

Lakes and Pines CAC, Inc.

Annual Report

2015—2016

**Building a Path of Equity and Opportunity
Towards Prosperity.**



Mission:

To build prosperous communities by serving local families and individuals in their pursuit of self-reliance.

51 Years Partnering to End Poverty

Serving: Aitkin, Carlton, Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs & Pine Counties

1700 Maple Avenue East, Mora, MN 55051 (320) 679-1800 (800) 832-6082 fax: (320) 679-4139
www.lakesandpines.org

An Equal Opportunity Employer/Contractor

Letter from the Board Chair

Dear Friends of Lakes and Pines,

It is a pleasure to present to you the Fiscal Year 2016 Annual report covering the dates of October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016. As you will see from the following information, the 51st year of providing services and working to prevent and eradicate poverty in East Central Minnesota has again been an exemplary year.

“Building a Path of Equity and Opportunity Towards Prosperity” is something that Lakes and Pines has embarked upon for over five decades and a goal that has been accomplished innumerable times with families and individuals over that period.

It is with pleasure that I take this opportunity to thank my fellow Board Members and the dedicated staff for their tireless efforts toward assisting those with limited resources find a way toward greater opportunity. I am honored and humbled to work alongside these devoted individuals, all working for a common goal.

As we head into the upcoming year, it is clear that challenges remain on the horizon and Lakes and Pines will again be tested in its resolve to eliminate poverty in the midst of plenty. I ask and thank you in advance for your continued support and assistance in this battle. This is an effort that cannot be relegated to a single Agency or group of people, but must be carried by all of us and begins with each of us treating all of our neighbors with dignity, respect and equality.

Sincerely,

Gene Anderson

Gene Anderson, Board Chairperson

2016 Award Recipients

Spirit of Community:	Trio Community Church
Allies in Action:	Seven County Senior Federation
Volunteer of the Year:	Judy Welton
Roger E. Corbin (Staff):	David Engberg

Lakes and Pines Board of Directors

Donald Niemi, Aitkin County Commissioner*
Gary Peterson, Carlton County Commissioner
Mike Robinson, Chisago County Commissioner*†
Greg Anderson, Isanti County Commissioner **
Gene Anderson, Kanabec County Commissioner, Chairperson**†
Genny Reynolds, Mille Lacs County Commissioner, 2nd Vice Chair
Curt Rossow, Pine County Commissioner
Lilly Turner, Aitkin County Area Served, Secretary**
Patricia Johnson, Carlton County Area Served
Joy Erickson, Chisago County Area Served†
Ronald Duke, Isanti County Area Served**
Liane Heupel, Kanabec County Area Served†
Carla Bruggeman, Mille Lacs County Area Served**
Roberta Folkestad, Pine County Area Served
Mary Oja, Carlton County Council on Aging
Rebecca Foss, Health & Human Services Directors
Steven Walbridge, Area Lions Clubs, Treasurer**
Bradley Larson, Area Financial Institutions
Wayne Boettcher, Farmers Union Groups, 1st Vice Chair**†
Jeffrey Haberkorn, Legal Services
Anne Kubesh, Head Start Policy Council

** Executive/Personnel Committee Member

† Planning and Evaluation Committee



Executive Committee



Board Officers

Photos provided by: Tonya Burk

Head Start Policy Council

The Head Start Policy Council provides parents and other community representatives with the authority and opportunity to participate in decision making concerning program design and implementation. Parents are elected by their local parent groups to represent their “socialization site or center site” on Policy Council. Policy Council has many responsibilities including, but not limited to:

- Evaluate the Head Start Program and make recommendations for improvement;
- Develop and approve budget proposals;
- Develop and approve grant proposals;
- Provide input on state legislation affecting Head Start;
- Bring comments/concerns from their parent group to Policy Council;
- Report back to their parent group the happenings in the Program; and
- Participate in sub-committees of the Policy Council.

Because they are an important connection for families in their area, it is important for the Policy Council Representative to attend parent meetings to give a report to the group.

2015—2016 Policy Council Representatives



Back: Anne Kubesh, Lara Huynh, MaryAnn Mathews, Kristina Kolecki
Front: Kim Mikush, Venessa Nelson

Family Homelessness Prevention and Assistance Program

The Family Homelessness Prevention and Assistance Program has an Advisory Committee that meets monthly to determine the current trends and needs of the area relative to housing and homelessness. The Committee consists of staff from each County Health and Human Service Department, Domestic Violence, Department of Corrections, Veteran’s Service, Mental Health and Chemical Health service providers, area landlords and housing providers from the entire seven county service area.

