
Request for Proposals

Invitation to work with Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Education department on developing a First Nations Student Continuity of Care Framework

Nishnawbe Aski Nation (known as Grand Council Treaty No. 9 until 1983) was established in 1973. NAN represents the legitimate, socioeconomic, and political aspirations of its First Nation members of Northern Ontario to all levels of government to allow local self-determination while establishing spiritual, cultural, social, and economic independence.

In 1977, Grand Council Treaty No. 9 made a public declaration of the rights and principles of Nishnawbe Aski. NAN's objectives are:

- Implementing advocacy and policy directives from NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly,
- Advocating to improve the quality of life for the people in areas of education, lands and resources, health, governance, and justice,
- Improving the awareness and sustainability of traditions, culture, and language of the people through unity and nationhood,
- Developing and implementing policies which reflect the aspirations and betterment of the people, and
- Developing strong partnerships with other organizations.

NAN is a political territorial organization representing 49 First Nation communities within northern Ontario with the total population of membership (on and off reserve) estimated around 45,000 people. These communities are grouped by Tribal Council (Windigo First Nations Council, Wabun Tribal Council, Shibogama First Nations Council, Mushkegowuk Council, Matawa First Nations, Keewaytinook Okimakanak, and Independent First Nations Alliance) according to region. Six of the 49 communities are not affiliated with a specific Tribal Council.

NAN territory encompasses James Bay Treaty No. 9 and Ontario's portion of Treaty No. 5 and has a total landmass covering two-thirds of the province of Ontario spanning 210,000 square miles. The people traditionally speak four languages: Oji-Cree in the west, Ojibway in the central-south area, and Cree and Algonquin in the east.

NAN continues to work to improve the quality of life for the Nishnawbe Aski territory. Through existing partnerships and agreements with Treaty partners (governments of Canada and Ontario), NAN advocates on behalf of the communities it represents for self-determination with functioning self-government.

First Nations Student Continuity of Care Framework

Many NAN high school students must leave their home communities and attend an off-reserve high school in order to receive their Ontario Secondary School Diploma. This transition from on-reserve to off-reserve can be very difficult for students and sometimes, for whatever reason, some must return home before the school year ends. Once back in their home communities, students may struggle with successfully completing the school year, resulting in their falling behind in their coursework and losing interest in completing high school. There is a need for off-reserve schools and on-reserve schools and education staff to work together to ensure there is a custom continuity of care plan developed for the leaving student, and that facilities and supports are in place in the receiving First Nation community to effectively implement the plan. Regular communication and follow-up between the leaving school and the receiving community is also needed for the continuity of care plans to be effective.

The Seven First Nations Youths 2016 Inquest (the Inquest) recognized this situation and developed Recommendation #87 to address the issue. The Inquest examined the deaths of Jethro Anderson (2000), Curran Strang (2005), Paul Panacheese (2006), Robyn Harper (2007), Reggie Bushie (2007), Kyle Morriseau (2009), and Jordan Wabasse (2011). All seven youth died while attending high school in Thunder Bay, Ontario, far away from their families and home First Nation communities. After hearing from 146 witnesses with 185 exhibits during eight months of proceedings, the Coroner's Jury delivered 145 recommendations on June 28, 2016 to improve education outcomes for First Nations students and prevent future tragedies. The recommendations are also directed at improving organization and government accountability and student safety for all NAN students. NAN immediately called for a process for the immediate implementation of the recommendations and has participated through a Political Table as well as an Education Table.

Recommendation #87 specifically states:

In order to ensure continuity of care and increased prospect (where desired) of a return to Thunder Bay for those students who are sent back due to health and safety concerns, make all efforts to ensure that community supports, including a continuing education, health, and mental health plan, are in place prior to sending a student back to his or her home community. Canada and Ontario should ensure that there is sufficient funding and resources in place for these support programs.

Due to the recognized need for communication between the leaving school and the receiving community this First Nations Student Continuity of Care Framework also addresses Recommendation #47 which states:

In order to ensure that consistent information is being provided to remote communities regarding education off-reserve and the issues raised at this Inquest, organize a meeting to be attended by NAN community education representatives to discuss the following:

- i. Expansions of the role of education counsellors to include secondary school;*
- ii. Importance of education counsellors attending schools off-reserve to observe progress of students from remote First Nations communities;*
- iii. Purpose and importance of comprehensive assessments of students prior to leaving home communities; and*
- iv. Purpose and importance of information requested in student application forms.*

Request for Proposals

NAN is seeking proposals from qualified consultants/consulting firms who have a strong background and demonstrated knowledge and experience working effectively with First Nations communities, extensive knowledge and experience in First Nations education and the unique needs of NAN First Nations, and the ability to build capacity for change and lead projects.

