ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS ASSESSMENT FOR IDENTIFIED CHANGE

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

When an organization has identified an area of desired change in their administrative practices or service delivery, the best way to organize planning efforts is to conduct a readiness assessment. A readiness assessment is an essential step in the strategic planning process that examines and assesses the key domains of organizational structure and community need necessary to make change a reality.

Any change, such as implementing a new service line or adjusting current program components, can be stressful and difficult. This readiness assessment is an important step to inform an appropriate strategy to reach desired goals. Thorough planning can support successful change implementation. The following discussion topics are the primer for organizations to explore their service delivery and capacity for change.

It is important to point out that this assessment is intended to support strategic planning once a change in programming or organizational structure is already identified, not as a method to identify areas of needed change or opportunities for growth.

It is recommended that you have representatives from all facets of your organization present for the assessment exercise. Generally, this would include a member of your Board of Directors, your Executive Director or a leader from your administration, an operations manager, a provider and a member of the service support staff such as a registration specialist or resource advocate. This will allow for a better understanding of the issues from a variety of perspectives within your organization that will in turn provide an assessment that reflects your organization as a whole. It is highly recommended that each dialog your assessment team has is treated as a safe zone of communication where all ideas, notions, questions, concerns and recommendations are respected as constructive to the overall goal of creating a roadmap to organizational change readiness.

NOTE: This exercise is a way for you to identify and strengthen the essential building blocks for successful planning. For other planning resources, the UIHI has created a Health Priority Identification (HPI) Toolkit for those who want to elicit their communities' health priorities.

Assessment Background

In general, planning exercises, regardless of the desired outcomes, are derived from the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis methodology. Using this methodology as a base, UIHI staff reviewed four publically available organizational readiness tools that relate most closely to health care planning and created a methodology to help organize Urban Indian Health Organization's (UIHO's) planning activities for desired change. The source materials are:

Perinatal Periods of Risk Approach to Reduce Feto-Infant Mortality: A Framework for Assessing Community Readiness

http://webmedia.unmc.edu/Community/CityMatch/PPOR/howto/Framework.doc

Community Readiness Manual: Assessing Community Readiness for Change Increasing Community Capacity for HIV/AIDS prevention

http://www.nccr.colostate.edu/docs/cr/english.pdf

North Carolina New Organizational Vision Award: Provider Readiness Assessment Tool

http://www.ncnova.org/upload/doc/nc_nova_assessment_tool.pdf

Healthy IDEAS Innovation Readiness Assessment

http://www.questionpro.com/a/TakeSurvey?id=1674868&custom1=QPRO_Survey__c&custom2_=a0P500000003vvi

This assessment guide builds on the critical areas of organizational analysis specific to health and human service providers within the following five planning domains: Leadership, Community Profile, Existing Infrastructure, Financial Resources and Work Environment.

The assessment guide includes three phases:

Phase I – Identified Change Capacity Review

Phase II – Identified Change Agreement Level Assignment

Phase III – Constructing your Identified Change Readiness Tent

Phase I: Identified Change Capacity Review

The organizational readiness assessment begins by looking at the five domains of identified change planning that help determine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats your organization faces. Each domain contains a title, a brief description of its importance to accomplishing organizational or programming changes and a statement of confidence that depending on its strength, will be determined by answering the questions that follow.

In this section, an open discussion of each domain's description along with its confidence statement is encouraged so your assessment team can agree on its definition. The confidence statement is then read out loud as an overall goal, and your confidence in that statement will be measured by your answers to the key questions that follow.

Domain 1:   Leadership

Strong leadership is the foundation upon which success is built. A leader is someone who has the communication skills to inspire confidence in, as well as provide clarity to, internal and external stakeholders. Leaders have a background in successful organization building and program implementation that fosters overall success. Many funding agencies and community partners consider strong leadership essential to their collaborative efforts. Longevity in both the Board of Directors and Executive Director raise considerable confidence not only in the funding agency, but in the staff who are going to undertake the challenge of change. If longevity is not a strong point of your organization, demonstrated success in organizational stability, program implementation and buy-in between your board of directors, Executive Director, and key staff will help promote confidence among partner agencies.

