The Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska is located in the northeastern corner of Nebraska, 26 miles southeast of Sioux City, Iowa, and 70 miles north of Omaha, Nebraska on state highways 75 and 77. The reservation consists of over 40,000 acres and is located in both Nebraska and Iowa. The Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska is a federally recognized Indian Tribe with an enrollment of 5,530 members, 1,704 members reside on the Winnebago reservation.

The Winnebago P.L. 102-477 program has a service area which includes Thurston and Dakota Counties in Nebraska and Woodbury County in Iowa. The Winnebago P.L. 102-477 program consists of the following:

- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- General Assistance (GA)
- Workforce Investment Act (WIOA)
- Native Employment Works (NEW)
- Jobs, Placement, & Training (JPT)
- Child Care Development Fund (CCDF)

The Service Area currently identified for General Assistance and Native Employment Works is the Winnebago Indian Reservation, located in Thurston County, Nebraska, all participants must meet eligibility guidelines. Workforce Investment Opportunity Act services are available for enrolled members of all Federally Recognized tribes residing on the Winnebago Reservation in Thurston County, Nebraska.

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) is available to Winnebago Tribal members who reside in Thurston County in the State of Nebraska with the exception of those residing on the Omaha Reservation and to enrolled members of any Federally Recognized tribes residing within the boundaries of the Winnebago Reservation. Services are offered to enrolled members of any Federally Recognized tribe residing in Dakota County in the State of Nebraska and Woodbury County in the State of Iowa.

Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) services are available for enrolled members of all Federally Recognized tribes residing on the Winnebago Reservation in Thurston County, Nebraska, Dakota County, Nebraska, and Woodbury County, Iowa.

Each of these programs is a vital part of the community and ultimately assists families in becoming self-sufficient. There are times when families fall upon hardships in their lives, and these programs are here to assist families in overcoming these hardships.

**Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)**

The TANF program has two case workers in Thurston County and a case manager position for Dakota and Woodbury counties. The maximum amount of cases assigned to each case manager is 40 cases. One of our Thurston county caseworkers has a smaller case load and this position provides more intensive case management. Each case worker/manager is responsible for developing a family case plan with their clients. A majority of the clients have a goal of obtaining their high school diploma/GED or achieving higher education, which we hope will lead to self-sufficiency.

The TANF case workers/manager work with the following educational partners: Little Priest Tribal College in Winnebago, NE; Step-Up, which is a tribal partner program; Western Iowa Tech in Sioux City, IA; and Northeast Community College in South Sioux City, NE. Each of these providers offers low cost tuition, which makes it more affordable for clients to attend. The Step-Up offers paid training in the healthcare field, including: Medical Assistant, Pharmacy Technician, Dental Assistant, etc. They also offer paid training in Early Childhood Education and Industrial Mechanics. Our program now provides GED prep courses on-site for all clients that are working towards their GED.
Although each TANF client can access these educational services, transportation continues to be a major barrier for clients. Without reliable and affordable transportation, the clients often are deterred from attending GED and college classes. Unless clients obtain private transportation or have access to public transportation, this will continue to be a barrier to their self-sufficiency plans.

One of the largest employers for the Winnebago community is the tribally owned casino, WinnaVegas. The tribe provides an employee transit system which allows employees to catch rides to and from work for a small fee; however, the transit system is not available during all shifts and this proves to make it difficult for clients to get to and from work each day.

Another major barrier our clients face is child care. Our clients find it difficult to complete work activities required with their plans when they do not have reliable child care.

**General Assistance (GA)**

The General Assistance Program provides financial assistance to individuals who meet the program guidelines. The GA monthly caseload is generally 50-70. Clients can receive an amount up to $298.00 per month and are required to complete 20 hours each week participating in the following activities: searching for employment, attending workshops, attending college/GED classes or providing a community service. Clients must adhere to their case plans to remain eligible. This program is necessary to assist individuals that are out of the workforce due to layoff, pending disability, or have been unsuccessful in obtaining employment. The ultimate goal for GA clients is self-sufficiency, including: clients seeking and maintaining employment and/or obtaining a higher education. Some of our GA clients have had pending disability cases with the Social Security Administration for up to two years depending on their medical situation.

There are several barriers that GA clients face in becoming self-sufficient. Although the tribe does have tribal transportation, it mainly serves WinnaVegas Casino employees. Therefore, transportation is a major barrier for GA clients seeking self-sufficiency. Another barrier is that most job opportunities within the Winnebago reservation require a GED/High School diploma at minimum, and several clients lack this. Those that do not have a GED are now able to attend our GED classes until they take and achieve their final GED testing. If the client feels they possess a learning disability, we refer them to Vocational Rehabilitation in South Sioux City, NE.

**Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA)**

The Summer Youth Employment Program is offered to youth ages 14 to 18 years of age residing on the Winnebago Tribe reservation who meet the income, attendance and GPA requirements. This program provides youth with training and job skills that will help them when they are ready to enter the workforce. There is an adequate number of tribal programs that are willing to supervise youth participating in the SYEP. The Youth WIOA funds we receive are minimal, and assisted 1 youth throughout the 2016 summer. TANF funds allowed services to be provided for 20 youth. Youth are the future of the Winnebago Tribe, and the SYEP assists students in the service area with gaining job skills that can be used later in the Tribe’s workforce.

**Native Employment Works (NEW) & On the Job Training (OJT)**

On the Job Training is another vital program for the Winnebago community. This program allows employable adults to receive job training while working and earning income. Before placement can occur, OJT participants must be considered job ready, successfully pass a UA and depending on the job site location, must also pass a federal background check. After placement, OJT participants are paid the federal minimum wage of $8.25/hour for up to 40 hours each week for a maximum of 3 months or until full-time employment is gained.