2016 FHPAP Committee Members

Name	Agency	Name	Agency
Jane Arnold	Aitkin County HHS	Stacy Kriese	RS Eden
Sandra Barclay	Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe	Scarlet LaValle	Chisago County HHS
Patty Beech	Northeast Continuum of Care	Shirley Lewison	Area Landlord
Patti Bontjes	Isanti County Family Services	Chassidy Lobdell	Lakes and Pines CAC
Amy Carter	Rise, Inc.	Michelle Morgan	Pine County Human Services
Linda Cassman	A Place For You	Jeanne Olson	Rise, Inc.
Diane Elias	Minnesota Housing Finance Agency	Joshua Oquist	Kanabec County Human Services
Lori Engblom	Resource	Lezlie Sauter	Lakes and Pines CAC
Lea Engnell	Rise, Inc.	Barbara Schmidt	Volunteers of America, MN
Kate Ericson	Department of Corrections	Dianne Stone	Retired Housing Professional
Lisa Hamilton	Advocates Against Domestic Abuse	Teresa Swanson	Carlton County Human Services
AG Huot	Central MN Housing Partnership	Jackie Vetvick	Resource, Inc.
Jennine Johnson	The Refuge Network	Julie Wermerskirchen	New Pathways
Kathy Kraft	MAC-V	Mary Ann Westlund	New Pathways



Back: Kathy Kraft, Dianne Stone, Jeanne Olson, Kate Erickson

Front: Michelle Morgan, Julie Wermerskirchen, Chassidy Lobdell, Jennine Johnson

Photo provided by: Tonya Burk

Partnering to End Poverty

Legislative Membership

Lakes and Pines' Seven County Service Area

Lakes and Pines appreciates the partnership of Legislators in working toward prosperity for all East Central Minnesota residents.

US Senate

Amy Klobuchar (DFL)

Al Franken (DFL)

US Congress

District 8: Rick Nolan (DFL)

Governor

Mark Dayton (DFL)

Lieutenant Governor

Tina Smith (DFL)

State Representatives

District 10B: Dale Lueck (R)

District 11A: Mike Sundin (DFL)

District 11B: Jason Rarick (R)

District 15A: Sondra Erickson (R)

District 31A: Kurt Daudt (R)

District 32A: Brian Johnson (R)

District 32B: Bob Barrett (R)

District 39A: Bob Dettmer (R)

State Senators

District 10: Carrie Ruud (R)

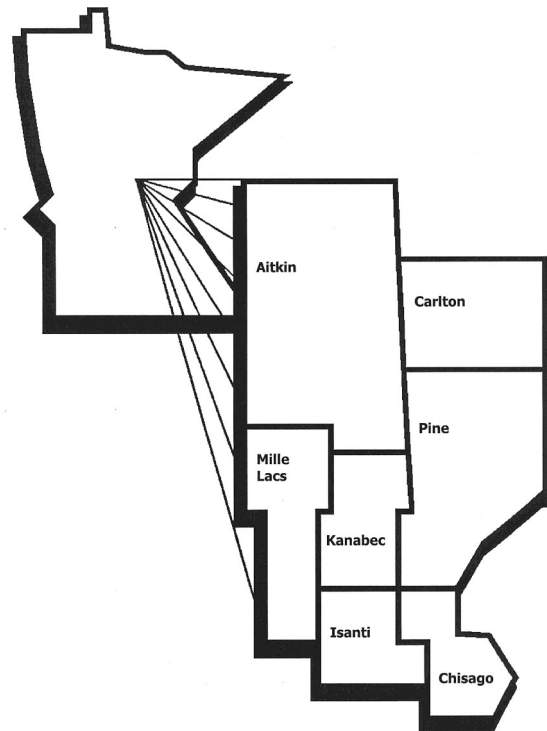
District 11: Tony Lourey (DFL)

District 15: David Brown (R)

District 31: Michelle Benson (R)

District 32: Sean Nienow (R)

District 39: Karin Housley (R)



Early Childhood & Family Development Department

Kraig Gratke, Department Director

Department Purpose

The Early Childhood and Family Development Department comprehensively serves families and young children in a holistic manner with a focus on parent engagement and preparing children to be life long learners.

Success Stories

Look Who's Talking! (Thanks to a team effort.)

Two important goals of the Lakes and Pines Head Start Program are collaborating with other local agencies in providing services to families and helping parents advocate for their children's health and development. Both of these goals played a role in the recent success of an Early Head Start (Birth to Three-year old) Program family obtaining speech services for their child.

The Early Head Start Program maintains annual contracts with County Public Health programs to ensure collaboration when families are being dually served. The service providers working with the family are able to communicate as needed to coordinate their services.

At the beginning of the 2015-16 Head Start Program Year, the parents of an enrolled 22-month old started to express concerns regarding their child's speech. Speech development varies greatly at this age, so both the Head Start home visitor and the Public Health nurse helped the family to understand typical speech development and alleviate some of their fears. Previous screenings had shown that the child was developing as expected. The Public Health nurse connected the family with their local school. The school completed a screening, but determined that no further evaluation was needed at that time. The family was discouraged by this and felt that their concerns had not been heard. In November 2015, at the child's 24-month well child check, the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) screening was completed with a speech score that fell in the referable range. Both the Head Start home visitor and the Public Health nurse connected with the school regarding an assessment. The school wanted to wait and assess at a later date. The family expressed further frustration over this and in the meantime was struggling to communicate with their child. Head Start was able to have their Special Needs Coordinator come directly to the home in early January 2016 to conduct a more in-depth speech screening which resulted in a referable score again and validated the parents' concerns. At that point it was decided that a joint home visit with both Head Start and Public Health would be beneficial to help the parents consider their options. Since the school was unable, at the time, to do another screening or assessment, the option of speech services through their primary health provider was presented to the family. They decided to pursue it and by February 2016, the child started speech therapy services with a speech clinician at their primary clinic. Within two months, the child was using two to three word combinations and had increased her vocabulary significantly. During the process, the parents had a few frustrations with the speech clinician not communicating with them. The home visitor encouraged the parents to respectfully express their concerns, which helped them get some of the answers they were seeking.

