



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
ADMINISTRATION FOR
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OFA PeerTA Technical Assistance Network
Omaha Tribe of Nebraska Technical Assistance Request #231
Strategic Planning Session Summary Report

Prepared for
The Administration for Children and Families
Office of Family Assistance



Introduction and Background Information¹

On August 8, 2014, Gwen Porter, Tribal Council Secretary, Omaha Tribe of Nebraska (Omaha) submitted a technical assistance (TA) request to the OFA Peer Technical Assistance (OFA PeerTA) Network for assistance in supporting their new Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. The Office of Family Assistance (OFA) approved Omaha's TANF program in August 2014. Because it is a new program and the majority of Tribal TANF staff has limited experience delivering this type of support, Omaha was specifically interested in developing their policies/procedures manual and receiving onsite training regarding case management and assessment practices. In addition, as these discussions progressed, Omaha expressed a need for strategic planning facilitation as a way to plan for and promote cross-agency collaboration and coordination across the Tribe's social service programs, including Tribal TANF.

OFA PeerTA provided a Tribal TANF case management and assessment training held on November 18 - 20, 2014 at the Omaha Tribe in Macy, Nebraska. Subsequent to the training, Tribal Council member Gwen Porter and PeerTA staff continued discussing the Tribe's strategic planning needs. During the case management post-TA check-in call, Ms. Porter explained that feedback from the training revealed substantial "disconnection" between the Tribe's social service agencies, including Tribal TANF, which she thought precipitated the need for better communication and coordination between these programs. Ms. Porter felt that a strategic planning session involving Tribal Council members and various program directors would help the Tribe better identify the "big picture" on how low-income tribal members interact with public assistance programs, receive services, find and maintain employment, and become self-sufficient.

OFA approved the Tribe's request for strategic planning assistance with Jon Grant and PeerTA staff acting as facilitators for a two-day session in Macy, Nebraska from May 12 - 13, 2015.

Technical Assistance Plan Goal and Objectives

Based on the TA Request and subsequent conversations, the PeerTA Team developed a TA Plan with four objectives:

- Prior to the strategic planning session, assist Omaha in gathering data from tribal agency administrators on the issues, needs, concerns, and key questions facing the Tribe. This information will be used to advance and focus the strategic planning during the two-day, onsite meeting;
- Provide logistical support to facilitate technical assistance through a combination of conference calls and a two-day onsite, interagency strategic planning session;

¹ This information was collected from the Omaha Tribe's TA Request and initial conference call with the TA Requestor.



- Work with Omaha and the primary strategic planning facilitator (Jon Grant) onsite to assist the Tribe in articulating a Tribal Administration vision, mission, program goals and objectives, and strategies for implementation; and
- Upon completion of the initial strategic planning session and, as needed, assist Omaha in documenting the outcomes of the meeting, communicating the results to local stakeholders, and help guide the drafting of a formal strategic plan and outreach strategy.

Pre-Meeting Data Collection

Prior to holding the strategic planning onsite session, Mr. Grant and PeerTA staff designed and delivered three separate surveys to a number of Omaha tribal program administrators to gather valuable data:

- **Omaha Tribe Priorities and Desired Outcomes Survey:**
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Omahapriority> -- Designed to help prioritize the issues the Tribe wants to address in the strategic plan. Includes questions such as, “What would success look like at the completion of the planning process?”; “What does your organization wish to achieve from a planning process?” and “What issues or choices do you think need to be addressed during the planning process?”
- **Omaha Tribe TANF Mission Statement Development Survey:**
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/OmahaMissionSurvey> -- Designed to gather data on the perceived purpose of the Tribal Administration, the challenges it seeks to solve, and methods for delivering services to tribal members to accelerate the development of the Tribe’s Mission Statement.
- **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis Survey:**
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RSL36H7> -- Designed to perform an initial situation analysis of issues facing the Omaha Tribe, current administration and program strengths, and possible strategies for overcoming the Tribe’s obstacles.

Data gathered from these surveys informed the tailoring and pre-population of the strategic planning materials used onsite with Omaha.



Strategic Planning Session – Day One

The Omaha Tribe of Nebraska (Omaha) strategic planning session was held May 12 - 13, 2015 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Nebraska Indian Community College in Macy, Nebraska. There were 15 participants representing a variety of agencies within the Omaha Reservation, including: Tribal Council, Tribal Administration and Contracting Office, Sacred Child Program (Child Welfare), Tribal TANF, Housing and Utilities, Finance Office, Attorney General's Office, and Community Response Team (a youth development-focused tribal non-profit).