The Social Services Program had 0 active OJT placements for FY 2016, but the program continues to have clients fill out applications for OJT placement. Funds previously used for OJT placements are used for an Employment & Training worker to assist clients with employment and training needs. A database of OJT
applicants is being maintained so we can better assist employers in the community in finding the right match with our clients/potential employees. More funding is needed in order for the OIT program to place more employable adults at job sites that would potentially lead to full-time employment.

**Child Care Development Fund (CCDF)**

The Winnebago P.L. 102-477 Program continues to work on building and maintaining relationships with tribal and non-tribal programs that offer services to clients working towards self-sufficiency. Service providers and Programs that the Winnebago P.L. 102-477 program partners with include: Little Priest Tribal College, Western Iowa Technical Community College, Northeast Community College, WinnaVegas Casino, ATLAS Program of Winnebago, Winnebago Tribe Higher Education Department, Vocational Rehabilitation, Winnebago Tribe Behavior Health, Winnebago Tribe Health Department, Winnebago Drug and Alcohol Program, Winnebago Drug Dependency Unit, Iowa Department of Human Services, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Goodwill-Sioux City, IA, and Winnebago Child Support Program. It is important that we maintain good working relationships with each of these programs in order to better serve our clients and assist them in becoming self-sufficient.

The Winnebago P.L. 102-477 Program remains located at the Human Services building. Our program is in need of a larger office space for confidentiality purposes and to accommodate a growing staff. It would also be ideal to have a larger meeting room for client workshops and trainings with a separate computer lab. The program recently updated our training space to accommodate larger groups. The new set-up works much better for training purposes, however, it is a shared space and can present issues with scheduling. Our staff are unable to have a private space to speak with clients if these areas are already in use, which makes it difficult for clients to openly voice their concerns.

Respectfully Submitted,

[Tina Tassler]

Social Services Program Manager
The Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska recognizes that high quality early childhood programs are vital in a child's life in the first five years to establish a foundation for success and lifelong learning. Educare Winnebago is based on the best early education practices that will ensure school readiness. Educare Winnebago partners with the Winnebago child care program, Winnebago Head Start, and the Buffet Early Childhood Fund. On December 10, 2014, Educare Winnebago was awarded the Early Head Start-Child Care (EHS-CC) Partnership grant.

Educare Winnebago offers full day, year-round programming for birth – 5. It is a licensed center and follows all of the rules and regulations set forth by the State of Nebraska Health and Human Services. The licensed capacity is 191 children. There are 16 classrooms, a library/teacher workroom and cultural resource room, conference room and a training area. Seven classrooms are designated for Head Start/Pre-k and 9 classrooms are designated for children birth – 3. The current enrollment at the center is 178 children.

At Educare Winnebago, each classroom has three teachers; an associate-lead teacher with A.A. in early childhood, and two teacher aides with high school diploma and training hours in child development.

There are six lead teachers who hold a bachelor’s degree. Educare Winnebago has several employees who are taking classes at Little Priest Community College to pursue an associate degree in Early Child Education. To accommodate employees, several Little Priest Tribal College classes are held on site.

Employees are also taking classes at Western Iowa Tech, Wayne State College, and the University of Nebraska-Kearney. Teachers and Support staff undergo training in the following areas during the school year: Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS-R), Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-R), Teaching Strategies Gold, “Safe with You” Series—child abuse, child neglect, sudden infant death syndrome, and shaken baby syndrome, Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), positive climate, and lesson planning. Last year, Educare Winnebago hosted the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines training series; this series is a requirement of Nebraska child care licensing and offers valuable information and resources to classroom teachers. All trainings will help employees work towards a Child Development Associate (CDA), if they are not working on an associate degree or higher. Four teacher aides are currently enrolled in an online CDA course.

To provide continuity of care, the primary teachers will remain with children for 3 years, from age birth to 3 years old. A second team of caregivers remain with children from ages 3 to 5 years. Educare Winnebago will maintain low staff/child ratios. Infants and toddler’s ratio will be 3:8 per classroom and preschool classrooms will be 3:17 per classroom. Lower ratios and the continuity of care will minimize transitions to support secure relationship development.

Educare Winnebago utilized many tribal programs throughout the year. Vision and hearing screenings were provided at no cost to the children who attended either center. The Early Learning Initiative (ELI) program also teaches the children 0-5 the Winnebago language and culture. This program creates and provides cultural resources and training to the classroom teachers.

Children also participate in the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) and Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT), Preschool Language Scale (PLS-5), Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS-R), Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-R), and Bracken School Readiness Assessment (BSRA); these assessments are completed by the Munroe Meyer Institute /University of Nebraska Medical Center. Parents are given the Ages & Stages Questionnaires: Social Emotional (ASQ: SE) at the appropriate ages.

Parents are offered monthly “lunch and learns” which focuses on areas of nutrition and child development. Parents Interacting with Infants (PIWI), a parent-child group, was offered to parents and the community of Winnebago.

The Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska provides short-term child care services to Woodbury County (Iowa) and Dakota County (Nebraska) TANF participants. Child care is provided for job search, training, or employment. All child care providers are licensed and abide by the rules and regulations of the State of Iowa and Nebraska. We were able to hire a Child Care Development worker. Her job will be recruiting.
homes that would like to become licensed through the state to provide childcare specifically to TANF families. She will also be working on the possibility of getting a licensed day care center on the reservation to provide services to those hard to serve clients. It is this position's job to make all payments regarding the temporary child care services mentioned above.