

SAULT STE. MARIE TRIBE OF CHIPPEWA INDIANS
Transportation Department — Bureau of Indian Affairs Tribal Transportation Program
531 Ashmun Street | Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan 49783
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Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians

Request for Proposals For Branding and Graphic Design Services

Date of Release: Tuesday, December 10, 2024
Submittals Due: 2:00 p.m. EST., Friday, January 24, 2025

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Contents

PURPOSE 3

PROCESS..... 4

DELIVERABLES 4

QUALIFICATIONS 6

TERMS AND CONDITIONS 6

CONTENT, FORMAT, QUESTIONS, AND SUBMISSION..... 12

EVALUATION AND SELECTION 13

PURPOSE

The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians (Tribe) Transportation Department seeks proposals from qualified artists, graphic artists, designers, design consultants, or firms capable of creating high-quality, engaging branding and graphics for future wayfinding signage and placemaking solutions and developing detailed designs to enhance regional tribal identity. This RFP seeks an artist, designer, or design agency that will work closely with the Tribe to create visually engaging and culturally sensitive materials that authentically represent our mission and values.

The services will include branding and the creation of graphics that will be incorporated into future wayfinding signage for vehicular and pedestrian routes, gateways, trails, multi-use paths, recreational facilities, natural resources, and tribal facilities. The final project will establish cohesive design standards for wayfinding that reflect the Tribe's unique cultural, historical, and contemporary identity. This opportunity is open to all artists and firms; however, preference will be given to artists of Native American, Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian descent.

The Project will focus on the Tribal seven (7) county service area in the eastern region of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. This area includes Chippewa, Mackinac, Luce, Schoolcraft, Alger, Marquette, and Delta Counties and covers 19,061 square miles. The service area is mainly rural in character, with low population densities and remoteness and small town "islands" surrounded by rural land. Within each county, the Tribe has housing, community centers, health clinics, and various other programs and facilities located on trust land, collectively representing the project's complexity. The project is intended to create a consistent representative characteristic of the Tribe with future use in signage and wayfinding, with the design of a graphically unified family of directional, contextual, and identification signs across a range of signage mediums.

Proposers must recognize the importance of the tourism industry to the Tribe's economic vitality and the need to identify, preserve, and expand the tourism industry. Branding and art should enhance recreational resources, social and cultural events, services, and public improvements, which are of clear mutual interest to the members and visitors of the Tribe.

The project is intended to strengthen the Tribe's sense of identity and provide an attractive center for tourism and related purposes of the visitor industry. The process will also generate an overall branding that we expect to use on all new regional signage. The branding and graphic design will incorporate the Anishinaabe language and culture and create a "sense of place."

The final product will provide a brand and logo system for use in wayfinding signage and placemaking. The graphics will consist of a flexible and functional hierarchy and creative alternatives such as engraved hardscape and vertical elements, kiosks, moveable and variable signage, and other ways of imparting information and elevating the Tribes brand. The Transportation Department will oversee the successful Proposers' work and provide support as needed. The consultant will conduct site audits and coordinate Community Engagement for public meetings and surveys as outreach efforts.

This project is to achieve two levels of design complexity. Art within or on tribal lands and communities will have a higher level of design and complexity. In contrast, other locations, such as entry and directional signs on state and county highways, will have a more straightforward design that conforms to DOT, Michigan DOT, and the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) standards and coordinates with the more prominent overall design character of the communities. Designs must be scalable based on the mode of travel. The Tribe is looking for imaging and materials that will have longevity and hold up to the test of time.

PROCESS

The Tribe is interested in an efficient and timely branding and design process that will successfully provide a compelling brand identity with schematics, graphics, and all associated design data and process systems to procure a signage system by December 2025. The Transportation Department will have a Workgroup to guide the process and select a proposer.

