

STATE OF WASHINGTON TOURISM

Request for Proposals Indigenous Tourism Support Program

Program: Indigenous Tourism Support

Position: Facilitator, Indigenous Tourism Support Program

Budget: \$90,000

Term: 12 months (1 program cycle)

Status: Contract

Reports to: Director of Tourism Development and Strategic Partnership

Company Location: Virtual office

Introduction

State of Washington Tourism (SWT) seeks consulting services to design and facilitate a tourism development program tailored for Indigenous communities. Modeled after a similar SWT initiative, the Indigenous Tourism Support (ITS) program focuses on a long-term, community-driven, and culturally respectful approach to tourism planning and policy. This program is intended for Indigenous communities seeking to develop or manage tourism assets outside of Indian gaming, including but not limited to festivals and events, cultural heritage, outdoor recreation, and agritourism.

The ITS program does not serve as a comprehensive strategic plan for tourism, nor will it solve problems associated with funding or governance. Instead, the program is designed to enhance and expand tourism offerings in Indigenous communities. It promotes organization and collaboration among local stakeholders through small projects and targeted issues in line with a 10-year vision for tourism that incorporates regenerative tourism strategies to improve ecosystems, elevate local economies, and promote meaningful and responsible visitor experiences.

The ITS facilitator will work with SWT and a committee of local stakeholders to tailor the ITS program for their specific destination, addressing the unique community, business, and environmental needs. This will occur in a phased approach and may include asset mapping, stakeholder surveys, visioning exercises, community workshops, leadership training and coaching, and updates on the latest travel trends, research, and data. All work will be conducted with the consent and respect of Indigenous communities, acknowledging that this may require additional time and communication to build trust and mutual understanding.

After completing the first two phases of the ITS program, which usually takes six to eight months, tourism stakeholders are encouraged to apply for financial assistance from SWT and other funding sources to support a series of tourism development projects. The ITS facilitator will coach tourism stakeholders in preparation for this process and help them prepare grant documents, project teams, and workflow.

The ITS program is funded by the Economic Development Administration, which requires SWT and the ITS Facilitator to adhere to federal procurement standards, reporting requirements, and guidance from the Washington State Department of

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Commerce. This includes ensuring a transparent competitive bidding process for consulting services. To be eligible to compete for this federally funded contract, interested parties must obtain a Unique Entity ID (UEI) number and register with the federal government's System for Award Management (SAM).

Tribal Participation in Destination Development

In late 2021, SWT selected the Tri-County Economic Development District as the regional convener in a pilot program for destination development in northeast Washington. Since then, the success of the Rural Tourism Support (RTS) program spurred SWT to consider the creation of a new program dedicated to Indigenous tourism. Each cycle of the RTS program included the participation of local Tribes in addition to land managers, city officials, businesses, and nonprofit organizations. After the initial phases of each RTS program, tourism stakeholders received a summary report of the progress made and work left to do. Summaries reports for each RTS program are below along with some important highlights.

- A 10-year vision for the regional destination
- A working group of key stakeholders committed to the 10-year vision
- A list of community-shared values
- A statement of intent outlining strategic focus areas for destination development/management
- Priority projects vetted by the working group and ready to implement as part of the 10-vision

[Summary Report of the RTS Program in Northeast Washington](#)

[Summary Report of the RTS Program in North Central Washington](#)

[Summary Report of the RTS Program in the Walla Walla Valley](#)

Objectives for the ITS Program

This program should establish a vision for tourism among Indigenous communities, engage local stakeholders, gather research and data, foster partnerships, outline strategies and actions for destination development/management, and deliver outcomes in a timely manner. Through this process, SWT will look to achieve the following for tourism stakeholders in Indigenous communities.

- Provide an overview of the current state of tourism, including community and visitor sentiment as well as travel trends in relation to social, economic, and environmental conditions
- Define a purpose and scope of work for future phases of destination development and management

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- Develop actions for Indigenous tourism that foster collaboration and innovation among a wide range of stakeholders

Phases

Phase I: Research and Data. This phase includes virtual meetings with local stakeholders, overcoming logistical hurdles, information sharing/gathering, site visits, and the production of outreach materials.

Phase II: Community Engagement. This phase includes one visioning/scenario planning workshop, three strategy workshops, and one action-planning workshop. Meetings with key stakeholders and SWT staff members will continue in Phase II.

Phase III: Priority Projects. The ITS facilitator will support the launch of up to three action teams to implement tourism development projects. They will continue to liaise with key stakeholders and provide leadership training and coaching. Under their instruction, a working group of key stakeholders will form to address ongoing destination development/management needs.

