



Memorandum

Employment meeting: Standing Rock Sioux Tribe
 Fr: Robert W. Harms

Memorandum follows meeting on May 17, 2010, with tribal members at large, and representatives of Sitting Bull College, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, and TERO offices relating to employment on Standing Rock Reservation and observations and comments of attendees.

1. The following are employment/labor related programs currently available on the Standing Rock Reservation:
 - a. **Sitting Bull College**; host specific classes such as general construction, excluding plumbing and electrical, includes office tech; computer tech; nursing, Energy Tech program, etc.
 - b. **Entrepreneur Center** (located at Sitting Bull College) operated by SRST
 12 week course/modified to 5 hours X 6 week course
 Entrepreneurial Training not an employment center
 - c. **Standing Rock Sioux Tribe**
 TWEP (Tribal Workforce Employment Program) essentially a "welfare to work" program—little training; piecemeal/temporary work; not full time or career oriented.
 AVT (Adult Vocational Training) via BIA contract
 Direct employment (1 time assistance/ stop gap program)
 - d. **TERO**: referral to prospective employers; limited employment training except for CDL and construction jobs.
 - e. **Oyate' Development Corporation** (5 Board members): Focus is to develop CDFI (Community Development Financial Institution), Financial Readiness and Credit Union.
2. North Dakota programs:
 - a. TANF—"Career Options" through a contractor; program is described as not well matched with community and jobs available.
 - b. WIA—Mismatched training, lack of oversight, needs to be revisited according to attendees.
 - c. NDJS—could use greater presence and interaction with SRST
 - d. State programs do not appear to be well connected to the community
3. Tribal Programs
 - a. Tribal entities (e.g. Tribal College; TERO; Entrepreneurial Program; Tribal HQ) do not communicate regularly with each other
 - b. State and Tribal entities (NDJS/NDHS/Workforce Development/TERO/Colleges/HQ) do not communicate regularly regarding employment issues.
 - c. No tribal government focus on employment.
4. Observations:
 - a. ND-DOT is not at Fort Yates, making licensure an issue

- b. 96% of wages at SRST are from some form of government program (Fed/Tribal/State/local). Private employment is virtually non-existent.
- c. High incidents of poverty connected to despair/ coupled with programs that provide disincentives for work (e.g., general assistance and TANF)
- d. Many tribal members live in very rural areas, where economic opportunity is limited. Training and outreach should be tailored to reach that population.
- e. TERO program is primarily referral/compliance directed with modest employment training.
- f. Overriding concern: public policy consequences that create long-standing cultural influences that detract/discourage employment.

5. Recommendations:

- a. Review state programs with NDJS, Workforce Development and DHS to establish closer relationship with SRST. Look for disincentives to work as described by tribal members. Create greater interaction on SRST reservation (more "hands on") for that purpose.
- b. State/Tribal conference to determine employment plan (consider revising state and tribal eligibility for programming to not discourage employment).
- c. Urge Tribe to begin employment training program (at Sitting Bull or TERO)
- d. Combine tribal programs (AVT/TWEP/ possibly TERO) for new program designed to encourage and train for employment.
- e. Semi-annual tribal employment conference (coordination of tribal entities)
- f. Tribal outreach to districts with TWEP/TERO and Ent.Center ("traveling circuit" team" to local districts (smaller communities) for jobs/finance/economics 101 training)
- g. TERO become employment focal point for training, eligibility, focused on merit based employment rather than entitlement; assist with reviewing eligibility criteria for other programs that may serve as a disincentive for employment.
- h. Tribal Council host annual "work force training/jobs fair" to foster value of employment
- i. Incorporate to K-12; meet with local school administrators (deliver with current funding)
- j. Indian Affairs Commission should develop a tribal economic consortium (e.g. tribal colleges, tribal government representative, Department of Commerce, Workforce Development) to for consistent communication and support for employment and economic development.
- k. SRST should create a "5 year" Strategic Plan complete with benchmarks. The Strategic Plan would guide the tribe through the business development process.
- l. **NOTE:** Tribes should be urged to participate in labor study; similar outreach should be considered for TAT/Spirit Lake or Turtle Mt. to gather additional input, particularly from Tribal Colleges, and TERO offices.