DELIVERABLES

Deliverables shall be tangible work products to be provided to or delivered to the Tribe, such as reports, draft documents, data, interim findings, drawings, schematics, meeting presentations, meeting notes, preliminary and final drawings with graphic rendering, and the element recommended, including material, dimensions, fonts, graphics, and other relevant information.

The selected firm shall perform the following tasks as part of the three-part project:

PRE-DESIGN INFORMATION GATHERING

The selected proposer will become familiar with our tribal communities to identify, define and convey the Tribe's identity. Tasks will include four onsite meetings, including kick-off meetings, workgroup meetings, community workshops, site audits, and surveys, to gather input from leadership, staff, membership, residents, and businesses on the Tribe's identity, values, and aspirations.

BRANDING AND GRAPHIC DESIGN

1. Synthesize community feedback and insights to create
2. Create a distinct brand with a unified visual experience that reflects the Tribe's unique identity and resonates with target audiences. Branding and graphics should be recognizable and compelling regional brand identities that capture the essence of the Tribe and its people and resonate with membership, residents, businesses, and tourists. Branding and art should capitalize on existing local assets, catalyzing a persuasive vision to enhance the community's livability.
3. The art must reflect the Tribe's character and include specific neighborhood identity for each tribal land location.
4. Create visual brand elements, and develop a cohesive logo suite covering the primary, watermarks, favicons, font, typography, imagery, and color palettes that communicate the Tribe's brand identity across various communication channels and touchpoints.
5. Design a gateway sign to mark primary entry points into Tribal communities.

6. Identify and provide a system for standard aesthetic, materials selection, and elements, including final concepts/schematics.
7. Thoughtful and relevant inclusion and integration of the Anishinaabemowin language, tribal culture, and art within the design and processes. The final product will also include options highlighting natural resources, historical features, and ecological information from the standpoint of preservation and recreation, specifically environmental education, marine biology, and plant and tree identification.
8. The final product should ensure consistent brand implementation across marketing materials, signage, and digital platforms.
9. At least three concept graphic styles will be presented during the process.
10. The final branding and logos should portray a consistent image for the Tribe and communities and improve navigation for all modes of travel.
11. A complete brand identity guide with multi-digital formats for reproduction.

MANUFACTURE/PRODUCTION DRAWINGS

1. The project should provide appropriate detailed branding and logos to allow for the immediate bid of a Wayfinding Signage Project to move forward with manufacture, production, and installation no later than December 15, 2025.

ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS

1. Drafting a Project plan that includes a proposed schedule, meetings, and product review schedule. The ideal product will be a workflow chart describing and showing the timing of the project's milestones.
2. Monthly progress reports with updated project schedule, if necessary, containing a concise narrative of the work accomplished and percentage of work completed.
3. Present at least three schematic design concepts from which the final design concept will be chosen.

TRIBE RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Facilitate community and individual engagement, interviews, and site audits.
2. Provide maps, GIS information, and data as needed.
3. Coordinate, advertise, and facilitate events and provide guidance on how the events should be structured.
4. Provide materials for meetings, as needed.
5. Coordinate communications with staff and Workgroup

DELIVERABLES

1. The selected consultant will be responsible for producing the following products:
2. Logos and taglines that can be used across various Tribal branding and marketing materials.
3. Universal graphic design guidelines and color palette.
4. Draft products: one electronic copy of each product must be submitted in Adobe Acrobat PDF format is created using 300 dpi scanning resolution and Microsoft Word if applicable.
5. Final products: if applicable, one electronic copy must be submitted in PDF format,
6. created using 300 dpi scanning resolution and Microsoft Word. In addition, one paper copy of each final product (including reports, designs, maps, drawings, and

plans) must be submitted.

