached approximately 1,008 relatives, showing the real community reach of culture-based connection and healing.

Healing Bridge is another example of this integrated approach. It provides somatic healing and herbal supports and is offered free to enrollees, descendants, staff, and community members helping bridge wellness supports and traditional healing in a way that stays accessible.

## **STRENGTHENING SYSTEMS WHILE MEDICAID AND DHS REQUIREMENTS CHANGE**

Alongside direct services, WEBH continued important "behind-the-scenes" work to protect access and strengthen how we operate as requirements change. Medicaid and DHS rules continue to evolve, and WEBH is staying proactive so our services remain stable and our Tribe remains positioned to sustain and grow care.

This included ongoing support for relatives who need help navigating coverage. In reporting snapshots, staff provided MA/MNsure enrollment assistance and related support to reduce barriers to care. WEBH also continued improving documentation and readiness through internal documentation reviews and audits, strengthening consistency and reducing risk as requirements shift.

Workforce and licensure readiness remained a steady focus as well, including tracking licensure renewals and CEUs. And operational improvements continued so access is smoother and services are easier to use — such as strengthening intake and service flow processes and improving scheduling practices. WEBH also continued advocating for EHR and reporting improvements so data better supports service delivery, outcomes tracking, and compliance needs.

This work may not always be visible, but it is critical. It helps protect services, reduce administrative burdens over time, and ensure the Tribe can adapt to external changes without losing what matters most tribal authority, cultural grounding, and continuity of care for our relatives.

## **LOOKING AHEAD: STRATEGIC PLAN DIRECTION FOR FY 2026 – 2028**

As WEBH moves forward, our Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2026 – 2028 provides a clear direction for strengthening services, governance, workforce supports, facilities, accountability, and long-term sustainability. This plan is tribally grounded and designed to be a living guide for policy development, licensing standards, capital planning, and day-to-day decision-making.

The plan is guided by values that reflect who we are and how we serve: tribal sovereignty

and self-determination, cultural humility and traditional knowledge, harm reduction and dignity-centered care, community accountability, workforce wellness, and continuous learning and improvement. It is organized around nine connected areas of work: governance and authority; a full continuum of behavioral health services; cultural frameworks and Indigenous knowledge; workforce development and organizational design; quality assurance and continuous improvement; data governance and tribal data sovereignty; infrastructure and capital planning; community engagement and accountability; and long-term sustainability and adaptability.

## **FY 2026 PRIORITIES**

For FY 2026, WEBH is focusing on three major priorities that match community needs and build on progress already underway.

The first priority is advancing traditional healing and mental health services. This includes strengthening access to mental health services, expanding peer support, and creating stronger, more consistent ways to integrate cultural practitioners and elders into service models. The goal is to improve engagement and trust, increase cultural safety, and help relatives stay connected to care.

The second priority is enhancing and expanding SUD and MOUD services. WEBH will continue building a comprehensive, integrated treatment continuum focused on safety, access, and long-term recovery. This includes expanding harm reduction-based withdrawal management approaches, continuing development of tribally operated OBOT and OTP services (including methadone planning), integrating peer recovery supports across all levels of care, and implementing ASAM-aligned services across outpatient, residential, and community-based settings. The goal is to reduce reliance on crisis-driven systems, improve continuity of care, and expand access to life-saving medications and recovery supports.

The third priority is advancing infrastructure and capital development. This includes moving forward with Oshki as a healing-centered hub, developing Bemidji-based infrastructure to improve access for off-reservation and urban members, improving the safety and dignity of existing facilities, and aligning capital planning with workforce needs and future service growth. The goal is to expand capacity, improve the service environment, and strengthen long-term sustainability.

## **GOVERNANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT**

A key part of the Strategic Plan is strengthening tribally grounded governance. WEBH will continue clarifying authority and accountability across tribal leadership and oversight structures so that decision-making remains strong, roles are clear, and accountability is centered on

community responsibility. This includes continued emphasis on tribal licensing authority for SUD and behavioral health programs being recognized and codified within Tribal systems in a way that can work alongside credentialing and accreditation needs.

Quality assurance is also central to the plan. WEBH will maintain an independent, non-punitive quality system — focused on learning, early risk identification, and continuous improvement. The goal is to improve care, strengthen accountability, and prevent problems before they grow, while still supporting staff wellness and stability.

### **TRIBAL DATA SOVEREIGNTY AND COMMUNITY-GUIDED EVALUATION**

The Strategic Plan also reinforces an important principle: our data should serve our community. WEBH will continue working toward stronger tribal control over the full data lifecycle so data collection and reporting reflect community priorities and protect against misuse. The plan also supports community-guided evaluation approaches, including narrative outcomes and community reflection, not just numbers so the story of healing and progress stays grounded in lived experience.

### **A PRACTICAL, PHASED APPROACH**

The plan is designed to be realistic and step-by-step. Over 24 months, WEBH will move through phases that begin with governance alignment and executive direction, then build policy and workforce foundations, stabilize and expand services, integrate systems and licensing operations, and finally focus on optimization, evaluation, and sustainability. This phased approach helps ensure growth is steady, organized, and accountable.

### **CLOSING MESSAGE TO TRIBAL MEMBERS**

WEBH is doing two important things at once: we are serving relatives today, and we are building a stronger tribally governed system for tomorrow. In 2025, WEBH served thousands of relatives, responded during crisis moments, expanded community-based engagement, and strengthened the cultural foundations that keep people connected and supported. At the same time, we continued improving systems so we can adapt to changing Medicaid and DHS requirements while protecting access, stability, and tribal authority.

This is what it means to build a behavioral health system that is truly ours: culturally grounded, harm reduction-oriented, accountable to community, and strong enough to grow and adapt so that our relatives and future generations have care that supports healing, dignity, and hope.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

### **THE STATE SMALL BUSINESS CREDIT INITIATIVE (SSBCI)**

This loan program is a federal initiative that provides capital to states, territories, and tribal governments to help them support small businesses through various lending programs. The goal is to provide small businesses, especially those in underserved communities, with access to capital they might not otherwise have, using tools like loan guarantees, participation in loans, and collateral support.

White Earth Tribe continues to partner with the Midwest Minnesota Community Development Corporation (MMCDC) and the loan funds are processed by their Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), White Earth Investment Initiative. Available loan capital through this program is over \$2,000,000.

**Gizhiigin Arts Incubator** becomes an independent 501c3. Gizhiigin was a project of the White Earth Reservation Tribal Council's Economic Development Division. Gizhiigin, which means "grow fast" in Anishinaabemowin, opened officially January 30, 2015.

The Gizhiigin Arts Incubator serves artists living on the White Earth Ojibwe Reservation. They help artists reach their

marketplace goals by providing space, resources, and technical assistance for their entrepreneurial development.

Gizhiigin is focused on achieving three major outcomes:

- ▶ Artistic and economic growth for our artists
- ▶ Creation of an arts destination to promote the economic growth of White Earth
- ▶ Cultural revitalization, vitality, and community pride

Gizhiigin is a model for a successful transition from a tribal government program to an independent non-profit 501c3 business.

### **AWAKAAN BIMAAJI (PET LIFE)**

The creation of the Tribal nonprofit 501c3 animal rescue shelter. This organization will assist in the challenges our communities face with stray pets. More funding will be necessary to activate the shelter in 2026.

### **GRANTS DEPARTMENT**

Grants applied to by the grants department were 22 total submissions with 14 being successfully awarded to White Earth for a over a 63% success rate. The total number of grant funding received for various programs was approximately \$7,000,000 in 2025.

# COMPLIANCE DIVISION



## ADDRESS

PO Box 395  
779 E Jefferson Ave  
Mahnomen MN 56557

## MAIN PHONE

218-935-2148

## HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday – Friday  
8:00am – 4:30pm

### CHRISTIE HAVERKAMP COMPLIANCE DIRECTOR

White Earth Nation  
Tribal Affiliation, Enrolled Member of White Earth Nation

### GERI BURNETTE ADJUDICATION MANAGER

White Earth Nation  
Tribal Affiliation, Enrolled Member of White Earth Nation

### KRYSTA HEISLER TRIBAL GAMING MANAGER

White Earth Nation  
Tribal Affiliation, Enrolled Member of White Earth Nation

### TINA STARKEY DRUG TESTING MANAGER

White Earth Nation  
Tribal Affiliation, Family – Descendent of White Earth Nation

### ANDY FRIGEN SURVEILLANCE MANAGER

White Earth Nation  
Tribal Affiliation, Descendant of White Earth Nation

The Surveillance, Tribal Gaming, Adjudication, and Drug Testing Departments collectively support the safety and integrity of all White Earth Reservation operations. Surveillance operates 24/7 with 39 employees, monitoring over 2,700 cameras across two casinos, several dispensaries, and more than 30 tribal buildings to protect assets, oversee financial activity, and support law enforcement. Tribal Gaming, also a 24/7 function, ensures the integrity of gaming operations through audits, licensing, and strict regulatory compliance, completing dozens of audits annually while supporting ongoing casino operations. Together, these divisions maintain secure environments, enforce standards, and safeguard tribal resources.

Adjudication and Drug Testing further strengthen workforce integrity and compliance across all entities. Adjudication conducts thorough background investigations — including fingerprinting, state and credit checks — to ensure employees meet tribal, federal, and regulatory requirements. The Drug Testing Division provides comprehensive testing services, including pre-employment, random, post-accident, and DOT testing, using multiple certified methods. It also supplies training and testing resources to tribal programs and external partners. Combined, these departments ensure a qualified workforce, uphold regulatory standards, and support the White Earth Divisions.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ▶ Working with WE IT and SSC MIS on installation upgraded systems, sonic walls and switches
- ▶ 24/7 Asset Protection & Compliance across all major tribal operations
- ▶ 2,733+ Active Cameras Securing Assets across casinos, dispensaries, and 30+ facilities
- ▶ 47+ Audits Completed (FY25) driving accountability and operational excellence
- ▶ 156 Compliance Violations Identified & Addressed to strengthen regulatory adherence
- ▶ \$20K+ Jackpot Oversight ensuring gaming integrity and financial transparency
- ▶ 500+ Technical Gaming Interventions (installs, conversions, RAM clears, inspections)
- ▶ Full-Scope Workforce Screening protecting organizational integrity across all entities
- ▶ Comprehensive Drug Testing Program supporting safety, compliance, and DOT standards
- ▶ Providing real-time video evidence and investigative support to various agencies
- ▶ Ongoing surveillance expansion through system design, camera installs, and facility consultation

The Compliance Division will focus on expanding and strengthening security, compliance, and operational support across all White Earth entities. This includes scaling surveillance infrastructure to support new facilities and increasing camera coverage, while investing in modern technology and analytics to improve monitoring and response capabilities. Continued collaboration with law enforcement and tribal departments will enhance communication and coordinated response efforts. At the same time, efforts will be made to further strengthen audit readiness and regulatory compliance through improved processes and internal controls.