Head Start believes that parents are their child's first and BEST teacher. However, when there are special concerns, parents suddenly find themselves navigating a system that, at times, can be daunting and frustrating. They begin to doubt themselves, and they may give up. Because Public Health and Head Start staff were able to communicate, be on the same page, and support the family through the process, the best possible outcome for the child was achieved. The parents felt validated and empowered to speak-up on their child's behalf and will be more likely to play an active role in their child's education in future years.

Taylor Davis is 20 years old. She has an awesome three-year-old son named Trevor and is pregnant with her daughter. Taylor was referred to Lakes and Pines by the Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency, who thought that Taylor could definitely benefit from having some extra support in her corner.

When Lakes and Pines first began working with Taylor, she was new to our area. Just three-months pregnant, she was starting over in an area she was unfamiliar with. Taylor has already survived much adversity in her young life, but she is such a positive and wonderful young woman to work with. We put together some goals of things that she wanted to accomplish and she soared through all of them in just three short months.



Partnering to End Poverty

Early Childhood & Family Development Department

Kraig Gratke, Department Director

First, she wanted to get her GED. She has an 11th grade education and knew that a GED is one of the first steps towards attaining her dream of attending college. In just two months, she took and passed three of the four tests that she needs to obtain her GED.

One of the next goals that she set was that she wanted to get her driver's license so she could be more independent and not have to rely on others for her family's transportation needs. With the help of the workforce center in setting up behind the wheel training, she is now a licensed Minnesota driver.

The goal that she is currently working to achieve is moving her into her own housing. Although she was lucky enough to have a place to live with her son's family, she has longed for her family to have a home of their own. She has signed a lease and with the help and support of Lakes and Pines programming, she will be able to achieve more financial stability and independence.

As all of us do, Taylor wants the best for her young family and is working diligently towards accomplishing her goals. She is living proof that if a person continues to try and allows people to support their efforts, nothing can stand in the way of their goals. Lakes and Pines is grateful to be a part of her journey towards self-sufficiency.

Programs

During the 2015-2016 Program Year, the Early Childhood and Family Development Department worked with three grants and provided services through Home Visiting, Combination Programming, Center, and Family Child Care options. The state funded Birth to Five Head Start grant was used primarily for birth to three-year old home-based programming, including services to pregnant women. It also included home-based services for homeless children from ages birth to five and home-based services to children in alternative care settings. Services to homeless children and children separated from their primary care provider due to incarceration or inpatient treatment for mental health or substance use concerns are a priority. The Office of Head Start and the Minnesota Department of Education have emphasized the need for targeted services in this area.

The federally funded Birth to Five Early Head Start/Head Start grant primarily funded home based services, but also included center-based and combination programming for children ages three to five and Family Child Care Partnership programming for children ages three to five. This was the first year of the Medica Grant, which increases dental access for low income children in the Lakes and Pines service area. Lakes and Pines continued its partnership with Tri-County Community Action and Kootasca Community Action to serve birth to three year-old children in the federally funded Early Head Start Child Care Partnership grant. Lakes and Pines serves 12 children as part of this grant across multiple child care providers.

Department Progress

School readiness continues to be a focus with systems aligned for a comprehensive Birth to Five-year old program. Staff was supported in implementing Creative Curriculum and Teaching Strategies Gold across the birth to five continuum. The child level data this year provided a deeper look at child development which continues to refine our focus on teaching strategies and assessment. On a micro level, differences between how teachers score the same child became evident as children moved between staff and options. Overall, children experienced double digit gains in the development domains. In two finite areas, children demonstrating awareness of themselves, their communities, and characteristics of people and children experimenting with everyday objects and materials in their environment, there was considerable lack of development. This will lead to additional training on these topics and in how we perceive development in very young children. The CLASS observation instrument, another data set, was also used with our center-based and Family Child Care partners. Over the course of the year, focused coaching was done in specific areas that pushed those scores higher than the national benchmarks. This was our first year collecting Parent Family and Community Engagement goals. We are continuing to refine our work in this area and the tools used to assess parent progress. What we do know from the data is that families became more stable and accessed a wide array of resources. Both of these things, however, have lead to deeper questions about the timing and quality of the interventions and how we can improve across the whole service area. The Department is preparing for a year of substantial changes and opportunities as we move into the second year of the federal five-year grant and begin to process new federal regulations, building programming to meet those requirements. For a complete report on children's progress, please visit www.lakesandpines.org.