7. Electronic data for all designs, drawings, and plans must be submitted in the original software they created (such as CAD format or other similar products acceptable to Transportation) and in JPG format.
8. Photographs and images must be submitted in JPG format with a minimum resolution of 300 dpi and must be dated and captioned with the location and a brief description of the activity being documented and include any associated metadata (including the photo's GPS location where available)

QUALIFICATIONS

Interested artists should possess the following qualifications and areas of expertise:

1. Experience with art, branding, design, and the creation of art with various communities involving tribal or municipal branding and community engagement initiatives for similar communities like the Sault Tribe.
2. Demonstrated expertise in branding, graphic design, and placemaking principles.
3. Strong project management skills and the ability to coordinate multiple stakeholders and deliver projects on time and within budget.
4. Creative storytelling, visual communication, and brand identity development capabilities.
5. Commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion principles in the branding and signage design process.
6. Experience with collaborative art and design processes with public and tribal membership.
7. Experience working and communicating remotely if the firm is not local to the Upper Peninsula area.
8. A diverse portfolio showcasing design work that resonates with communities of color.
9. Proficiency in industry-standard design software and tools.
10. Ability to collaborate effectively with our team.
11. Creative and innovative design sensibilities.
12. Strong attention to detail and knowledge of current design trends and best practices.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

CONFIDENTIALITY

To avoid disclosure of contents that may contain confidential or proprietary information to competing firms, officials shall open responses to this RFP in private. A summary of the results will be made available to the public.

TRIBE'S RIGHTS

The Tribe's rights in connection with this RFP include the right to issue addenda to the RFP, including extending or revising the timeline for submittals, withdraw, reissue, or modify the RFP and request clarification and/or additional information from any Provider at any point in the procurement process. Rejecting any or all proposals, waiving minor infirmities in any proposals, as determined to be in the best interest of the Tribe In addition, the Tribes rights include the following.

INDEPENDENT PROVIDER

Provider expressly understands that it and any person employed by it or working on its behalf is an independent Provider for purposes of this Agreement. All persons employed by Provider in the performance of any work or services required or provided in this agreement shall not be considered employees of Tribe for any purposes whatsoever, including, but not limited to, workers' compensation coverage, unemployment insurance benefits, social security coverage, or retirement membership or credit. No such claim shall be the obligation or responsibility of the Tribe.

LIABILITY AND INDEMNIFICATION

In consideration of the fact that the Tribe does not hire, train, or supervise the Provider's employees performing the services required by this Agreement, the Provider shall be solely responsible for any and all acts performed by its employees in the implementation of this Agreement. Additionally, without regard for the coverage provided by the Tribe's general liability and motor vehicle insurance, the Provider shall indemnify, hold harmless, and defend the Tribe, its officers, agents, and employees from any and all claims, damages, or liability of any kind arising out of any acts, errors, or omissions of Provider or its agents or employees in furnishing services or performing work pursuant to this Agreement.

FUNDING

All Tribe expenditures are subject to appropriation of funds. Therefore, the Tribe reserves the right to discontinue the RFP process if funding is unavailable.

RIGHT TO AWARD AGREEMENT

The Tribe reserves the right to award an Agreement or not to award an Agreement based on the responses received to this RFP.

ACCEPTANCE OF PROPOSALS

This RFP should not be construed as an Agreement to purchase goods or services. The Tribe is not bound to accept the lowest price or any proposal of those submitted.

LIABILITY FOR ERRORS

While the Tribe has made considerable efforts to ensure the accuracy of the information in this RFP, prospective Providers are urged to conduct their own investigations into the material facts. The Tribe shall not be held liable or accountable for any error or omission in any portion of this RFP.

ACCEPTANCE OF TERMS

All the terms and conditions of this RFP are deemed to be accepted by the Provider and incorporated in its proposal, except those conditions and provisions that are expressly excluded. Rejection of terms and conditions will be taken into account by the Tribe in deciding whether and to whom to award an Agreement.

CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION, OWNERS REPRESENTATIVE, RECORDS

The Transportation Planner shall oversee the Agreement awarded to the successful Provider. In addition, the successful Firm will be expected to name a counterpart designee.

24.CFR 200.318 (i-k) requires that subrecipient and/or beneficiary of funds and sub grantees maintain records sufficient to detail significant history of procurement. These records must include, but are not limited to:

- Rationale for the method of procurement
- Selection of contract type
- Contractor selection or rejection
- The basis for the contract price

Subrecipients and/or beneficiaries of funds must also maintain a contract administration system to monitor the contractor's performance against the terms, conditions, and specifications of their contracts or purchase order. The records should:

- Allow an auditor or other interested party to track the nature of the goods or services bought with public funds.
- Track the entire process used to purchase those goods and services.
- Show that the public body obtained high-quality goods and services at the lowest possible price through an open, competitive process.

COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS

The selected Firm shall give all notices and obtain all the licenses and permits required to perform the work. Provider shall comply with all the laws applicable to the work and the performance of the Agreement.

GOVERNING LAW

This RFP and any Agreement entered into between the Provider and the Tribe shall be governed by and in accordance with the laws of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians and the United States of America, and any disputes following the completion of a protest as set forth herein shall be heard and resolved in the Courts of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians.

AGREEMENT TERM

The Agreement between the Tribe and the successful Provider will have an initial term of 12 months.

PROVIDER ASSURANCES

Provider warrants that it has carefully reviewed the needs of the Tribe as described in the RFP and its attachments and otherwise communicated in writing by the Tribe to the Provider that it has familiarized itself with the Tribe's specifications and warrants that it can provide such services as described in the RFP and as represented in its Proposal.

NONDISCRIMINATION; EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Provider expressly agrees that neither it nor any person on its behalf shall, in any manner, discriminate against or intimidate any employee hired for work under this Agreement based on race, creed, color, sex, age, physical disability, or national origin. The successful Provider is required to submit an Equal Employment Opportunity Plan to the Tribe.

VALIDITY

Provider's proposal shall be valid for a period of 120 days from the opening date. Provider shall explicitly acknowledge in the Executive Summary of the submission that Provider understands the Proposal is valid for that period of time.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Tax Exemption

The successful consultant must contact the Tribal Transportation Program to request a prepared Tax Exemption certification for materials purchased for work performed under this RFP.

INDEMNIFICATION

The selected consultant shall indemnify, defend, and hold harmless Sault Tribe, its officers, agents, employees, and all officers, agents, and employees thereof: From any and all claims by persons, firms, or corporations for labor, materials, supplies, or services provided in connection with any contract awarded, which the consultant shall perform under the terms of this contract; and from any and all claims for injuries to, or death of, any and all persons, for loss of or damage to property, environmental damage, degradation response and cleanup cost, and attorney fees or other related cost arising out of, under, or by reasons of this Agreement, including the design of the project, except claims resulting from the sole negligence or willful acts or omissions of said indemnity, its agents or employees.

NATIVE PREFERENCE POLICY

As per the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians Purchasing Policy, effective September 30, 2008, all proposals received for this RFP will be subject to the Native Preference Policy. To qualify for native preference, a contractor must be classified as an "Indian Economic Enterprise", a business entity which is at least 51 percent owned by one or more members of a federally recognized Indian tribe and has one or more of the tribe members involved in the daily business management of the economic enterprise; and a majority of the earnings from said Economic Enterprise benefits said member or members. The contractor claiming to be an Indian Economic Enterprise must have satisfied the eligibility/certification requirements. Certification of eligibility for native preference could include Bureau of Indian Affairs Certification and Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, Michigan Minority Business Development Council, Small Business Administration, and Certification of membership from another Native American Tribe or Michigan Commission on Indian Affairs Certification.

Certification shall be submitted with the proposal response. A prospective contractor seeking to qualify for preference shall provide evidence showing the extent of Indian ownership and

interest. Evidence of structure, management, and financing affecting the Indian character of the enterprise, including major subcontractors and purchase agreements, materials or equipment supply arrangements, and management salary or profit-sharing arrangements, and evidence showing the effect of these on the extent of Indian ownership and interest shall be provided.