Additionally, the organization will continue to prioritize workforce integrity and safety by expanding adjudication and background screening services, as well as growing drug testing programs and consortium participation. Early involvement in facility planning and construction will ensure security systems are integrated from the outset, supporting long-term efficiency and protection of tribal assets. Overall, these efforts position the Compliance Division to effectively support ongoing growth, maintain high standards of compliance, and enhance safety across all operations.

## MISSION

To promulgate comprehensive and effective services to the people of the White Earth Nation for their economic needs with respect for their cultural individuality and encourage their talents knowledge and skills to move the White Earth Nation forward.

## OUR VISION

Together the Compliance Division strives to achieve a vision of success for future generations and to preserve and protect the integrity of gaming, employment procedures and policies, while safeguarding all assets for the White Earth Nation, our people and our communities, now and in the future.

## WHITE EARTH GAMING COMMISSION

- ▶ White Earth Nation
- ▶ Tribal Affiliations
- ▶ 5 Enrolled Members of the White Earth Nation

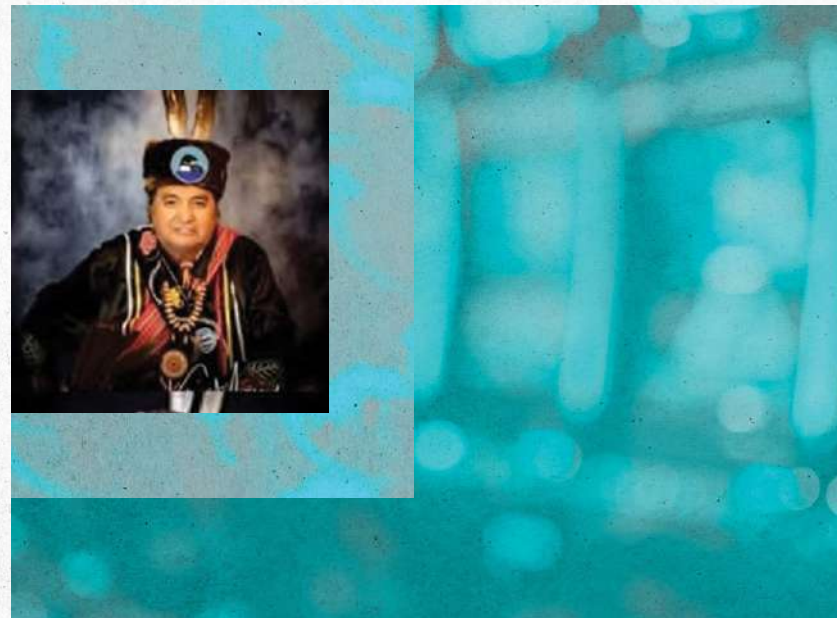
The White Earth Gaming Commission is a five-member Regulatory body selected by the Tribal Council to promulgate and regulate all Tribal Gaming on the White Earth Indian Reservation along with its designee departments that include the Compliance Director, Adjudication and Background Investigations Surveillance and Tribal Gaming. The Commission was established in the White Earth Gaming Ordinance in 2019.

The Commissioners are selected to serve four-year terms.

- ▶ **Chris Londo:** Chairman
- ▶ **Thomas Spry:** Vice Chair
- ▶ **John Buckanaga:** Sec/Clerk
- ▶ **Matt Foltrom:** Commissioner
- ▶ **Open:** Commissioner

In February 2026, the White Earth Gaming Commission lost one of its founding members, Commissioner Mike Swan, who served with loyalty and pride for seven years. His dedication and contributions helped shape the foundation of the Commission and its ongoing success. Miigwech, Commissioner Swan, for your service and commitment.

Miigwech, Commissioner Swan, for your service and commitment.



# EDUCATION DIVISION

2025  
HIGHLIGHTS



## ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM (ABE)

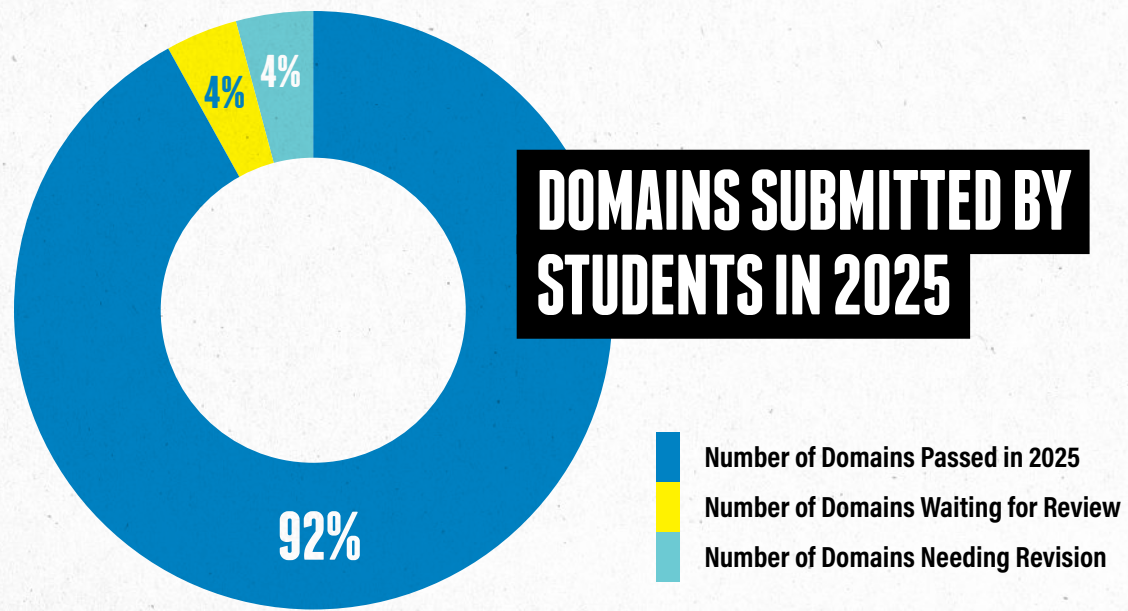
SERVES AGE 17+

**GED Highlights:** The GED test is a series of four subject tests a person can take to demonstrate their high school academic knowledge. Earning a GED diploma is the equivalent to a high school diploma.

Number of GED Proctors Certified in 2025	6
Number of Subject Area Exams Taken in 2025	119
Number of Subject Area Exams Passed in 2025	82 (68.9%)
Number of students that Earned GEDs in 2025	15

**Minnesota Adult High School Diploma Highlights:** White Earth ABE was approved to offer the Minnesota Adult High School Diploma option. Students need to pass five domains by compiling and submitting a portfolio of work to the Minnesota Department of Education, showing evidence of competency of all high school content.

Number of Domains Submitted by Students in 2025	51
Number of Domains Passed in 2025	47 (92.2%)
Number of Domains Waiting for Rreview	2 (3.9%)
Number of Domains Needing Revision	2 (3.9%)
Number of Students That Have Completed All 5 Domains and Have Earned the Minnesota Adult High School Diploma	5



## DOMAINS SUBMITTED BY STUDENTS IN 2025

- Number of Domains Passed in 2025
- Number of Domains Waiting for Review
- Number of Domains Needing Revision

### OTHER ABE HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ Hired a program Paraprofessional
- ▶ Two volunteer tutors are participating in the state C.A.L.M. Cohort. They were selected from a competitive pool of applicants from around the state to pilot a math curriculum designed for adult learners.
- ▶ Activated a new mobile GED testing center to allow for testing in students' home communities
- ▶ New College, Career, and Transitions-related offerings (online and in-person) have helped countless students meet other goals:
  - Obtain a driving permit, driver's license, or ID
  - Enroll in college and apply for financial aid
  - Become a certified Paraprofessional
  - Certify as a Minnesota Food Protection Manager
  - Certify as a Minnesota Food Protection Manager Trainer and Proctor
  - Earn a Nursing Assistant or Personal Care Attendant Certification
  - Enroll in welding, carpentry, CDL, and other vocational training opportunities
  - Improve basic digital literacy skills



# EARLY INTERVENTION / EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION

SERVES AGES BIRTH-5

The mission of the White Earth Early Intervention & Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Program is to be the leading advocate for children with disabilities in our communities. We identify and support children with special needs during their early years, empower parents with education, resources, and address each family's unique needs with compassion and respect. Together, we work to create a more inclusive and supportive community for all.