Partnering to End Poverty

Energy-Housing Department

Richard Fuchs, Department Director

Department Purpose

The Energy-Housing Department provides Energy Assistance Programs (EAP), Weatherization Programs and Housing Rehabilitation Programs. They further the Agency's Mission by helping low-income residents be more self-sufficient through providing heat, housing repairs and decreasing the cost of heating homes, so that those households can budget their limited income for other essential needs. The Rehabilitation Programs help communities by assisting families in keeping their homes safe, energy efficient and from falling into disrepair. The community at large benefits from improved neighborhoods, business directed to local contractors and a stable property tax base. The Weatherization Programs help reduce annual fuel consumption for households, while ensuring combustion appliances receive a safety check. Reduced dependence on heating fuel helps control the market demand for everyone. Energy Assistance helps pay a portion of the heating costs for low-income households. This provides stability for families so that they can continue to pay for other necessities. Crisis Funds are also available for households experiencing a heating-related emergency. Energy Related Repair helps homeowners repair or replace nonfunctioning furnaces. These unexpected costs would ordinarily cause families to endure the cold until they had funds to do the repairs.

Programs

Energy Assistance Program	Small Cities Development Program:
Crisis Program	- Princeton
Energy Related Repairs	- Mora
Reach Out For Warmth	- Cloquet
East Central Energy Caring Members	- Braham – Grasston
Weatherization Assistance Program	Minnesota Housing Finance Agency Programs (MHFA):
Renewable Energy Equipment Grant	- Home Rehabilitation Deferred Loan Program
Pine County Septic Program	- Fix-Up Fund Loan Program
Conservation Improvement Program	- Emergency Loan Program

Department Progress

The Energy Housing Program is making progress by using technology to deliver programs to clients by implementing a paperless processing system. Applications were scanned into a laserfiche file system. All processing of applications was done using two screens. Staff had access to files from their desks; they no longer had to find them in file cabinets or refile them after they were processed. This efficiency allowed staff to process applications much faster.

Success Stories

Minnesota Housing Finance Agency: Before and After



The existing siding on this home was no longer providing a water barrier. Part of the work done included new siding.



Partnering to End Poverty

Energy-Housing Department

Richard Fuchs, Department Director

Energy Assistance:

It is wonderful when many programs can work together to make a huge impact on one family who is overwhelmed with problems. However, in the Energy Housing Department, even the ordinary things we do make a big impact on families and individuals.

One 58-year-old widow from Aitkin County sent this note: “I would not have been able to stay in my home through the winter if the Lakes and Pines staff had not replaced my furnace. Everyone at Lakes and Pines was great to talk to and very helpful. I want to make sure everyone knows how much I appreciate the help. It was very hard to ask for help, but the staff made me feel at ease throughout the entire process.”

A woman of 88 years from Kanabec County wrote: “A big thank you for the new furnace you gave me. It was so wonderful to have a nice warm house again. Thank you for the fuel assistance, too.”

There seems to be a common thread in the thank you letters received from clients, primarily from elders. This 91-year old woman is from Chisago County and her letter speaks to why the Department staff work so hard: “Thank you so much for what you all do for me. I can’t thank you enough. This helps me stay in my home.”

How can you not be proud of what you do when the bulletin board is covered by letters similar to the one written by this 73-year old woman from Isanti County: “Thank you for all the work you do. I appreciate the help you gave me on my heating bill; also for others you help. God’s blessings. You are a blessing in difficult times.”

The feedback comes in many ways. The younger people express their thanks over the phone when hearing we can help them. Staff are often too busy to get quotes from these callers to post on the bulletin board or write here, but appreciate hearing how much their work has made a difference. There are so many people who express their feeling that they would not be able to stay in their home without the help they receive.

Weatherization (Wx):

Lakes and Pines was able to weatherize the home for a 77-year-old recently widowed homeowner. A crew spent seven days at her home adding seventy-two bags of insulation to the home. A local electrician installed three hardwired smoke detectors and three hardwired carbon monoxide/smoke detectors. A local company installed a new energy efficient furnace and power-vented gas water heater. The electric vendor’s conservation improvement program was also able to replace her inefficient 18-year-old refrigerator with an Energy Star one. Her advice to Lakes and Pines: “Don’t ever let Chad or Caleb leave your company, I feel so lucky to have had them to help me.”

A couple that are both legally blind had difficulties maintaining their home, which had fuel bills in the \$1200 range. The Weatherization Program was able to add proper ductwork and lots of insulation to the walls and attics and seal many air leaks that let the heat escape. With the approaching winter, the homeowner will see lower fuel bills and more even heat throughout their home. They no longer dread the coming winter but anticipate seeing the lower fuel bills.

A couple who, after saving for a nice retirement, began living off these funds only to learn that inflation was affecting their ability to provide them with the retired life they had planned. Then one of them developed cancer and they were not able to maintain their home, nor pay for the heating costs as a result of increased expenses. Energy Assistance helped defray the heating costs, but the 1988 insulation and air sealing techniques were not as advanced as they are today. The couple was selected to have their home weatherized and received a new furnace and water heater. Other work included insulation and air bypass sealing, plus an improved ventilation system which corrected a moist indoor air problem that was damaging windows. The homeowners commented how much cooler their house was in the summer with a more uniform temperature.