INDIAN ECONOMIC ENTERPRISE

The consultant must submit a letter as evidence of Indian ownership and control certifying that the enterprise will continue to meet the requirements necessary to sustain Indian ownership and control throughout the period of service.

FEDERAL ACQUISITION REGULATIONS

This RFP may be subject to Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR), and if applicable, the Contractor/Consultant shall be subject to and shall abide by any and all applicable FAR clauses.

INSURANCE

The consultant and all subcontractors shall meet the insurance requirements of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians must submit certificates of liability and workman's compensation insurance before a notice of award will be issued. The firm shall not commence work until the firm has obtained the insurance. All coverage shall be with insurance companies licensed and admitted to do business in the State of Michigan. All coverage shall be with insurance carriers acceptable to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the City of Sault Ste. Marie and the Tribe.

Minimum Scope of Insurance: Coverage shall be at least as broad as:

- General Liability Insurance must include coverage for contractual liability assumed by the contractor.
- Workers' Compensation and Employer's Liability Insurance is required.
- Certificates and policies must be submitted and reviewed by the Sault Tribe Insurance Department.

Minimum Limits of Insurance: Contractor shall maintain limits no less than:

- General Liability: \$1,000,000.00 per occurrence for bodily injury, personal injury and property damage.
- Automobile Liability: Must meet the State of Michigan minimum requirements.
- Worker's Compensation statutory limits and Employer's Liability: \$1,000,000.00 per accident for bodily injury or disease.

Deductibles and Self-Insured Retentions:

- Any deductibles or self-insured retentions must be declared to and approved by the Tribe.

Other Insurance Provisions:

The general liability and automobile liability policies are to contain, or be endorsed to contain, the following provisions:

- The Sault Tribe, 523 Ashmun, Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783, its agents, officers, officials, employees, and volunteers are to be named as additional insured with respect to liability arising out of automobiles owned, leased, hired, or borrowed by or on behalf of the contractor and with respect to liability arising out of work or operations performed by or on

behalf of the contractor including materials, parts or equipment furnished in connection with such work or operations. General liability coverage can be provided in the form of an endorsement to the contractor's insurance or as a separate owner's policy.

- For any claims related to this project, the contractor's insurance coverage shall be primary insurance with respect to the Tribe, its agents, officers, officials, employees, and volunteers. Any insurance or self-insurance maintained by the Tribe, its agents, officers, officials, employees, or volunteers shall be in excess of the contractor's insurance and shall not contribute to it.
- Each insurance policy required by this clause shall be endorsed to state that coverage shall not be canceled or reduced by either party or modified in any way, except after thirty (30) days prior written notice by certified mail, return receipt requested, has been given to the Tribe.

Waiver of Subrogation:

The Workers' Compensation and General Liability policies are to be endorsed with a waiver of subrogation. The insurance company, in its endorsement, agrees to waive all rights of subrogation against the Tribe, its agents, officers, officials, employees and volunteers for losses paid under the terms of the policy which arises from the work performed by the named insured for the Tribe.

Acceptability of Insurers: Insurance is to be placed with insurers with a current A.M. Best's rating of no less than A:VII.

Verification of Coverage: The firm shall furnish the Tribe with original certificates and amendatory endorsements effecting coverage required by this clause. All certificates and endorsements are to be received and approved by the Tribe before work commences. The Tribe reserves the right to require complete, certified copies of all required insurance policies, including endorsements affecting the coverage required by these specifications at any time.

