



SERVING MARSHALL, KITTSOON, ROSEAU
AND LAKE OF THE WOODS COUNTIES IN
NORTHWESTERN MINNESOTA

2024 - 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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MISSION STATEMENT

Northwst Community Action, INC assists people to achieve economic stability and build strong communities.

CORE VALUES

Compassion
Accountability
Resourcefulness
Environment (that is welcoming)

Board of Directors

LAKE OF THE WOODS

Edward Arnesen
Rachael Raschke
Jenny Moorman
Jon Waibel

ROSEAU COUNTY

Carol Rhen
Colleen Lorensen
Pamela Lovejoy
Levi Novacek

EAST MARSHALL COUNTY

Gary Kiesow
Carol Steuck
Orvis Haugen

KITTSOON COUNTY

Ardell Larson
Cindy Hanson
Derry Jones
Cindy Christopherson

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Sharon Millner

Dear Community Partners, Participants and Friends,

I am pleased to present the 2024-2025 Annual Report for Northwest Community Action, Inc. July 26, 2025, marked 60 years of service to residents of Roseau, Kittson, Lake of the Woods and Marshall Counties!

A heartfelt thank you to the Board of Directors for their commitment to the mission of Community Action and their willingness to actively engage and support that mission.

I appreciate the NWCA employees and their commitment to living our core values of COMPASSION, ACCOUNTABILITY, RESOURCEFULNESS and the commitment to create a welcoming ENVIRONMENT for all. The variety of programs and services that our agency provides to low-income individuals and families throughout Roseau, Kittson, Marshall and Lake of the Woods counties are effective because of the dedication and determination of our employees.

Our agency continues to collaborate with a wide variety of community partners to meet the needs of low-income children, families, and individuals. I am grateful for our partnerships with county social service centers, county boards, school districts, public health, energy vendors, contractors, local businesses, faith communities, and neighboring Community Action Agencies.

Thank you to our federal, state and private funders for your support. A special thank you to local community members for supporting our programs through monetary donations as well as donations of time, talent, goods and services.

At the heart of all we do, we remember the Promise of Community Action:

"Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other."

Visit us at nwcaa.org and please stop in or reach out to me any time to discuss the services and mission of NWCA at 218-528-3258 Ext. 117 or smillner@nwcaa.org.

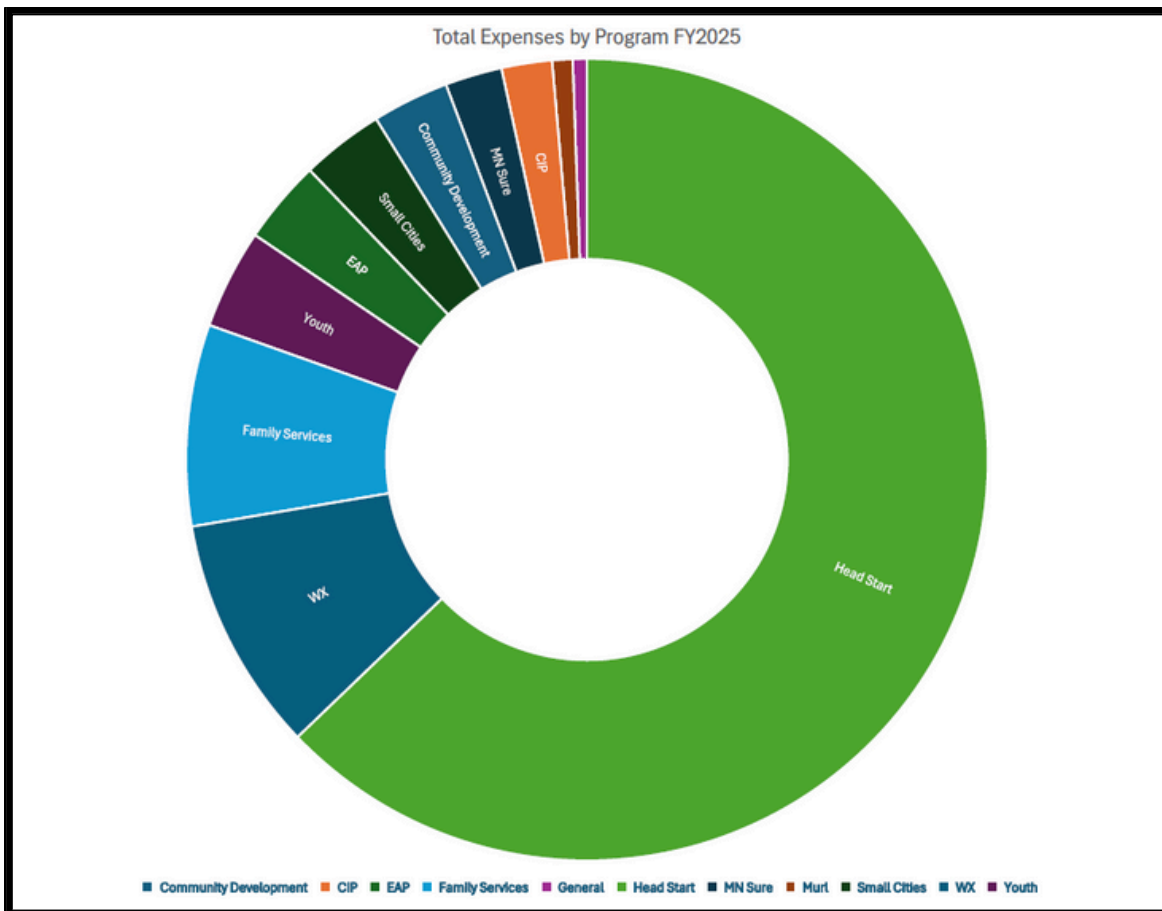
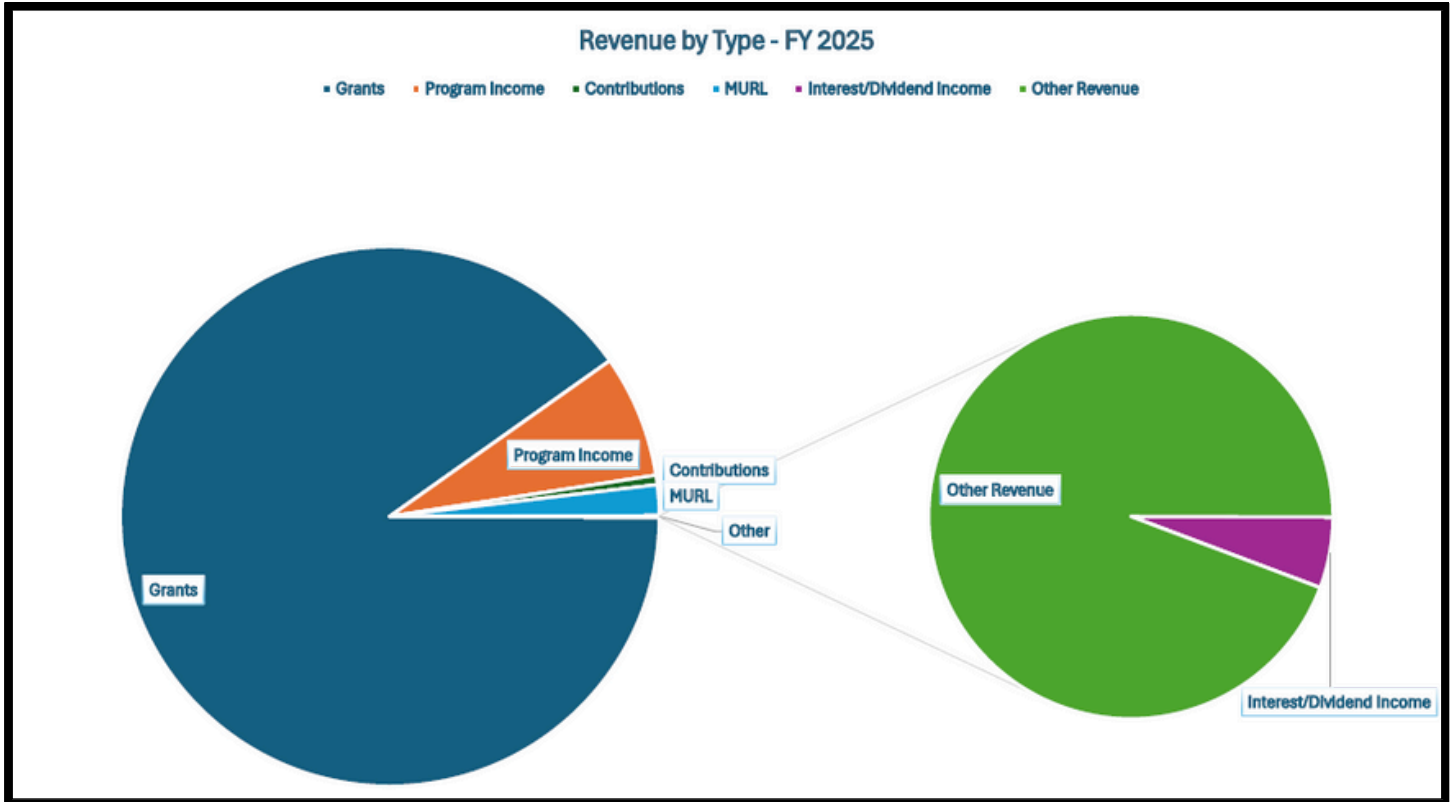
Sincerely,

Executive Director



FISCAL

Fiscal Director -



WEATHERIZATION

Program Director - Jason Gohman

The goal of the Weatherization Program is to reduce home energy consumption and costs for eligible households by improving the energy efficiency of their homes while ensuring their health and safety.

The Weatherization Program is a grant that is federally funded through the U.S. Department of Energy and a state propane fund used to insulate and address health and safety issues for homes with propane as their primary heat. The program prioritizes services to the elderly, people with disabilities, high energy consumers, households with high energy burden, and households with young children.

Weatherization is a process of making homes more energy efficient through means of diagnostic testing. The whole-house approach is used, incorporating advanced technologies and addressing comprehensive energy usage in the home, as well as related health and safety improvements. This testing helps determine if the home has the recommended amount of insulation, air sealing, and if the heating system and water heater are operating properly.

Diagnostic equipment, such as a blower door, infrared camera, and manometer, are used to detect air infiltration, duct leaks, and pressure imbalances in the home.

Potential improvements may include attic insulation and exterior wall insulation, air leakage reduction/air sealing, furnace, boiler and water heater repair or replacement, installation of smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors, bathroom or kitchen exhaust fans.

53 households took part in our weatherization program in the 24-25 program year.

Conservation Improvement Program (CIP)

Otter Tail Power, Roseau Electric Cooperative, North Star Electric, City of Roseau and City of Baudette participate in the CIP program. With many households already upgrading to LED light bulbs, our current focus is upgrading older major appliances like refrigerators and freezers to Energy Star models. Otter Tail Power also allows qualifying customers to replace dishwashers, clothes washers, and clothes dryers. With an increase in appliances being replaced per household, the number of households we serve through this program is reduced. However, the savings in electrical use are greatly increased for those who do participate.

77 households took part in the CIP program last year.

YOUTH INTERVENTION

Program Director - Madeline Waage

YIP known as the Little Brother Little Sister Program, continues to impact our area youth in the counties of Kittson, Roseau and Lake of the Woods.

Area youth need healthy places and activities to engage in positive behavior and grow as individuals. The mentoring component of the Little Brother Little Sister Program enables high-risk children to develop relationships, goals and skills necessary to break negative cycles within their lives. There to come alongside our youth have been caring adults willing to volunteer their time as “Big Brother” and “Big Sister” mentors providing that place of acceptance and positive reinforcement. Through these friendships our mentors can provide a consistent, positive influence with valuable teaching moments from their time spent together. [?]

Throughout the year fun group activities and free passes to attend events are provided for the Little Brother Little Sister Program participants. We offer a variety of events for the participants to attend such as at Mini Golf & Go-Karts at Falls Stay & Play, Northern Air Trampoline Park, Bowling, Warroad Corn Maze, Blazin’ Saddles Horse Ranch, Scoops Ice Cream and more. Group events are a great way for mentors to come and enjoy a free activity with their “Little’s.” It also provides an opportunity to connect and meet others involved in the program. [?]

NWCA received a two-year grant for the Little Brother Little Sister Program from the Minnesota Office of Justice Programs, which will conclude on December 31, 2025. We have submitted the 2026-2027 YIP Grant Application, with grant awards expected to be announced by the end of 2025. In addition, we have received valuable support from the counties of Kittson, Roseau, and Lake of the Woods, as well as from local businesses and community members.

We are encouraged by the support from the community and its continued growth as mentors step forward to build friendships and guide our area youth. During uncertain times and heightened emotions, it is most crucial that our youth are surrounded by the presence of a reassuring voice in their lives.



ENERGY ASSISTANCE

Program Director - Anne Bertilrude

The Energy Assistance Program helps eligible renters and homeowners living in Kittson, East Marshall, Lake of the Woods, and Roseau counties pay a portion of their home heating and electric bills. Homeowners may be eligible for repair or replacement of their non-functioning heating systems.

The household income must be at or below 50% of the state median income or 110% of federal poverty guidelines, whichever is greater.

EAP is federally funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



PRIMARY HEAT ASSISTANCE

The Primary Heat benefit helps low-income households maintain affordable and reliable energy by providing grants that reduce their energy burden. Payments are made directly to the household's energy vendor. The grant amount is determined using a matrix that considers the household's income, size, and previous year's heating costs.

A total of 106 households were denied assistance due to lack of sufficient income verification, over-income, or applying after the end of our program year.

COUNTY	TOTAL SERVED	AMOUNT PAID
Kittson	234	\$148,337.00
Lake of the Woods	231	\$144,088.00
Marshall	180	\$121,600.00
Roseau	678	\$456,339.00
Total	1323	\$870,364.00

CRISIS PROGRAM

Crisis benefits provide immediate assistance to prevent energy shut-offs, restore disconnected services, ensure fuel delivery, and help senior households with current heating or electric bills. These requests are handled right away to address life-threatening situations or emergencies where there is no heat.

This assistance was provided to 749 households, with 1178 crisis payments.

ENERGY ASSISTANCE

COUNTY	TOTAL SERVED	AMOUNT PAID
Kittson	159	\$77,559.00
Lake of the Woods	93	\$43,270.00
Marshall	126	\$65,886.00
Roseau	371	\$181,956.00
Total	749	\$368,671.00

ENERGY RELATED REPAIR PROGRAM

The Energy Related Repair (ERR) Program is a crisis assistance program that addresses hazardous, life-threatening safety issues or no-heat situations caused by malfunctioning or non-functioning heating systems. Qualified installers perform necessary mechanical and safety repairs or replacements, and at least 50% of completed installation work is inspected to ensure quality and safety.

Occasionally, numerous trips were required from contractors.

COUNTY	TOTAL SERVED	AMOUNT PAID
Kittson	17	\$38,774.34
Lake of the Woods	21	\$80,872.21
Marshall	16	\$47,042.60
Roseau	59	\$178,821.77
Total	113	\$345,510.92

REACH OUT FOR WARMTH

The Reach Out for Warmth (ROFW) program provides emergency assistance to households experiencing a no-heat crisis. This vital program is funded entirely through local donations. During the 2024–2025 program year, generous community contributions totaled \$44,942, making it possible for Northwest Community Action (NWCA) to assist 90 households in need.

✨ A heartfelt “Thank You” to everyone who donated to the Reach Out for Warmth program—your support truly makes a difference!

HOUSING/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Program Director - Diane Hayes

Director Diane at Northwest Community Action is dedicated to assisting jurisdictions with securing and administering Small Cities Block Grants to provide owner occupied housing, commercial, and rental rehabilitation along with improving public facilities. These grants are available with funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and are awarded through the Department of Trade and Economic Development (DEED) as part of their Small Cities Development Program (SCDP).

The owner-occupied housing rehab program provides opportunities for low-moderate income households to make necessary repairs to address safety deficiencies, improve energy efficiency and accessibility improvements to their homes. Households otherwise may have no means of doing these repairs. The program is a grant (deferred loan). This program also benefits the communities as it extends the lifespan of the existing housing stock. These homes undergo improvements such as:

Roof repair or replacements

Siding replacement

Window replacement

Insulation improvements

Plumbing and electrical insufficiency

Septic and well systems

Commercial rehabilitation has a national objective which is to eliminate or prevent slum and blight conditions. These building owners are given an opportunity to undergo improvements that are often a hardship for small community business owners. This program is 80% grant (deferred loan) and 20% owner portion. Improvements to these buildings may include items such as:

- Facade improvements such as roofing, window, door replacement, tuck-pointing, and signage.
- Accessibility/ADA improvements
- Electrical, heating and plumbing code violations

Rental rehabilitation is provided to area landlords. This program is 70% grant (deferred loan) and 30% owner portion. Improvements to these buildings are very similar to the owner-occupied improvements along with common area improvements. The tenants must be low-moderate income and the units must remain rented to low-moderate tenants for the term of the repayment agreement (5 years).

HOUSING/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

NWCA is currently administrating grants in the following communities:

City of Argyle	15 owner occupied units 5 commercial units 7 rental duplexes	\$ 759,000 Closed September 30, 2025
City of Crookston	16 owner occupied units 13 commercial units 10 mixed use rental units	\$1,198,000
City of Hallock	15 owner occupied units	\$414,000
City of Karlstad	15 owner occupied units 4 single family rental units	\$507,380
City of Lake Bronson	15 owner occupied units	\$ 379,500 Closed September 30, 2025
City of Newfolden	15 owner occupied units 7 commercial units 12 multi-family rental units	\$880,900
City of Roosevelt	5 owner occupied units	\$132,000
City of Stephen	8 owner occupied units 3 commercial units	\$368,000
City of Strandquist	10 owner occupied units	\$253,000
Kittson County	20 owner occupied units	\$563,000
Marshall County	20 owner occupied units	\$575.00
Roseau County	20 owner occupied units	\$563,000

HOUSING/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

NWCA has submitted 3 Small Cities Applications-Lake of the Woods County to rehabilitate 20 owner occupied units, Cities of Humboldt, Donaldson, Halma, and Kennedy to rehabilitate 10 owner occupied units, City of Lancaster to rehabilitate a multi-family rental (Lancaster Homes). We expect to hear if we are awarded this fall.

Minnesota Urban and Rural Homesteading Program (MURL)

Minnesota Housing provided funding to the agency to acquire and rehabilitate substandard properties and then re-sell the properties on a zero-interest contract for deed with no down payment required. Contract for deed payment amounts are determined by household income levels. Northwest Community Action currently has 14 homes in communities throughout our service area. Two homeowners paid their contract for deed off at the end of last year and one paid off her contract for deed this last summer. NWCA replaced a water heater and a ramp on one of homes this past year.

GREATER MINNSOTA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (CDC)

Greater Minnesota CDC is a non-profit organization with its primary purpose to help businesses that have difficulty securing conventional financing, or to help minority businesses. Greater Minnesota CDC's revenue was originally received from the United States Department of Agriculture. The revenue is now generated from the revolving loan payments. There are currently four loans and one application that is being processed.



TEAM EPIC

Program Director - Stephanie Heppner

This year Team EPIC worked to increase awareness, reduce stigma, and provide protective factors around substance misuse, mental health and suicide. Members of the EPIC Youth Coalitions worked in their schools to share messages through posters and social media campaigns and face to face interactions and activities with peers and younger students.

Five Team EPIC Youth members attended the National Leadership Forum for prevention in Washington DC to learn about substance misuse concerns and prevention with over 700 other students from around the country. Our youth observed a vote taking place in the US House of Representatives and met with staff from the offices of Rep Fischbach, Sen Klobuchar and Sen Smith to discuss the challenges faced by youth in our area and the work being done with the use of the Federal DFC funds Team EPIC has received.

Team EPIC has completed five years of funding awarded through the federal Drug-Free Communities (DFC) program. The coalition has made major strides in reducing youth substance use and improving youth mental health by increasing community collaboration among agencies, organizations and community members in Roseau County to work together to build sustainable, community-wide prevention strategies.

Team EPIC outlined several objectives at the start of this initiative. Success of objectives is measured by data from the Minnesota Student Survey (MSS), which is implemented statewide every three years, and the Roseau County Student Survey, which is implemented in between MSS years. The results in Roseau County are noteworthy:

- Goal: Reduce the number of Roseau County 8th–11th graders reporting using alcohol in the past 30 days by 2%. Result: Alcohol usage in reporting Roseau County 8th–11th graders has decreased by 7%, down from 17% in 2019 to 10% in 2024.
- Goal: Reduce the number of Roseau County 8th–11th graders reporting using marijuana in the past 30 days by 2%. Result: Marijuana usage in reporting Roseau County 8th–11th graders has decreased by 5%, down from 7% in 2019 to 2% in 2024.
- Goal: Reduce the number of Roseau County 8th–11th graders reporting using tobacco/nicotine in the past 30 days by 2%. Result: Tobacco/nicotine usage has decreased by 15%, down from 20% in 2019 to 5% in 2024.

In addition, survey results show that in Roseau County, depression was down 4% from 2019 to 2024, and anxiety was down 5% from 2019 to 2024, despite statewide increases from 2019-2022.