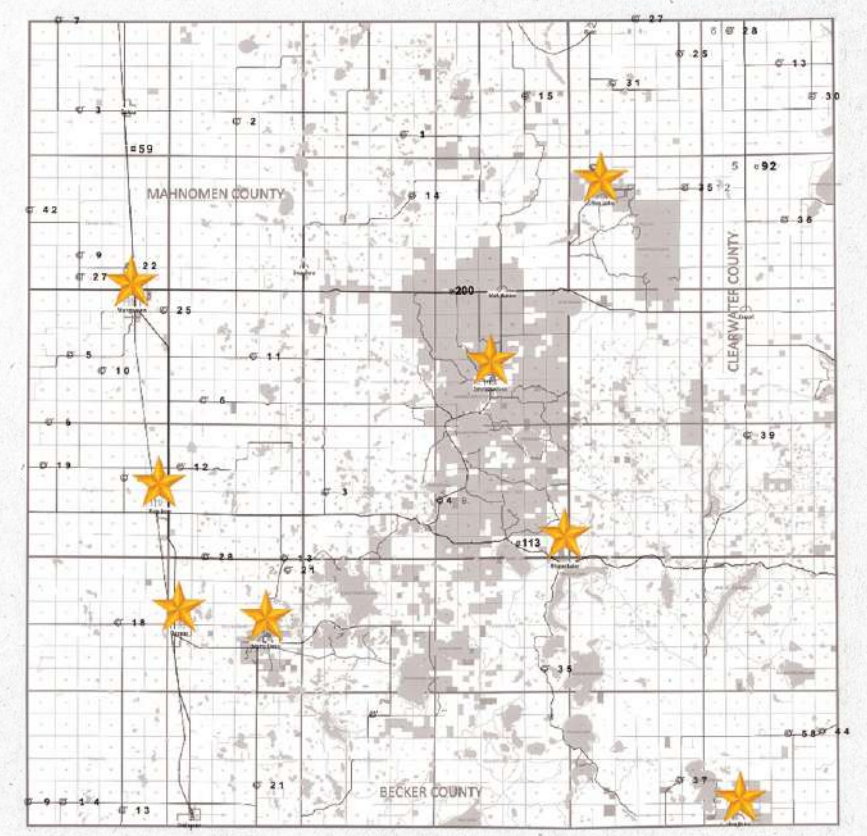
We provide services for children aged birth-kindergarten entrance in Rice Lake, Naytahwaush, Mahnommen, Waubun, Ogema, White Earth, Elbow Lake, and Pine Point communities.

### Services include:

- ▶ Early intervention
- ▶ Speech and language
- ▶ Occupational therapy
- ▶ Physical therapy
- ▶ Autism spectrum disorder
- ▶ Physical impairment
- ▶ Vision — blind
- ▶ Deaf — hard of hearing

**During the 2025 - 2026 school year:** We are currently providing services for 36 children and families. We have received 48 referrals for children 5 and under.

If you have developmental concerns with your child or a child you know, referrals can be made at [helpmegrowmn.org](http://helpmegrowmn.org).



# INDIGENOUS EDUCATION FOR ALL (IEFA)

GRADES K-12



As a new program, Indigenous Education for All (IEFA) is committed to fostering a deeper understanding and respect for the Anishinaabe people by integrating our history, culture, language, and contemporary contributions into the educational experience of all Minnesota students. Through inclusive and accurate curricular resources, IEFA empowers educators, students, and school communities to honor Tribal sovereignty, recognize the enduring presence of Indigenous peoples, and build meaningful relationships rooted in equity, truth, and shared responsibility.

## 2025 IEFA HIGHLIGHTS

### Bringing White Earth Centered Curriculum into Classrooms

- ▶ IEFA is developing lesson plans that share important parts of Ojibwe life and history with students across Minnesota. 2025 lesson plans include:
  - **Ojibwe Math:** Showing how math connects to traditional practices.
  - **Manoomin (Wild Rice):** Teaching about harvesting and its cultural importance.
  - **White Earth History:** Helping students understand local history and boarding school experiences.

We also created hands-on activities, educator guides, and cultural assessment tools to make learning interactive and respectful. These resources will help teachers confidently bring Indigenous perspectives into their classrooms.

### Building a Digital Archive

To preserve history for future generations, IEFA is designing a digital archive platform. This will store photos, videos, and documents related to White Earth history. IEFA is testing ways to connect classroom tools like Google Classroom and PowerBI with the archive, making it easier for educators to access materials. The goal is to create a secure, user-friendly system that keeps cultural knowledge safe and accessible.

### Connecting with the Community

- ▶ Community voices guide everything we do. In 2025, we:
  - ▶ Hosted community meetings and attended local events.
  - ▶ Set up IEFA booths to share updates and gather feedback.
  - ▶ Recorded cultural teachings with community members. These recordings will help preserve traditions and share them with future generations.

### Building Partnerships

IEFA aimed to strengthen relationships with colleges, universities, and other Tribes to share ideas and resources. Our team attended national and state conferences, including the NIEA Convention, to learn new strategies for Indigenous education. These partnerships help us bring the best practices back to our community.

### Forming an Advisory Group

The IEFA Advisory Group was created to ensure community voices are part of every decision. Most seats are filled, and meetings will begin in early 2026. This group will guide curriculum development, cultural projects, and outreach efforts.

### Gathering Resources

- ▶ To support the work, IEFA:
  - Secured recording equipment for cultural documentation.
  - Received bison hides and other materials to create classroom resource boxes.
  - Shifted methods of engagement with the community, to capture more community stories and teachings.

# WHITE EARTH CHILD CARE & EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

AGES 0-12



### Child Care Providers, By Type

- ▶ **Child Care Learning Centers:** 7
- ▶ **Licensed In-Home Providers:** 18
- ▶ **Unlicensed Providers:** 4

**Number of Children serviced throughout the year: 375**

### Community Events hosted by WECC:

- ▶ 21st Annual Communities Collaborative Brain Development Conference  
Children are the Shining Stars of Hope: 500 + attended
- ▶ Week of the Young Child
- ▶ Back to School Event
- ▶ Christmas Literacy Book Giveaway

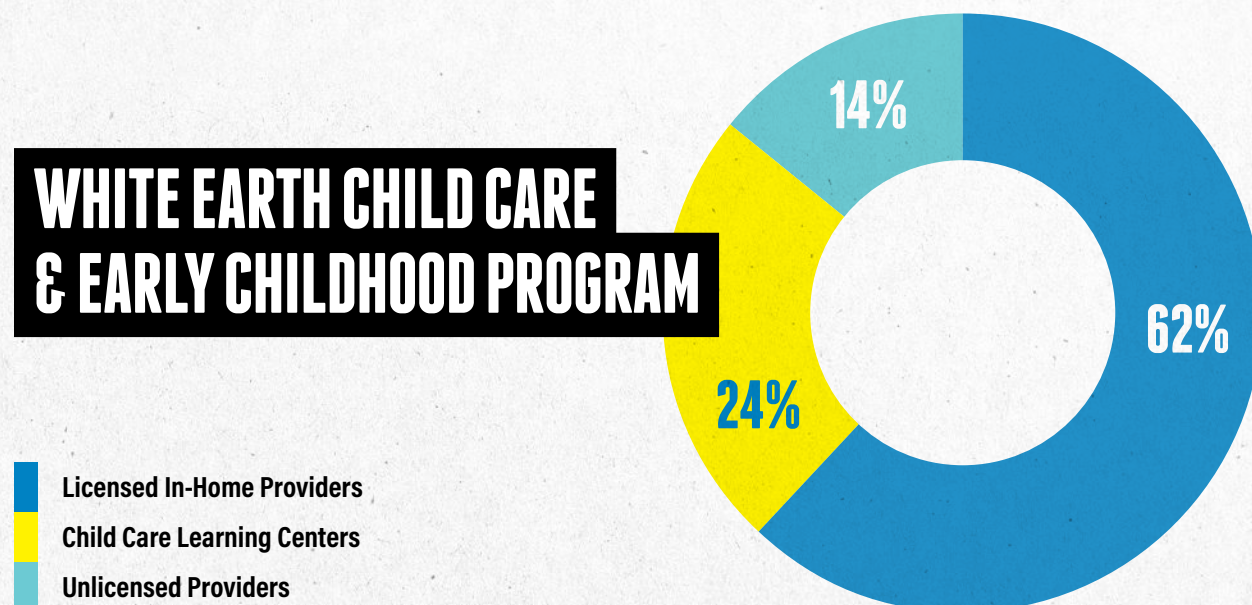
### Attended and hosted a WECC booth:

- ▶ Community Families Picnics

- ▶ Detroit Lakes Area Schools Pow-Wow
- ▶ White Earth Wic And Life Community Baby Shower
- ▶ Public Health Halloween Health Fair

### Other Program Highlights

- ▶ Some of the services we offer are:
  - Support to all our licensed childcare programs to be Parent Aware Rated
  - White Earth Child Care Assistance and Early Learning Scholarships to qualified families
  - Curriculum/Assessment Support and Coaching
  - Early Childhood/School Age Trainings
  - Community Outreach, and
  - We promote our Ojibwe Language and Culture in the classroom and with in-home providers
- ▶ White Earth Child Care moved into their new building
- ▶ New Library — Maamagin Achigaazo (the Gathering Place) will be opening in the Summer of 2026
- ▶ Collaborated with the White Earth RBC to offer funds to add 8 playgrounds and basketball courts to encourage healthy physical play and family fun
- ▶ Fully staffed 32 employees
- ▶ Lead teachers attended National Association for the Education for Young Children (NAEYC) conference
- ▶ Minnesota Tribal Resources for Early Childhood Care (MNTRECC) member of the 11 tribes of Minnesota; focuses on culturally appropriate training and early childhood support



# WHITE EARTH HEAD START & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

SERVES EXPECTANT MOMS & CHILDREN BIRTH-5 YEARS



### WHITE EARTH HEAD START PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

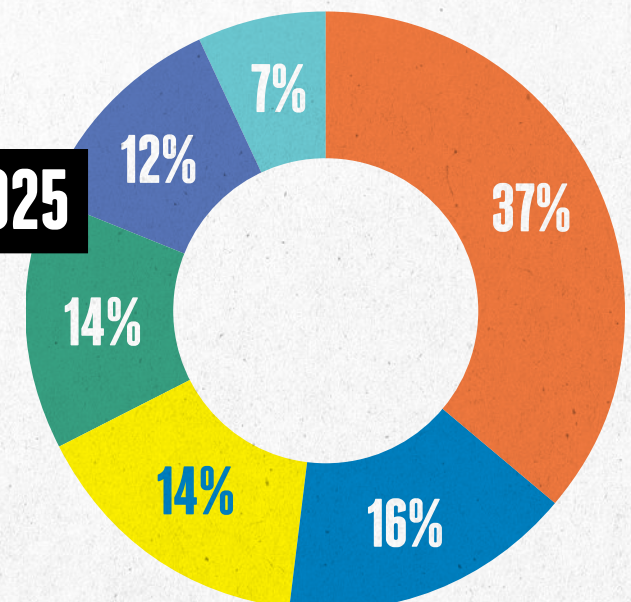
- ▶ Established "Amikwiish" an Ojibwe Language-Focused Head Start Classroom at the White Earth site
- ▶ Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) Program collaborated with Parents as Teachers (PAT) Program for monthly events and socializations
- ▶ Implemented new Frogstreet Curriculum
- ▶ Established no findings during Office of Head Start monitoring

