



Dear Tribal Leader:

The Indian Health Service (IHS) issued a letter on October 23, 2008, to solicit Tribal input on the IHS Office of Information Technology's (OIT) proposal for reshaping IT support packages and invited formal comment from Tribal leaders and representatives at a Tribal consultation session held on December 17, 2008, in Arizona. In response to feedback received from Tribes, the current OIT proposal has been withdrawn, and I am now extending the comment period on this proposal to May 1. Furthermore, I am forming the IHS/Tribal/Urban (I/T/U) workgroup to review all comments and provide me with recommendations by September 30. The I/T/U will operate under the guidance of the IHS Information Systems Advisory Committee. Area Directors will solicit and appoint Tribal representative nominees to serve on this workgroup. Following are the workgroup's roles and responsibilities.

The IHS/Tribal/Urban Workgroup

Vision Statement

In the spirit of Self-Determination, and to reaffirm Tribal right under the ISDEAA to contract or compact with the IHS for all or portions of programs, services, functions, and activities, the I/T/U workgroup will ensure information technology support packages are available to all American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) Tribal programs that choose to leave all or a portion of their Tribal shares with the IHS.

Objectives

- To review current OIT Tribal Shares.
- To review comments from the Tribal Consultation Reports log.
- To provide advice and guidance to Regions/Areas as they conduct additional consultation sessions on the proposed restructuring of IHS-OIT information technology support packages.
- To develop information technology support packages that are consistent with the vision statement.

Members

One Tribal Information Systems Advisory Committee representative and one IHS representative serve as co-chairpersons of the committee. Mr. Chuck Walt, Associate Director of Human Services for the Fond Du Lac Reservation, and Dr. Richard Church, Pharm.D., Director of the IHS Office of Public Health Support, have agreed to co-chair the workgroup. Additional IHS and/or Tribal staff may serve as technical advisors.

The Workgroup consists of 21 additional members:

- One Tribal representative selected from each IHS Area by the IHS Area Director in consultation with Area Tribes.
- The IHS-OIT Chief Information Officer (CIO) or a delegate chosen by the CIO.
- One representative from the Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee.
- One representative from the IHS Office of Urban Indian Health Program.
- One representative from the IHS Agency Lead Negotiators.
- One representative from the IHS Office of Tribal Self-Governance.
- One representative from the IHS Office of Tribal Programs.
- Three representatives from the IHS Information Systems Advisory Committee.

Meetings

The workgroup meeting schedule will be determined after the members have been selected. All workgroup meetings are open to the public. At the initial workgroup meeting, members will determine the protocols, final products, and timeline for fulfilling their mission. The IHS-OIT will provide the group with necessary administrative support as well as reimburse members' travel to formal meetings.

For information regarding IHS Tribal consultation policy, please refer to http://www.ihs.gov/PublicInfo/Publications/IHSManual/Circulars/Circ06/Circ06_01/circ06_01.htm#11. Additional background on the information technology support packages can be found at [http://www.ihs.gov/CIO/Self-Determin/index.cfm?module=Tribal ConsultationFAQ](http://www.ihs.gov/CIO/Self-Determin/index.cfm?module=Tribal%20ConsultationFAQ).

If you have any comments on the information technology support packages, please submit them by close of business May 1 to Mr. Samuel Berry, Information Technology Specialist, Division of Program Management and Budget, OIT, IHS. He may be reached by e-mail, at Samuel.Berry@ihs.gov; by fax, at (505) 248-8014; or by telephone, at (505) 248-4150. Mr. Berry is also available to assist you with any questions you may have.

I look forward to working with you as we continue to improve the I/T/U information technology support system.

Sincerely yours,

Robert G. McSwain/s/
Director