



The Rain Maker Project SPF-SIG Contingencies Response Document

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A. Introduction

This document presents the Omaha Nation Community Response Team (ONCRT) official response to the State’s contingency requests/questions related to the SPF-SIG Strategic Plan for the Rain Maker Project. The document first provides a review of the context of the Rain Maker Project and then replies to the contingency requests from the State. The contingency narrative identifies the state’s requests/questions in italics, and the ONCRT response in black text following each request or question. Answers are purposefully brief, with more clarification offered if needed. The responses are also derived from notes related to the last State site visit meeting of March 11, 2009, where the meeting participants of John Penn, Orville Cayou, Dean Ross, Neal Grandgenett, Diane Harrup, and Jeff Armitage brainstormed response possibilities and provided clarifications to the state request. This meeting was very helpful and appreciated. Finally, the ONCRT would like to request that the State move quickly on reviewing and making a decision on this document to allow the ONCRT to move forward with its next phase of project operation (and funding) as quickly as possible. The project has made a successful and aggressive start to its prevention efforts and we would like to keep up this important project momentum.

B. The Context of Rain Maker

The geographic area served by the Rain Maker Project includes the Omaha Indian Reservation, which has a land base of 260 square miles of rolling hills and woodlands located in Thurston County in Northeastern Nebraska along the Missouri River. This is a very rural setting, with the major cities of Sioux City, IA lying 30 miles to the north and Omaha, NE located 75 miles to the south. The reservation includes two primary villages, Macy, NE and Walthill, NE as well as numerous Indian families residing throughout the countryside in HUD homes. The 2000 Census Bureau Report indicates that the Native American population in Thurston County has grown steadily over the past two decades and now makes up 52% of the County’s total population and consists of numerous tribal affiliations. According to the Omaha Tribal Enrollment Department, the on-reservation tribal population is over 4,200 while the overall tribal membership totals nearly 5,500. Census statistics reveal the overall tribal membership is young,

with 36.4% between the ages of 5 and 18 and 41.6% between the ages of 19 and 65. A younger population, included as an important environmental factor, has led to a number of serious community issues that are also closely associated with the area's high poverty.

Current socioeconomic factors concerning education, unemployment and poverty rates make the environmental status very poor on the reservation. According to the State of Nebraska, 2006, more than half of the Omaha people live below the poverty level and the school dropout rate is among the highest in the State. The 2000 Census also reported 36% of American Indians in Thurston County have less than a high school education; 18% of all Native American residents and 23% of all Indian families (with children under 18) live below the poverty level, compared to 10% for the State; and 42% of all households are single-parent families. The State of Nebraska, Department of Economic Development, 2006, reports that the Omaha Reservation is considered an impoverished area. The Thurston County the death rate for Native Americans is 50% higher than the state average, with 84% of these deaths being related to substance abuse compared to 26% statewide. Also, births in Thurston County for girls aged 10-17 account for 7.4% of all births, compared to 3.7% statewide.

Substance abuse on the Omaha Reservation has unfortunately become the norm rather than the exception as alcohol and substance abuse has become a generational issue. Effects of substance abuse, particularly among our youth, have found their way to everyday life, making the most common achievements difficult. There is a community acceptance of alcohol, promoted by local businesses, even as school dropout rates, teen pregnancies, and generational abuse and neglect continue to rise. Driving under the influence arrests are some of the highest in the State of Nebraska. Many families function in a habitual state of crisis and are impacted either directly or indirectly by the substance abuse of immediate or extended family members.

For its intervention efforts, the ONCRT Rain Maker Project will utilize the evidence-based environmental approach Communities Mobilizing for Change on Alcohol (CMCA) in providing coalition-building and community-based mobilization activities. This program is already identified by SAMHSA as evidence-based. The Rain Maker Project will also further utilize SAMHSA's Prevention Framework Model and its five-step process to assist our communities in developing the culturally relevant knowledge and skills to provide a solid framework to change community norms regarding underage drinking. The Rain Maker Project will also seek to enhance our existing Community Mobilization Initiative Model by expanding coalition efforts related to environmental strategies, as well as striving to give local youth support in their substance abuse prevention by providing opportunities for a greater voice and participation in the various coalition events and planning. Thus, the ONCRT has selected CMCA as our key evidence-based program to embrace our primary SPF-SIG priority of "Alcohol use among persons 17 and younger" as described in the ONCRT Strategic Plan document.