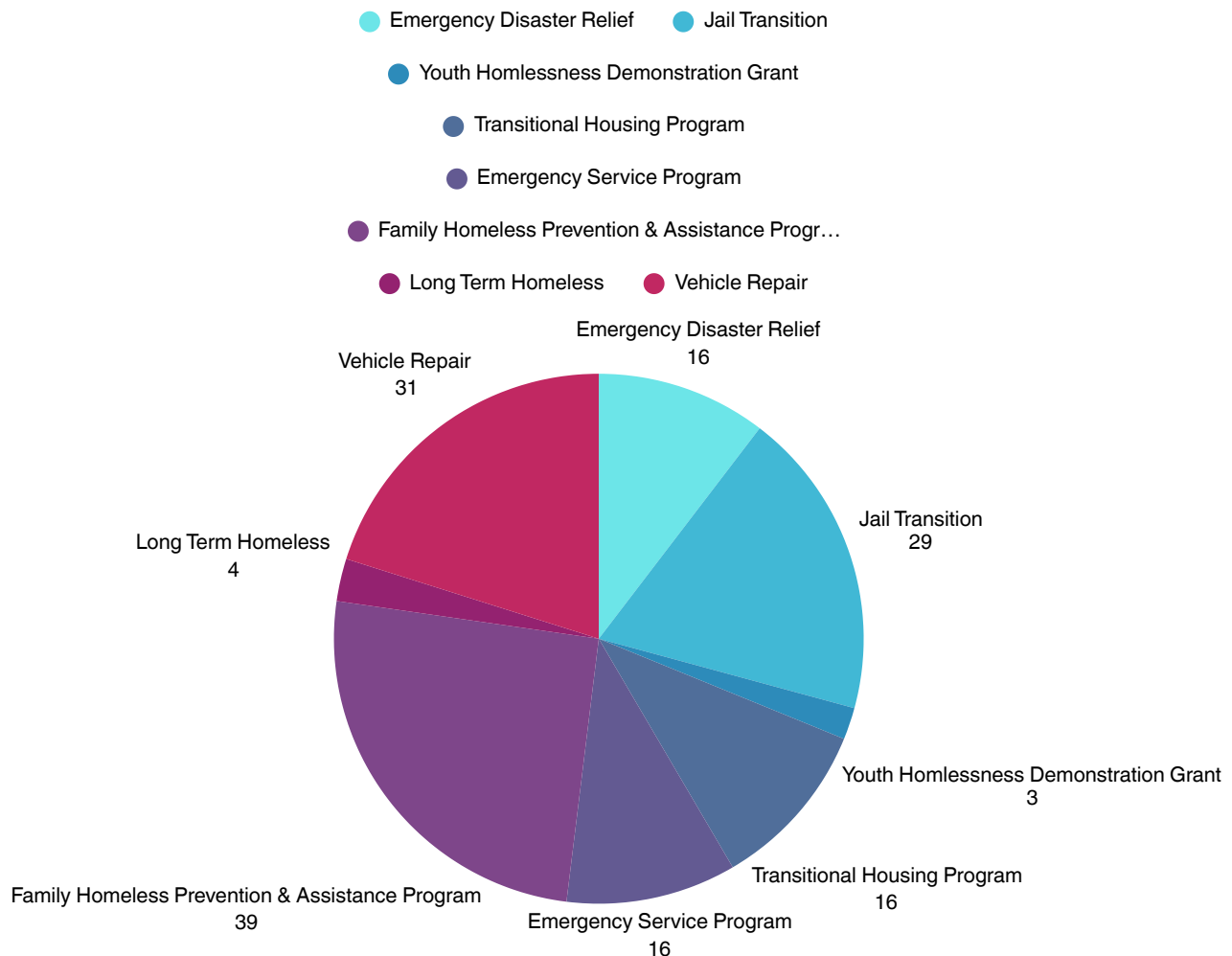
FAMILY SERVICES

Program Director - Randi Jenson

The Family Services Department is dedicated to supporting and strengthening families in our community. Through compassionate guidance and coordinated services, our team helps families overcome challenges, build on their strengths, and achieve lasting stability.

The Family Service Department works with individuals and families to connect them with essential resources such as housing assistance, employment support, financial education, and family development programs. We also provide case management, goal planning, and referrals to community partners to ensure that each family receives the comprehensive support they need.

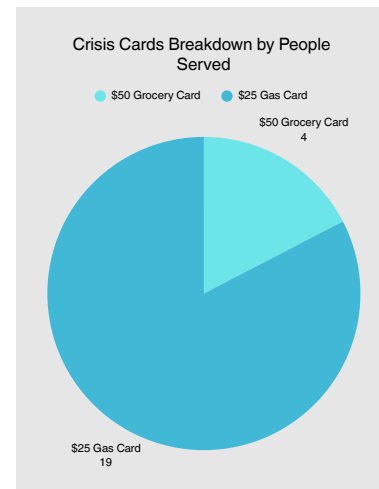
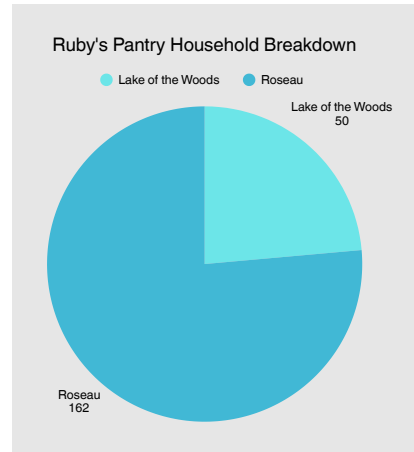
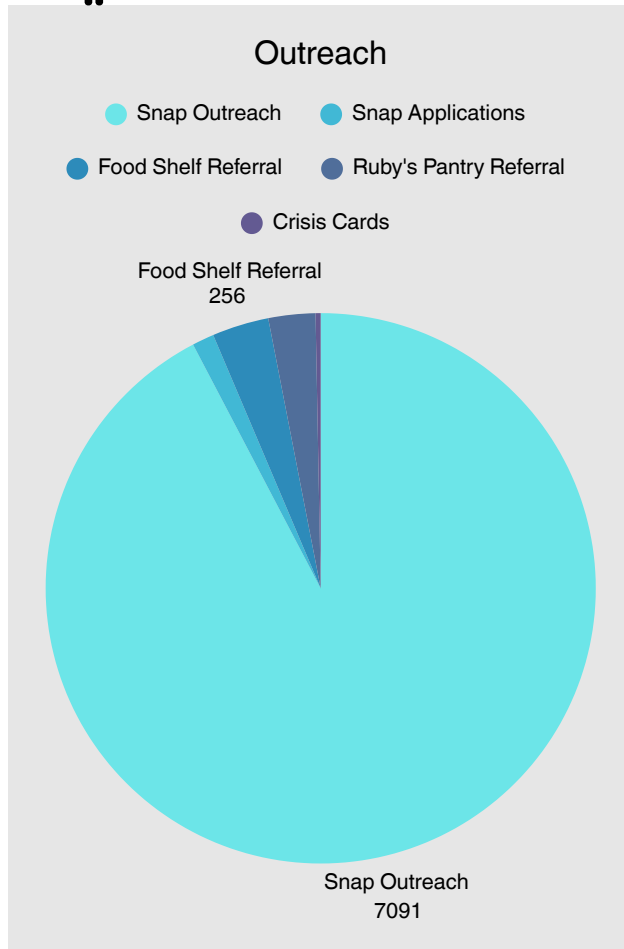
Services/Case Management



FAMILY SERVICES



7,658 People contacted through Outreach



687 Referrals made to outside services including:

- Mental health
- Homeless shelters
- HOME Line
- Senior LinkAge line
- Legal help
- Violence Intervention Project
- Child-care
- Social Services
- Housing Redevelopment Authority
- Workforce
- Veteran's services
- Northwest Minnesota legal aid
- Salvation Army

TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS RECEIVED DIRECT ASSISTANCE= 138

FAMILY SERVICES

POVERTY SIMULATION

Northwest Community Action has now facilitated poverty simulations! We have covered Kittson, Marshall, and Roseau counties. Randi Jenson, Erica Maxwell, Stacie Meyer, and Emma Spina became certified facilitators and facilitated Poverty Simulations in Roseau County and in Pennington County (partnered with Marshall and Kittson County Public Health). This interactive event allows participants to encounter the daily realities of the complex and interconnected issues of families and impoverished individuals.

Age-Friendly Community Grant

The Age-Friendly Grant has focused on three of the eight domains of livability of Age-Friendly Concepts. These include Respect and Social Inclusion, Social Participation, and Transportation. The grant deliverables include two different activities.

Assessing the needs within the four counties

Contracted with Wilder Research Group for a needs assessment related to social inclusion and transportation. The project will be done in two phases.

Promoting Age-Friendly Concepts

An Age-Friendly landing page has been added to the Northwest Community Action Website. The marketing posts and ads were developed and launched in June.

