



RED LAKE NATION

Red Lake Nation is a sovereign “closed reservation” in Minnesota that prioritizes Anishinaabe culture, language, and lifeways. Through a Tribal-State Title IV-E Agreement, the Nation began serving families directly in 2021. Since then, out-of-home placements declined by more than 70% and the program screens out approximately 78% of child welfare reports, reflecting a strong emphasis on prevention and family preservation.

PROJECT GOAL

Strengthen Ombimindwaa Gidinawemaaganinaadog’s (Uplifting our Relatives) child welfare workforce capacity by embedding workforce analytics in daily operations, supporting culturally-grounded supervision and training, and sustaining manageable caseloads aligned with an Anishinaabe-centered practice model.



“Having this support in the workplace provides the foundation to uplift our relatives in the field.” – RLN Manager

KEY FINDINGS

Baseline data was collected through interviews with 9 child welfare staff and one focus group with the management team in 2024. Ongoing implementation work highlighted workforce strengths and priorities for embedded analytics that support coordination, documentation, and supervision.

- Ombimindwaa Gidinawemaaganinaadog expanded from roughly 20 staff in 2015 to over 180 staff in 2024. Nearly all employees are American Indian (many Red Lake citizens) and turnover is about 2%.
- Caseloads vary by unit but fall within Child Welfare League of America’s recommended level (15), supporting intensive engagement and “active efforts.”
- Beraten (workflow management) and Connecteam (communication and training) create a single source of truth for tasks, training, and reporting- organized around communication, dissemination, and tracking/documentation.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Analytics is most useful when embedded in everyday tools and routines- not treated as a standalone dashboard project.
- Documentation standards and data governance can be reinforced within daily workflows to uphold tribal data sovereignty while meeting reporting requirements.

NEXT STEPS

- Blend qualitative and quantitative measurement on practical monthly or quarterly cadences (e.g., interviews/focus groups/process reviews paired with engagement, platform use, task timeliness, and training progression).
- Triangulate trends and feedback each quarter, refine workflows and training, and conduct periodic implementation audits/LMS checks to keep data decision-grade.