Tribal Council Secretary Gwen Porter opened the session by welcoming participants and framing the purpose of the strategic planning session. She emphasized that the need for this meeting was driven from a perceived disconnect among tribal social service programs. By the end of the meeting, Ms. Porter expressed she hoped the group could agree on a mission statement and set the groundwork for future strategic planning steps.

Following an opening prayer and group introductions, PeerTA staff member Patrick Heiman provided some background on the technical assistance request and then turned the meeting over to the primary facilitator Jon Grant. After asking each participant about their expectations for the strategic planning session, Mr. Grant provided an outline of topics he intended to cover over the next two days (see **Appendix A – Strategic Planning Agenda**). He spent the first part of the morning discussing various strategic planning theories and approaches. Mr. Grant explained how strategic planning ideally provides three outcomes:

1. An *overview* of the environment in which the organization is expected to function;
2. An *analysis* of the organization's current ability to effectively respond within the stated environment, and;
3. A *plan* for dealing with concerns (strengths and weaknesses) and achieving success.

Mr. Grant described that as the strategic plan is developed, it becomes both an analytical tool and a working document to guide management action during a specified period. As a lead to the first group discussion, he outlined how vision and mission statements form the foundation of a strategic plan by establishing who and what the organization is, what it believes in, and what it hopes to accomplish. To formulate a mission statement, the group had to agree on the issues, choices, and questions facing the Tribe.



Nebraska Indian Community College –
Macy, Nebraska



Task One: Using the initial surveys as a baseline, the group answered questions, which asked them to decide on short- and long-term issues, and priorities the Omaha Tribe needs to address regarding services.

What strategic questions, topic areas, and goals does the Omaha Tribe need to address?

- Government function — is the Tribal Administration to be a governing or managing body?
- Housing
- Small business development
- Integrating culture into all activities
- Building local, staff, and government capacity
- Long-term vision of the Tribe
- Healthcare
- Youth development
- Role of education
- Fiscal management
- State and tribal relations

What specific challenges does the Tribe face?

- Power transition among leadership and the challenges with maintaining continuity
- Communication and establishing buy-in with all stakeholders
- Documenting organizational structure and roles
- Lack of affordable and safe housing
- Adhering to fiscal and programmatic grant compliance
- Lack of human capital on the reservation
- Loss of native language
- High unemployment rates (70%) and a lack of job opportunities and skilled workers
- Need for services for Native individuals with disabilities – particularly TANF-funded supports
- Chronic health issues among tribal members such as diabetes
- Need for constitutional reform and having a government more representative of all tribal members
- Government-to-government relations

What priorities do you consider to be urgent in the short-term?

- Improve local housing and utility infrastructure

Omaha Tribal Administration Structure

Strategic planning participants discussed the challenges associated with the Tribal Administration organizational structure. There are currently 47 tribally administrated programs that all report directly to the Chief Technical Officer (CTO). Without a structured departmental system, such as a social services department (to oversee programs like Tribal TANF), the CTO must interact directly with 47 different program managers. The result, according to the participants, is a siloed mentality among program managers with little motivation or support to partner with other tribal programs.



- Reduce meth and drug use
- Increase community engagement and buy-in
- Restructure Tribal Administration organization to help streamline decision-making (see call-out box for more information)
- Preserve and expand use of the Omaha language
- Address the lack of vision and goals within the Tribal Administration – currently it is too reactive
- Update the Tribal Administration’s financial policies/procedures to better address audit findings
- Increase local law enforcement presence to better combat rising drug and sexual abuse on the reservation

What priorities do you consider to be important to address in the long-term?

- Improve housing, utilities, and overall infrastructure within the reservation
- Increase tribal member self-sufficiency and stability
- Expand professional and educational development opportunities
- Preserve and foster the growth of Omaha language, culture, and traditions
- Engage in tribal constitutional reform
- Build the capacity of tribal courts and update tribal criminal and corporate codes
- Promote youth development and decrease young people emigrating from the reservation
- Invest in and foster economic and job development
- Improve relations between the Tribe and the state of Nebraska
- Engage elders and reinvigorate the Omaha clan system



Participant feedback from Day One on Tribal Administration priorities

Following this conversation on short- and long-term issues and priorities for the Omaha Tribe, Mr. Grant and Mr. Heiman led participants through a series of discussions aimed at identifying the Tribal Administration’s focus, purpose, and shared values.



