

# MILLE LACS TRIBAL ECONOMY BUSINESS INCUBATOR

**Summary:** Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures (MLCV) is completing a research, community engagement and feasibility study in the development of a business incubator program that will foster the development of local entrepreneurs within the Mille Lacs Tribal Economy in east central Minnesota. The Mille Lacs Tribal Economy Business Incubator (TEBI) aims to build a pipeline of entrepreneurs and to equitably connect them with resources in the region. This program is being designed to support both Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe members and Mille Lacs Tribal Economy citizens (Native American and non-Native American). Depending on the capital and programmatic funders of TEBI (federal & state public partners, philanthropic community, tribal community, etc.), additional requirements may be included.

**Mille Lacs Tribal Economy:** The Mille Lacs Tribal Economy (TE) encompasses the three districts of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe territory that include Census tracts 9504, 9505, 7704, 9703, 9701, 9702. Included in the TE are portions of the counties of Mille Lacs, Pine and Aitkin. According to Minnesota Compass, there are 20,171 people (Native American and non-Native American) that live in the TE.

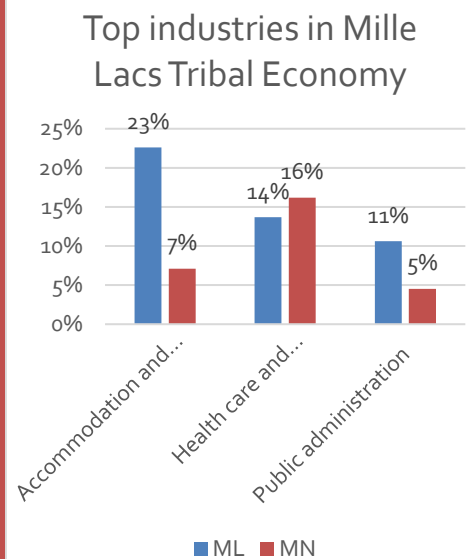
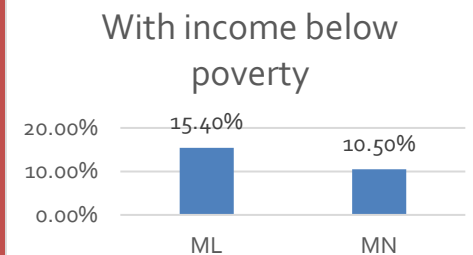
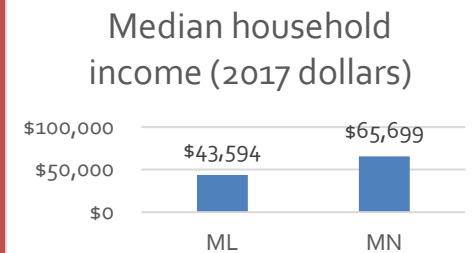
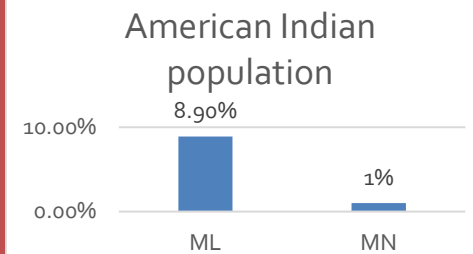
**Economic Reality:** the region has consistently fallen behind Greater Minnesota communities as well as the State of Minnesota in many economic metrics including median household income, unemployment, poverty. In addition to the region lagging overall, American Indian populations have skewed even more unfavorably.

**What is a Business Incubator:** business incubators are designed to help create and grow young businesses by providing them with necessary support and technical services. There are approximately 900 business incubators nationwide. Incubators provide numerous benefits to owners of startup businesses. Their office and manufacturing space are offered at below-market rental rates, and their staff supply advice and much-needed expertise in developing business and marketing plans as well as helping to identify any potential financing. Businesses typically spend an avg. of two years in an incubator, during which time they often share telephone, office and other expenses with other companies to reduce everyone's overhead and operational costs.

**Project Partners:** MLCV has partnered with several highly respected Minnesota-based groups including the Initiative Foundation, Neighborhood Development Corporation, Northspan Group, Maxfield Research, Hy-Tec Construction, and others to study and determine the feasibility of TEBI.

**Project Goals:** TEBI will bring together four key elements: 1) entrepreneur training (which includes the Initiative Foundation's Enterprise Academy), 2) entrepreneur technical assistance, 3) entrepreneur financing and 4) low cost commercial spaces. Through these key elements TEBI aspires to build a robust entrepreneur ecosystem of resources, to create greater industry diversity in the regional economy, and to help underrepresented groups better participate in the economy.

## Mille Lacs Tribal Economy (ML) vs. State of Minnesota (MN)



**MILLE LACS**  
CORPORATE VENTURES