The proposal must include a detailed plan for engagement with NAN First Nations leadership/Tribal Councils/communities/education organizations and provincial district school board representatives in developing a framework specific to First Nations Student Continuity of Care when a NAN high school student transitions from an off-reserve high school back to their on-reserve community. The proposal must also include goals, objectives, activities, timelines, and resources needed to complete the work starting November 2021 to April 2022.

The focus will be on First Nations and Inquest identified priorities, strategic actions over the short, medium, and long term for developing a First Nations Student Continuity of Care Framework, and on the creation of a regional structure to support and coordinate First Nations governance. The work will also create a First Nations human resource strategy that promotes and builds on existing capacities, assets, and relationships of First Nation Tribal Councils/communities/education organizations and provincial district school boards.

Successful applicants will work closely with the Education department, the Education Committee, and the Continuity of Care Working Group to ensure integration and inclusion of service delivery challenges and realities faced by northern First Nations.

Additional Inquest Recommendations that relate to the development of a Continuity of Care Framework

7 (ii, iii, iv, v, vi.), 8 (i, ii, iv, v.), 9 (i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi, vii, viii, ix, x.), 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 22, 25 (iii, v.), 26 (i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi.), 27 (i, ii, iii, iv.), 28, 29 (i, ii.), 30, 31, 32 (i, ii, iii.), 46 (i, ii, iii, iv.), 65, 72 (iii, iv.), 81 (i, ii, iii, iv.), 82, 83 (i, ii, iii, iv, v.), 84, 85, 90, 121, 122, 123, 125, 136, 138, 142, 145.

Deliverables

- First Nations Student Continuity of Care Framework
- Continuity of Care Gathering & Gathering Report

Project Outcomes

- Continued partnership/relationship development between NAN Tribal Councils/communities/education organizations and provincial district school boards/schools;
- Increased continuity of care for students transitioning between off-reserve high schools and on-reserve communities; and
- Decreasing the number of students falling through the cracks and becoming disengaged from school.

Key Qualifications

- Required education includes a M.Ed., BSW, MSW, or RSW with specialized and or professional interest of focus on First Nations education.
- Minimum of 5 years' experience working with First Nations in developing specific approaches related to education or another related field.
- Experience in the field of asset-based community/program development and participatory action research.
- Ability to organize and synthesize multiple ideas and complex information into well-composed reports and presentations within time limits.
- Ability to develop and maintain collaborative relationships.
- Experience and demonstrated skills in coordinating/facilitating meetings with multiple stakeholders and comfortable with using technology.
- Demonstrated knowledge and experience working with community and regional resources and services throughout the NAN Territory.
- Work experience with Indigenous people and communities and a demonstrated understanding regarding related opportunities, issues, and challenges.
- Fluency in a NAN dialect (Cree, Ojibway, or Oji-Cree) is an asset.

Selection Process

All proposals are to be submitted by **December 31, 2021**. If your proposal is selected, you will be contacted by **January 16th, 2022**. This will be a contract-based proposal for 6 months.

The successful proposal will be based on the following:

- Overall scope and experience in the education or related field.
- Proven ability and experience in working collaboratively with First Nation communities and supporting community-led, asset-based approaches.
- Proven ability to generate user-friendly reports and materials that accurately capture the priorities and vision of the First Nation communities.
- Confirmation of capability of delivering the services described in the RFP, including personnel, IT equipment, and resources.
- Budgets are within a maximum amount of \$50,000.00. The lowest price will not necessarily be accepted.

Proposal Requirements

In your proposal, please include the following:

- Qualifications in developing strategic plans/frameworks in collaboration with First Nations.
- The methodology you would use to meet the deliverables.
- A detailed budget and projected timelines to complete specific tasks.
- Examples of related work you have led or been involved in.
- Three references who can speak to your work.

Proposals are to be sent electronically by closing time: **December 31, 2021 EST 5:00 p.m.** to Ian Beardy Human Resources at ibeardy@nan.ca

[Proposals that are not submitted on time will not be considered.](#)

Thank you for your interest. All applications will be reviewed; however, only successful applicants will be contacted.

Please note due to COVID-19 and potential delays the project may be extended.