C. Contingency Responses

Each contingency request or question from the state is given in italics, with the ONCRT response given in the black text following it.

Contingency 1:

Explain why "reduce binge drinking among 18-25 year olds" and "reduce alcohol impaired driving across all age groups" were not selected as prevention priorities.

Contingency 1 Response:

We have representation from all 12 sectors of the community however the base of our coalition membership are community stakeholders, many of which are non-professional and have limited education. For our reservation community, we have found that it is important to have a clear and relatively simple focus to best mobilize for change. Thus, at the onset of SPF-SIG activities, we felt that it was best to have one core prevention focus rather than three focus areas or we risked losing the power of a *focused* community effort. Our selection of "Alcohol use among persons 17 and younger" also represents an area where the community has already been concerned historically, that we are losing our youth, as they are slowly losing their cultural identity, and becoming relatively dysfunctional. High youth crime and youth substance abuse appear to be closely linked as both increasingly threaten to overwhelm tribal law enforcement and tribal court. Our SPF-SIG community readiness surveys (n = 25) and our key informant interviews (n = 12) clearly reinforced this community interest and need to focus on youth. In addition, the data from the 2003, 2005, and 2007 Nebraska Risk and Protective Factors Student Surveys (NRPFSS) illustrated that alcohol use among our youth is clearly out of control. We also expect that our focus on alcohol use by youth will also help indirectly address "binge drinking" and "alcohol impaired driving" since there are indeed youth connections to both of these unfortunate situations on the reservation. In addition, for or single focus area, we were concerned that a 2nd focus on binge drinking would degenerate into a long operational definition discussion of what that meant, and that a 3rd focus on alcohol impaired driving on the reservation, was not getting directly enough at the underlying, extensive and tragic context of substance abuse on the reservation. Thus, we felt that by having a single focus on "alcohol use among persons 17 and younger, we would retain a clear prevention focus for our community while also indirectly supporting the other two focus areas.

Contingency 2:

More clearly define the root causes and contributing factors that will be directly impacted by CMCA, and ensure that the root causes are actionable. The contributing factors can include any of the seven contributing factors identified within the toolkit as well as risk and protective factors that will be addressed through CMCA in your community. Revise the logic model to reflect accordingly.

Contingency 2 Response:

More than any other root cause or contributing factor, our leaders and key community members are in full agreement that "community disorganization" is our most problematic factor within the context of our youth substance abuse problems (and other related problems, such as youth crime). Community disorganization and a diffused or confused "call to action" for the support of our youth, and a lack of joint knowledge about how best to support them, is eroding our ability to move forward as a community to address this growing problem. Key organizations on the reservation, such as the tribal police, the court system, the schools, the alcohol program, and many others, are not aware of each other's efforts, and even at times, find themselves distinctly at cross purposes to each other. In this diffusion and confusion of good intentions, the community evils of youth substance abuse, violence, depression, and even tragically at times suicide, become a set of all too common and alarming occurrences in our community. Other root causes and contributing factors that are experienced by other tribal communities, are also present

here, such as easy access to alcohol, social norms that permit drinking, poor tribal enforcement codes, large rural distances, lack of economic opportunity, poverty, and a general feeling that youth pride, identity, and culture are slowly melting away. The loss of culture is particularly disheartening for us, since a proud and supportive Omaha culture has historically been a source of resilience, hope, and protection for our people. Social norms on the reservation that have evolved over a time that have adults ignoring youth alcohol use, or even contributing to it, are also a key root cause. Finally, poor tribal codes are making it difficult for our law enforcement, the tribal court, and even concerned citizens to take any immediate and direct action at all, and have become a steady source of frustration for law enforcement and community leaders.