Task Two: Identify a set of shared core values and develop a Tribal Administration mission and vision statement.

What is the focus issue(s) that our organization exists to solve?

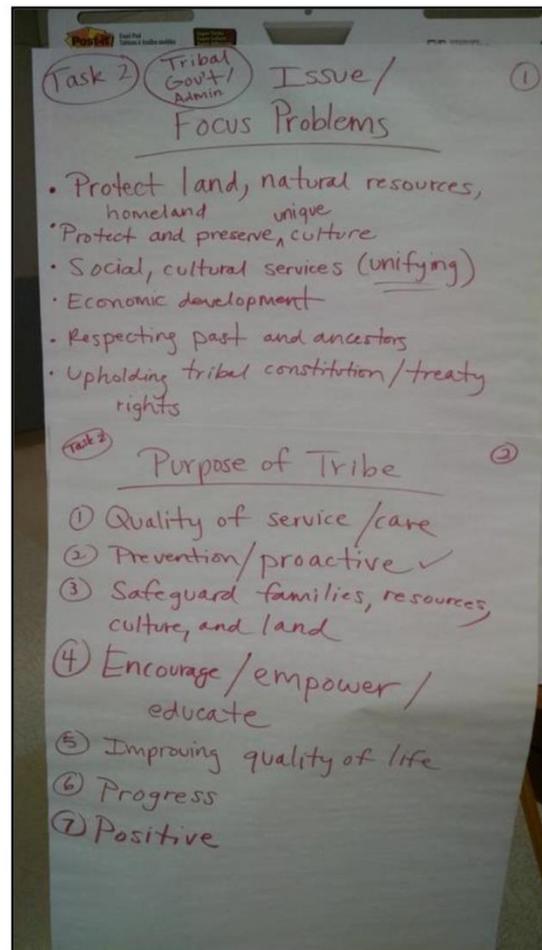
- Protect, land, natural resources, and the Omaha homeland
- Protect and preserve the unique Omaha culture
- Promote social and cultural services
- Create economic development opportunities
- Respect history and tribal ancestors
- Uphold the tribal constitution/treaty rights

What is the purpose of the Tribe?

- To provide quality service/care for all tribal members
- Safeguard Omaha families, resources, culture, and land
- Encourage, empower, and educate all tribal members
- Improve the quality of life for all tribal members
- Proactively manage issues within the Tribe

What core values do we share as a Tribe and as an organization?

- Communication
- Compassion
- Culture/tradition/clanship
- Encouragement
- Excellence
- Harmony
- Hospitality
- Humility
- Innovation
- Integrity
- Modeling positive behavior
- Prayer
- Preservation of language and land
- Proactivity
- Relationships
- Respect/dignity
- Selflessness/sacrifice



Participant feedback from Day One highlighting Tribal Administration focus issues and purpose



- Spirituality
- Support/empower
- Understanding
- Unity

Mr. Grant and Mr. Heiman next assisted the Tribe in formulating a mission statement that built on the priorities, challenges, and strategies collected during Tasks One and Two. After a long period of discussion, participants agreed upon the following mission statement:

“Our mission is to enhance and protect the sovereign rights and homeland of the Umo^{ho} people, given to us by Wako^{da}. We do this by safeguarding the culture, health, and well-being of our people throughout their four hills of life.”

As a supplement to the mission statement, and to support the future development of a vision statement, the participants also agreed upon the following language:

“We do this using knowledge and skills necessary to achieve the goals of improving productivity and providing leadership and services to our community while providing social, health, economic, and educational resources, opportunities and services that contribute to the well-being of the community while also enhancing our inherent power of self-governance.”

Strategic Planning Session – Day Two

Mr. Grant opened the session with a review of outcomes from Day One and a check-in to see if participants recommended changes to the recently created Tribal Administration mission statement.

Task Three: Clarify the Tribal Administration’s belief system to identify what core values are critical in helping the organization achieve their mission statement.

Participants next reviewed the list of core values from Day One to identify the eight overriding values that guide (or should guide) their work, as well how they envisioned the type of everyday behaviors individuals should commit to that embody these principles.