Partnering to End Poverty

Community Services Department

Lezlie Sauter, Department Director/ Agency Planner

Department Purpose

The purpose of the Community Services Department is to achieve the goals outlined in Lakes and Pines' Community Action Plan. The Community Action Plan is based on the needs defined through the Community Needs Assessment, which is conducted typically every other year and surveys program participants and community members.

The primary work and purpose of the Community Services Department is to provide resources, referrals and case management/supportive services to people who are struggling to make ends meet. The Department's secondary focus remains to provide financial assistance, as necessary, to stabilize struggling individuals and families. Through these activities, the Community Services Department directly improves the communities where these individuals and families live by strengthening the ability of these individuals and families to become prosperous.

Programs

Family Homelessness Prevention & Assistance	Garden Seed Program
Emergency Services Program—Shelter	SNAP Outreach & Application Assistance
Emergency Solutions Grant—Rehousing	MNsure Assisters & Navigation
Ex-Offender Rapid Rehousing Program	Volunteer Income Tax Assistance
Transitional Housing	Family Assets & Independence in Minnesota
Transitional Living for Youth	Financial Empowerment
Long-Term Homeless Supportive Services	Transportation—Vehicle Donation Program
Social Security Outreach, Advocacy & Recovery	Live Well at Home—Chore Services

Success Stories

The Community Services Department has experienced the trickle-down effect of expanding services and raising awareness this past year.

The year started off with a Regional Housing Dialogue, which brought in funders from the private sector as well as the state and federal government to talk about the funding opportunities available to address the region's biggest housing deficits. Over 85 people participated and developed a preliminary plan for the region to begin working on housing.



As a result of these conversations, Lakes and Pines has been at the forefront to help expand services to those experiencing long-term homelessness obtain supportive services to prevent further episodes of homelessness. Now, the region has grown to offer these services to an additional 14 units/households this past year, up from a total of 10 units in the previous year.

Partnering to End Poverty

Community Services Department

Lezlie Sauter, Department Director/ Agency Planner

The Bundled Services Initiative was started this past year and with that, Lakes and Pines established two new offices in North Branch and Moose Lake, plus a one-day a week satellite office in Aitkin. It can be discouraging for someone who needs services from different agencies, providers and programs, to go from building to building, office to office, person to person and explain their situation and challenges multiple times. Agency-Wide Advocates are available at each of these sites, as well as the Mora office to coordinate services for families and individuals who are facing multiple obstacles on their path to self-sufficiency. Most service models only focus on one challenge or issue rather than providing a comprehensive bundled package of services. Advocates work with program participants to efficiently coordinate all available services to address all their needs. This process builds on a combination of staff and family input



and may involve coordination with service providers outside Lakes and Pines. Achievable goals are set with the individual or family and Advocates establish an on-going relationship with the family. Advocates also mentor the families to build on their strengths and navigate service systems to access the services they need. By providing services to meet multiple challenges and on-going ever expanding goals, individuals and families will have a better opportunity to achieve self-sufficiency and this initiative has, so far, shown promising success.

Recently, an Agency Wide Advocate had an appointment with a mother and her adult daughter who have been living in their car. They had moved back to Minnesota to be closer to relatives but things did not go as planned and they found themselves homeless. They were in need of shelter and the Advocate was able to provide additional services to the mother and daughter while sheltering them in a motel for the night.

The Advocate helped the family fill out a Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) application and during this process the family reported that they had other needs as well. The mother needed health insurance and the family could benefit from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Energy Assistance and budgeting. The Advocate explained that she could help them apply for all of these services and they were thrilled that they could address all of their needs with one person rather than having to tell their story over and over again to different people.

There are so many times that families give up because they have to jump through so many hoops and talk to so many different people. This family exited the shelter program with more tools than they entered the program with and was more financially resilient due to the manner in which the services were delivered.

This is a great example of how Lakes and Pines has improved the quality of services that are provided to families and individuals in their pursuit of self-reliance.

Department Progress

The Community Services Department continues to make progress at building prosperous communities by helping local families and individuals obtain the knowledge and resources they need to be financially resilient. This includes getting to work to put food on the table and maintaining housing, while also accessing resources and knowledge. The Department continues to engage with the community and expand services as needs arise.

One recent expansion of services is the Live Well at Home Chore and Home Delivery Services. These two programs help seniors and homeowners with disabilities improve the safety, efficiency, and comfort of their homes, enabling them to remain in their own homes longer by providing volunteers to remove snow, clean gutters, mow, rake, clean, install grab bars and deliver groceries/incidentals. In addition to the volunteer services, staff utilize the Rapid Screen test on all program participants and offer referrals as needed. These programs are also unique in that they suggest program participants consider a cost share donation to promote program sustainability.

Partnering to End Poverty

Administration Department

Robert Benes, Executive Director

The Executive Director's office, governed by the Board of Directors, provides overall management of Agency business operations, overall leadership and direction through planning and evaluation to assure that all Agency activities are consistent with Lakes and Pines' Mission and in full compliance with Federal, State and programmatic laws, regulations, rules and standards. The Administration Department provides legal authority, supervises Agency contracts, enacts Agency policies, assures fiscal controls, integrity and viability, as well as fair, consistent and efficient personnel management. All of this is done through the most efficient and most technologically methodology practical.

