

Inter-County Community Council Annual Report 2019-20

Serving the counties of Clearwater, East Polk, Pennington, and Red Lake



Community Action:
Helping People. Changing Lives.



Inter-County Community Council
207 Main Street
PO Box 189
Oklee, MN 56742
Phone: 218-796-5144
Fax: 218-796-5175
www.intercountycc.org

Executive Director's Note

Dear community partners, participants and friends,

Looking back on this past year it is difficult to articulate all that happened. By all accounts we saw the world come to a stop but services and people needing help did not stop. We had to pivot how we delivered services and learned how to stay safe.

We were challenged in ways that we never thought possible. We lost human connection in-person and had to learn how to be creative and create connection through the use of technology.

We saw civil unrest throughout the Country. In my opinion, it was one of the most disturbing and disappointing years I have ever seen. There was a loss of human decency that I for one was haunted by. I don't think after this year anyone will look the same and the same could be said for our Organization.

We added new programs and grants to meet new needs that bubbled up. We adapted current service delivery, then adapted again and then yet again.

To the ICCC Board of Directors and Head Start Policy Council- thank you for your continued leadership and governance through these very uncertain times. Your ability to jump on a call or a zoom meeting and be engaged for hours shows your commitment to the organization and the people we serve.

To the staff at ICCC- thank you for showing up in different ways, for growing in your own professional skills, for continuing to work with people differently and for serving it all up on a plate of compassion. I feel like we have learned and grown together more this year than ever before.

Most importantly to the people we serve - hang in there! We see you, we will continue to show up (even if it looks differently) and I promise we will continue to be with you as we all move through this year to come.

Yours in action,

Catherine Johnson, LISW
Executive Director

Food Shelf

ICCC's Food Shelf is available to anyone who needs it. This past year we moved to curbside pick-up for our Food shelf. By calling ahead the Food Shelf is available: 8:00am-4:30pm, Monday-Friday.

The food shelf is funded by community donations and fundraisers. We would like to thank all of our past donors. If you would like to assist our local food shelf, please consider donating.

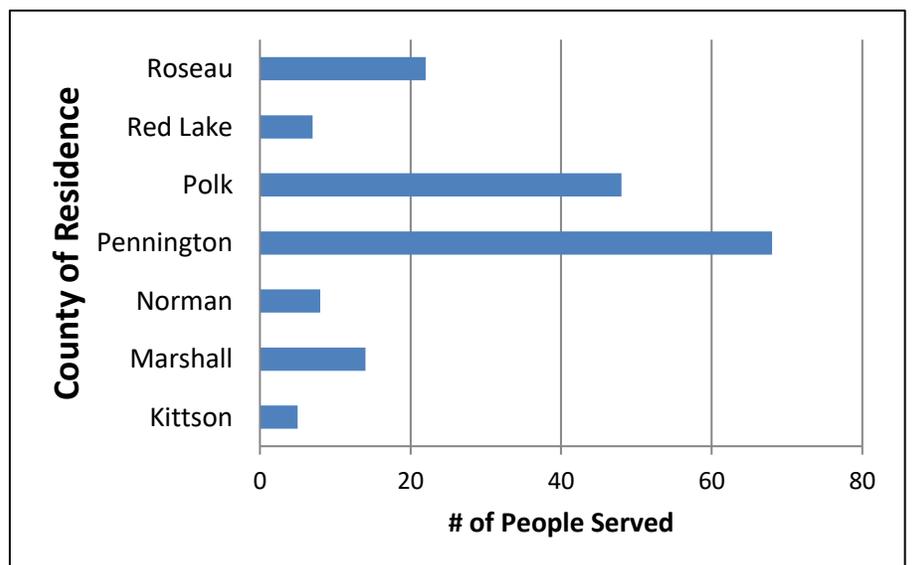
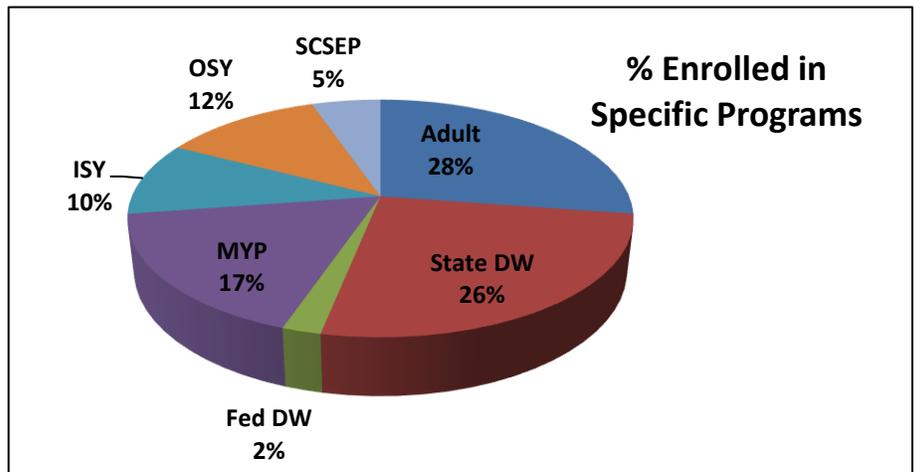
From October 2019-September 2020 we served 81 households, giving out 13,483 pounds of food and 555 pounds of household items.