For an eventual solution, or at least a start to a path for addressing youth substance abuse, we see the four areas of community disorganization, loss of culture, social norms that permit youth drinking, and poor tribal codes as actionable items within our community prevention efforts, and a solid place to start to try to stop the rapid downward spiral of our youth. We have adjusted our logic model to more directly reflect these four root causes. We believe that by addressing these four key problem areas, within the context of our selected evidence-based prevention program of Community Mobilizing for Change on Alcohol (CMCA), we can truly mobilize the community to make a significant impact on this unfortunate situation, and attempt to rescue our youth, who are slowly but steadily drifting away from us and losing their chance for a life of productivity, contribution, and happiness.

Contingency 3:

Identify the desired outcomes of CMCA within your community.

Contingency Response 3:

The outcomes most desired from our efforts with CMCA have been prioritized to be the following four key outcomes, mapped directly to our four root causes. We have adjusted our logic model accordingly. Within the context of our four outcomes, it is important to note that in our community, we have really found it very important to be simple and direct in what we strive to accomplish. Since this prevention message is shared frequently among our community, where many members have little education, a complex and overly detailed logic model or prevention plan is a sure way for us to lose momentum. Thus, the four most desired outcomes are:

Better Community Organization ó We hope to better organize all contributing partners to more aggressively address the youth substance abuse problem, to be more fully aware of each other's efforts, and most importantly, to work more closely together on solutions. Strategic planning, information sharing, and the media campaign are key activities in producing desired outcomes.

Enhanced Cultural Identity for our Youth ó We hope to support our youth to see the power of cultural identity and pride as a protective factor and a source of strength. This is particularly important in Native American communities, and has been reinforced by various consultants who have visited the reservation to help us on youth-related substance abuse issues. Providing opportunities for youth to engage in prevention activities that include Omaha culture are necessary in achieving desired outcomes.

Modifying Social Norms ó A major issue on our reservation centers on prevailing

community attitudes that allow youth to engage in underage drinking, that it is socially and culturally acceptable, even expected. Contributing to minors occurs frequently. We hope to change these social norms on the reservation through revision of codes and policies, stricter enforcement, and education at all community sector levels.

Adjusting Tribal Codes - We want to help our law enforcement and court system to more directly confront the problem, by changing tribal codes and policies accordingly. Often, youth (and contributing adults) are aware of these tribal code problems, and use them to lessen or even escape the results of their actions.

Contingency 4:

Identify the specific steps necessary for implementing CMCA in your community, such as:

- *Hiring a qualified, full-time community organizer;*
- *Forming a local CMCA strategy team;*
- *Developing a specific CMCA organizing strategy;*
- *Selecting specific alcohol policy and enforcement targets;*
- *Mobilizing citizens of the community to push for those targets.*

Contingency 4 Response:

We have hired a qualified Project Director and Assistant. Our specific steps for implementing the CMCA in our community at this point in time are related to the following expectations. Some flexibility will be needed in our situation to ensure that we are able to modify as necessary to continue to advance Rain Maker's efforts with our changing circumstances on the reservation (such as in changing tribal leadership, etc.). These steps are organized under seven common implementation "lessons learned" steps for CMCA, as identified by Wagenaar, Gehan, Jones-Webb, Toomey, and Forster (1999), in their well respected *Journal of Community Psychology* article (Vol. 27, No. 3, 315-326).

1. Assessing the community

- ÉRevisit and update Rain Maker assessment data gathered to support strategic plan
- ÉUndertake a new Nebraska Risk and Protective Factors Survey administration
- ÉCreate a "Community Data Summary Document" for continued updating and use

2. Creating a core leadership group

- ÉContinue to assemble the core leadership group and hold agenda driven discussions
- ÉTrain the core leadership group on CMCA, Community Healing, and related strategies
- ÉRefine the agenda, minutes, and follow-up strategies
- ÉPeriodically revisit priorities, action and status of the CMCA efforts

3. Developing a plan of action

- ÉReview the Rain Maker Strategic Plan Document with core leadership team
- ÉExamine school-related policies and strategies as it relates to the Strategic Plan
- ÉPrioritize efforts on: community organization, youth identity, social norms, tribal codes
- ÉEstablish further consensus on Rain Maker timelines and revisit priorities

