

ALBUQUERQUE AREA OFFICE IT TRIBAL SHARES LISTENING SESSION

April 12, 2011

Presentations from George Huggins (ISAC IT Priorities), Lisa DeCora (IT Tribal Shares listening session process) and Raymond Willie (Tribal Shares). Dr. Cullen was present and responded to questions and comments by listening session participants.

Listening session included participants from the Albuquerque Area Office, Santo Domingo, Kewa Pueblo, Jemez Pueblo, Ramah Navajo, Alamo Navajo, Pueblo of Taos, and Pueblo of Isleta.

Feedback from the participants:

COMMENTS ABOUT TRIBAL ISSUES/NEEDS

- Technology in rural areas: Is there a way to streamline between departments in the Federal government to assist Tribes in a specific area? There are issues for Tribes with cost, accessibility, and delay with movement. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) published its National Broadband Plan and recommended that Congress provide \$29 million a year for the Indian Health Service to upgrade its broadband service to meet connectivity requirements. See FCC National Broadband Plan, Chapter 10 Health Care at <http://www.broadband.gov/plan/> Currently, IHS has over 120 requests to increase bandwidth, more than any other agency in the Federal government.
- Partnership: Does IHS report on Tribal needs regarding technology? Currently, OIT collects information on calls to the OIT Help Desk but that information is not available for public review. Tribes want to develop their capacity but there is also a partnership between IHS and the Tribes so how does IHS know what Tribes need? And furthermore, how does IHS plan if it doesn't know what the Tribes need?
- IHS is looking towards building/expanding relationships with Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Bureau of Indian Education. For example, IHS entered into an agreement with BIA to move its data center into BIA space, in order to reduce costs for data storage. There may be other opportunities for Tribes to reach out and see how partnerships can be built in order to create a better utilization of resources or information.
- The Office of National Coordinator, within the Department of Health & Human Services, has new leadership and IHS has developed a good relationship with that office. See website at <http://healthit.hhs.gov/>

OFFICE of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SPENDING

- Per capita IT spending: The IHS Backlog of Essential Maintenance, Alterations, and Repair (BEMAR) is used in facilities and maintenance programs but OIT has never developed a similar list. Dr. Cullen has met with the Office of Environmental health and Engineering to discuss the BEMAR and how OIT could use it for IT needs.
- OIT could compare user population spending with IT user population spending and put the data in a format to show where the highest need vs. cost is. IHS has done this calculation in the past to

show that it spends approximately \$4-5 per person on technology and 3% on IT. In comparison, healthcare networks spend 6-7% on IT.

- OIT spending for services/products: out of the approximately \$48 million budget, IHS spends about \$30 million on contracts, but approximately \$6-7 million is licenses for using software programs. OIT employs about 100 Federal employees and working to hire more employees. In addition, OIT recently hired its own acquisition employees (previously used outside resources to handle the IT contracts) and has saved a few million dollars by doing acquisitions internally, instead of sending that work out. OIT has 7-8 major contracts that employ approximately 200 contract employees.
- OIT has no residual. If 100% of OIT was contracted, how would data collection happen? Data warehouse is about 9-10% of OIT's budget and if it was contracted out, it is unsure how the reporting from RPMS or non-RPMS systems would get completed. If the data warehouse was contracted by another entity or Tribal organization, there would probably be a cost associated with that service but OIT hasn't looked into the issue in more depth than that.

GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT OIT PRODUCTS/SERVICES

- IHS packages its IT services so there is a limited choice for Tribes to purchase with shares. There is a certain amount of dependency with IT products/services but Tribes would like to know what those items are in order to better understand why certain products/services must be purchased together.
- When a Tribe leaves it shares with IHS but only needs partial services or uses resources in a productive way (less cost), is there any incentive for the Tribe? Similar to a refund?

COMMUNICATION/INFORMATION ON SERVICES/PRICES

- The Information Systems Advisory Committee (ISAC) is a venue for Tribes to provide information/feedback on IT issues. The ISAC advises the IHS Director on IT issues.
- There are many questions about Tribal shares (history, calculations, and distribution) and it would be helpful to know more about the process of calculating shares on headquarters, area and service unit level.
- OIT (HQ) is available to provide information or be present at any Tribal negotiations, if requested.
- Information sharing: OIT is trying to find ways to get information out to Tribes. There are many options to explore and it has been a recurring comment during other listening sessions.
- It would be helpful to have more detail about the packages that OIT offers in negotiation. Many services/products are not available for review in the PSFA Manual due to the fact that the last edition of the manual was 2002 and many of these services were provided after that date, such as electronic health record, Vista Imaging and network support. OIT has a document that it provides to IHS negotiators that shows what is currently available but it is not updated in the PSFA Manual.
- Pricing: Should IHS provide only services that benefit from an economy of scale (best pricing for greater number of buyers) perspective? Or as a vendor, is IHS providing the rights services and prices that benefit Tribal needs and wants? IHS can obtain services/products at a discounted price and can pass those savings on to Tribes, if they decide to purchase through IHS.

- Currently, the prices/percentages in the Tribal shares table for headquarters do not correlate directly with the percentages that OIT spends on its products/services. The spreadsheets break down each package into a percentage from the line item budgets for OIT but at this time, cannot explain how those exact percentages were calculated. The ultimate goal is to provide accurate information on the OIT services/products so Tribes know what they are getting and at what cost.
- It is the general understanding that the Tribal shares are calculated using the “user population” but other than that, there is much confusion about how the Tribal allocations come from that general premise. The Office of Tribal Self-Governance and the Office of Direct Service and Contracting Tribes have the tables that show HQ Tribal shares but it is calculated by the Office of Financing and Accounting. In addition, there are area and service unit shares and it would be beneficial for everyone to understand how shares are calculated for each line item and also for each level. There have been discussions about relooking at the Tribal Shares Allocation (TSA) formulas on a national level.