Employment & Training



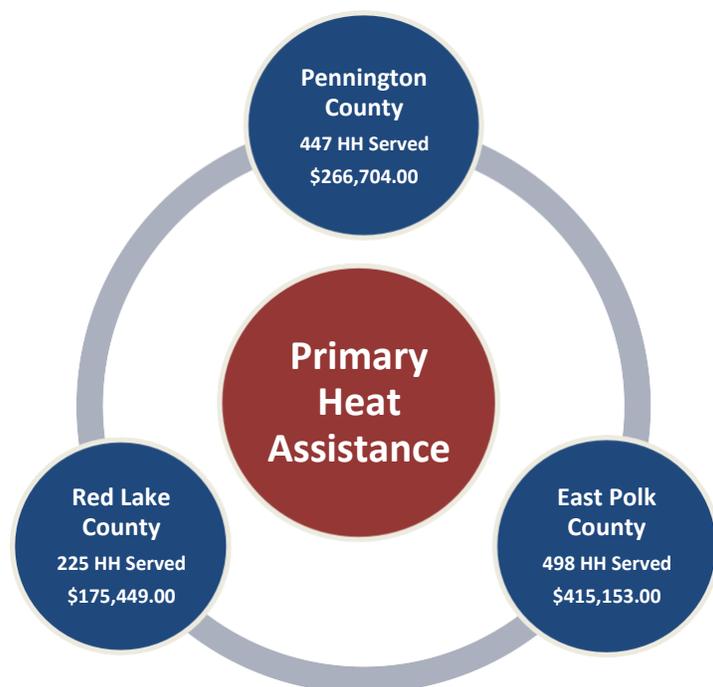
Employment and Training (E&T) served 190 clients in 2019-20. ICCC's E&T service area covers seven counties in the northwest corner of Minnesota. Employment Caseworkers are located in Roseau, Thief River Falls, Oklee, Crookston and East Grand Forks, helping people with barriers to employment through seven different programs. **ICCC receives funding from the Northwest Private Industry Council to provide all WIOA and state dislocated worker programs.** The E & T programs serve different demographics from youth – Minnesota Youth (MYP) and WIOA Youth programs (ISY and OSY) – to economically challenged Adults, to Dislocated workers – State and WIOA Dislocated worker programs – and finally the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). Fifty-two enrollees were exited to full time employment from the programs this year. ICCC is a proud partner of the American Job Center network.