Age-Friendly Community Conversations

Randi Jenson and Stacie Meyer held meetings in each county to discuss the needs of seniors. The biggest lesson learned was that more traditional modes of communication work best for this population, such as flyers in areas that seniors attend often including pharmacies, churches, and grocery stores.

Randi Jenson earned the Certified Community Action Professional (CCAP) certification this year.

This certification recognizes individuals in the field of Community Action who have demonstrated expert knowledge and embody the movement's values.

- **Awarded by:** The National Community Action Partnership (NCAP).
- **Significance:** It serves as a prestigious professional achievement that distinguishes individuals as highly capable and qualified leaders in poverty reduction efforts.
- **Eligibility:** To earn the credential, candidates must enroll in a program and pass a two-part examination that tests their knowledge and application of the Community Action Body of Knowledge.
- **Recognition:** Successful candidates were recognized at NCAP's annual convention in Detroit, MI in August.

MNSURE HEALTH SERVICES

Program Director - Tammy Novacek

MNsure assists clients within our service area in applying for Minnesota Health Care. NWCA currently has one Certified Navigator, who is trained and must re-certify each year. We currently assist clients with not only new applications, but also renewal, life event changes, special enrollments, insulin applications and enrollment into Qualified Health Plans. We work closely with insurance brokers within each county to help clients choose the best plan for their needs. We also can help people who are certified disabled and over 65 (on Medicare) whose income & assets are very low – this application is called “Certain Population Application”. NWCA assisted more than 1800 clients with health care questions and either one or more of the things listed above. We successfully helped 530 clients / 245 households with either a new application or some kind of issues that include: updating address, adding/removing a family member, loss of current health insurance, or updating income.

Open enrollment ran from November 1st, 2024- January 15th, 2025. During open- enrollment, people with Qualified Health Plans can make changes to their current plan or change plans completely. This is also the only time of the year that Minnesotans who are without insurance and don't qualify for medical assistance or MinnesotaCare or did not have a qualified life event change, also called "special enrollment" can enroll with a January 1st, enrollment date. Clients who qualify for Minnesota Care, Medical Assistance or are enrolled as part of an American Indian Tribe can apply and make changes year-round.

NWCA was given a 1-year extension to the current grant cycle that started in June 2025. This funding allows Northwest Community Action along with its partners, Tri-Valley Opportunity Council and Inter County Community Council, to bring free health insurance services to nine counties in Northwestern Minnesota for another year. The service area covers 11,325 square miles and has a total population of 97,537 people. This past year, NWCA successfully enrolled 313 people into some kind of health plan, 118 Medical Assistance, 43 Minnesota Care and 147 Qualified Health Plans with an Advance Premium Tax Credit and 5 insulin.

NWCA also has a Navigator / In-Person Assister Program, which reimburses NWCA \$100.00 for each successful applicant who is enrolled or renewed into Medical Assistance, MinnesotaCare and/or a Qualified Health Plans. However, we do not receive additional compensation for any of the other services we help with such as income/address changes, adding or removing applicants or any other updates. This year NWCA has received a total of \$30,800 for 308 successful applicants.

NWCA continues to be part of the Navigator Coalition Group, MNsure Stakeholders Board and Department of Human Services Round table. These groups meet via web monthly, discussing how to make this process of applying and submitting changes easier for the client and gives navigators the tools to make it go smoothly. MNsure Navigators submit applications for clients, but we also do certain population & Alex Smith Insulin applications, along with as much outreach as we can. Currently NWCA's number one method of outreach is “word of mouth”.

HEAD START

Program Director - Beth Budzizewski

MISSION STATEMENT

NWCA Head Start assists children in achieving appropriate physical and developmental growth. We also increase self-confidence and expand each child's ability to think, reason, and communicate. Head Start assists parents and families in improving their parenting skills, self-sufficiency, and the conditions in which they live, learn, and work.



HEAD START LEADERSHIP TEAM

BETH BUDZISZEWSKI

CRYSTAL PETERSON

PAMELA HORNTVEDT

SARA LEE ASST

JACKIE STINSON

JOANN CHRISTIAN

MONICA BYRE

NATASHA LEE

STACIE MEYER

HEAD START DIRECTOR

EDUCATION MANAGER

ASST EDUCATION MANAGER

EDUCATION MANAGER

FAMILY SERVICES MANAGER

HEALTH MANAGER

ASST HEALTH MANAGER

OFFICE ASSISTANT

IT/DATA MANAGEMENT

HEAD START

HEAD START: SERVING FAMILIES PRENATAL TO AGE FIVE

Northwest Community Action, Inc. (NWCA) provides comprehensive Head Start services to 253 children and their families across four counties: Lake of the Woods, Roseau, Marshall, and Kittson. In total, 234 families were served, including those with children who have special needs or require individualized supports. Services are delivered in collaboration with local school districts.

Head Start programming includes both home-based and center-based options. Children attending centers located in area schools receive nutritious breakfasts, lunches, and snacks each day. In partnership with county nursing services, children also receive medical screenings, oral health checks, and follow-up care. When needed, Head Start may assist families with payment for services not covered by Medical Assistance (MA), MinnesotaCare, or private insurance.

A key part of NWCA Head Start is supporting parents as their child's first and most important teacher. Parents are encouraged to participate in Policy Council meetings (available in person or virtually), attend local parent meetings, and collaborate closely with teachers during home visits. Each family also participates in conferences and multiple home visits throughout the year, ensuring strong family-school partnerships that support children's growth and development.



Northwest Community Action, Inc. continues to provide Head Start services to families in Marshall, Roseau, Kittson, and Lake of the Woods counties in the Northwestern corner of Minnesota. Our service area is bounded west by North Dakota and north by Manitoba and Ontario. This service area covers 6,500 square miles, in which over 32,000 people reside. The communities range in size from 50 to 2600 people. Our entire service area is designated Medically

PROGRAM GOAL

NWCA will nurture social-emotional health, fostering internal motivation to learn.

- Enhance Educational Qualifications and Professional Development.
- Foster Health, Nutrition, and Well-being of Children by Enhancing Health Education, Promotion, and Supportive Services
- Enhance Family Engagement to Foster Positive Relationships and Improve Child and Family Outcomes

HEAD START

POLICY COUNCIL

Parent engagement is a cornerstone of NWCA Head Start. Each site holds parent committee meetings, which give families opportunities to share input, plan activities, and stay connected to their child's learning. Representatives from these committees are elected to serve on the Policy Council, ensuring that parent voices guide program decision-making.

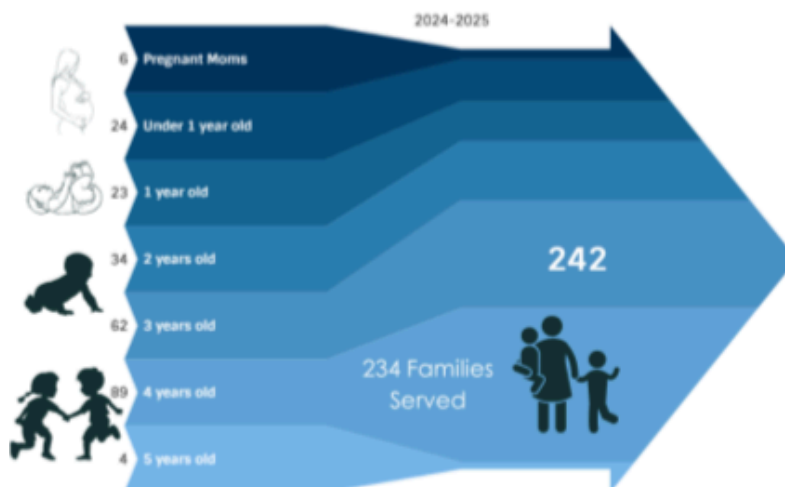
This year's Policy Council is made up of 10 elected Head Start parents who work in partnership with program management. Together, they review and provide input on budgets, program planning, policies, and community partnerships. Policy Council members also help strengthen connections between families and local communities by sharing feedback and encouraging participation.