### HEAD START CLASSROOM ENROLLMENT, DECEMBER 2025

Mahnomen Head Start	13
Naytahwaush Head Start	35
Pine Point Head Start	7
Rice Lake Head Start	15
Waubun Head Start	12
White Earth Head Start	13

### HEAD START CLASSROOM ENROLLMENT DECEMBER 2025

- Rice Lake Head Start
- Mahnomen Head Start
- Pine Point Head Start
- Naytahwaush Head Start
- Waubun Head Start
- White Earth Head Start

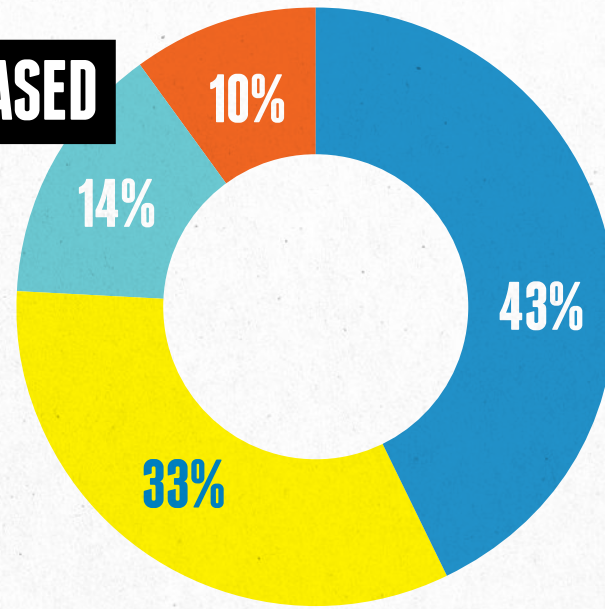


**EARLY HEAD START ENROLLMENT: PRENATAL-3 YEARS**

Early Head Start Enrollment, December 2025

Mahnomen Home-Based	7
Naytahwaush Home-Based	2
Pine Point Home-Based	3
Rice Lake Home-Based	9
White Earth Home-Based	0

**EARLY HEAD START HOME-BASED SERVICES ENROLLMENT DECEMBER 2025**



- Rice Lake Home-Based
- Mahnomen Home-Based
- Pine Point Home-Based
- Naytahwaush Home-Based

**Staff Highlights**

- ▶ One bachelor’s degree in early childhood graduate in Spring 2026
- ▶ Two associate’s degree graduates in Spring 2026
- ▶ Three staff earned their Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential
- ▶ Hired a Mental Health Consultant to work directly with staff, children, and families to support social-emotional development, behavior, and families, ensuring stronger relationships and a supportive learning environment.

**STUDENT FINANCIAL SERVICES POSTSECONDARY**



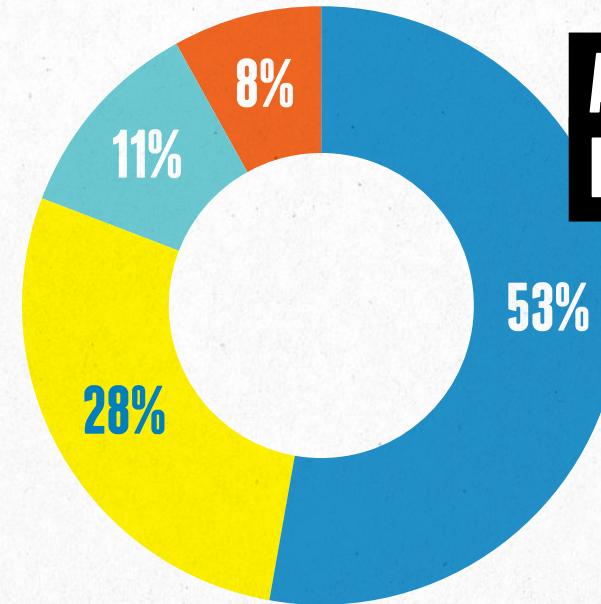
**White Earth Scholarship Program Highlights:**

- ▶ Awarded 203 Scholarships
- ▶ Awarded 56 Graduation Incentives

**Johnson O’Malley Program Highlights:**

- ▶ Currently serves 1,210 eligible, active students
- ▶ Serves five area school districts: Waubun / Ogema / White Earth, Mahnomen / Naytahwaush, Bagley, Detroit Lakes, and Moorhead

**AWARDED GRADUATION INCENTIVES 2025**



- High School/GED
- 4-Year Program (BA, BS, Other)
- 2-Year Program (AA, AS, AAS, Other)
- Masters Program
- Doctorate Program



**CIRCLE OF LIFE ACADEMY K-12 BIE TRIBALLY CONTROLLED SCHOOL**

**Programmatic Highlights**

- ▶ Now enrolling 1st and 2nd Generation Descendants in addition to enrolled members of federally recognized tribes and those with ¼ blood quantum.

- ▶ COLA offers 1-to-1 devices for all students. K-2 utilizes iPads and 3-12 utilizes Chromebooks. Google Classrooms are set up for onsite and offsite instruction.
- ▶ We'll be rolling into your community with our new mobile classrooms! COLA secured three trailers to utilize for mobile classrooms, conferences, student screenings, and community events!
- ▶ COLA students will be back on the airwaves with Nijjii Radio! Tune in to 89.9FM to hear COLA Connections coming soon!
- ▶ Currently completing Bureau of Indian Education Programmatic and Fiscal Review and Rebuild — Year 1 of 5 with the support of BIE professionals and White Earth support staff.
- ▶ New Paraprofessional Apprenticeship Cohort for paraprofessionals interested in earning their Elementary Education Teaching degree and licensure.
- ▶ Through a Safe Routes to School Grant, COLA received 35 new bicycles for our physical education program. We were also able to purchase a trailer to haul them which enables us to travel to other trails for riding adventures.
- ▶ Developing culturally sensitive, developmentally appropriate schoolwide behavior management practices.
- ▶ Reforming behavioral response processes by developing a culture-based trauma response protocol, working closely with White Earth Mental Health for out-of-school referrals, and enhancing and utilizing our Student Support Team. This has led to a significant reduction in behavior referrals.

### Ojibwe Language & Culture Highlights

- ▶ Developing 131 acres of COLA Forest for outdoor, cultural activities including, but not limited to Sugar Bush, Winter Camp, fasting, coming of age ceremonies, and walking/biking trails.
- ▶ Focus on building the COLA Language Program to be family-based.
- ▶ Working to merge language and culture with the core curriculum.
- ▶ Seasonal activities including ricing, spearing, fishing, and other activities in collaboration with the White Earth Natural Resources.
- ▶ Development of a 6th Grade Survival Class and a virtual Language Table for area schools.
- ▶ Exciting class offerings of Food Sovereignty, Seed Saving, Plant Identification, and Medicine Gardens.

### General Highlights

- ▶ New website is coming soon! Access job announcements, student applications, and important school information. Watch for the announcement!
- ▶ Safe and secure campus — daily bag checks and Student Resource Officer on campus daily.



## GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

WEN had 17 separate consultations with Minnesota agencies last year.

WEN hosted Senate Majority Leader Erin Murphy and Senator Assistant Majority Leader Fong Hawj at White Earth to showcase the Elder Tiny Homes, the new Early Childcare Center, and Waabigwan Mashkiki. Senator Hawj also had an opportunity to harvest wild rice.

# LEGAL DIVISION

## LEGAL UPDATES

November 8, 2024 — White Earth Deputy General Counsel Veronica Newcomer and Environmental and Land Attorney Andrea Szabo were sworn into the United States District Court for the District of Minnesota. General Counsel Andrea Kingbird, as an admitted member of the District Court, made the motion for their admission. Federal Magistrate Judge Brisbois, a White Earth descendant, granted the motion for admission. Since this time, White Earth Legal Department attorneys have been admitted to the Eighth Circuit Federal Court of Appeals and Ms. Newcomer was recently admitted to the United State Supreme Court.

Deputy General Counsel Veronica Newcomer was a panelist at the American Bar Association State and Local Government Law Section's CLE, "Understanding the Role of Tribal In-House Counsel" in Phoenix, AZ. Ms. Newcomer also co-chaired the MNABA Continuing Legal Education Conference in Minneapolis, and moderated the panel, "Preserving Tribal Sovereignty and Protecting the Rights of Indian Children and Families — the 2025 ICWA Update."

General Counsel Andrea Kingbird has participated on panel discussions regarding cannabis including the MJ Unpacked event, an exclusive network of cannabis industry leaders, and for the Minnesota Association of City Attorneys conference, provided by the League of Minnesota Cities.

In May 2025, Legal Department Legal Assistant Kathy Jo Heisler coordinated a Tribal Wills Clinic for the White Earth community. Services were provided by the University of Denver College of Law and Anishinabe Legal Services. 68 individuals were able to complete their wills.

Much effort goes into protecting the Nation's interests in the many areas that the Nation has identified as priorities — such as natural resource protection and economic development. Legal has a great team of in-house and outside counsel that makes wins such as this possible, see: Federal Courts Reject Challenges to White Earth Water Protection Ordinance, the White Earth State Forest Memorandum of Understanding, the Co-stewardship Agreement for Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge, and the Cannabis Compact.

# NATURAL RESOURCES

## 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

Natural Resources remains steadfast in the management of our lands and waters, and unwavering in our responsibility to protect the Treaty Rights of our Tribal membership. We are committed to creating lasting, meaningful change for the environment — work that centers on restoring and protecting habitat, the foundation of a healthy ecosystem for both our people and our animal relatives. Our efforts extend to reclaiming our place within the Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge and the White Earth State Forest, ensuring these homelands continue to reflect our values and stewardship. We recognize that our youth need opportunities to reconnect with culture, language, and traditional outdoor teachings. By engaging and empowering the young people of our Nation, we are helping them grow with an understanding of, and a commitment to, the environment that sustains our life. Across all of our efforts, we remain dedicated to safeguarding our resources for the generations to come.