Energy Assistance

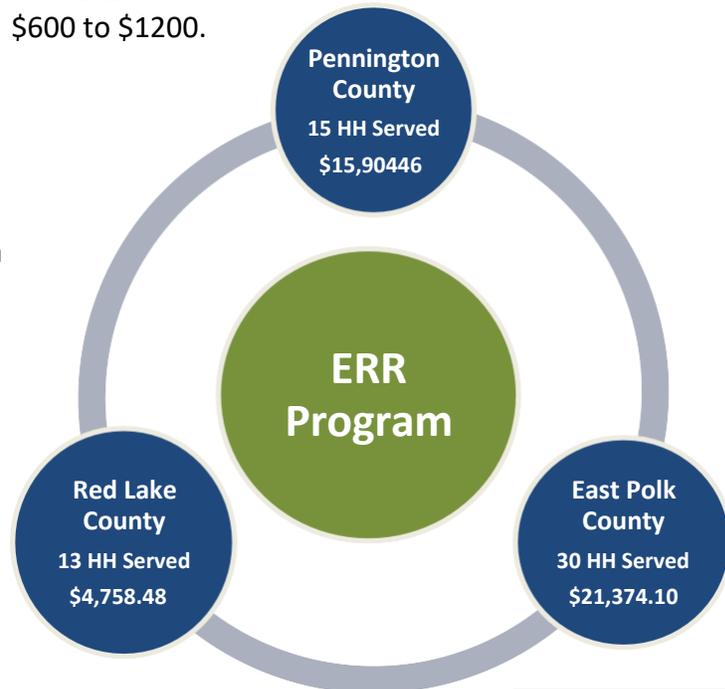
Primary Heat Assistance

Primary Heat Benefits are used to address the household's ability to maintain affordable and continuous energy by providing grants in order to lower household's energy burden. During the 2019-20 program year, ICCC distributed \$857,306 to vendors on behalf of 1,170 households. The average primary heat grant was \$733



Crisis Program

Crisis benefits are used to prevent shut-off of residential energy, reinstate service of residential energy, and enable delivery of fuels. During the 2019-20 program year, ICCC assisted 411 households in energy crisis situations spending a total of \$239,792. In response to COVID-19 maximum crisis amounts were increased from \$600 to \$1200.



Energy Related Repair Program

Energy Related Repair (ERR) benefits are used to address hazardous and life threatening situations or cases where a home has no heat due to a malfunctioning or nonfunctioning heating system. During the 2019-20 program year, ICCC spent \$40,612.48 assisting 58 households.

Reach Out for Warmth

Reach out for warmth (ROFW) is an emergency program for households facing no heat situations. ROFW is funded through locally raised donations. During the 2019-20 program year donations totaled \$1550, allowing ICCC to help 2 households. A special Thank You to all who donated to the Reach Out for Warmth Program.

Family Services

2019-20 Family Services Annual Program Report Chart

Individuals and Households Served			
Program	Proposed Households	Actual Households Served	
FHPAP	56 Households	48 Households	81 Individuals
LTH	33 Households	23 Households	33 Individuals
ESP	5 Households	29 Households	41 Individuals
THP	20 Households	25 households	41 Individuals
PSH	6 Households (7 beds)	8 Households	9 Individuals
HYA	15 Individuals	34 Households	50 Youth Clients
ESG	17 Households	29 Households	47 Individuals
Riverside	4 Households	4 Households	4 Individuals
River Pointe	4 Households	4 Households	17 Individuals
YHDP	23 Households	31 Households	53 Individuals