4. Building the base of support

- ÉIdentify who would important to invite into Rain Maker discussions and partnerships
- ÉInvite new partners to attend meetings or events
- ÉInvite and help schools to play a role on identifying students under the influence
- ÉBrief new members on CMCA and the Strategic Plan related efforts
- ÉDiscuss new ideas as contributed by partners

5. Implementing the action plan

- ÉUndertake efforts on building community organization (meetings, talking circles, etc.)
- ÉUndertake efforts on helping build youth cultural identity (events, meetings, etc.)
- ÉUndertake efforts on social norms (media campaign, awareness strategies, etc.)
- ÉUndertake efforts on tribal code revision (code review, revision team, etc.)
- ÉEstablish a youth code of conduct for implementation in schools and elsewhere
- ÉProvide all partners with cross-partnership briefings and information summaries

6. Maintaining the organization and institutionalizing change

- ÉProvide open and increasingly wider discussions on project progress and strategies
- ÉRevisit goals, objectives, and strategies with the core leadership group
- ÉRevisit and revise Rain Maker MOU documents as necessary
- ÉDiscuss and plan for sustainability of Rain Maker efforts
- ÉTarget additional grants and examine potential funding from other sources

7. Evaluating changes

- ÉContinue to semi-annually update the "Community Data Summary Document"
- ÉFormalize an evaluation data sharing process among all partners
- ÉContinue the regular evaluation process to report on process and outcomes
- ÉContinue to enhance the evaluation process and to provide formative input into project

Contingency 5:

Explain how CMCA complements the other prevention strategies mentioned in the plan (e.g., American Indian Life Skills, Walking in Beauty on the Red Road, Shonga Ska, and Project Washkon) as well as how CMCA will address the prevention gaps in the community. Also, it was unclear if CMCA had been implemented previously in the community. If so, explain past successes and challenges and how this grant funding will build upon past successes and address past challenges.

Contingency 5 Response:

The Rain Maker project will essentially provide a communication and partnership conduit between other youth-focused projects and organizations on the reservation. Many of the programs mentioned (such as Walking in Beauty on the Red Road) operate within a clinical setting, where young people who have been identified as having an alcohol problem, are involved in intensive outpatient treatment and continuing care activities.

Other programs are more community focused, such as Project Wa sko which is an after-school program working in partnership with the ONCRTøProject HOPE, where students are involved in youth suicide prevention and cultural activities. The evidence-based American Indian Life Skills



Development curriculum is utilized both directly within the schools and with Project Wa sko . The Sho ga Ska Project is focused on a particular intervention strategy, such as equine (horse) therapy with youth which serves as a cultural approach to substance abuse prevention. Each of these programs will benefit from the CMCA organizational efforts (particularly in the context of environmental strategies), since CMCA has a more global focus and will strive to bring different projects, programs, and activities together, so that each understands the other, and so that collaborative decision-making and shared efforts can be undertaken.

Although CMCA has already been initiated in the community in a limited way, through the SAMHSA Drug-Free Communities Grant Program, the Nebraska SPF-SIG grant is providing a much more focused, systematic, and aggressive CMCA implementation opportunity. Our DFC grant has provided our coalition with the basics of the Prevention Framework model, which gives us a healthy foundation, awareness, and support for CMCA. The reservation community appears to be much more ready to now fully implement CMCA under the more defined efforts of the SPF-SIG grant effort. Thus, the primary past success that we are building upon is a solid awareness of what CMCA represents and a related community support for its evidence-based design. We are also now positioned to confront our greatest challenge from the earlier efforts, which was a tendency of the community to try to move to action too quickly, with out adequate planning and consensus building (following the framework model approach). The Rain Maker leadership, and the community in general, now appears to better understand that careful, sustained planning and evaluation are key to success, and that moving toward action too quickly and without providing enough awareness and without securing adequate input, can sometimes result in a relatively chaotic set of actions, that eventually have only a minimal effect, or worse, even a negative effect on the outcomes being addressed. Thus, key community members appear to be much more ready to contribute, participate, and help to advance CMCA planning, and eventually, implementation efforts.

Contingency 6:

You had indicated that you would eventually be implementing a media campaign as part of this project. Describe the purpose and desired outcomes of the media campaign. If the media campaign is not done as part of CMCA, it will need to be incorporated into your logic model as an additional community strategy.

Contingency 6 Response:

The media campaign is indeed a part of the planned CMCA efforts, but the media campaign will also be relatively wide in involvement, by encompassing and including youth as well as adults. We have adjusted the logic model to better identify this effort as a community strategy. The purpose of the media campaign is to bring a solid awareness to the community that alcohol use among persons 17 and younger is a major problem, which is closely linked to crime, associated with problems in student achievement, helping to accelerate our youths' loss of culture and identity, and in general, consuming considerable community resources. The media campaign will invite both youth and adults to be a part of this awareness effort, and to help lead and contribute to the efforts. The media campaign will be primarily grass roots by design, using direct mailings, flyers, and a monthly community prevention newsletter. Youth of all ages will contribute quotes, comments, artwork, editorials, and personal reflections to be included in the media materials. The materials will also be very professionally produced, and widely distributed through the community. They will also contain summaries of data, lists of ways for community

members to become involved, and will also include the general contact information for the Rain Maker project. Through other grant efforts, the Rain Maker project will also incorporate our new logo, puppet show, story-telling activities, and interactive coloring book for children in grades K-4. The logo's name is Kage Zhi ga (öLittle Friendö in Omaha language) and the traditional Omaha story told in age-appropriate presentations at the schools depicts the övilsö of underage drinking. The Rain Maker Project will also utilize our ONCRT website to inform the community (omahanationcrt.org).

Contingency 7:

Submit an electronic needs assessment.

Contingency 7 Response:

As discussed and agreed upon at the site visit meeting of March 11, 2009, we are initiating work to develop a needs assessment document that can be more readily shared and interpreted by our reservation community. We are calling this document a öCommunity Data Summary Documentö and we expect that it will be approximately 4 to 5 pages in length and in a newsletter format. The document will provide short summaries of the relevant data related to youth substance abuse, as well as short interpretations of this data, useful figures, quotes from community members, and other useful pieces of information. There will be an introduction section to the document, as well as a summary section, and a final call to action to participate in the Rain Maker Project and efforts. Some of the data sets that are currently available are summarized in the table following, which is also identified in the Rain Maker Strategic Plan. The timeline for this specialized document is to have an initial rough draft to be completed by May 1st, and a first formal version of the document to tentatively be shared with the community (and the State) by May 22nd. This document will then continue to be frequently updated and refined as new datasets become available.

D. Assessment of Needs Summary Table

As described in the Rain Maker Strategic Plan the needs assessment process has engaged a variety of datasets that together have helped to select and confirm our prevention priorities. These datasets have come from two main sources, including the source of: 1) state and federal datasets related to Thurston County and 2) tribal organization datasets that are more local to the reservation. Both datasets have their own inherent challenge. For the Thurston County sources, it has been difficult to determine what portion of the data relates directly to the reservation, and for the reservation data, there are sometimes gaps and inconsistencies. However, together, the key sources of data present a picture that confirms the need for the Omaha Nation Community Response Team SPF-SIG project to indeed focus upon the state's first prevention priority of öalcohol use among persons 17 and youngerö and the related challenges of this priority focus. The following table represents the key datasets, and the primary insights that each source provides into the prevention priority of working with persons 17 and younger. This table will be expanded into an increasingly detailed and useful öCommunity Data Summary Documentö as the project evolves, to be shared with all partners.

