

Executive Briefing:

AI Readiness for Sovereign Nations

A leadership briefing for Tribal Council and senior staff — no technical background required. Five readiness domains, a priority action matrix, and sovereign guiding principles.

Pair this briefing with the free AI Readiness Assessment at ai-assessment.tribal-technology.com

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KEY FINDING

Policy before procurement.

Tribal nations that establish data sovereignty policies, vendor evaluation criteria, and internal governance structures *before* adopting AI systems retain far greater control over outcomes. This briefing helps leadership build that foundation.

READINESS ASSESSMENT

Five Sovereign Dimensions

Complete the interactive assessment at ai-assessment.tribal-technology.com to score your nation across each domain. Use the table below to record your results.

Domain	Description	Your Score
■ Data Governance	Written policies, data inventory, breach processes, member transparency	_____ / 100
■ Sovereignty	Jurisdictional language, cultural data protections, FPIC processes	_____ / 100
■■ Vendor Risk	Procurement checklist, terms review, data portability, Indigenous data vetting	_____ / 100
■ Community Impact	Community consultation, decision boundaries, feedback channels	_____ / 100
■ Workforce	Internal AI lead, staff training, leadership literacy, capacity plan	_____ / 100
Overall Readiness		_____ / 100

0 – 39%	40 – 69%	70 – 100%
<i>Emerging</i>	<i>Developing</i>	<i>AI Ready</i>
Foundation-building phase. Prioritize data governance and sovereignty policies before any AI adoption.	Good progress. Target your two lowest-scoring domains. Pilot low-risk AI with strong oversight.	Strong foundation. Ready to evaluate and adopt AI tools with appropriate governance structures in place.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

Where to Start

Priority	Action Item	Domain
CRITICAL	Establish a written Tribal Data Sovereignty Policy grounded in CARE Principles	Data Governance
CRITICAL	Audit and classify all tribal data assets — know what you have and where it lives	Data Governance
CRITICAL	Review all vendor contracts for data ownership, portability, and termination rights	Vendor Risk

HIGH	Develop a Tribal AI Procurement Checklist for evaluating new vendor proposals	<i>Vendor Risk</i>
HIGH	Designate an internal AI/Data lead responsible for governance oversight	<i>Workforce</i>
HIGH	Establish explicit contractual prohibitions on use of tribal cultural data for AI training	<i>Sovereignty</i>
MEDIUM	Design a community consultation process for technology decisions affecting	<i>Community Impact</i>
MEDIUM	Conduct all-staff AI literacy training (minimum 2 hours) for tribal employees	<i>Workforce</i>

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Six Commitments for Sovereign AI Adoption

I. Sovereignty First	Jurisdictional authority over technology systems and data is non-negotiable. No AI system should be adopted that compromises tribal sovereign authority.
II. Community Over Efficiency	AI tools that improve operational efficiency but harm community trust or cultural integrity are not improvements. Community benefit is the primary metric.
III. Cultural Data Is Sacred	Language, oral history, and ceremonial knowledge are not data assets to be optimized. Explicit contractual prohibitions on using cultural data for AI training are required.
IV. Build Internal Capacity	Every AI adoption should include a plan to reduce vendor dependency over time. The goal is tribal expertise, not perpetual vendor reliance.
V. Consent Is Ongoing	Community consent for AI deployments is not a one-time approval. Establish mechanisms to revisit, pause, or halt deployments as conditions change.
VI. Start Slow, Learn Fast	Begin with low-risk administrative use cases and build governance experience before deploying AI in sensitive domains like health, enrollment, or child welfare.

NEXT STEPS

Take the free AI Readiness Assessment at ai-assessment.tribal-technology.com to score your nation across all five domains and generate a prioritized action plan.

Download the companion RFP Addendum at tribal-technology.com/resources to protect your nation in any AI or technology procurement — free to use and adapt.

Questions or want to discuss your nation's readiness? Contact us: info@tribal-technology.com