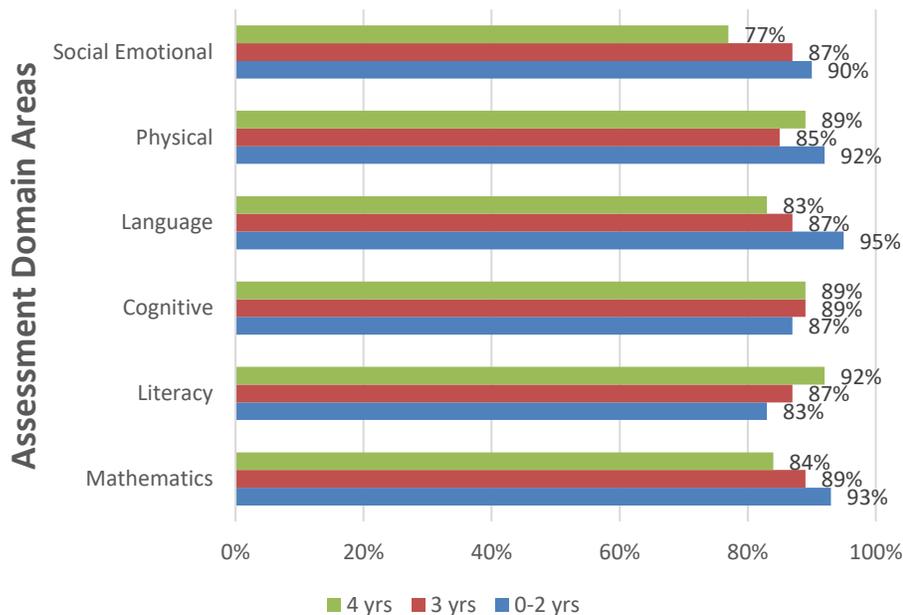
MN Sure	
Individuals screened for health insurance eligibility	2,909
Individuals assisted with the enrollment and renewal process	74

SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)	
SNAP Screenings	1,737
Presentations Given	16
People attending presentations	330
Clients receiving SNAP information	1,508
Clients assisted with completing application	25

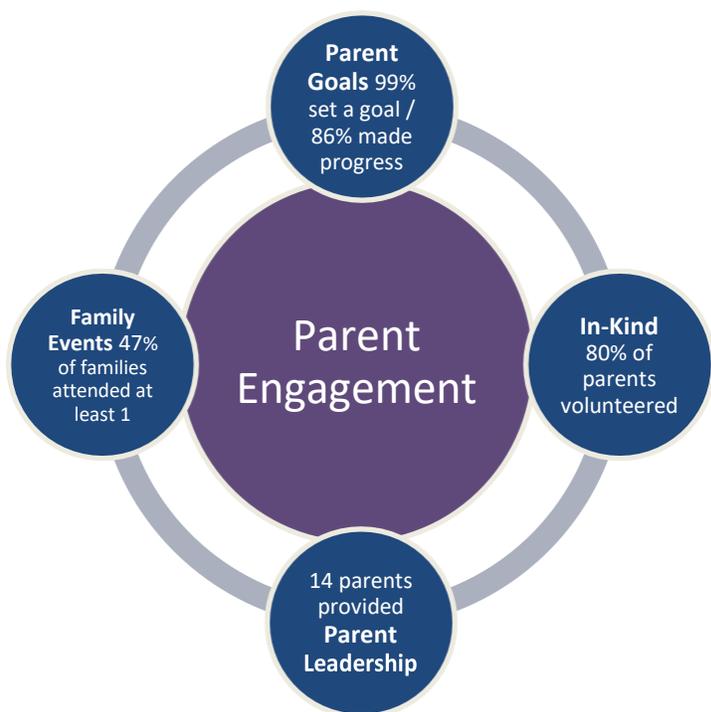


Head Start

% of Children Meeting / Exceeding Expectations for Age Group



Program Performance Indicators		
Funded Enrollment	179	
Number of Children Served	187	
Percentage of eligible children served	66%	
Percentage of children served that are homeless	6%	
Percentage of children served that are in foster care	5%	
Children with IEPs or IFSPs served	17%	
# of family volunteer hours	3474	
	HS	EHS
Classroom Attendance	84%	NA
Children receiving preventive dental care	73%	74%
Children Up to Date on Immunizations	86%	90%
Children Up to Date on preventive medical care**significant drop due to COVID-19	56%	26%
Fathers were involved in Head Start activities	44%	25%



Parent Engagement

Parent involvement and participation in the Head Start / Early Head Start program is what makes the most difference in their child's progress toward school readiness – parents are their child's first and most important educator. Every parent / guardian is encouraged to give back in whatever way they can – from goals to improve family self-sufficiency, volunteering in the classroom or working on school readiness at home, to leading the program.