Confidence Statement:

Our leadership has created an environment where key stakeholders at our organization have a shared understanding of the difficulties and successes that come with change.

Key Questions:

1. Where does the vision for the future of your healthcare service delivery overlap among key stakeholders in your organization? Where do those visions differ?

2. How long has your senior administration been with your organization? Clinic Manager or Medical Director?

3. Can you share an example of an organizational change your organization has completed (e.g. new program implementation)?

Domain 2:   Community Profile

Urban Indian Health Organizations (UIHOs) operate under a special relationship with their urban American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) clients. Our missions are all responsive to the needs of the community we serve and it is especially important to have clear motivations for identified change communicated through face-to-face encounters, data supported trends and service partner input. Though it might be evident to the service provider that change needs to happen, with the support of the urban AI/AN community you serve, the administrative, financial and political hurdles you encounter will ultimately be more manageable with a unified community advocating for that need.

Confidence Statement:

We can effectively demonstrate the need for the identified change with evidence and support from the community we serve, our service partners and data.

Key Questions:

   1. What feedback has your organization received from the community regarding healthcare service needs?

   2. What evidence (including prevalence and mortality data, clinical data) do you have to support the need for change? Do you have a ranked list of health priorities informed by your community?

   3. Does your state and/or local health department(s) health priorities match-up with yours? What is your organization's existing relationship with those organizations?

   4. What are potential risks of implementing your identified change at this time?

   5. What are potential benefits of implementing a change at this time? Do these benefits outweigh the risks?

Domain 3:   Existing Infrastructure

It is important to evaluate the current state of your healthcare service delivery to fully understand where the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats lie as you move toward change or expansion. This section takes a critical look at operations including services offered, personnel, technical infrastructure, funding compliance and internal and external monitoring.

Confidence Statement:

The essential functions, policies and structures that support our healthcare service delivery have been tested and are adequate to allow for both the process of change and to carry out the functions needed for the identified change.

Key Questions:

   1. What capabilities and policies do you think are necessary to carry out your vision of change? Are these captured in your current policies and procedures?

   2. What types of program monitoring and reporting do you have in place for your services?

   3. Please tell us about your current Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement (QA/QI) system.

## Domain 4:   Financial Resources

It is extremely important to funders and community partners alike to know that if they are to enter into a fiscal arrangement with your organization, your fiscal department has the experience and confidence to mitigate challenges that may arise. Clean third party audits and the proven ability to manage funding resources and billing systems promoting sustainability helps promote this confidence in your partners.

Confidence Statement:

Our organization can handle the fiscal challenges of our identified change and balance the various responsibilities that come with multiple funding options.

Key Questions:

1. What is the current source of funding for your health and social services?

2. What, if any, billing or funding sources have you identified for the purposes of your desired change?

3. Does your accounting department/personnel have experience with both public and private funding source compliance? Any third party audit findings in the last five years?
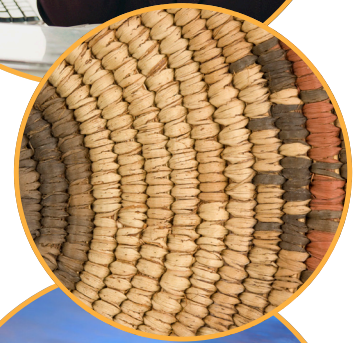
Domain 5:   Work Environment

Successful implementation of organizational changes are dependent on many factors, but an organization's ability to create lasting change can be traced to their ability to communicate with and utilize input from all levels of staffing from direct services to administration. The willingness to monitor and address needs or concerns in real time is often the hallmark of sustainable change or growth, this includes the ability to identify where key skills are lacking in the current workforce and to supply the education or training necessary to ensure service stability.

Confidence Statement:

Our organization fosters an environment providing for open communication and professional growth.

Key Questions:

1. How are ideas, opinions and concerns shared between the different levels of staffing?

2. What systems are in place to support trainings and continued education for staff?

Phase II: Program Change Agreement Level Assignment

In Phase II, you will assign a level of agreement associated with each planning domain's statement of confidence. The level of confidence is based on the discussion prompted by questions associated with each planning section in Phase I. As a group, try to achieve consensus on where you fall on the confidence scale. This score will inform the last phase of your Program Change Readiness Tent construction.

