

TRIBAL EARLY LEARNING INITIATIVE GRANTEE PROFILE

Grantee:	White Earth Nation
Project Period:	September 30, 2012 – September 29, 2015

Program Goals and Activities

- Jointly conducted monthly collaborative meetings to deliberate on matters concerning TELI
- Coordinated space utilization across programs; held joint monthly program staff meetings.
- Reviewed policies and procedures to see which ones might be jointly adopted.
- Jointly supported and promoted community programs that benefit/serve involvement in the early childhood system (e.g., fatherhood/male involvement).
- Reviewed and identified common assessment tools to use across programs.
- Jointly created a Universal Demographic Collection Form that is common to each partner agency and shared relevant data across program partners with appropriate safeguards for parental consent, confidentiality, and protection.
- Jointly reported program data and other information to funding agencies.

Community Context

State	Minnesota
Rural or Urban Reservation or Non-Reservation	Rural Reservation
Geographic Area, Characteristics, Demographics	The White Earth Reservation is located in northwestern Minnesota. The reservation covers 1,300 square miles and includes 3 counties: Mahnomen, Becker, and Clearwater. The White Earth Reservation includes 5 incorporated cities and 5 major villages. The Reservation has 11 communities ranging in size from 50 to 1,200 people within its boundaries. There are 9,188 people living on the White Earth Reservation, of which 4,029 identify themselves as American Indian.

Description of Early Childhood System

Several of the Tribe's programs collaborate to serve the needs of pregnant women, young children, and families. These programs and agencies include mental health, Indian Child Welfare, child care, and Head Start. Staff communication and collaboration across programs has helped create networks for aligned services. With a deeper understanding of each other's services, programs now look at how they can share resources, support staff, and plan events in a way that supports and addresses needs of all the programs.



WE CARE (White Earth Collaboration, Assessment, Referral and Education) Collaborative Case Management has been developed by White Earth. WE CARE allows for the collaboration between programs to keep the client as the focus of the services. A wellness plan is written by the WE CARE team and the client based on the needs. The wellness plan allows the WE CARE team to prioritize and strategize program services and efforts to best assist the client and family to become independent and strong. The WE CARE “Health Living Plan” creates a process for the Tribe to assess Tribal service effectiveness, the needs of the people and outcomes, strengths and weaknesses of services. It will provide seamless, coordinated care on our Reservation. To help improve data collection efforts and facilitate coordinated service delivery, Rite Track, a comprehensive and shared database, has been developed. Advisory councils and committees are in place and include representatives from tribal and non-tribal agencies, families, and Elders. Collaborative relationships with neighboring school districts have been developed with help of the White Earth Child Care/Early Childhood Program. In response to student needs, the Read-mobile, Early Childhood Initiative, and other programs and initiatives are now in place and continue to evolve. Though WE CARE was started as a part of the TELI partnership, when the value was fully recognized, it became a tribal wide initiative.

Results

White Earth TELI partners started their project with a strong foundation of communication and cooperation across early childhood programs. The TELI provided an incentive for White Earth Child Care, Head Start, and home health programs, including Tribal Home Visiting, to build deeper collaborative working relationships after many years of working in parallel. Building on the TELI, White Earth Nation is implementing WE-CARE (White Earth Coordination, Assessment, Resources, Education), a holistic case management model that is client focused, client driven, and requires the client’s input and involvement. The model requires collaboration and communication across all tribal programs working with a client and is intended to decrease duplication of services and staff time by utilizing shared data in the tribe’s Rite Track data system. Funds from the TELI were instrumental in purchasing and supporting the Rite Track system, and the White Earth TELI team is taking the lead to pilot WE-CARE due to their increased coordination and collaboration through their TELI efforts. One example of how WE CARE is being used is the creation of a tab within the software to share ASQ information so families are not repeatedly completing the same information for different programs.