Monitoring Reviews

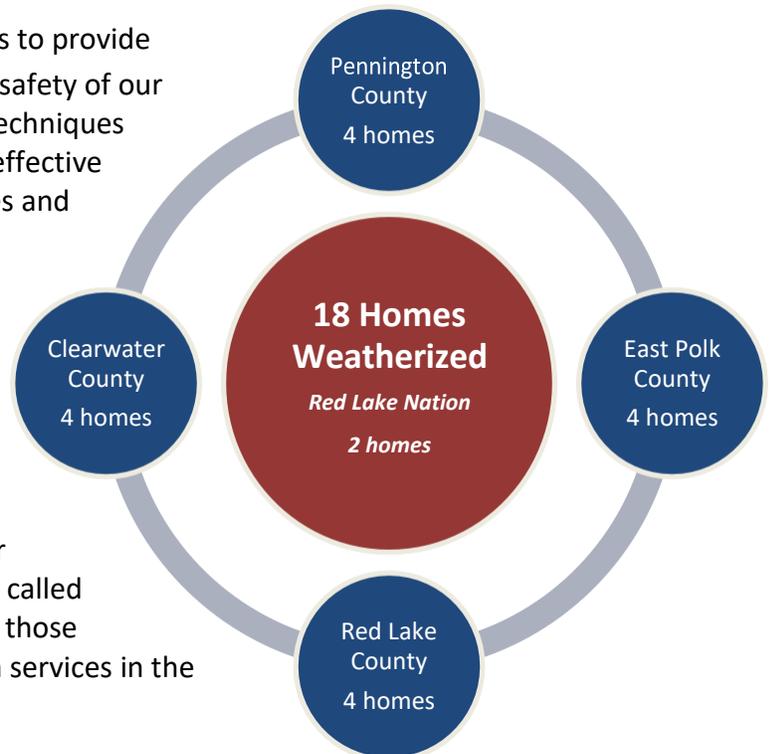
ICCC had a Focus Area 1 Federal Monitoring events in the 2019-20 program year. ICCC had a MN Department of Human Services on-site review to monitor our 2 state licensed center classrooms. The Federal event had no areas of concern, with one recommendation that has been implemented. The DHS event identified one concern of an immunization record that was not entered into our system prior to the child starting in the classroom. A new policy is in place to correct this.

Federal Head Start / Early Head Start			State Head Start / Early Head Start		
Line Item	Budget	Expenditures	Line Item	Budget	Expenditures
Personnel	\$795,296	\$823,362.42	Salary & Fringe	\$169,805	\$169,663.76
Fringe	\$434,071	\$387,409.54	Contracted Services	\$6,750	\$6,936.78
Travel	\$11,825	\$7,072.16	Staff Development	\$1,200	\$1,148.56
Equipment	\$40,000	\$0	Travel / Transport.	\$4,850	\$4,735.99
Supplies	\$40,600	\$37,632.06	Equipment	\$0	\$0
Contractual	\$71,950	\$57,404.41	Office Expenses	\$16,820	\$16,762.11
Other	\$97,079	\$177,920.41	Program Expenses	\$7,400	\$7,577.80
In Kind / Local Match	\$372,700	\$372,700	Pathway – TRF & Bagley	\$75,000	\$75,000

Weatherization

The mission of ICCC's Weatherization Program (WAP) is to provide energy savings, comfort, and to maintain the health & safety of our client's homes by using proven energy conservation techniques developed over the years to determine the most cost effective measures to save the most energy in our client's homes and keep them safe.

During the 2019-20 program year, ICCC received weatherization dollars from the Department of Energy (DOE). DOE dollars combined with Energy Assistance Transfer funds and propane funds, ICCC was able to weatherize 18 homes in Pennington, East Polk, Red Lake, and Clearwater Counties. Along with homes weatherized we also use WX dollars to repair or replace furnaces and water heaters and those Jobs are called Stand-alone projects. We assisted 14 households with those services. With the COVID-19 Pandemic, weatherization services in the home were put in a holding pattern for over 3 months.