Reflecting on the discussions you had in Phase I, consider and assign an agreement level with each domain's statement of confidence. This will help your strategic planning exercise by identifying areas of focus for the implementation of the program change or expansion.

LEADERSHIP: **Our leadership has created an environment where key stakeholders at our organization have a shared understanding of the difficulties and successes that come with change.**

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

COMMUNITY PROFILE: **We can effectively demonstrate the need for our identified change with evidence and support from the community we serve, our service partners and data.**

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE: **The essential functions, policies and structures that support our healthcare service delivery have been tested and are adequate to allow for both the process of change and to carry out the functions needed for the identified change.**

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

FINANCIAL RESOURCES: **Our organization can handle the fiscal challenges of our identified change and balancing the various responsibilities that come with multiple funding options.**

| 1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

WORK ENVIRONMENT: **Our organization fosters an environment providing for open communication and professional growth.**

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

# Phase III: Constructing your Identified Change Readiness Tent

In the phase III, you will erect your identified change planning confidence tent, also known as the Program Change Readiness Tent. This tent will give you a visual representation of the strength of your organization to implement changes in the five domains. You will place a mark at the corresponding spot you ranked your planning domains in Phase II on the tent graphic. You then connect the marks and if your tent is structurally sound, then it is a good indication that you are ready for your identified change. If your confidence tent is flat or uneven, you have identified the areas in which you need to devote further planning to before successful change is possible. There are some examples of readiness tent's and their meanings provided to help with your readiness tent interpretation.

Now that you have assigned a level of strength to each planning domain's confidence statement, you can construct your readiness tent. This visual aid will help you plan your next steps in a strategic planning session.
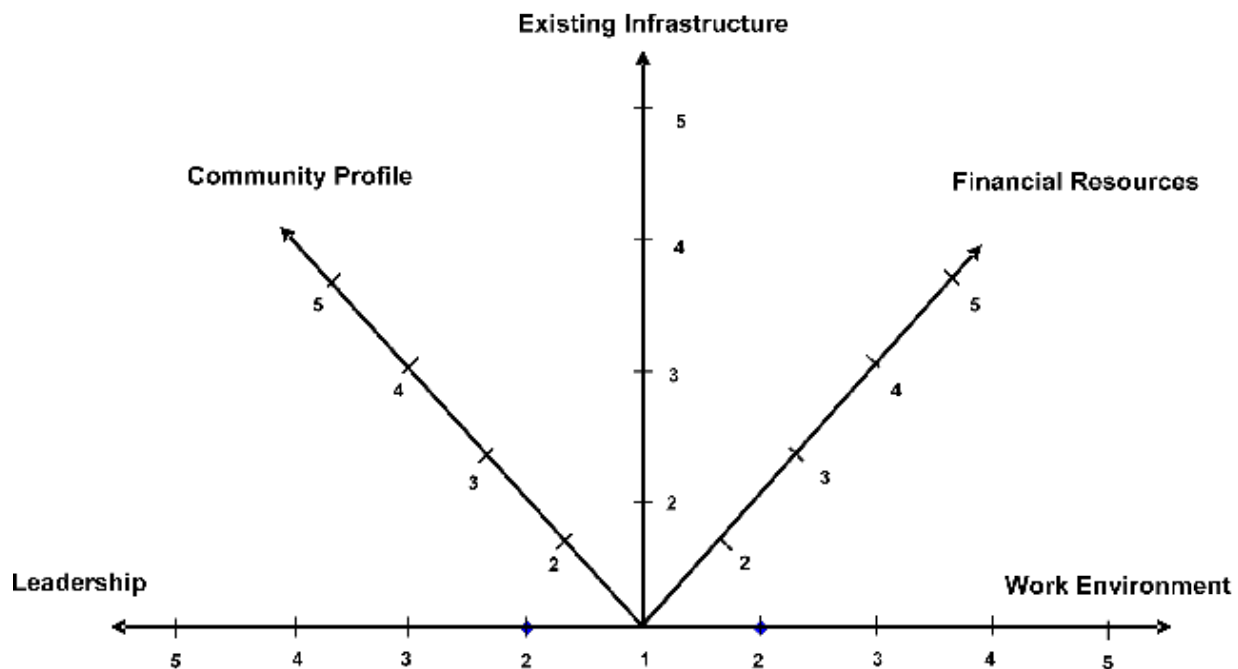

1. Transfer each of your agreement scales from Phase II worksheet to the graphic above. Mark your score on each corresponding axis with a ◆.