Phase IV: Reporting. In this phase of the program, the facilitator will produce a thorough report on ITD activities in the destination. This report should include workshop notes and summaries, a vision narrative, strategic focus areas and priority projects, as well as information on the tourism working group for the destination.

Term and Budget of Project

The contract awarded under this request for proposals is for an amount not to exceed \$90,000 during one cycle of the ITS program between 2024-2025, commencing in October and ending in September, to include **all program costs for the prime contractor and subcontractors** (e.g., travel, lodging, meals, materials, research and data, as well as other consulting services). Contractors must have UEI numbers and must be billed on a reimbursement basis after services are rendered. If applicable, some eligible expenses can only be covered at [OFM reimbursement rates](#). The terms of the contract must be finalized by October 15, 2024, and will expire on September 30, 2025. The ITS facilitator or SWT may terminate this agreement at any time; provided, however, that all compensation earned or costs incurred before such termination shall be payable to contractors.

Proposed Schedule

Based on previous cycles of the RTS program, SWT estimates six to eight months for the initial phases of the ITS program to be completed among Indigenous communities. The exact duration will depend on several factors such as the availability of key stakeholders and consultants, holiday periods, weather conditions, data collection and analysis, etc.

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Assuming a January start date for the first meeting with key stakeholders, much of the ITS program will be completed by Q2 2025.

Required Qualifications

A consultant submitting a proposal represents that their firm is fully qualified, staffed, and equipped to properly perform the work outlined in this document. The consultant must possess a strong understanding of the tourism sector and destination development/management principles and procedures, including superior research, writing, and data skills. Consultants with expertise in Indigenous tourism and experience working with Indigenous communities are encouraged to submit a proposal for this program. Preference will be given to Native American-owned businesses. Consultants must also demonstrate the ability to engage with groups of diverse stakeholders across multiple formats. Some overnight travel is required.

Selection Process

All material submitted regarding this bid request becomes the property of SWT and will not be returned to the consultants. Disqualification does not eliminate this ownership right. SWT reserves the right to reject or accept any or all proposals or waive any formalities, informalities, or information therein.

The proposal should cover 12 months. It should specify how each component of the RTS program will be approached and completed, in addition to the following information.

- The title of the proposal should contain the consultant's name, address, telephone number, primary contact, and email address
- Description and history of the consultant/company
- Brief of relevant experience of the consultant/company
- Links to or copies of relevant material showcasing the quality of work and testimonials of the consultant/company
- Consulting team: names, titles, and career briefs of each team member, including their roles and responsibilities for the proposed project
- Understanding of the ITS program and its objectives
- Outline of project approach, strategy, methodology, etc.
- Detailed project timeline
- Financials should include a detailed "line item" breakdown of costs for the proposed project

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- Identify possible adjustments to the ITS program that would improve efficiency and effectiveness
- Propose work that could be completed by SWT so that federal dollars are focused on technical expertise
- Any other information deemed appropriate for this project

SWT will contract with the ITS facilitator based on the merits of their proposal. Criteria for these merits include but are not limited to:

- Demonstrated work experience on similar projects in rural destinations
- Qualifications of personnel
- Understanding of the ITS program and its objectives
- The process, manner, and methods of providing the services outlined in this document
- Fees and costs of the proposal

Method of Submittal

All proposals and their components must be submitted electronically to matthew@stateofwatourism.com by October 1, 2024. Once submitted, all proposals become the property of SWT and be made available for public record requests.

Background

State of Washington Tourism (SWT) is a 501[c]6 organization established by industry stakeholders with the mission of sustaining Washington State destination tourism marketing. SWT began as an industry advocacy organization following the 2011 closure of the Washington State Tourism Office by the state legislature. Years of subsequent work to re-establish an industry-led statewide tourism marketing program culminated in 2018 when Governor Jay Inslee signed enabling legislation with a private-public sector matching fund program.

SWT was contracted as the state destination marketing and management organization later that year. SWT procures and administers funds for state destination tourism marketing activities and creates and implements a strategic statewide destination marketing plan.

State of Washington Tourism supports social justice, human rights, cultural preservation, and public safety for all. As such, all travelers should feel welcome and safe, and host communities and travel and tourism suppliers should be respected by their guests. At its best, travel offers inherent social and cultural exchange that fosters understanding and acceptance. SWT seeks to advance these values throughout its marketing, communications, and travel advisory programs.