Cancellation Notice: Workers' Compensation Insurance, Commercial General Liability Insurance and Motor Vehicle Liability Insurance, as described above, shall include an endorsement stating the following: "It is understood and agreed that Thirty (30) days Advance Written Notice of Cancellation, Non-Renewal, Reduction and/or Material Change shall be sent to the Tribe to:

Wendy Hoffman, Transportation Planner, Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians
523 Ashmun Street, Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan 49783

Proof of Insurance Coverage:

The Firm shall provide the Tribe, at the time the contracts are returned for execution, certificates and policies as listed below:

- Two (2) copies of Certificate of Insurance for Workers' Compensation Insurance;
- Two (2) copies of Certificate of Insurance for Commercial General Liability Insurance;
- Two (2) copies of Certificate of Insurance for Vehicle Liability Insurance;
- Two (2) copies of Certificate of Insurance for Builders Risk Insurance;
- If so requested by the Tribe, Certified Copies of all policies mentioned above will be furnished.

If any of the above coverages expire during the term of this contract, the Consultant shall deliver renewal certificates and/or policies to the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians at least ten (10) days prior to the expiration date. The Firm shall not cancel or reduce the coverage of any insurance without providing prior written notice to the Tribe. The Firm shall cease operations immediately on the occurrence of any such reduction or cancellation, and shall not resume operations until new insurance, approved by the Tribe, is in force.

CONTENT, FORMAT, QUESTIONS, AND SUBMISSION

CONTENT:

Proposers must submit the following information in response to this RFP:

1. Company profile, including relevant experience and qualifications in graphics, branding, signage design, and community engagement.
2. Portfolio of past projects, with examples of branding campaigns, wayfinding signage installations, and community engagement initiatives.
3. Proposed approach and methodology for the "Tribal" branding and wayfinding signage project, including strategies for community engagement, brand development, and signage design.
4. Estimated project timeline, cost proposal, and proposed fee structure.
5. One (1) signed digital Proposal. The Proposal must be signed by an official authorized to bind responding organizations to its provisions. Proposals must include a statement about the period during which the proposal remains valid. For this RFP, this period must not be less than 60 days from the close of the solicitation period.

FORMAT

The format should be organized in the sections listed below. As shown on page 1, one (1) digital copy shall be submitted via email by the Proposals Due deadline.

Section A – Introduction

Section B - Qualifications and Experience

Section D – Approach

Section E - Timeline / Schedule

Section F - References and Work Samples (any additional information relevant to the firm's qualifications for this project, including prior designs and pictures after installation, may be included).

Section G - Price / Cost Estimate for services

QUESTIONS

Questions regarding this RFP must be emailed to Mary Lehre, Tribal Purchasing Department, at MLehre@saulttribe.net. Responses will be sent electronically to all proposers. The deadline for questions is Monday, January 13, 2025.

SUBMISSION

Proposers must email one digital copy of the Proposal to MLehre@saulttribe.net. The title of the proposal email must be Sealed Proposal—BRANDING AND WAYFINDING. Proposal packages submitted by facsimile will not be considered. Proposals must be submitted electronically to the Sault Tribe Purchasing Department by January 24, 2025. Late submissions will not be considered.

EVALUATION AND SELECTION

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The Transportation Department and Workgroup will evaluate the Proposals. The following categories will be considered when selecting a qualified proposer. If two or more proposers are deemed equally skilled, the Transportation staff and Workgroup will host interviews with them to make their final decision. Interviews would be requested virtually. Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria: Qualifications, experience, creativity, innovation, feasibility, and alignment with the Tribe's goals and objectives for community engagement, placemaking, and economic development, along with cost-effectiveness and value for money.

Professional qualifications - Industry experience 25%	25%
Understanding the work quality of the proposal	25%
Proposed Approach and timeline for completing the work	20%
Pricing for products and services	15%
Past work and references	10%
Experience with MDOT and highway standards	. 5%
TOTAL	100%

SELECTION PROCESS:

The Tribe reserves the right to select the proposal that best meets the Tribe’s needs and objectives. Shortlisted firms may be invited to participate in interviews or presentations as part of the selection process.

EXHIBIT A CURRENT TRIBAL LOGOS



EXHIBIT B - REGIONAL MAPS



TRIBAL SERVICE AREA— COMMUNITY LOCATIONS