Datasets Used in the Completing Needs Assessment Process		
Dataset:	Source:	What the Dataset Implies:
Demographics Data	Federal Census	Thurston County and the Omaha Reservation residents are some of the poorest residents in the United States. Poverty related challenges have a significant relationship to substance abuse challenges.
Alcohol Related Arrests	Tribal Law Enforcement	Alcohol-related arrests are higher than state averages and include high percentages of young people within the arrest statistics. In particular, weekend alcohol-related arrests are significant higher and include a large number of young people.
Youth Risks and Protective Factors	Nebraska Risks and Protective Factors Student Survey (NRPFS)	The NRPFS from 2003, 2005, and 2007 indicate levels of student 30-day use significantly higher than state statistics, with age of onset around 12 years of age. Student perception trends suggest particular challenges with adult sponsors of substance use, peer influences, and community disorganization. Family support is linked to possible protective factors supporting the "culture as prevention" ideas of the ONCRT coalition. A special administration of this survey will occur in 2009.
Youth Violence Data	Tribal Law Enforcement	Tribal law enforcement data from 2004 to 2008 suggests that youth violence is a real problem on the reservation, with weekends representing a significant proportion of youth crimes. Youth arrests are also strongly linked to alcohol through some of highest arrest areas, which include Minor in Possession, Curfew Violations, Truancy, Disorderly Conduct, Criminal Mischief, and Simple Assault arrests.
Alcohol Admissions	Tribal Alcohol Program	Alcohol admissions data shows a large number of initial assessments related to youth, and consistent representation of youth in alcohol related assessments. Tribal data also indicates a difficulty in providing youth with the help they need, and a lack of convenient alternatives for youth.
Substance Abuse Assessments	Sacred Child Program (GPRA)	The ONCRT Sacred Child Center is a new alternative for youth that will now also does assessments using federal GPRA instruments and AccuCare's Addiction Severity Index.
Walthill Public and Omaha Nation Public School Data	Omaha Nation and Walthill Public Schools	School data shows challenges related to high mobility rates (20-25%), low graduation rates (40-60%), a high free and reduced lunch rate (90-99%) as well as generally low student achievement test scores (lower quartile). Both school districts are listed as low performing school districts by the Nebraska Department of Education. However, both districts are known for exceptional innovation, a passionate commitment to children, and a wide range of academic support as well as life skill support programs.
Cultural Data and Feedback	Omaha Cultural Assessments Data	Various administrations of the Omaha Cultural Survey suggest that while both youth and adults see their cultural heritage as important, and possible protective factor, they see this cultural connection slipping away. This data reinforces the need for a

		“culture as prevention” component of some SPF-SIG and ONCRT related efforts.
Court Records and Youth Sentencing	Tribal Court Records and SPF-SIG Data Document	Youth sentencing is clearly pointing to a lack of convenient options for youth sentencing sanctions and rehabilitation. Data has supported the need for a Youth Detention Center as well as rehabilitation programs for youth that can be mandated by the court. The new Sacred Child Project is a recent alternative sponsored by the ONCRT, which will lead to further analysis of court mandated youth interventions.
Community Feedback Data	Community Forums and Community Training Surveys	Surveys from various community forums and trainings related to substance abuse awareness and intervention, suggest a very strong community concern for the areas young people and a perception that the youth are losing touch with the tribal community. Many community members see a focus on youth as the critical prevention necessity.
Key Informant Interviews	SPF-SIG Toolkit Interview Data	The 12 key informant interviews suggest a concern for young people, their access to alcohol, and the inappropriate role modeling and support by adults. Community disorganization is also a real trend and challenge that was recognized in all 12 key informant interviews.
Community Readiness Online Survey	SPF-SIG Toolkit Survey Data	The 25 coalition members who completed the community readiness survey suggest averages of 3.47 in membership involvement; 2.64 in membership interaction; 3.67 in coalition assessment; 3.93 in coalition assessment capacity; 3.82 in leadership; 3.92 in coalition skills, 3.35 in coalition interaction with the community; 3.54 in meeting procedures and practices; 3.64 in organization and infrastructure; 3.64 in attention to fiscal issues; 3.82 in planning experience; 3.83 in evidenced based approaches; 4.14 in vision and mission; 3.78 in evaluation; 3.93 in cultural competency; and 3.29 in sustainability. The data in general suggests that the coalition infrastructure is generally “in some need of improvement” but has a solid base to initiate a further solidification of coalition efforts.

E. Revised Logic Model

The Rain Maker Project Logic Model has been slightly revised to better represent this contingency document, and the related revisions as discussed in the contingency responses. This revised logic model is attached.