What are some of the values and/or guiding principles that guide (or should guide) your leadership and staff?	What are the behaviors we should commit to doing in everyday practice in support of our values and guiding principles?
Dignity and Self-Worth	Compassion, Acting on the importance of human relations, Self-determination, Caring, Empathy, Individual-worth, Respecting individual differences, and Professionalism



What are some of the values and/or guiding principles that guide (or should guide) your leadership and staff?	What are the behaviors we should commit to doing in everyday practice in support of our values and guiding principles?
Competence	Striving to enhance professionalism; Being knowledgeable; Keeping up with professional standards/professional development; Being knowledgeable of cultural values and traditions; Understanding your responsibilities; Knowing your program’s mission, objectives, vision, and scope of work; Being confident in your organization’s direction; Upholding standards and goals; and Collaborating
Excellence	Gratitude, Pride in work (attitude), Good work habits and work ethic, Stressing good customer service, Setting and committing to your own personal standards, Dress code (presentation), Self-discipline, Being a role model (modeling the behaviors you want to see in others), Empowering and encouraging others, and Consistency
Way of Life	Mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually healthy; Maintaining balance of these values; Alcohol and drug free; Preserving and integrating culture and language into everyday life (e.g., using your native name); and Perseverance
Service to Others	Self-sacrifice; Hospitality; Support and empowering; Communication and constant contact; Respect; Relationships; Treat others like you want to be treated; Selfless acts; Sharing knowledge; Recognizing the successes of others; Empowering; Being resourceful; Being outgoing; Mentoring others; Following through and being consistent; Reliability; Listening; and Timeliness
Integrity (individually and behavior to others)	Ethics, Trustworthiness and honesty, Recognizing and trying to correct mistakes, Reliability, Honesty, Responsibility, Verifying your own work, Accountability, Taking pride in your work, Competency, Solidarity, Follow-through – doing what you say you would do, Professionalism and attention to appearance, Belief in the work you do, Customer service, and Passion about your work



What are some of the values and/or guiding principles that guide (or should guide) your leadership and staff?	What are the behaviors we should commit to doing in everyday practice in support of our values and guiding principles?
<p>Social Challenges/Justice (challenge to injustice, equality of service, advocate for justice and fairness for all, and equity)</p>	<p>Empowering, encouraging, and supporting others; Innovation and creativity; Being proactive; Adhering to the unwritten social contracts with each other; Looking for and creating opportunities for improvement; Developing policies/procedures for services (ongoing process); Willingness to change (self); Advocating and practicing fairness and equality; Transparency; Creating and adhering to organizational vision statements; Honesty; Consistency; Being open-minded about new ideas, concepts, policies, etc.; Standing by and adhering to policies; Respecting each other’s choices and self-determination; Advocate on others’ behalf; Unlearning negative learned behaviors; Cultural responsibility; and Protection of equal access to liberties, right, and opportunities, balancing the importance of self-reliance and resilience while caring for the needs of the most vulnerable</p>
<p>Environmental Stewardship (responsible use and protection of the natural environment through conversation and sustainable practices)</p>	<p>Modeling good behaviors — clean our own “yards”; Recycling; Repurposing; Reusing; Being a protector of the earth; Believing that resources are alive; Safe and responsible agriculture; Advocate for Mother Earth; Committing to reducing your carbon footprint; and Investing in and promoting renewable energies</p>

Task Four: Choose a course of action by identifying the Tribal Administration’s preferred short- and long-term priorities.

Participants next reviewed the list of issues and priorities created during Day One to identify 5 - 7 short- and long-term priorities the Tribe wished to begin addressing:

Short-Term Priorities

1. ***Restructure the Tribal Administration Organization:*** Create a departmental structure so not all 47 programs need to report directly to the Chief Technical Officer. A more traditional and circular reporting system would also help streamline decision-making and facilitate the creation of more proactive and updated policies/procedures that meet internal and external requirements (particularly in terms of grant compliance) – also see short-term priority #2 below.