We deeply value the time and talent our Policy Council members contribute. Their leadership ensures that parents remain central to shaping the Head Start program, reinforcing the belief that parents are their child's first and most important teachers.

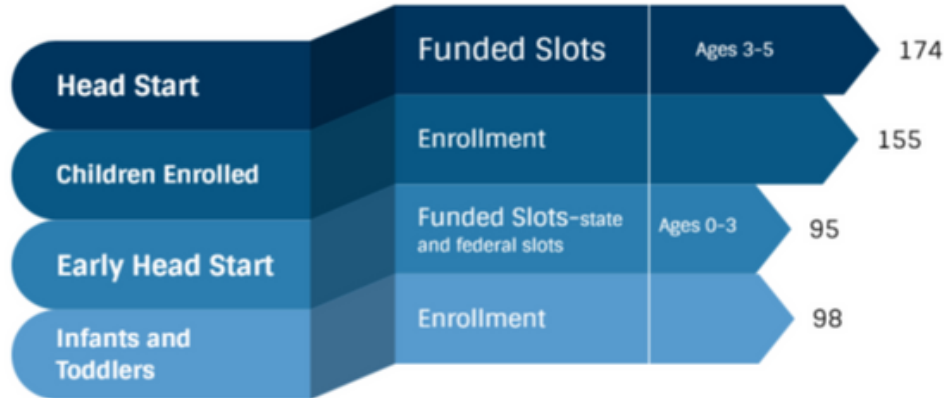
WHO WE SERVE

Head Start serves children and families who often experience barriers related to poverty, rural isolation, and limited access to resources. Many families demonstrate incredible resilience while facing challenges such as economic instability, housing insecurity, and limited access to health and mental health services.



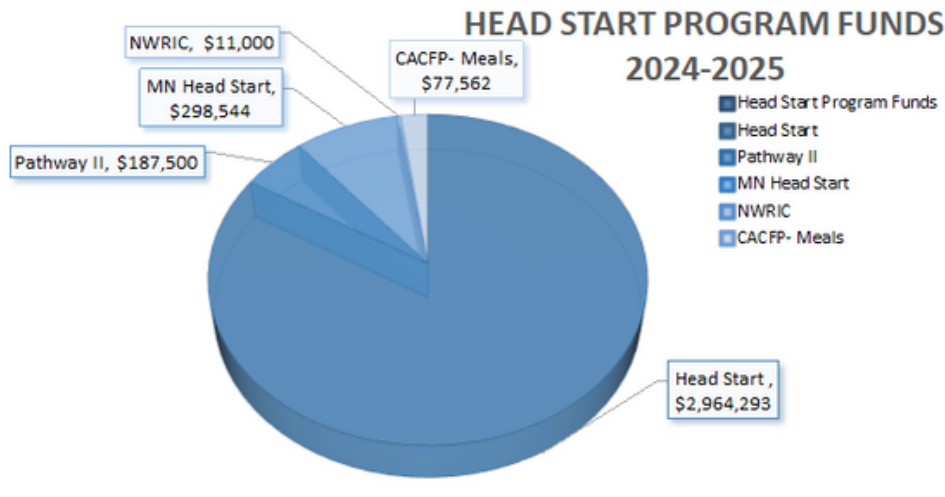
HEAD START

2024-2025 Head Start Enrollment



FISCAL

Head Start is primarily funded with federal funds, and our programs receive additional support from state and local dollars.



FEDERAL EXPENDITURE

Head Start Expenditures 2024-2025	Total
Personnel	\$1,816,397.22
Fringe Benefits	\$591,489.77
Travel/Travel-Out of Area/Vehicles	\$93,512.28
Consulting	\$227,354.52
Supplies	\$273,492.23
Training	\$61,033.41
Total	\$3,063,279.43

HEAD START

AUDIT

Our recent financial audit was completed on June 2, 2025. NWCA has implemented the Corrective Action Plan noted in the agency's audit, completed on August 31, 2025.

2024-001 PROPOSITION OF JOURNAL ENTRIES

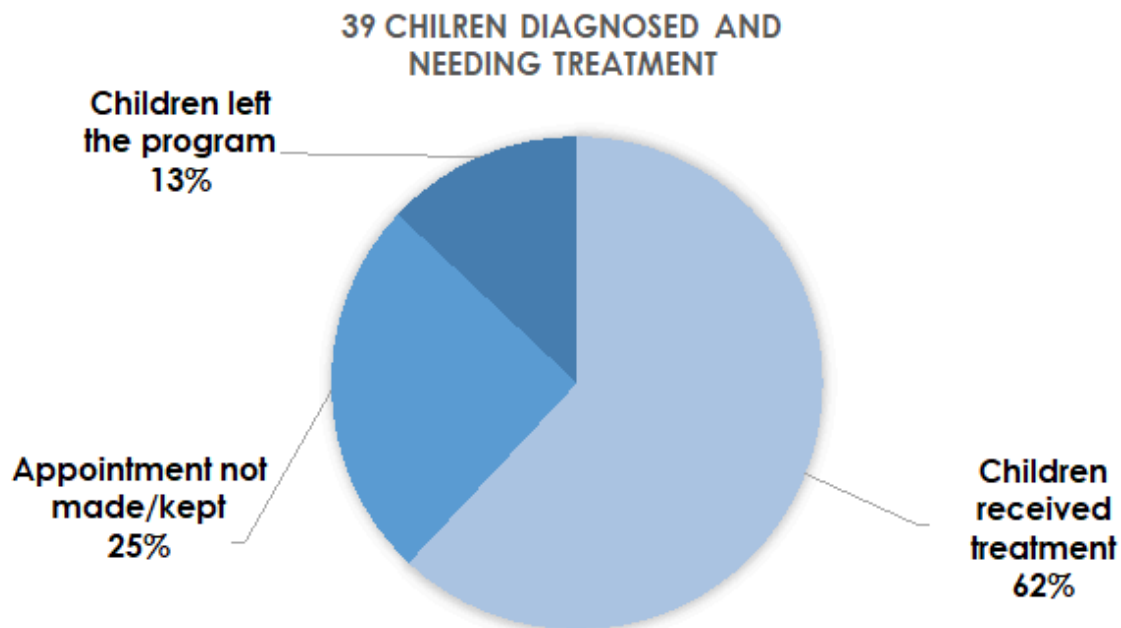
The Agency is required to maintain internal controls at a level where underlying support for general ledger accounts can be developed and a determination can be made that the general ledger accounts are properly reflected in accordance with GAAP.

2024-002 REPORTING

Head Start requirements state that by the 30th calendar day following the end of each semi-annual period, each grantee must submit a SF-425, Federal Financial Report. The requirements also state that an annual SF-425 Federal Financial Report be submitted no later than 120 calendar days after the end of the project period.

HEALTH

Our health-related services are well-received by our families, with staff and community professionals collaborating to complete health and developmental screenings. During the screenings, children are assessed on dental, vision, and hearing tests and developmental screening tests designed to identify young children who need further testing or help with academic skills. Children have received early identification of hearing, dental, and vision needs.



HEAD START

This year, 226 children received oral health preventive care, and 147 completed a professional oral health examination. Tracking the recommendations for dental care indicates that 25% of the children with an indication for treatment had not completed their appointment.

NWCA Head Start children aged 3-5 years old have insurance and access to health care, and 95% of families that choose immunization are up to date. 99% of these children are currently in preventive and primary care. Of these children, 30% have been diagnosed with a chronic health condition. Of families with children 0-3-years-old, 100% also have insurance and access to health care. 58% of the children are up to date for their preventive care, and 3% are documented with chronic health conditions. (NWCA 2024-2025 PIR Report)



Beyond referrals, Head Start integrates daily routines that promote good oral health. Children learn about brushing and healthy eating in the classroom, and families receive education and resources to continue these practices at home. This dual approach—health services plus education—empowers families to establish lifelong dental hygiene habits for their children.

HEAD START

SCHOOL READINESS

NWCA Head Start promotes parents as their child's first and most important teacher. Head Start parents have many opportunities to participate in educational activities in their service area. Parents participated in our Policy Council, and knowledge, attendance, and participation grew with each meeting. Parents attend local parent meetings and work with their teacher and their child on home visits. Additionally, four parent conferences are held with each family throughout the year.

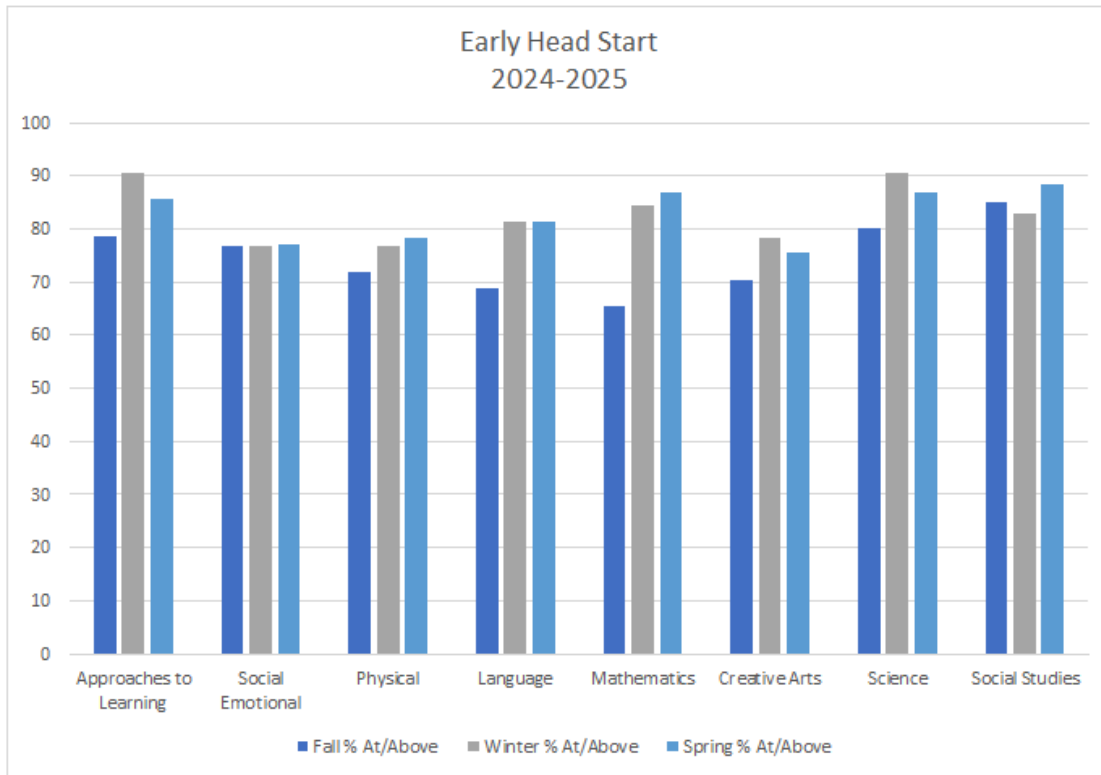
In Early Head Start, weekly (46 total) home visits of 1.5 hours are done with each enrolled child and a parent. The Buddy Group get-together is held twice a month for families in each local area, and activities, education, and information are provided for the children and parents. Parent engagement is emphasized, and literacy activities, budgeting education, mental health counseling, and crisis assistance are some parent support services that are provided.



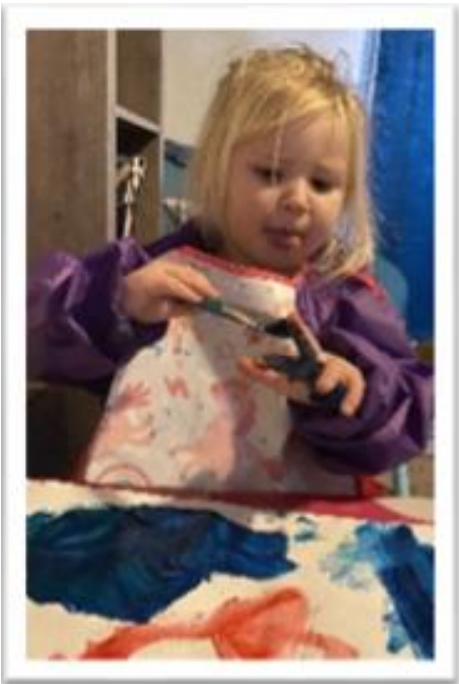
Early Head Start continued to utilize the Child Observation Record Advantage (COR) for outcome and growth tracking. The Infant/Toddler COR assessments show strong developmental progress across all areas from fall to spring. In the fall, many children were still building early foundational skills. By winter, a majority of children were meeting expectations in most domains, and by spring, nearly all areas showed 80–90% of children at or above expectations.

Growth was especially strong in language, mathematics, and creative arts, highlighting steady skill development and readiness for preschool transitions.

HEAD START



Early Head Start teachers utilize COR Advantage to provide a complete picture of each child's development. COR Advantage allows teachers to observe children's development through play and naturally occurring activities.

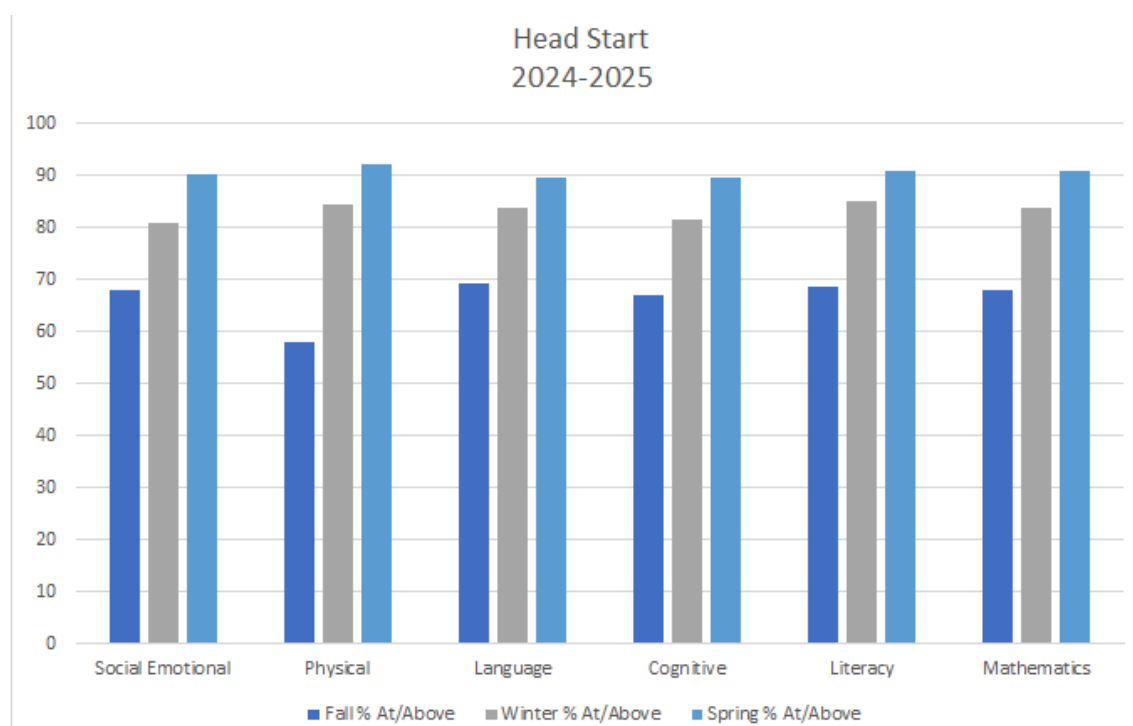


HEAD START

We continued our involvement in a project to aggregate child outcome data statewide using the Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG). The program documents child growth success and points to areas for improvement. The results will also help refine our efforts to optimize each child's development and transitions to kindergarten.

During each school year, communications occur with kindergarten teachers in each school district to review expectations and discuss transition experiences. Developmental growth and concerns are shared as appropriate. Memorandums of Agreement outlining transition activities and mutual school readiness goals are developed with each school district.

Overarching goals and the developmental growth of kindergarten-bound children are included below. The 2024–2025 preschool assessments demonstrate steady and consistent growth across all learning domains. In the fall, just over half of students were meeting or exceeding expectations in most areas. By winter, this improved significantly, with more than 80% of students at or above expectations across all domains. By spring, nearly all domains reached 90% or higher, with particularly strong gains in physical, literacy, and mathematics.

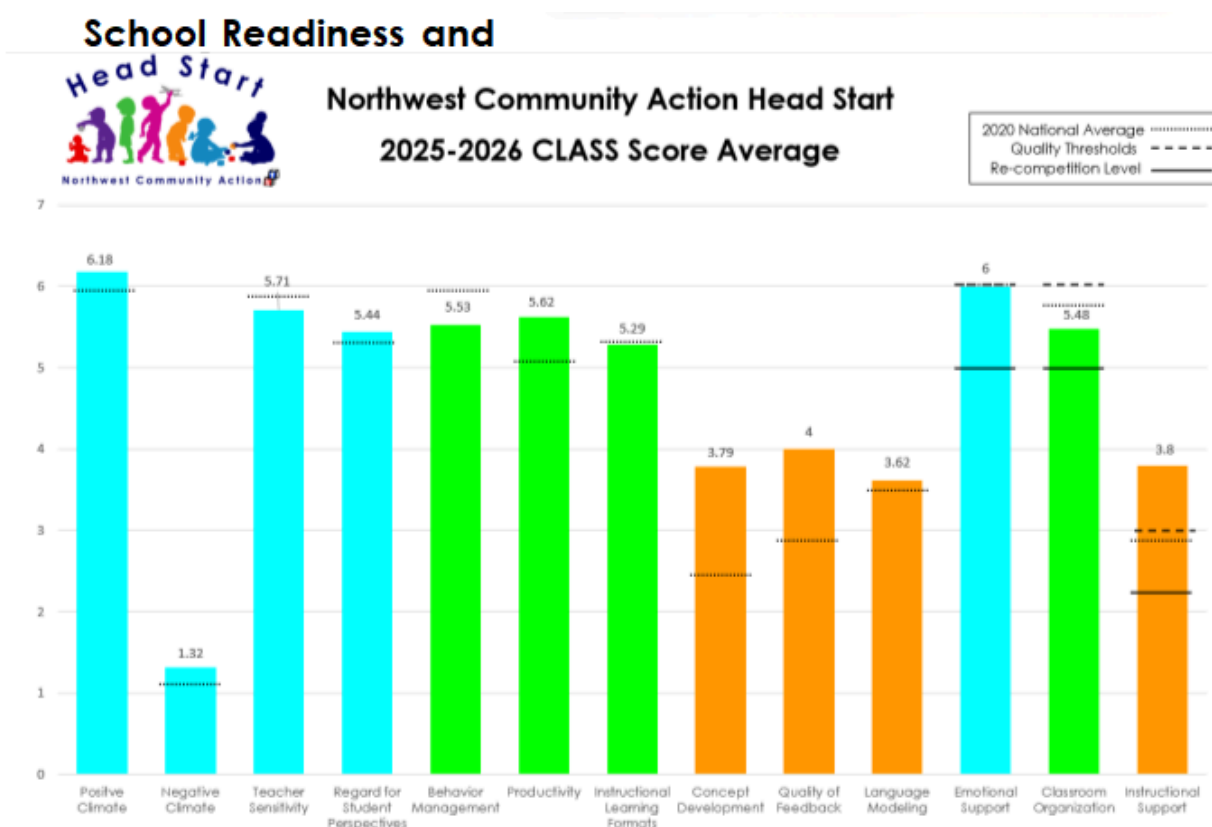


This growth shows that children made meaningful progress throughout the school year, building the critical social, cognitive, and academic skills needed for kindergarten readiness.

This progress highlights the impact of consistent learning opportunities and support throughout the year, demonstrating that children are building the skills they need for kindergarten success.

HEAD START

NWCA also participates in Minnesota Head Start Association (MNHSA) data collection and evaluation for School Readiness Outcomes. Participating with MHSA in this project provides information to showcase our efforts and identify areas of need. We analyze our assessment results across the state. For example, suppose a classroom shows higher or lower than average scores. In that case, we can compare across the state, dive deeper into our tools, classroom needs, and documentation, and act accordingly. CLASS Observation and HOVRS provide teachers with constructive feedback and areas to focus on for training. Requests for Conscious Discipline and Mental Health training are examples of requests that have resulted from observations.



At 30 months, home visitors and parents develop a transition plan for each enrolled child. The Busy Buddy meetings are often held in our Head Start centers, which provides additional opportunities for children to visit and become comfortable in the classroom.

HEAD START



School Readiness Goal

Children will have an internal motivation to learn.

The office of Head Start defines school readiness as:

Children possessing the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for success throughout their academic careers.

School Readiness Objectives:

80% of children will show growth in each indicated measure from Fall to Spring each program year, and

82% of children transitioning to kindergarten will meet MNHSA School Readiness target scores indicating Kindergarten Readiness.



HEAD START

School Readiness

Early Learning Outcome Framework

Domain	Objectives
Approaches to Learning	Children will persist in tasks. Children will demonstrate initiative and independence. Child will show an interest in and curiosity about the world around them.
Social Emotional	Children will show an interest in, interact with, and develops personal relationships with other children. Children will show confidence in their own abilities through relationships with others. Children will express confidence in their own skills and positive feelings about self. Children will engage in and maintain positive interactions and relationships with other children.
Language/Literacy	Children initiate non-verbal communication and language to learn and gain information. Children understand and respond to increasingly complex communication and language from others.
Cognition	Children will actively explore people and objects to understand self, others, and objects. Children will ask questions, gather information, and make predictions.
Perceptual, Motor and Physical Development	Children will demonstrate healthy behaviors with increasing independence as part of everyday routines. Children will demonstrate knowledge of personal safety practices and routines.

HEAD START

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT



Head Start centers hosted two parent meetings; of the four parent conferences, at least two are scheduled at the family's home. In Early Head Start, in addition to the home visits, we host Busy Buddy groups twice a month.

Our families are invited to volunteer during events and participate in our Policy Council. The Policy Council had eleven active members participate in this program year. NWCA had 196 volunteers in our program.

Professional and motivational speakers are provided, including our Mental Health Consultant, Health Professionals and Conscious Discipline training. Some activities include birdhouse making, garden centers, and visiting farms, firehouses, restaurants and post offices



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