### LAND STEWARDSHIP & CO-MANAGEMENT EFFORTS

Natural Resources made significant strides in 2025 toward regaining greater stewardship and authority over lands currently managed by federal and state agencies. These efforts reflect our long term commitment to restoring Tribal autonomy and protecting our homelands for future generations.

### TAMARAC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

In 2025, Natural Resources began working closely with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to assume certain duties within the Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge. This work represents an important step toward expanding Tribal involvement in managing refuge lands, integrating cultural knowledge into land stewardship practices, and strengthening our presence on lands historically tied to our people.

### WHITE EARTH STATE FOREST

Natural Resources also initiated partnership work with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources on the White Earth State Forest. This collaboration is helping to formalize roles, improve coordination, and expand Tribal authority in day-to-day forest management.

### ADVANCING TRIBAL AUTONOMY OVER OUR HOMELANDS

Together, these partnerships — one federal and one state — mark the beginning of a new chapter in land stewardship. In 2025, we initiated the process of gaining back autonomy over lands currently held in their possession, ensuring that Tribal values, cultural priorities, and long term ecological health guide how these places are cared for. These efforts strengthen sovereignty, improve natural resource management, and reaffirm our Nation's leadership in stewarding the lands that sustain us.

During FY2025, the Land Office completed the acquisition of 838 acres, representing a significant investment in conservation, habitat protection, and community benefit.

### PARKS & RECREATION

Parks & Recreation continued to be one of the most active and visible teams throughout 2025, hosting or participating in 81 community events that strengthened cultural knowledge, outdoor skills, and community connection. Their outreach touched youth, families, and schools across the Nation through an impressive range of activities including the COLA Fishing Day, Ogema Elementary Ice Safety training, career exploration classes, the Waubun School Forest winter camp, the White Earth Nation 5th Annual Ice Fish'n Derby, fur bearer identification sessions, Sugarbush at Waubun School Forest, Boys & Girls Club spearing events, kids' fishing programs, canoe and kayak water safety, ATV and firearms safety courses, mobile rice displays, rice camps, ricing instruction, netting demonstrations, and knocker making workshops, to name just a few.

Their tireless commitment to youth, community engagement, and cultural education has created a year rich with hands on learning and tradition. By consistently showing up in schools, at community events, and on the land itself, the team has helped young people build confidence, outdoor skills, and cultural knowledge that will serve them throughout their lives. It is this sustained dedication — evident in the 81 events they led or supported — that contributed to Parks & Recreation being honored with Conservation Minnesota's 2025 Blazing Star Award, a recognition celebrating exceptional work in conservation, climate resilience, environmental protection, and outdoor recreation.

These accomplishments build on an already abundant year where Parks & Recreation also:

- ▶ Hosted the 5th Annual White Earth Nation Fishing Derby with 1,082 anglers, including 470 youth, and introduced the exciting Ice Castle fish house raffle.
- ▶ Delivered a successful Youth Summer Internship Program centered on hands on outdoor stewardship.
- ▶ Brought Sugarbush teachings alive at the Waubun School Forest, producing about 12 gallons of syrup with students and teachers, followed by a community pancake feed.
- ▶ Held the Canoe & Kayak Safety event to promote safe recreation on the water.
- ▶ Maintained public use areas and beaches, ensuring clean, safe, and accessible spaces for community members throughout the year.
- ▶ Upgraded both Roy Lake and Lynwood public areas with new vault toilets to enhance comfort, safety, and convenience for all users.

Parks & Recreation continues to demonstrate how culturally grounded programming, consistent community engagement, and hands on education uplift youth and strengthen the Nation's connection to the land.

## **CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP**

### **2025 Tribal Climate Camp**

From September 21 – 26, the White Earth Nation Environmental Team proudly hosted the 2025 Tribal Climate Camp, a culturally appropriate, week long training designed for delegates from Tribal Nations to strengthen climate planning and support long term Tribal resilience. The camp provided hands on learning, peer exchange, and space for delegates to advance their own climate goals while connecting with others facing similar environmental challenges.

### **White Earth Climate Action Plan Adoption**

In 2025, the White Earth Reservation Business Committee formally adopted the White Earth Climate Action Plan. The plan identifies opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and outlines strategies tailored to individual sectors across the reservation. These sector specific goals support a coordinated approach to lowering emissions and achieving the overall reduction targets established by the White Earth Nation.

Together, the Tribal Climate Camp and the adoption of the Climate Action Plan mark major steps forward in strengthening climate resilience, protecting our land and water, and ensuring a healthier future for the next seven generations.

## **FORESTRY & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

Forestry and Emergency Management played a critical role in protecting the community during one of the most destructive weather events of the year. Their quick action, coordination, and long hours demonstrated deep commitment to the safety and wellbeing of the Nation.

### **SEVERE WINDSTORM RESPONSE**

Rice Lake Community: A devastating and powerful windstorm struck White Earth, with the Rice Lake community hit particularly hard. Emergency Management and Forestry worked alongside the Roads Department to respond immediately and provide urgent support.

### **EMERGENCY RESPONSE ACTIONS**

Delivered generators to elders and individuals with medical needs, ensuring they had access to electricity for essential health equipment. Distributed food and water at the community center to support residents affected by the outages. Worked tirelessly to remove downed trees and debris, reopening critical roadways to allow emergency access and safe travel. They provided assistance beyond the immediate area, including traveling to Oshkimanidoo in Bemidji to help where

needed. The dedication before, during, and after the storm ensured community members were cared for and essential transportation routes were restored as quickly as possible.

## **AGRICULTURE**

### **Bison Program**

#### **Welcomed 10 Yellowstone Bulls**

The Ag team brought in 10 three- to four-year-old Yellowstone bulls, a highly valued genetic line, secured through partnership with the Intertribal Buffalo Council. The herd expanded from four heifers in 2023 to 55 bison by Fall 2025.

#### **Hands On Harvest & Necropsy Training**

Staff facilitated a traditional harvest and necropsy training, offering a culturally grounded, hands on learning experience that blended traditional teachings with herd health education.

#### **Surprise Calf Arrival**

The breeding herd at Spence Farm welcomed an unexpected calf in August — months ahead of the anticipated 2026 calving season. All four heifers delivered a calf in 2025.

#### **Intertribal Traditional Foods Trade**

Strengthening food sovereignty relationships, Ag coordinated a trade with the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation: 500 pounds of bison meat for 400 pounds of wild rice, reinforcing intertribal connection and shared food systems.

## **FOOD SOVEREIGNTY & LOCAL FOOD ACCESS**

### **Fresh Produce Delivery to Every Community**

Throughout the summer, Ag staff themselves purchased, transported, and delivered fresh produce to every tribal community. This was a major time commitment for the team, and the effort was deeply appreciated by families, elders, and youth who relied on consistent access to fresh, healthy foods.

### **Strategic Planning Sessions in November**

The program conducted strategic planning sessions in November to begin aligning future programming, priorities, and capacity with long term goals. This early planning step demonstrates the program's commitment to structured growth and intentional direction. Leadership refined the meaning of food sovereignty and food security for White Earth, embedding these principles into program design, community outreach, and project planning.

### **Soil Health Education**

Hosted a two day public soil health seminar with the Minnesota Soil Health Coalition, drawing strong attendance and providing hands on learning about building soil

health, reducing chemical inputs, and protecting water quality. The Coalition also assessed soil health on Tribal ag leases and found excellent conditions.

### **Garden Support & Seedling Production**

With additional TERO staffing, seedling and plant production remained on track. Spring tilling, with mulch, poultry fertilizer, and starter plants provided to gardeners.

### **Naytahwaush Community Sugarbush**

The sugarbush east of the Spence Farm pasture opened for the season, with sap flowing and growing community involvement. Volunteers will receive maple syrup shares, and additional evaporators are available for independent sugarbush operations.

### **Cultural & Traditional Food Education**

Public workshops continued in gardening, food preservation, and manoomin harvesting. Indigenous food plantings began in NTW, with fruit and nut production expected in 2027.

### **Community Gardens**

The NTW community garden, started last year, will be expanded. Outreach identified Pine Point as the next site for a new community garden in 2026.

### **Wild Foods Collaboration**

Partnered with the Forestry Department to begin blueberry habitat restoration, including bringing in a Grand Portage advisor to guide restoration and maintenance practices.

### **Support for Conservation Programs**

Agriculture staff continued maintaining and managing 800 acres of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands, providing mowing, pollinator planting, and habitat upkeep necessary for long term contract compliance. This work was also referenced in internal communications regarding CRP fund management.

## **WILDLIFE & CONSERVATION**

### **Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Surveillance**

The Wildlife team collected 112 deer heads for CWD testing during the fall season, with zero confirmed cases. Each submission earned a \$45 L&M Fleet gift card, encouraging community participation in ongoing disease monitoring efforts that protect both treaty harvesters and the long term health of the deer population.

### **Bear Management – NTW Community**

A highly successful bear hounding management approach was implemented to keep bears out of the Naytahwaush community. This method – using trained dogs to safely

push bears away from homes and community borders – proved far more effective than trapping and relocating, strengthening both public safety and animal welfare.

## **WILD RICE**

### **Infrastructure Improvements & Lake Access**

Several significant upgrades were completed at Lower Rice Lake. These improvements made ricing more accessible and supported a smoother, safer experience for the community.

- ▶ Installation of wood corduroy walkways with gravel overlays at the Ponsford and Bush landings, improving safe access to the water's edge.
- ▶ Placement of large boulders at the start of each walkway to prevent damage from ATV and UTV traffic.
- ▶ Expansion of parking areas to improve traffic flow and accommodate more vehicles during the busy harvest season.
- ▶ Reopening of the old channel at Big Bear landing after years of overgrowth, allowing ricers to travel directly from the parking area to the lake.
- ▶ Installation of solar powered lights and navigation flags at all four landings to increase visibility and safety.