2. ***Review, Revise, and Adhere to Tribe’s Housing Policies:*** The Tribe is currently sanctioned by a number of housing funders due to lack of policy compliance (e.g., allowing people to stay in subsidized housing despite engaging in substance abuse, not paying rent, etc.). Winnebago could serve as a model, since they have a strong record of accomplishment for adhering to their own housing policies.
3. ***Increase Awareness of the Tribe’s Methamphetamine Problems:*** Reduction of meth use begins with acknowledging that it is a problem and expanding awareness of its prevalence.
4. ***Expand Law Enforcement Presence to Combat Rising Drug and Sexual Abuse on the Reservation:*** Filling the currently vacant law enforcement positions would help increase police presence and may serve as an important first step in reducing crime within the reservation. Participants also discussed the importance of increasing diversity on the police force (i.e., hiring a female police officer).
5. ***Take Steps to Increase the Use of the Omaha Language:*** Expand the “visual presence” of the Omaha language (e.g., more Omaha language signage, particularly in government buildings) and leverage the Tribe’s current language grant to create Omaha language conversational classes. Engaging Tribal TANF members in language instruction might also be a way to fulfill part of their work requirement hours.
6. ***Discuss with Tribal Council the Creation of an Economic Development Department:*** Participants discussed the possibility of this agency leading a Tribal Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) effort and advocating for investment in organic farming/agriculture on the reservation.

Long-Term Priorities

1. ***Invest in Infrastructure and Utilities on the Reservation:*** Many of the Tribe’s economic development plans hinge on upgrading their utility systems (e.g., better water piping to support large-scale organic farming).
2. ***Increase Economic and Small Business Development:*** The Tribe needs new business codes and strategies to attract external investment.

Due to time constraints, the strategic planning meeting ended prior to the completion of the long-term priority discussion. Mr. Grant discussed his willingness to continue working with Omaha, on a pro-bono basis, to conduct a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis and to help guide the initial drafting of the strategic plan — including identifying strategies for managing the short- and long-term priorities discussed above, assisting with benchmarking, and establishing timelines.

Next Steps

At the conclusion of the training, OFA PeerTA staff reviewed next steps in completing Omaha’s TA request, along with who was responsible for completing each task:

- Schedule a follow-up conference call in June 2015 to review progress and discuss any other needed TA (**Patrick Heiman** – OFA PeerTA).



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- Capture and share the outcomes of the strategic planning session with the Tribe (**Patrick Heiman** – OFA PeerTA; **Jon Grant**).
- Connect with Gwen Porter to discuss the initial development and drafting of a strategic plan (**Jon Grant**).



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Appendix A – Training Agenda

**Tribal TANF Case Management and Assessment Training
Omaha Tribe of Nebraska
Nebraska Indian Community College
Macy, Nebraska
May 12-13, 2014**

Day One – May 12, 2015

Morning Session

Introductions and Opening Prayers

Getting Ready: Brief Overview of Strategic Planning Process

Data-Driven Process — Benchmarking

Task One: Make a Draft of Issues, Choices, and Questions the Tribe Is Facing

- Issues and priorities the Omaha Tribe needs to address regarding TANF services
- Decide on issues and priorities lists
- SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) and/or GAP Analysis

Task Two: Articulate Mission, Vision, and Values

- *Development of Mission Statement:* Establish — or reaffirm — a shared understanding of why an organization exists and its aspirations for the future

Lunch: 12 noon - 1:00 p.m.

Afternoon Session

- *Development of Vision Statement:* Answers question “What will success look like?”



Articulate the Fundamental Values that Guide Our Work

- Development of Internal and External Core Values: Answers question “What will success look like?”
 - Internal: What values are we committed to in our everyday work?
 - External: What values are we committed to in providing services to our community?

Day Two – May 13, 2015

Morning Session

Opening Prayer

Task Three: Create Narrow Goals and Objectives

- Decide on Priorities (based on the list of issues, mission and vision)
- Develop Goals and Objectives — two to three goals to achieve over the course of the plan
- Measuring Success: Outcome-based using “Benchmarks”

Lunch: 12 noon - 1:00 p.m.

Afternoon Session

Task Four: Decide on and Develop Strategies

- *Decide on Core Strategies to Accomplish the Mission*
 - Internal: Organizational change and improvement
 - External: Partnering Organizations and other agencies
 - Governmental Policy: Changes to internal governmental policy to increase the likelihood of achieving the mission

Close Out: Wrap Up and Steps To Be Taken

- Writing the Strategic Plan
- Adopting the Plan
- Implementing the Plan
 - Identifying Barriers and Impediments
 - Annual Operating Plan
 - Regular Follow Up