

TRIBAL FINANCE PROGRAM

READINESS GUIDE

Purpose

This readiness guide can be used to self-evaluate your Native nation's capacity and preparedness to implement major tribal finance changes. Changes may include new technologies or processes that have a significant impact on many others. This guide also gives you a chance to get familiar with the process and what to expect in the Tribal Finance Program. Use this guide to help answer the following question:

Does your nation have the necessary infrastructure, resources, skills and culture to support the change?

Forming the Team

The Tribal Finance Team team is made up of five individuals, chosen by the Nation, to be participants in the program. These individuals will attend all programming and also implement the change. Things to consider when forming your team:

1. Change Champion - Typically a Council Member. A high level individual that shares in the responsibility for change results, helps to set a vision and break down barriers.
2. Change Leader - Typically a CFO or Controller. This person plans, leads and organizes the change. For best results, the change leader will be a strong communicator, excellent influencer and a relationship builder.
3. Change Ally - These individuals may or may not be people on your finance team, but they are great influencers with creative problem solving skills.
4. Other skills and abilities to consider for remaining team members include: strong collaborators, organizers and excellent communicators.

Team members may include elected officials, finance staff or other relevant staff that can contribute to the success of the tribal finance change(s).

Q#1: Does your Nation have the human capital to fill the five members of the Tribal Finance Team? Score between 0 (least ready) - 20 (most ready). _____

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Getting Started

At the beginning of your two-year, cohort-based journey, an in-depth financial assessment will be conducted. This assessment identifies your nation's current financial governance state and offers ideas on how to strengthen relevant structures, processes and systems. We do this through document review and interviews. A sample of the documents requested include: an organization chart, finance department job descriptions, finance policies, recent monthly financial reports, strategic and/or operating plan, current year budget and a list of IT systems used by or related to the finance function. There is no need to create these documents for the purposes of this financial assessment, you just submit whatever documentation already exists.

All of the information submitted and discussed during this process will be held in the strictest confidence. We understand that Native nations are sovereign nations and have a strong desire to protect their financial information. So while we understand that the thought of sharing this information may be troubling, please know that your financial information will be safeguarded appropriately.

Q#2: Is your Nation will to undergo an in-depth financial assessment that includes a review of structure, process and systems? Score between 0 (least willing) - 20 (most willing). _____

Next Steps

Based on the financial assessment, we will co-create a "roadmap" that lays out a plan for the rest of your time in the program. In addition, a communications plan will be discussed to identify resistance and barriers as well as the approach that will be used to overcome or mitigate them. After the roadmap is created, it can be used to apply for Tribal Finance program grant funding to support participating nations in implementation of their roadmap

Q#3: Does your Nation have effective channels of communication to keep all who are impacted by major tribal finance changes informed? Score between 0 (none) - 15 (many). _____

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Implementation

As much as we can all agree that something needs to change, we may not all agree on the solution or how to get there. As the roadmap is being implemented, the Tribal Finance Team may encounter resistance, challenges and/or opportunities that weren't anticipated. Some flexibility and patience will be needed from everyone affected by the tribal finance change(s) being implemented. Misunderstandings may occur. Major change doesn't happen overnight and celebration of small wins along the way is necessary.

Q#4: Is the management team (executives, directors, managers and supervisors) at your Nation receptive to feedback, responsive to alternative ideas, and supportive of open communication? Score between 0 (least receptive) - 10 (most receptive). _____

Q#5: Can your Tribal Finance Team identify when it may be necessary to change the approach to resistance and/or barriers to ensure timely and successful completion of the change? Score between 0 (least capable) - 10 (most capable). _____

Training & Resources

The biggest investment needed from Native nations to be successful in the program is time. The program includes four in-person convenings (2-3 days each), 2 virtual convenings (1/2 day each) and six coffee connections (1 hour each). In addition, for one year, each team member receives monthly executive coaching sessions. This time will be used to strengthen leadership skills, identify challenges, support professional development, and generally strengthen capacity of your nation to implement roadmaps efficiently. While we understand how busy you are, this is an investment into the future of your Nation and the changes implemented will make everyone's job easier, in time.

Q#6: Is your Nation's leadership willing to prioritize this program and allow participants the time needed to participate in all programming offered to make this change a success? Score between 0 (least willing) - 25 (most willing). _____

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READINESS SELF-EVALUATION

Enter your score for each question into the chart below and calculate the total. Then go to the next page for your readiness rating.

Q#1: Does your Nation have the human capital to fill the five members of the Tribal Finance Team? Score 0-20.	
Q#2: Is your Nation will to undergo an in-depth financial assessment that includes a review of structure, process and systems? Score 0-20.	
Q#3: Does your Nation have effective channels of communication to keep all who are impacted by major tribal finance changes informed? Score 0-15.	
Q#4: Is the management team (executives, directors, managers and supervisors) at your Nation receptive to feedback, responsive to alternative ideas, and supportive of open communication? Score 0-10.	
Q#5: Can your Tribal Finance Team identify when it may be necessary to change the approach to resistance and/or barriers to ensure timely and successful completion of the change? Score 0-10.	
Q#6: Is your Nation's leadership willing to prioritize this program and allow participants the time needed to participate in all programming offered to make this change a success? Score 0-25.	

TOTAL _____

**For questions or inquiries, please contact the Tribal Finance Program Manager,
Kathryn Young, at kathryn@nativegov.org**

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READINESS RATING

See where your total score from the previous page fits in the table below for your readiness rating.

Your Score	Readiness Rating
> 75	<p>High Readiness Rating - Your nation is most likely prepared to take the next step and start asking questions like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What parts, if any, of the Tribal Finance Program are still unclear?• What could be possible with stronger financial governance?
50 - 75	<p>Medium Readiness Rating - Your nation may be prepared to take that next step. In addition to the questions above, start asking questions like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How could we be better prepared to start the Tribal Finance Program?• What areas of readiness are most concerning?
< 50	<p>Low Readiness Rating - Your nation may not be prepared to take that next step. Start asking the following questions to get more clarity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What areas of readiness could be easiest or quickest to improve?• Are there common trends or patterns that need attention?• This is my self-evaluation. Is it possible that others feel differently?• Given the perceived shortcomings, how do we create an action plan to address our current state of readiness so we are in a position to take that next step?

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Kathryn Young, at kathryn@nativegov.org**