



Request For Proposal (RFP)

Legal Counsel Services to amend existing Akwesasne Laws

Issue date: September 23, 2025

Closing Date and Time:

Proposals must be received at the Akwesasne Justice Department prior to:

October 7, 2025, at 4:00 p.m.

Akwesasne Justice Department (AJD)

45 Johnson Road

Akwesasne, QC H0M 1A0

Or

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For more information contact:

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1. INTRODUCTION

Akwesasne Justice Department Mission Statement

The Akwesasne Justice Department is committed to providing a comprehensive justice system for the people of Akwesasne. Guided by the principles of natural justice, the department empowers the community to safeguard collective rights—primarily—and individual rights for Akwesasronon, while honoring the community’s heritage and culture.

Justice and order are foundational to effective governance. Every society must resolve internal disputes, reconcile conflicts, maintain peaceful relationships, and regulate behavior to ensure community well-being.

First Nation governance systems are not merely oppositional to Western models. Rather than emphasizing adversarial processes and punitive outcomes, they often serve as centers of healing, harmony, and restorative justice. While some Indigenous systems may include punitive elements, the focus is largely on restoring peace and balance, upholding individual and collective responsibilities, and nurturing interpersonal and inter-familial relationships.

The Akwesasne Justice Department applies natural justice principles to uphold both collective and individual rights, always with respect for Akwesasne’s cultural traditions. The Mohawk Council of Akwesasne has developed a First Nation Justice System rooted in customary law and traditional restorative practices. This system encompasses the three core functions of governance: Law-Making, Adjudication, and Enforcement.

The Legislative Services division of the department is responsible for developing community laws and regulations. As the needs of the community evolve, there is an increasing demand to amend existing laws to ensure they remain relevant and responsive.

2. OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to engage qualified legal counsel to provide expert legal services in the review, analysis, and amendment of existing laws within the Akwesasne jurisdiction. The selected counsel will work in close collaboration with the Akwesasne Justice Department to ensure that all legal revisions are consistent with applicable legal frameworks and responsive to the evolving needs, values, and priorities of the Akwesasne community.

3. SCOPE OF WORK

The selected legal counsel will be responsible for the following tasks:

1. Review of Existing Laws

- Conduct a comprehensive review of current Akwesasne laws to identify areas requiring amendment.
- Assess the impact of existing laws on the Akwesasne community and recommend necessary changes.

2. Drafting Amendments

- Collaborate with the Working Task Group (WTG) to propose and prepare legal amendments that reflect the needs and priorities of the Akwesasne community.
- Ensure all amendments are developed in accordance with the Akwesasne Legislative Enactment Regulation Procedure (ALEPR).

3. Community Engagement

- Facilitate community consultations to gather input and feedback on proposed legal changes.
- Incorporate community perspectives into the drafting process to ensure culturally relevant and community-driven outcomes.

4. Finalization and Implementation

- Assist in finalizing legal amendments and support the legislative process for their formal adoption.
- Provide ongoing legal support during the implementation phase, as needed.

4. TERM AND COMPENSATION

The term of this engagement is scheduled to conclude on **March 31, 2026**, with the possibility of extension based on project completion timelines.

Total compensation for the contracted legal services is **\$35,000**, to be disbursed in **monthly payments** over the duration of the contract. Payments will be issued upon receipt of a monthly invoice and confirmation of satisfactory progress on agreed-upon deliverables.

5. SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Interested legal counsel must submit a **Letter of Interest** addressed to the Akwesasne Justice Department.

All prospective applicants are required to disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest. This includes any past, present, or anticipated involvement in litigation or legal matters that may relate to the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne. Full transparency regarding any potential legal challenges or conflicts is essential to uphold the integrity of the selection process.

5. MANDATORY SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for consideration, the Proponent must submit their proposal in **Microsoft Word** or **PDF** format. The proposal must include the following components:

- **Brief Cover Letter**
A concise letter expressing interest in the project.
- **Proponent Profile**
Full legal name, mailing address, telephone number, and email contact information.
Include a description of the organization (if applicable) and evidence of a proven track record in providing legal services.
- **Relevant Experience & Proposed Approach**
A statement outlining relevant legal experience, particularly in legislative development.
Include a description of the proposed approach to the work and a history of expertise.
- **Experience with First Nations**
A description of prior work experience with First Nation communities, including examples of culturally informed legal work.
- **Project Management & Timelines**
Provisions for meeting project timelines and managing urgent or unexpected deadlines.
- **Professional Status**
Proof of professional status as a licensed lawyer authorized to practice law in:
 - **Ontario** (Law Society of Ontario), and
 - **Quebec** (Le Barreau du Québec).

6. CONTRACT AGREEMENT

Once the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne Justice Department (AJD) selection committee identifies a successful proponent for legal services, the committee will finalize a Legal Counsel Services Agreement. If an agreement cannot be reached with the selected consultant, the committee reserves the right to:

- Offer the contract to another qualified bidder, or
- Revise and reissue the RFP for further clarification and retendering.

The selected consultant will receive a Legal Counsel Services Agreement outlining the final contract amount for services. The successful consultant will be required to submit monthly invoices to the AJD Director. These invoices must include all costs associated with general management, non-technical support services, and overhead. No additional or undisclosed costs will be accepted.

In addition to providing Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) information, all invoices must include:

1. A unique invoice number;
2. Consultant's name, address, and telephone number;
3. A summary of services rendered during the billing period, including a breakdown of completed activities.

7. DISCLAIMER

All information distributed in connection with this RFP is **confidential** and intended solely for the purpose of preparing submissions. No information may be used for any other purpose without prior written consent from the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne (MCA). All materials remain the property of the MCA and may be used at its discretion. Proponents who choose not to submit a proposal must dispose of all confidential materials responsibly.

Proponents will not be compensated or reimbursed for any costs incurred in the preparation of their proposals.

Rights Reserved by the MCA

The Mohawk Council of Akwesasne Justice Department reserves the right to:

- Accept or reject any or all proposals if deemed in the best interest of the MCA;
- Assume no obligation or liability for costs incurred by proponents prior to the issuance of a Legal Services Agreement;
- Negotiate a lower or alternative fee structure, or adjust deliverables in line with the contract price;
- Waive any irregularities or anomalies in proposals;
- Negotiate with any or all potential consultants;
- Modify or cancel the RFP at any time.

Proposal Withdrawal and Validity

Proponents may withdraw their proposal at any time prior to the closing deadline by submitting a written withdrawal notice to the designated contact persons.

All proposals are **irrevocable for a period of sixty (60) business days** from the closing date.

Ownership of Proposals

All proposals, including attachments and documentation submitted to the MCA in response to this RFP, become the property of the MCA.

Local Preference

Preference will be given to **local proponents** where quality, service, and price are equivalent.

Confidentiality

The proponent agrees that neither it nor its employees shall disclose, publish, or otherwise reveal—directly or indirectly—any confidential information provided by the MCA. All information furnished by the MCA remains its sole property and must be held in strict confidence by the proponent.