### **Record Wild Rice Purchases**

The program purchased 320,699 pounds of freshly harvested manoomin from ricers – a record amount. Buying began on August 22 and concluded on September 22, marking a highly successful harvest season for both ricers and the program.

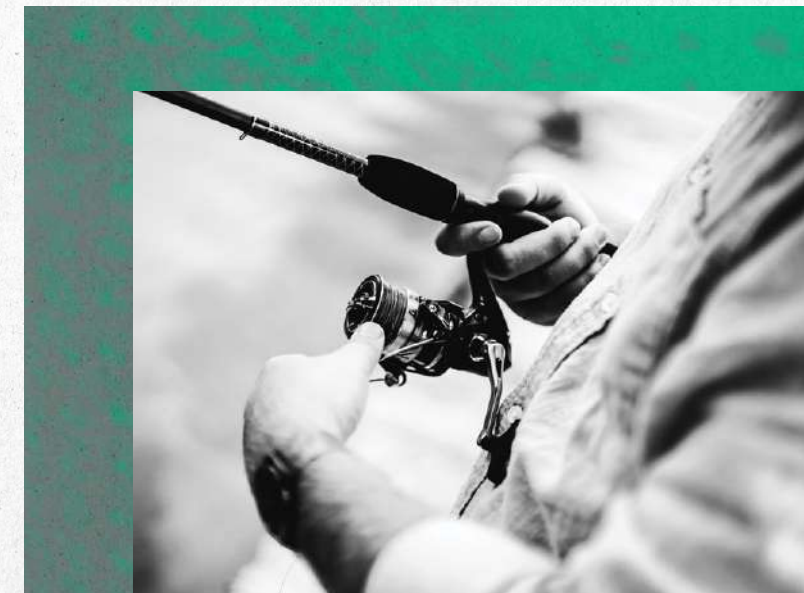
## **PERMITTING**

The Permitting Department officially launched in 2025. The team has made significant progress establishing clear processes, building forms and procedures, and responding to the growing need for regulatory oversight across the Nation.

### **Permits Currently Issued**

The department is now actively issuing a wide range of permits, including:

- ▶ High capacity water appropriation permits
- ▶ Public works water permits
- ▶ Fishing tournament permits
- ▶ Individual septic system permits
- ▶ Building permits
- ▶ Topographical change permits
- ▶ Special harvest permits



- ▶ Special netting permits
- ▶ Elder netting permits

These permits help protect natural resources, ensure safe development practices, and support cultural harvesting activities.

### Permits in Development

The team is currently creating or finalizing new permit types to address emerging community needs, including:

- ▶ Prescribed burn permits
- ▶ Controlled structure burn permits
- ▶ Commercial taxidermy permits
- ▶ Salvage yard permits
- ▶ A stormwater management plan permit

These additions will expand the Nation's ability to regulate land use, protect water quality, and enhance public safety.

### Eagle Feather Inventory Process

The department also began developing a process to inventory eagle feathers. These feathers are presented to community members in recognition of important achievements, such as graduations or other significant milestones. Establishing this system ensures respectful tracking, proper documentation, and cultural integrity.

## WATER RESOURCES

The White Earth Water Resources Department is responsible for protecting and monitoring more than 530 lakes larger than 10 acres, nearly 300 miles of rivers and streams, and the Reservation's groundwater resources. The department operates with three dedicated staff members: a Manager, a Hydrologist, and a Surface Water Quality Coordinator.

Throughout 2025, the Water Resources team prepared for field season through extensive training and coordination with the EPA and state agencies. The department also continued to strengthen partnerships with federal, state, and local organizations to improve water quality across the Reservation and meet long term water resource goals.

### Nonpoint Source Assessment & Management Plan

Identified and evaluated sources of nonpoint pollution across the Reservation, including agricultural runoff, stormwater, and atmospheric deposition. This assessment informs long term strategies to protect water quality. Developing a management plan that outlines strategies to reduce pollution from sediment, pesticides, and nutrients. This plan provides a roadmap for improving water quality through better land management and runoff control.

### Stabilization and Restoration of Shimmelhorn Creek

Advanced long term restoration planning for streambank stabilization, tree planting to lower water temperatures, and removal of abandoned asphalt. Over time, increased shading will allow for the reintroduction of trout — anticipated approximately 10 years after mature canopy growth.

### Hydraulic and Hydrologic Reconnectivity of Bad Boy Creek

Continued assessment and planning work for reconnecting natural hydrology in this designated trout stream. This long term project aims to restore ecological function and eventually support reintroduction of trout.

### Surface Water Monitoring of Lakes

Completed monitoring of 16 reservation lakes for water quality, sampled in both June and September.

Groundwater Monitoring Wells: Continued installation and use of groundwater monitoring wells to strengthen baseline data for aquifer health and long term groundwater protection.

### Macroinvertebrate Quality Assurance Program Plan

Completed the QAPP for macroinvertebrate sampling. Field sampling will begin in summer 2026. Macroinvertebrates act as biological indicators, helping assess the overall health of streams and aquatic ecosystems.

### Septic System Inventory

Continued inventory of septic systems to identify potential risks to groundwater and surface water.

### Culvert Inventory

Conducted culvert assessments to support hydrologic modeling, identify barriers to aquatic life, and plan for infrastructure improvements.

### Coordination with Watershed Districts

Participated in regular meetings with the seven watershed districts located within Reservation boundaries to align goals, share data, and coordinate restoration and monitoring projects.

### LCCMR Pineland Sands Study

Contributed to the Pineland Sands study focused on groundwater resources, including chemical composition and the movement of chemicals and nutrients on and off the Reservation. This work supports a clearer understanding of regional groundwater vulnerabilities.

# INDIAN CHILD WELFARE DIVISION

## DEPARTMENT PROFILE



### LOCATION

White Earth, Mahnomen, Bagley, Duluth, and Minneapolis

### HOURS OF OPERATION

24/7 • 8:00am – 4:30pm

#### CERA SWIFTWATER-HAYES DIRECTOR

Enrolled member of the Oglala Lakota Nation  
**Email:** [Cera.Swiftwater@whiteearth-nsn.gov](mailto:Cera.Swiftwater@whiteearth-nsn.gov)  
**Phone:** 218-983-4647 / 218-850-9985

#### — ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

**Email:**  
**Phone:**

#### HOW MANY STAFF ARE IN YOUR DEPARTMENT?

32

### SUMMARY OF SERVICES PROVIDED

White Earth Indian Child Welfare provides case management services to families that are eligible for ICWA services.

### FUNDING SOURCE(S)

Child Welfare Targeted Case Management, CHAFEE-Independent Living Skills Grant, STAY (Successful Transition to Adulthood for Youth) Grant, Customary Adoptions Grant, Kinship Supportive Services BIA Grant, Children's Mental Health Screenings Grant, Title IV-E Reimbursements, State Initiative and ICWA Primary Grants, Permanency and Supportive Services - Kinship Grant, CASEY Family Programs Partnership Grant, Opioid Allocation, and Family First Preservation Services Allocation.

### GENERAL FUND

White Earth ICW does not receive assistance from General Fund.

## DEPARTMENTS

### Gizhawaaso Voluntary Program

The Gizhawaaso Voluntary Program works with families to access services that will help protect them from out of home placement of their children. Gizhawaaso is voluntary intensive case management for families that focuses on rigorous case management to stabilize and set parents and families up for success long term.

### IV-E Program

IV-E Program works with child welfare to obtain medical assistance for children in foster care and to obtain reimbursements from foster care, childcare, and other eligible services.

### Customary Adoption Program/Kinship Permanency Supportive Services

Customary Adoption works with relatives of children and makes additional relatives for children who cannot return home to the custody of their parents in the foreseeable future. Adoption department offers post-adoption assistance to families who are needing additional assistance and support with navigating resources for children that have gone through customary adoptions.

### Independent Living Skills Program

The Independent Living Skills Program works with youth aged 16-23 to assist with life skills and services.

### Extended Foster Care Program

Extended Foster Care Program works with youth 18-21 who choose to stay in foster care.

### Educational Neglect Program

Educational Neglect Intervention Program works with school aged children and

families to address excessive absenteeism with support and interventions.

### Intake and Assessments

Intake and Assessments handles all child maltreatment calls on the Reservation to screen and determine whether an assessment is warranted, type of assessment, and immediate response.

### Child Protection

The Child Protection Program handles all child protection matters on the Reservation under exclusive jurisdiction authority. Provides secondary case management and ICWA Compliance off the Reservation in the counties and metro areas. The program also provides ICWA compliance and support to families and jurisdictional territories out of state.

### Foster Care Program

The Foster Care Program provides care on a Tribal level to our children when their parent or caretaker is unable to do so. Foster parents are to be committed to the sacredness of our children: respecting, honoring, and nurturing them when they are faced with the trauma of being separated from their parents. The Tribe and foster parents are responsible for ensuring that children receive the highest care possible. In FY2024 this program had 72 licensed foster homes and 31 short term respite homes.

### Parenting Visitation Center

The Parenting Visitation Center provides supervised visitation to parents and their children in foster care. The main site is in Mahnomen, and three satellite centers in White Earth, Pine Point, and Bagley.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND RECOGNITION

ICW was awarded 223,000 for the Families First Preservation Services Allocation. This allocation's intent was to provide direct services to families in our communities to prevent out of home placement for those at risk. ICW was able to assist 138 families that did not have open child protection cases with direct assistance. Direct assistance was defined as past due rent, utilities, grocery vouchers, clothing vouchers, and car repairs.

ICW's Gizhawaaso Program provides services to families as a prevention method, helping families who are at risk of entering or reentering the child protection system and/or out of home placement. This method prevents placements and the trauma it creates. This holistic cultural approach implements the missing link that many Native people are needing for successful healing to historical and generational trauma. ICW assists all families we serve who are seeking a cultural way of life and teachings. From January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2025 ICW serviced 74 families and prevented placement of 210 children.

