



NATIVE GOVERNANCE CENTER

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING AND VISIONING

A. Purpose

The Native Governance Center is seeking a creative, visionary partner who understands that Indigenous strategic planning isn't just about spreadsheets and timelines—it's about storytelling, sovereignty, and cultural resonance. We are looking to identify a qualified consultant to guide and execute a strategic visioning and comprehensive planning process rooted in Indigenous methodologies for our organization.

B. About Native Governance Center

Native Governance Center is a Native American-led nonprofit organization dedicated to assisting Native nations in strengthening their governance systems and capacity to exercise sovereignty. The organization was established in 2015 in response to a need identified by Tribal leaders representing the 23 Native nations sharing geography with Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota. These leaders expressed the need for an organization that would meet the expanding demand for Tribal governance- and nation building-related resources and sustain this work into the long-term future. In 2025, we expanded our service region to include the 4 Native nations sharing geography with Nebraska.

When we say *nation building*, we mean the processes by which a Native nation enhances its own capacity for effective self-governance and self-determination. Native Governance Center helps Native nations improve their governance systems because decades of research by the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development (HPAIED) have shown that strong Tribal governance leads to more successful Tribal communities and economies. HPAIED researchers have pinpointed five “tenets” of nation building: sovereignty, capable governing institutions, cultural match, strategic orientation, and leadership. Along with our values: being a good relative, practicing humility, embracing fun unapologetically, honor sovereignty, and center Indigeneity; these tenets form a base upon which we build the curriculum for our various program offerings.

Native Governance Center is unique—we are one of the few organizations that delivers hands-on nation building training in our region. Our organization was built on the feedback of grassroots and elected Tribal leaders, who called for specialized governance support and leadership programs created by and for Native people. We take a similar approach to developing any new program offerings: we seek input from the Native communities we serve and also look to create programming based on the feedback we receive.

Programs

Native Governance Center works at the intersection of leadership development and Tribal governance support. We have four programs through which we carry out our mission.

Leadership Development

Native Nation Rebuilders: We provide leadership development opportunities for Native Americans (both emerging and established grassroots leaders) through the Native Nation Rebuilders Program. The Rebuilders Program is a two-year, cohort-based leadership program that empowers participants to develop the knowledge, skills, and connections they need to effectively lead nation building efforts in their own communities. Rebuilders access ideas and information, build their networks, and learn leadership skills. They then develop and implement action plans for nation building projects within their communities. Enrolled members of the 27 Native nations sharing territory with Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Nebraska are eligible to apply.

Tribal Governance Support

We provide support to Tribal governments through four main strategies: Customized Tribal Services, Indigenous Leaders in Governance, Tribal Civics and Candidate Forum Facilitations.

Customized Tribal Services: This program provides customized consulting and technical assistance services to Native nations in the areas of governance and capacity building.

Indigenous Leaders in Governance: This initiative provides Tribal leaders and staff with a deep dive into traditional Indigenous governance and Native nation rebuilding..

Tribal Civics: We work with Native communities to host large- and small-scale educational convenings, such as youth engagement and voter education. We support communities with creating and implementing their own Tribal civics experience that reflects their people's history, culture, language, and government.

Candidate Forum Facilitations: Through this service, NGC partners with Native nations to organize and facilitate candidate forums for Tribal elections.

Tribal Finance

Our Tribal Finance program is a two-year, cohort-based experience. We deliver the program in partnership with CliftonLarsonAllen LLP to help support Native nations in building their financial leadership and capacity. Participating nations benefit from assessments, training, resources, and mentorship.

Community Engagement

We provide educational opportunities to the broader public around topics that support our mission. We host educational events, engage in relevant public speaking opportunities and partnerships, and share knowledge through resources.

C. Project Overview

NGC is governed by a native-led Board of Directors (9 directors). The Board has three officers who serve as Chair, Secretary and Treasurer for the organization. The Board is transitioning from a founding/working board to one that will provide policy direction and work closely with the Executive Director to oversee implementation.

NGC currently employs 14 full-time staff members including three directors, five managers, four coordinators, two specialists and an executive administrator.

Our organization is looking for a consultant to help us create a strategic plan and assess our organizational values through a comprehensive and participatory process. The ideal consultant will utilize innovative methodologies—such as visual storytelling, interactive visioning, or community-based arts—to help us articulate a future that honors the nations we serve and empowers the next seven generations.