During the past year, the Agency has demonstrated the capacity and ability to react quickly and strategically to the community and its emerging needs. Flood waters in July affected families in five of the seven counties served by Lakes and Pines. As with the floods in 2012, the organization partnered with local agencies and officials to address the emergency as quickly and efficiently as possible and continue to assist residents with the long-term recovery effort.

With the pending implementation of new Head Start Performance Standards, the Agency has been proactive in its preparation for the upcoming Program Year. The new standards have created a need for change in the program model and Lakes and Pines is prepared to meet that challenge, while continuing to operate the highest quality program for families and their children.

Lakes and Pines is proud that we had another staff member, Dawn vanHees, Early Childhood and Family Development Department Family and Community Partnership Manager, complete the Certified Community Action Professional program. Lezlie Sauter, Agency Planner/Community Services Department Director also completed the Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) Trainer Certification. Both Lezlie and Dawn add a wealth of experience and competencies to the Agency with these national certifications.



Administrative Team

Back Row: Lezlie Sauter, Kelly Manley, Rich Fuchs, Kraig Gratke, Leona Dressel

Front Row: Denise Stewart, Bob Benes, Amanda Wall

Photo provided by: Tonya Burk

Fiscal Department

Amanda Wall, Fiscal Controller

The Fiscal Department is comprised of three staff members: the Fiscal Controller and two Accounting Technicians. Together, staff maintain a timely and accurate account of all financial transactions for the Agency. The Fiscal Department follows policies and procedures to assure management and funding sources that fiscal operations are conducted consistent with laws and regulations; that resources are safeguarded against waste, loss and misuse; and reliable data is fairly disclosed in reports. Reports are provided to the Board of Directors, Agency departments, community partners, and program funding sources. The Fiscal office continues to assess accounting duties performed in relation to cost effectiveness and efficiency of operations; reliability of internal and external reporting; and compliance with applicable laws and regulations; to achieve internal control objectives as approved by the Board of Directors.

As a team this year, staff focused on this triangle of objectives to make improvements for getting the job done legally and reliably through sound fiscal practices. Legally, Uniform Guidance, federal grant regulations, informs the Agency that it must "expedite the completion of its lowest-dollar small purchase transactions and minimize the associated administrative burden and cost". To start, Lakes and Pines has simplified the process of obtaining goods and services by putting forth a procurement flowchart for staff to follow and for the first time allowed Department Directors to approve small purchases. By establishing thresholds for approval, the Agency opened the door for department staff to get their jobs done more efficiently so program objectives can be accomplished more cost effectively.

Partnering to End Poverty

Human Resources Department

Leona Dressel, Department Director

Human Resource Purpose Statement and Description: To assist the Board of Directors, Executive Director and senior management in the overall policy direction on human resource management issues and administrative support functions. The mission of the HR Department includes serving the other Agency Departments in their efforts to recruit, train and retain a diverse and competent workforce which allows the Departments to carry out their program operations more effectively, as well as to comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws and funding source requirements.

Human Resource Strategic Objectives: To be the Employer of choice in the local market; Support learning and continuous professional development for staff; Have an innovative workforce; A safe and healthy working environment; Ensure equality and diversity principles in all aspects of employment; Build positive relationships with all levels of staff and community partners through Mission, Vision and Values.

One of the operational strategies for this past year and going into the next Fiscal Year is to streamline internal efficiencies within personnel management. The Department is working closely with the Agency's Technology Department to identify and develop processes and use of technology – thus, eliminating hard copy forms, automating manual processes, providing staff on-line access to Agency documents and trainings, as well as allowing supervisors on-line access to applicable employee records.

HR and key management staff participated in local job fairs, including the St. Cloud State's Diversity and Intern Job Fair. HR assisted Directors to plan for future employment needs at the same time maximizing the effectiveness of our current employees. One key element was to identify the competencies we will need for the future. The second was to evaluate the skills of current employees and develop plans for promising candidates to better position them to fill future vacancies. The organization continues to offer leadership development and to build effective teams; an example being five key staff members participated and certified in the Community Action Leadership Institute. Through the Central MN Jobs and Training, DEED, a grant was submitted for continued training of staff in early childhood education to meet the new educational requirements in the performance standards by the funder.

At peak during the 2015-2016 Fiscal Year, the Agency had 117 staff members. Staff members continue to build strong partnerships with external businesses, organizations and government entities. Partnerships involve professional/work relationships, as well as personal volunteering.

Successful outcomes for the Fiscal Year included (1) meeting the Affordable Care Act with its many complex compliance areas; (2) the Department worked with a volunteer which assisted with HR secretarial functions; and with the volunteer building on her skill set, she obtained full time employment; (3) expanding our Safety and Health and Wellness Programs resulting in safer and healthier employees with less workers compensation claims and reasonable group health premiums. And lastly, the Department has continued to lead in meeting compliance in the ever changing employment laws.