The Weatherization Assistance Program helps low-income families, seniors, veterans, and individuals with disabilities improve the safety and energy efficiency of their homes. A peer-reviewed evaluation by Oak Ridge National Laboratory found that the program is cost-effective by even the most conservative estimates.

According to an Oak Ridge evaluation, WAP creates healthy communities.

- Residents of weatherized homes report fewer asthma and allergy symptoms.
- Residents of weatherized homes report fewer hospitalizations.
- Children in weatherized homes report fewer missed days of school.
- Families in weatherized homes reported an increased ability to get more sleep, making them rested and ready to be productive workers and members of their communities.

According to the Oak Ridge evaluation, WAP creates jobs.

- At least 8,500 jobs are supported by WAP, which impacts thousands more in related industries.
- WAP also results in over \$300 million in energy savings in a typical year.

More WAP talking points:

- Every DOE WAP dollar yields \$4.10 in energy, health and safety benefits.
- WAP has served over 7.4 million families since its inception in 1976
- For every \$1 invested in the program, WAP returns \$2.78 in non-energy benefits.
- For every \$1 invested by DOE, the Program leverages \$3.44 in other federal, state, utility, and private resources.
- Families who receive weatherization on average save \$283 per year on energy consumption.



COVID Relief

When COVID hit it amplified our need to be mobile and continue to provide assistance in a different way. Below are just a few of the highlights of how things changed and how we adjusted.

Work Environment

Plexiglass barriers were installed where we meet face to face with clients.

Staff shifted to work remotely when able, or rotated shifts in the office.

Doorbells and secure drop boxes were installed at all office locations

Food boxes were made available through curbside pickup

Polk County Funds

Polk County distributed \$70,000 to ICCC through their COVID Cares Funding. With these funds ICCC:

- Sponsored a local Thanksgiving meal
- Updated technology to allow employees to work virtually
- Purchased web cameras, zoom subscriptions, and Docu-sign to better assist our participants
- Increased cleaning at our locations and purchased PPE

Employment & Training

All participants in Polk County received laptop computers through Polk County Funds, to be able to participate in case management zoom meetings and attend school virtually.

All case management went virtual

- Staff were able to keep in contact with participants through phone, email, text, and zoom
- When weather allowed, some participants were willing to meet outdoors.

Energy Assistance

Application deadline to submit an Energy Assistance Application was extended one month.

The required income verification documentation was changed to only require ONE month of income verification prior to signature date instead of three months.

For Energy Assistance eligible households, crisis benefits were increased from \$600 to \$1200.

Applications were accepted and made available through email, fax, and mail and by secure drop box.

Food Support

In partnership with LSS, we gave out 1,150 premade meals to Red Lake County Residents

ICCC sponsored a Farm to Families food drop, giving out 450 boxes of food to area residents

With funding received from a grant, we purchased another freezer and additional food for our food shelf

ICCC received \$10,000 from Red Lake County to purchase additional food

Family Services

We applied for and received COVID Housing Assistance Program Grant (CHAPS) through MN Housing.

These funds helped with past due housing related expenses for households affected by COVID. Funds could go to pay back payments from March 2020 through December 2020.

We secured emergency shelter for those who were doubled up and had to quarantine due to COVID.

Head Start

Head Start staff assisted families in getting signed up for free meals through their local school districts.

Modified all programming to be completely virtual:

- Teachers hosted circle time, story time, as well as individual time with children and parent(s)/guardians
- When weather allowed, EHS home visitors hosted "backyard home visits", as well as hosting virtual family events

50 tablets were purchased for families with limited access to technology, allowing them to prepare for a change in services.

Additional training was provided to staff – highlighting the importance of cleaning/sanitizing.

Additional PPE and cleaning supplies were purchased and distributed to staff.

Weatherization

In home Weatherization services were suspended for three months.

Training was held for staff on COVID restrictions and keeping staff and clients safe.

Cleaning protocol and safety checklists were put into place and have become the new normal for staff and contractors.