Scope of Work and Deliverables

We expect the project to include the following:

- Project management
- Design and execution of a strategic visioning and comprehensive planning process that includes all staff members
- Develop an actionable strategic plan
- Develop recommendations regarding the plan's implementation and support structure

It is expected that these tasks will be accomplished through a combination of activities, including:

- Background research by consultant on NGC history and current leadership team, including environmental scan of organization and opportunities ahead.
- Ensuring our organizational values still are in alignment with our mission and vision.
- Benchmarking our organizations with other similar sized non-profits or additional organizations with similar focus.
- Focus groups, interviews, surveys and/or any other method that will be useful in receiving partner and community input.
- Facilitated group meetings with the board and staff to create consensus regarding a strategic vision and plan
 - These meetings may be conducted in conjunction with our scheduled meetings in Q2 and Q3 of 2026 to coincide with the Board of Directors meeting. Date and location TBD.

Project Goals and Target Audience

While NGC seeks the consultant's recommendations regarding the best process to develop an actionable strategic plan, the organization envisions the scope of work being completed in stages.

Stage 1 – Discovery: Values, vision and key goals

This stage includes consensus building among NGC to:

- Confirm organizational values still are in alignment with mission and vision

- discover a shared strategic vision that
 - is clearly stated
 - is compelling
 - is timely
 - describes a clear and present need
 - motivates people to act
 - is a worthwhile challenge

Stage 2 – Research and Validation: Needs assessment and Evaluation Implementation

This stage should use the internal NGC evaluation results as well as the substantive documentation and solutions needed for validation of discovered vision and key goals and inform the strategic planning process.

Stage 3 – Identify strategic goals and write the strategic plan

After the discovery and research phases, stage 3 entails the identification of key strategic goals and the development of actionable strategic plan that will serve as the overall blueprint for our work. This plan should include:

- An executive summary
- A comprehensive, detailed plan that identifies:
 - Shared vision
 - Goals
 - Objectives
 - Strategies
 - Tactics
 - Responsible partners and their roles
 - Measures
 - Outcomes
- This plan should also include:
 - Resource development strategies
 - Review of communications strategies

Stage 4 – Development of implementation recommendations

This stage includes the development of recommendations regarding the implementation phase of NGC's work. Included within this phase should be a detailed budget to implement the plan and methods of measuring successful implementation.

Ownership and Confidentiality

All intellectual property will become the property of NGC. All data remains the sole property of NGC. The consultant shall further agree to keep information related to any and all contracts with NGC in strict confidence, including, but not limited to, the terms of the contract(s) and any confidential business information or proprietary information learned through its dealings with us.

D. Proposals

The proposal should include:

Basics

To best evaluate the ability of the consultant to meet our goals, please include the following in your proposals:

- Organization description, size and structure. Indicate whether the firm is a small or woman- or Native-owned business.
- Your approach to strategic planning

Consultants

Resumes and qualifications of staff to be assigned to the project should be provided. Vendor is not able to sub-contract out any of the work without the pre-approval of the sub-contractor by NGC.

Experience should include examples of conducting similar or related work (i.e, working with other collaborative or collective impact initiatives to create a strategic vision and strategic plan), as well as experience working with non-profits, Native community and regional development organizations.

To accomplish the scope requested, the consultant will need to possess the following qualifications:

- Experience at successfully developing consensus-based strategic plans
- Knowledgeable of collective impact or collaborative strategic initiatives
- Strong facilitation skills
- Experience at gathering and utilizing data to inform the strategic planning process
- Knowledge in budgeting
- Ability to constructively challenge key stakeholders
- Experience inspiring others to think innovatively
- Project management experience
- Experience utilizing and/or developing processes that center Indigenous values and practices

If a consultant group or partnership of consultants is proposed to conduct the RFP scope of work, the proposal must indicate which activities each consultant will conduct as well as information about their level of expertise, knowledge and experience to conduct those specific activities.

Work Plan

The proposal should contain a detailed description of the activities to be conducted by the consultant to complete the requested scope of work, including:

- The specific activities to be conducted at each stage
- A timeline for the activities at each stage
- Milestones and deliverables tied to those activities

- A detailed budget for each task, along with a proposed payment schedule tied to project milestones and/or deliverables

References

The proposal should include at least three references who can speak to their experience with the consultant in conducting projects of similar scope. Information regarding each reference should include the point of contact's name, address, telephone number and email address.

Previous Work Product

The proposal should include at least two examples of written work similar to the scope of work requested within this RFP (e.g., strategic plan)

Please email proposals to awanaabe@nativegov.org by March 15, 2026. We plan to communicate our selection by April 2, 2026.

If you have any questions or would like further clarification of any aspect of this request for proposal, please contact me. We look forward to receiving your proposal.

Sincerely,

Amber A. Annis

Amber Annis
Executive Director
Native Governance Center