Technology Department

Kelly Manley, Department Director

The past year the Tech Department was focused on creating new systems and improving the current systems of the Agency. This ranged from replacing obsolete equipment to developing new software to improve the day to day operations. The Department virtualized most of the server infrastructure, which allows for a more versatile server environment. The Department created the necessary systems to allow for connections between the main office and offsite locations securely. The public facing website lakesandpines.org was also redesigned to allow for greater capabilities.

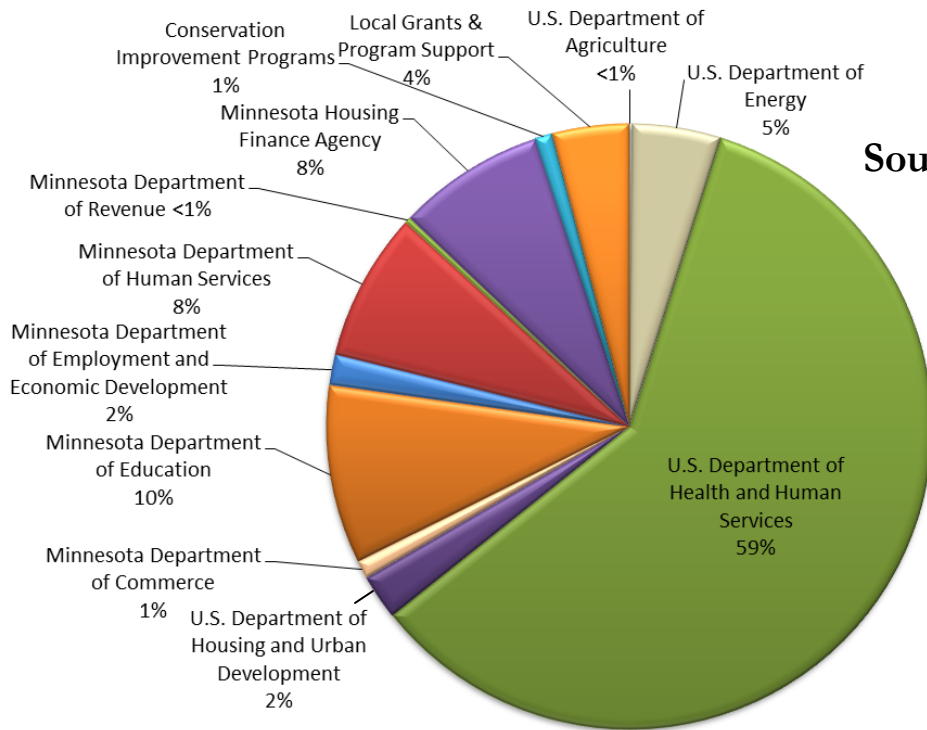
This coming year the Tech Department will continue to focus on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of Lakes and Pines and its service to the community. The following are things to expect in the next year on lakesandpines.org: Online Employment Application; Online Program Applications (*Dependent on program restrictions*).

Internally, the Tech Department will be implementing a new data tracking system and improving the current systems to allow for more efficient employee management. As always, the Tech Department will continue to provide excellent support to our fellow staff members.

Partnering to End Poverty

Financial Statement

Lakes and Pines Community Action Council, Inc. is audited each fiscal year by independent Certified Public Accountants. The audit is conducted in accordance with U.S. Generally Accepted Auditing Principles (GAAP). The summarized data that appears on pages 14 and 15 was compiled using the preliminary financial statements for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016. The final compilation and audit for these figures will be in December 2016. The audited financial statements for the Agency are available for public inspection on the Agency's website.

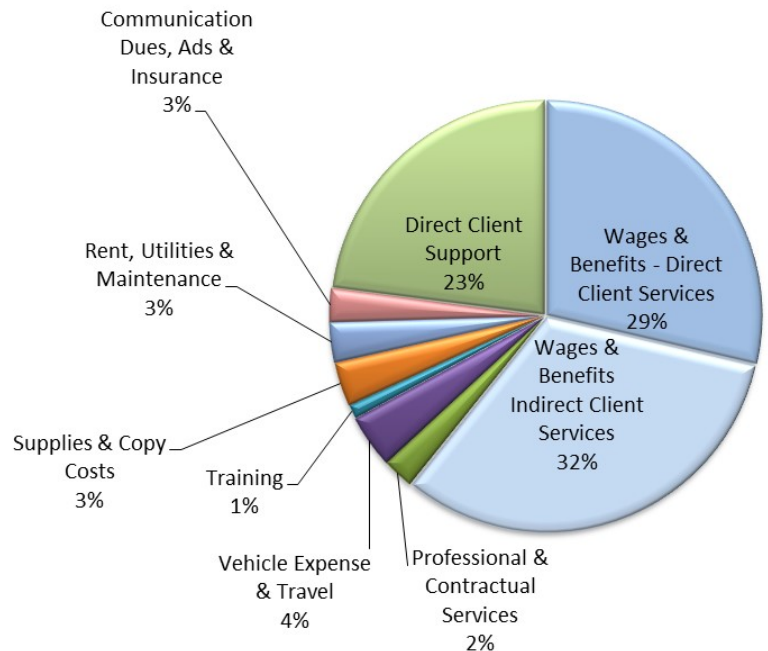


Sources of Revenue

<i>Revenues</i>	
Federal Grants	\$ 5,401,730
State Grants	\$ 2,292,176
Local Grants & Program Support	\$ 405,847
Total Revenues	\$ 8,099,753

