

PHOENIX AREA OFFICE IT TRIBAL SHARES LISTENING SESSION

March 29, 2011

Presentations from Dr. Theresa Cullen (ISAC IT Priorities & IT Tribal Shares listening session process)

Listening session included participants from the Phoenix Area Office, Colorado River Tribes, Hopi, Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community, Fort Mojave and Phoenix Indian Medical Center.

Feedback from the participants:

GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT OIT PRODUCTS/SERVICES

- IHS health information exchange operability-IHS will be using the National Health Information Network Direct and Connect. The Direct project is structured like a point-to-point exchange and the Connect project is structured like a search/query exchange. IHS is working with the Office of National Coordinator to complete the “on-boarding” process in order to allow the health information exchange.
- The PSFA Manual does not show a residual (for inherent federal functions) for IT services. The last update of the PSFA Manual was 2002 but IT activities have changed since then. IHS provides the network (Wide Area Network), it generates reports (National Data Warehouse), and provides security for the IHS IT system but these activities do not show up in the PSFA Manual.
- The PSFA Manual is almost like a catalog but not really a purchase. Which party is responsible for a function and where is that information, specifically? The funding agreements always say what Tribes give to IHS but not what IHS is giving to Tribes. Tribal organizations use a buy-back agreement and those are very specific, along with costs.
- What does it mean to use a service level agreement? Would it be holding the IHS to industry standards and best practices?

COMMUNICATION/INFORMATION ON SERVICES/PRICES

- Would like to pick and choose IT services, based on a Tribal organization’s individual needs. Would also like to know what IHS is thinking about its services/needs.
- Tribal organizations would like to know what they are getting for their Tribal shares, such as an education on IT services/products.
- There are concerns where IT services or packages overlap so would like clarification from OIT on services/packages. Are Tribal facilities getting the services it needs?
- During Tribal negotiations, it would be important to have OIT staff present and possibly have the Tribal IT staff too. It would be important to review the language and make sure the dollars match the services OIT is providing.
- Tribal organizations could benefit from OIT staff coming out to their facility and meeting with IT staff and others to discuss the unique needs/requirements of IT services. Currently, there is a spreadsheet that is populated with the Tribal shares amounts but it is difficult to understand what services are being retained and what a Tribal organization is taking. Also, the document is not included in the final documentation but it shows what a Tribal organization takes during negotiation.

RPMS

- Will direct services facilities have the ability to bill through IHS? What billing packages are available with RPMS? If a Tribal organization needs to purchase a “commercial off the shelf” product, would need an interface with RPMS but there is no funding for that.
- RPMS is free so why are Tribal organizations being charged for it? [Note: The RPMS application can be obtained via the Freedom of Information Act process] IHS should be more specific about what it is selling as RPMS. Also, pull out the research and development costs. It might be beneficial to look at the private sector models when an application is free but what does the organization charge for to cover its costs. For example, the Cache license is not free (required for running certain programs), training, support and deployment.

COMMENTS ABOUT TRIBAL CONSULTATION PROCESS

- Tribal organizations would like information on Tribal consultations to be distributed to Tribal leaders and possible other Tribal staff, depending on the topic for consultation. For example, these listening sessions should include Health Directors and IT staff (CIOs and site managers) and if this information is not disseminated in a timely matter, it is difficult for the appropriate staff to be present at these different meetings that are going on with Tribes and Federal departments.
- During the consultation process, IHS could ask Tribal organizations what it would like on the meeting agenda.