We continue to collaborate with White Earth tribal court for our reunification ceremonies. We celebrated the hard work and efforts done by parents, who successfully completed their requirements of their child protection case plan and court-ordered services. After the court hearing, a ceremony is held with traditional medicines and songs. Afterward, a meal is shared with all involved, and the family is then presented with gifts such as matching ribbon skirts/shirts to go forward in a good way. Between 1/1/24 - 12/31/25 we conducted eight ceremonies with 16 children being reunified with their parents.

The youth involved in the Independent Living Skills Program and Extended Foster Care Program are invited to participate in field trips and fun events throughout the year. On average there are about 15 youth participants per activity. The activities this year included visiting the BSU campus and NW Tech campus in Bemidji. They learned about FAFSA, scholarships, financial aid programs, Native Programs and then went bowling and to the park. Another event they went fishing with Natural Resources Dept and learned gardening basics. Each youth made flower pots and vegetable pots to take home. They got to participate in ricing with Natural Resources Dept and went to the Tamarack Wild Life Center. They learned about ricing, cultural presentation, youth participated in ricing. Last event of the year they were able to go to a haunted corn maze. Agency also took youth grocery shopping and they partnered up and made the cheapest meal they could by following all the food pyramid sections. Youth also made phone calls to schedule dental appts, price car insurance, purchase tires, schedule Dr appts. They practiced calling real people who volunteered to help with the activity so that they could go through these motions.

Between 1/1/2024 and 12/31/2025 we had five high school graduates, one GED completion, one graduate of a two-year technical college program, one Job Corp Graduate, and a youth who was in their third year of college by the time they finished the program.

# JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT



## COURT

The Tribal Court provides services in the following areas but not limited to: adoption, appeal, child support, general civil, civil commitments, conservation, custody, dissolution, employment appeals, garnishment, guardianships, housing, child protection, Juvenile matters, paternity, probate, traffic, truancy, name change, order for protection, small claims and marriages. In 2025, the Court had 618 new cases filed and held 1368 hearings.

The Guardian ad Litem Program Gezhaanaajib Nejanisug (Guardian of the Children) currently has one guardian. Her current case load is 12 custody cases and 25 ICW cases.

## WELLNESS COURT

Court occurs every other week and individuals are under surveillance and tested for alcohol and other chemicals at their home, employment, and during office visits approximately two times per week. During this reporting period, the probation agents and surveillance officer continue to have direct contact on a random but continuous basis covering a wide geographical area within Becker, Clearwater, Mahnomen Counties, and the White Earth Reservation.

	WE/BECKER DWI	WE/MAHN DWI	WE/MAHN DRUG
CURRENT	7	12	2
COMPLETED	35	26	12
NON-COMPLETED	24	12	2
TRANSFERRED	3	1	0
TOTAL	69	51	16
COMPLETION RATE	56%	66%	75%

**WE/Becker DWI Court:** 69 participants since the beginning of the program; 35 have graduated, 24 have been terminated, three have transferred, and seven are currently in the program.

**WE/Mahnomen DWI Court:** 51 participants since the beginning of the program; 26 have graduated, 12 have terminated, one transferred, and 12 are currently in the program.

**WE/Mahnomen Wellness/Drug Court:** Since August of 2021 there have been 16 participants; 12 have graduated, two have been terminated, and two are currently in the program.

We have acquired a defense attorney for Mahnomen County and will work towards attaining one for Becker County. Funding for defense attorneys is through an award of the State grant. We have gained engagement from the White Earth Police Department and Becker County Sheriff's Office.

The Team has determined culture is an important aspect related to our venue. A cultural component has been added to graduation ceremonies. Future cultural training and incorporation is anticipated.

We continue to implement and gain education to implement the new Standards for treatment courts. We are updating policy manuals and handbooks to align with Federal Best Practice Standards.

## TRIBAL PROBATION

The Tribal Probation program has been operational for four years. The mission of this program is to establish collaborative partnerships between state and tribal agencies, with the goal of engaging high-risk clients in the process of re-entry and rehabilitation.

Our initiative aims to develop a holistic, cultural, evidence-based, and collaborative approach to addressing recidivism. We believe that by creating opportunities for change, we can build safer and healthier communities. Additionally, we strive to support individuals in becoming healthy, productive, and independent.

Here are a few statistics that highlight the progress and impact of the program so far:

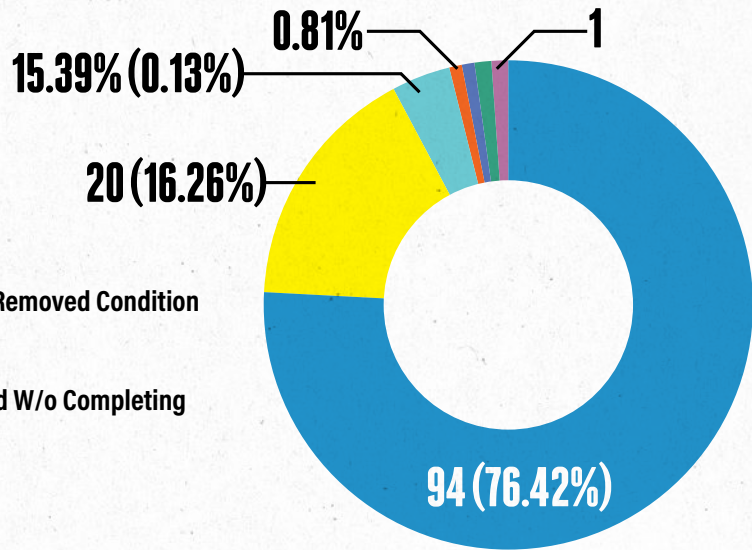
**Total Clients Participating in the ATPO Program By Year**

STATUS	BEMIDJI	DETROIT LAKES	GRAND RAPIDS	ISR	MOORHEAD	TOTAL
CLOSED	7	37		10	2	56
2022	2	14		4	1	21
2023	2	16		3	1	22
2024	3	6		2		11
2025		1		1		2
OPEN	4	79	1	13	2	99
2022	1	28		5	1	35
2023	3	15	1	2		21
2024		22		2	1	25
2025		14		4		18
TOTAL	11	116	1	23	4	155

# CLOSED CONDITION OUTCOMES

- Successful
- Sentence Executed
- Closed Jurisdiction
- Condition Not Directed by...

- Court Removed Condition
- Death
- Expired W/o Completing



## PEACEMAKING COURT

### Endazhi-nanandawi'igaadegin Gideminaanin (*Where our Hearts are Healed*)

Peacemaking plays an important role in indigenous justice practices. It is a traditional conflict resolution process that focuses on problem-solving and healing relationships. Participation in Peacemaking is voluntary, and it encourages people to solve their own problems in a safe environment. Sessions are facilitated by our Peacemaker to ensure that the process achieves balance and equality to all participants. For 2025, the program had 37 circles involving matters such as: custody, visitation, wrap-around service, conflict resolution in the workplace, restorative justice, sibling visitation and family group decision making for child protection cases. The Peacemaking continues to grow with its collaboration between Indian Child Welfare utilizing our services as well as the surrounding counties sending referrals for Restorative Justice Circles. A panel of Elders is in the selection process, this will allow us to have elders available to participate in the Circle, offering wisdom and guidance for all. Through community outreach we hope to meet with many community members during events and meetings.

## MOVING ON

Moving on is an evidenced based intervention for women who are at-risk or involved in the criminal justice system. This program integrates strength-based, trauma-informed, and relational theory to help women mobilize and build personal and social resources.

The primary goal of this program is to provide women with alternatives free from criminal activity by assisting them to mobilize and build personal strategies, natural supports, and community resources.

The development of Moving On was influenced by three complementary approaches: relational theory, motivational interviewing, and cognitive-based intervention. Moving on is made up of six distinct modules. Modules 1 and 6 are provided on a 1:1 basis while Module 2-5 are delivered in a group format. Each of the group modules has approximately 2 hours of programming content. There is a total of 23 group sessions which are delivered once per week for 26 weeks.

Our first Moving On Graduation took place on November 12th, 2025.



# CULTURAL DIVISION ACTIVITY

## A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Continued support for ceremonial drums given for peace to the Ojibwe from the Dakota

Partner with other tribal entities on cultural programming

Enwejig initiative focused on developing adult immersion to put White Earth in a position to have full immersion education programming, including relationship building with philanthropic partners

Continued support for White Earth substance abuse programming and other White Earth tribal entities

Powwow grounds improvements

Provide culturally and historically focused training for various White Earth programs

# TRIBAL UTILITY COMMISSION (TUC)



## LOCATION

35500 Eagle View Road  
Ogema, MN 56569

## MAIN PHONE

218-983-3285

The White Earth Tribal Utility Commission (TUC) was created in 2022 within the White Earth Nation's Tribal Utility Code for the purpose of utility oversight and regulation.

The TUC is currently made up of five Commissioners: Melinda Iverson (Chair); Jacob McArthur (Vice Chair); Christie Haverkamp; Mike Smith; and a vacant seat. The TUC Executive Director is Nate Mathews.

The following is a summary of the work and major TUC actions over the past 18 months:

### White Earth Renewable Energy Projects Completed/Underway with Tuc Support

- ▶ There were two BIA Department of Energy and Mineral Development (DEMD) grant projects that were completed in 2025:
  - **BIA-DEMD-EDMP:** Energy and Mineral Development Program. This was a grant that studied the feasibility of installing new solar PV investments at various tribal facilities, in addition to the feasibility of a combined heat and power system for the Shooting Star Casino at Mahnomen.
  - **BIA-DEMD-TEDC:** Tribal Energy Development Capacity. This was a grant that studied the feasibility of the White Earth Nation creating a Tribal Utility Authority.
- ▶ Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Indian Energy Clean Energy Deployment Grant.
  - This is a \$2.8M DOE grant to construct a 1.1MW AC solar array at Shooting Star Bagley. Interconnection application submitted to Clearwater Polk Electric Cooperative; construction anticipated in 2026.

### Utility Infrastructure Projects Reviewed, Permitted, Developer/Project Assistance

- ▶ **Cell tower projects:** New Verizon 5G tower (Naytahwaush); AT&T/Verizon Tower 5G installs (Bejou, Wauban)
- ▶ **Broadband construction projects**
  - Garden Valley Communications
    - Line Extension program: 17 new fiber services south and east of Mahnomen
    - Border-to-Border/RDOF program: 117 mainlines of fiber, 287 new fiber services, Naytahwaush and north Mahnomen County areas.
  - Arvig Communications
    - Border-to-Border program: 6 miles of new mainline and 137 new services, Naytahwaush.
- ▶ **Pine Point Charter School Resiliency Hub Project:** This is a 500 kW solar array project with a 2.76 MWh Battery backup system. The TUC provided planning support to the private solar developer, ownership entity, engineers, Charter School, Itasca Mantrap Cooperative, Pine Point Council leadership, and Tribe.
- ▶ **Siting permits:** 15 siting permits have been issued by the TUC for utility project infrastructure (electric, fiber, towers).
- ▶ **WE facility solar panels, <40kW:** In 2025 the TUC facilitated a comprehensive review/study of the various solar panel systems on the Reservation, with recommendations for continued O/M needs.

### Regulations and Code additions

- ▶ **Net Metering Regulations:** The TUC adopted new Regulations regarding Net Metering on the White Earth Reservation.
- ▶ **Telecommunications Code:** The TUC has created a draft Telecommunications Code out for comment and final review currently.

### NARUC, State and Regional Tribal Energy Leadership

- ▶ **NARUC:** The White Earth TUC became an official member of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC), the first tribe to become a member under the NARUC Charter.
- ▶ **TACE:** The White Earth TUC provided monthly leadership with the newly formed MN TACE (Tribal Advocacy Council on Energy) a MN Tribe and MN Department of Commerce partnership for MN Tribal and State Energy policy and advocacy. We held our first MN Tribal Energy Forum in the Fall of 2025 at Mille Lacs.
- ▶ **MTERA:** White Earth is a charter member of the Midwest Tribal Energy Resource Association (MTERA), a consortium of 35 Tribes in the Midwest. MTERA held the first Annual Summit in Milwaukee, WI in the Fall of 2025.

# DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

White Earth Department of Transportation's mission is to provide, safe, efficient, and convenient roadways within the reservation boundaries. Our roadways represent 150 miles used by tribal and non-tribal drivers.



CLARK ROAD NEWLY PAVED ROUTE



SHARED USED PATH ROY LAKE

The White Earth Department of Transportation (WEDOT) has concluded construction on the Clark Road north of Naytahwaush which is now widened and paved throughout the route.

WEDOT was successful in securing funds from Transportation Alternatives to address sidewalks in the village of Nay Tah Waush. WEDOT was also successful in securing funding to develop shared use path from Safe Streets For All (SS4A) from the new water tower to the new clinic in Nay Tah Waush. Both projects continue to move forward towards construction. Path will be similar to Roy Lake project shown.

WEDOT is actively pursuing road and pedestrian safety initiatives along Minnesota State Trunk Highway 113 from the Waubun School Forest area to the village Elbow Lake. The Tribe has resubmitted a grant application for the upcoming year in a continued effort to get our project funded

The department has continued to work towards improving safety measures on our tribal and local roads. We are in the early stages of developing plans for a separated shared use path in the villages of White Earth, Pine Point, and Rice Lake.

# WATER AND SEWER

White Earth Water & Sewer's mission is to provide continuous, clean, and assured safe service of water & wastewater utilities for our tribal communities and members in a manner respectful to the White Earth Nation's natural resources.



PROJECTED WHITE EARTH WATER TREATMENT PLANT

The water and sewer department continues to serve tribal members and communities with water and wastewater utilities. Our tribal community systems provide an average of 150,000 gallons of water per day to our six villages. All our water and wastewater systems are federally regulated under the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Clean Water Act.

The White Earth Water treatment plant construction project has started and will be completed in 2027. The department has continued its efforts into building new water treatment facilities for Naytahwaush and Pine Point.

Wastewater improvements projects in Rice Lake and Naytahwaush to ensure proper wastewater disposal in our treatment ponds have been completed in 2025.

The water and sewer department also constructs residential septic systems and provides services such as septic tank pumping, line thawing, exterior repair and grave digging. Our department also handles the Elder/Veteran Services such as snow plowing, and lawn mowing.



COMPLETED POND CELL PINE POINT WASTEWATER PONDS



NAYTAHWAUSH POND PROJECT



# TRANSIT

White Earth Public Transit has started its construction on the new Tribal Transit building located in Waubun; this will house all operation of White Earth Public Transit. This building will include administrative offices, two repair bays, indoor bus storage and washing. Also, a propane fill station to lower greenhouse gas emissions and keep the cost of White Earth Public Transit affordable for its clients while reducing maintenance costs.

The new building is set to open in July/August 2026. Another new feature to help our clients with is new dispatch software, clients will be able to book their own rides, make payments online and track their bus for pick-up. This will also help the drivers prioritize all their pick-ups for the route and allow dispatchers to make changes or add new locations as well as monitor each route from pick-up to destination resulting in less waiting times. All of our new improvements will provide safe, reliable, and efficient service to our clients.



## WHITE EARTH FLEET GARAGE

We continue to service department vehicles as well as public vehicles. We are fully staffed with one department manager, one office manager, and three full-time mechanics. Our garage hours are 8:00am – 4:30pm, Monday – Friday. We have our equipment and software all up-to-date. Mechanics are able to service all make and models. Schedule by calling 218-983-3296.



### SERVICES WHITE EARTH FLEET GARAGE PROVIDE

<b>Oil Change</b>	<b>Mount and Balance Tires</b>
<b>Control Arms</b>	<b>Brakes</b>
<b>Wheel Alignment</b>	<b>Rotors-Calipers</b>
<b>Struts</b>	<b>Shocks</b>
<b>Tire Repair/Sales</b>	<b>Battery Replacement</b>
<b>Suspension Front and Rear</b>	<b>GPS Install</b>
<b>DOT Certification</b>	<b>Spark Plug</b>
<b>Wires</b>	<b>Boots</b>
<b>Wheel Bearings</b>	<b>CV Shafts</b>
<b>Air Filters</b>	<b>Diagnostic</b>
<b>Starters</b>	<b>Tune-Ups</b>

## STOP IN OR CALL WITH ANY QUESTIONS

White Earth Tribal Fleet Department  
37999 Marten Drive, White Earth, MN  
218-983-3292

# WHITE EARTH ENTERPRISES



## WHITE EARTH BUILDERS, LLC

Provides comprehensive construction management services. Recent projects include the White Earth Transit Facility, Waabigwan Outdoor Building, Waabigwan Extraction Project, Natural Resources Fisheries Project, Naytahwaush E.N.P. Kitchen, Mahnomen Homeless Shelter, Boys & Girls Club of Mahnomen, and the White Earth Family Treatment 4-Plex Project.

## WHITE EARTH BUILDING SUPPLIES, LLC

Has refreshed its storefront and expanded its floor space to better serve customers. The enhanced facility now offers a broader and more accessible selection of lumber, plumbing supplies, building materials, power tools, carpentry supplies, and painting products to meet the needs of both residential and commercial builders.

## WHITE EARTH BUSINESS PRODUCTS, LLC

Provides high-quality branding solutions and business essentials for organizations, entrepreneurs, and community members. With expanded in-house embroidery and custom heat transfer capabilities, the company offers a full range of office products, office furniture, promotional items, logo design services, and home goods. The team is dedicated to delivering reliable service, professional results, and strong support for the White Earth Nation and surrounding communities.

## HIGHWAY 59 HOMES, LLC

Is a tribally owned company operating under White Earth Enterprises. The company's mission is to expand housing access on reservation land by offering a clear, streamlined pathway from home selection and financing through site preparation, delivery, set and finish, and warranty support. Highway 59 Homes focuses on reducing barriers to homeownership through transparent budgeting, coordinated project delivery, and local partnerships that support the development of quality, code-compliant homes for tribal members.

## WHITE EARTH SANITATION, LLC

Provides solid waste disposal services within the boundaries of the White Earth Reservation to more than 2,100 residential, commercial, and business customers. In addition to traditional waste services, the company now offers battery recycling, vape disposal, and specialized recycling services to support safe and environmentally responsible waste management.

# URBAN OFFICE



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

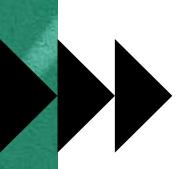
White Earth Urban Office continues to grow and support our community in the Twin Cities metro area. This year, we hosted two Tribal ID and wild rice events at the Minneapolis American Indian Center, one in the fall and one in the spring. These events helped community members access important services. We stay connected through a monthly email newsletter. Every week, we held Cultural Fridays with breakfast at the Brown Mansion on Franklin Avenue, where community members could join an Ojibwe language table, learn Anishinaabe Foundational Teachings, and participate in hand drum singing. Our cultural team hosted a Spirit Pole ceremony that had the largest turnout in the nation. We also held community sobriety talking circles on Thursday evenings, along with dinner and a monthly Speaker Meeting, which has attracted over 60 people at times. We had an Open House during Native American Month in May and represented our nation at local marches and events across the metro area.

## WHITE MANSION IMPROVEMENTS

We completed major updates to the White Mansion on Franklin Avenue. This included a new boiler, new gas furnaces, and new central air conditioning units to improve comfort year-round. We repaired the exterior brick and lintels, fixed a sinking porch, painted the interior walls and trim, and installed new carpet throughout the building. Tree services were performed on all owned properties to manage overgrowth and keep trees safely away from buildings.

## CLIFTON PLACE REMODEL

We started a major third-floor remodeling project at 1730 Clifton Place. This work includes a new roof, adding an elevator to improve access, and creating a simpler layout with one main hallway. We are building a larger group room with a kitchenette that can be divided into two smaller rooms. The project will also improve third-floor bathrooms, office spaces, and the parking lot. Windows throughout the building are being repaired, and a mural by artist Moira Villiard will be installed on the wall behind the main staircase, under skylights. Two new air handlers will help keep the building comfortable all year. Construction is expected to be finished by the end of summer 2026.



# **YOUR NOTES**



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