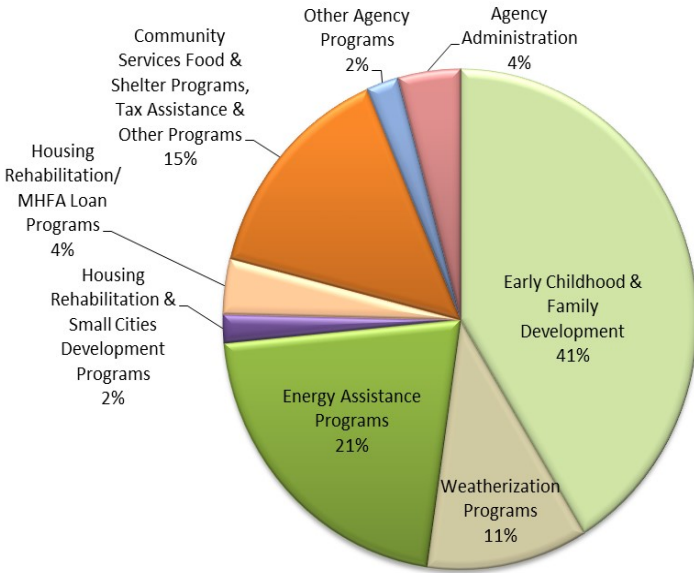
<i>Sources of Revenue</i>	
U.S. Department of Agriculture	\$ 12,570
U.S. Department of Energy	\$ 382,815
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	\$ 4,812,333
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	\$ 194,012
Minnesota Department of Commerce	\$ 77,220
Minnesota Department of Education	\$ 773,772
Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development	\$ 133,621
Minnesota Department of Human Services	\$ 643,657
Minnesota Department of Revenue	\$ 25,678
Minnesota Housing Finance Agency	\$ 638,228
Conservation Improvement Programs	\$ 75,958
Local Grants & Program Support	\$ 329,889
Total Sources of Revenue	\$ 8,099,753

Expenses by Category



<i>Expenses by Function</i>	
Early Childhood & Family Development	\$ 3,341,794
Weatherization Programs	\$ 892,374
Energy Assistance Programs	\$ 1,720,297
Housing Rehabilitation & Small Cities Development Programs	\$ 149,188
Housing Rehabilitation/MHFA Loan Programs	\$ 289,395
Community Services Food & Shelter Programs, Tax Assistance & Other Programs	\$ 1,185,695
Other Agency Programs	\$ 177,243
Agency Administration	\$ 343,767
Total Expenses by Function	\$ 8,099,753

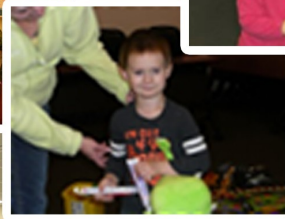
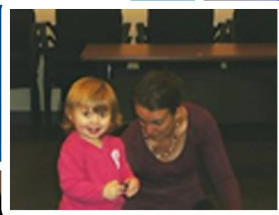
Expenses by Function



<i>Expenses by Category</i>	
Wages & Benefits - Direct Client Services	\$ 2,319,520
Wages & Benefits - Indirect Client Services	\$ 2,605,151
Professional & Contractual Services	\$ 191,624
Vehicle Expense & Travel	\$ 324,996
Training	\$ 85,059
Supplies & Copy Costs	\$ 266,743
Rent, Utilities & Maintenance	\$ 245,850
Communication, Dues, Advertising & Insurance	\$ 200,353
Direct Client Support	\$ 1,860,457
Total Expenses by Category	\$ 8,099,753

<i>Funding Agencies & Programs</i>
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Child Care Food Program
U.S. Department of Energy
DOE Weatherization
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Community Services Block Grant
Early Head Start
Early Head Start Childcare Partnerships
Energy Assistance Programs
Federal Head Start
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Emergency Solutions Grants
Transitional Housing Program
Minnesota Department of Commerce
Minnesota Weatherization Program
Propane and Oil Program
Minnesota Department of Education
Pathway II Early Learning Scholarships
State Head Start
MN Department of Employment and Economic Development
Small Cities Development Programs
Minnesota Department of Human Services
Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Prevention
Emergency Services Program
Homeless Youth Act
Live Well at Home
Minnesota Community Action Grant
Social Security Disability Income Outreach
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
Transitional Housing Program
Minnesota Department of Revenue
Tax Assistance Grant
Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA)
Family Homeless Prevention
MHFA Rehabilitation Loan Programs
Local Grants & Program Support
Aitkin County Health and Human Services,
BCBS, CommonBond Communities,
Conservation Improvement Program,
ECE Caring Members, Greater MN Housing Fund,
Hearth Connection, Hope Lutheran Church Moose Lake,
Initiative Foundation, MNsure,
MN Asset Building Coalition, Medica Foundation,
Mora Housing and Redevelopment Authority, etc.

Images of 2016



FYI...
Every picture has a story