2. Connect each of the five ◆ from axis to axis.

3. Shade the inside region across the axes.

4. Look at the shape of your 'tent': what does it tell you? Is there enough room for this change? Is it balanced? Is it able to withstand external elements that bear weight on its surface? Where is your greatest constraint?
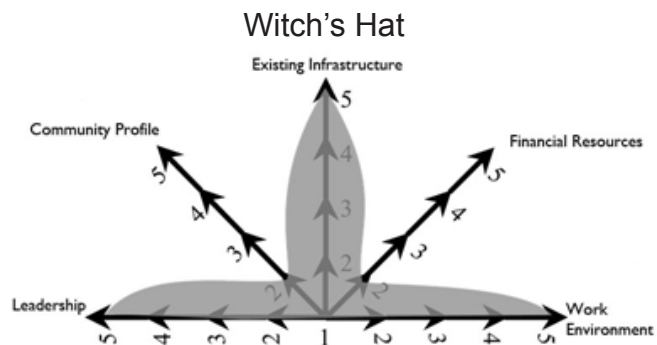
Program Change Readiness Tent Examples:

Sunrise
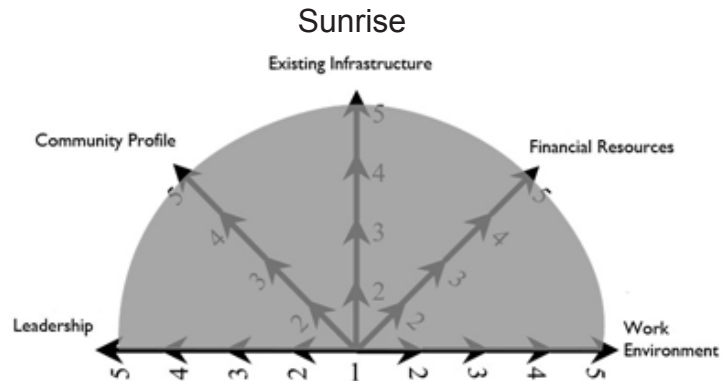
All five domains are aligned at full strength, plenty of room for growth and prosperity!

Sunset
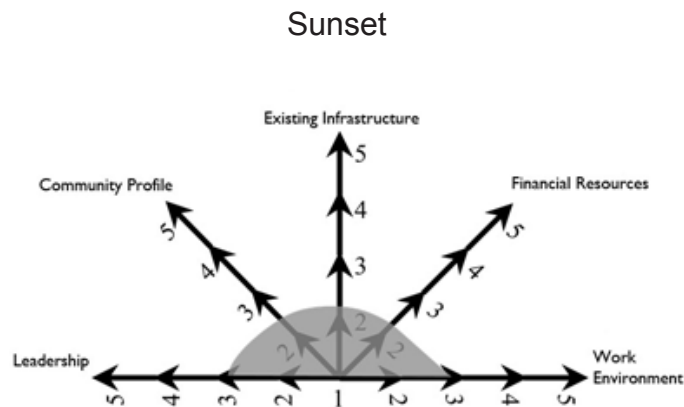
Basic ideas and understanding present, but needs serious improvements from all five domains before going forward with implementing desired changes.

Witch's Hat

Leadership is strong, infrastructure is in place and the work environment is accommodating and ready for change, but community stakeholder engagement and fiscal planning is needed.

Congratulations, you have completed the Organizational Readiness Assessment for Identified Program Change!

You now have a good understanding of what domains of your organization are sound as well as those that need strengthening. This knowledge offers an opportunity to strengthen the specific areas of your organizational leadership, community profile, infrastructure, financial resources or work environment prior to change implementation. Organizational readiness in these domains provides the foundation for successful change implementation.