



Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Indians

*Executive Branch of Tribal Government
Office of the Chief Executive*

Transmittal via e-mail

Virgil Wind
Chief Executive
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
43408 Oodena Drive
Onamia, MN 56359

February 26, 2025

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Supportive Services for Veteran Families
810 Vermont Street
Washington D.C. 20420

Re: Letter of Support for Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans Priority 1 SSVF Grant Proposal

Dear Director Santos:

I am writing to express my full support for the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans Priority's ("MACV") SSVF Priority 1 grant proposal. As the Chief Executive of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, I have witnessed firsthand the essential services MACV provides to Native veterans across Minnesota. The council's work is crucial to our shared goal of ending veteran homelessness, particularly among rural and Native communities.

Since 2011, MACV has been a leader in addressing veteran homelessness, providing Tribal outreach and SSVF services to Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe veterans. Through strong partnerships and culturally tailored programs, MACV serves Native veterans and employs a Red Lake Tribal member as a Case Manager to deepen connections and better understand community needs.

I recognize that maintaining this level of service relies on the continued support of MACV's SSVF grant, and that additional funding could expand MACV's ability to serve Native and rural communities. In the past program year, the SSVF grant enabled MACV to assist 134 Native American veterans in Minnesota, with 50 percent (65) of them residing in rural areas or on reservations. MACV's services consistently prioritize improving housing stability for Native veterans and their families during times of financial hardship, health challenges, or other crises. Without this vital support for veterans facing or experiencing homelessness, other community services would be under immense strain, and veterans would lose access to the proven safety net that has been so effective for over a decade. Veterans living on Tribal lands particularly benefit

Letter from Chief Executive Virgil Wind to U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Re: Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans Priority 1 SSVF Grant Proposal
February 26, 2025
Page 2 of 2

from MACV's specialized services because these services were specifically designed to address the unique needs and resources available to military veterans in these communities.

MACV's initiatives—such as landlord engagement, legal assistance, and housing stability programs—address the unique needs of Native veterans, filling critical gaps in services. Over the past four years, MACV has made substantial progress in reducing veteran homelessness within Tribal communities. However, continued resources are essential to sustain and expand this success as needs evolve, especially in rural and Tribal areas.

I fully support MACV's efforts to secure additional SSVF funding to enhance their services for Native and rural communities and look forward to continuing our partnership to support Minnesota's Native American veterans. Please feel free to contact me at virgil.wind@millelacsband.com if you have any questions.

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Virgil Wind
Chief Executive
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe