



The Children's Aid Society
OF HAMILTON
La Société d'aide à l'enfance
DE HAMILTON

The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton

Request for Proposal

RFP #2020-01

Indigenous Consultant

Issue Date:	February 5, 2020
Closing Date and Time:	February 26 at 4:00 pm
Contact:	Kristin Roe, Manager of Equity, Inclusion and Community Development

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton (the "Society") was established in 1894 as a not-for-profit charitable organization focusing on the well-being and protection of children. The Society is mandated under the *Child Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA)* of Ontario and, as such, is required by law to protect children from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and harm. The Society receives most of its operating revenue (approximately 92%) from the province of Ontario through the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS). Other revenue is derived from federal government programs, property rental and fundraising activities.

The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton operates with the direction of a volunteer Board of Directors. The Society has approximately 270 employees (professional social workers, support and administrative staff), 410 children in care, and 157 foster, kin care and group care homes.

The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton continues to be on a journey of growth and awareness as we learn more about the legacy of oppression, marginalization and cultural genocide in the province of Ontario towards Indigenous people, particularly within the child welfare sector.

Our sector has agreed upon the nine key sector commitments listed below:

- Reducing the number of Indigenous children in care
- Reducing the number of legal files involving Indigenous children and families
- Increasing the use of formal customary care agreements
- Ensuring Indigenous representation and involvement at the local Boards of Directors
- Implementing mandatory, regular Indigenous training for staff
- Imbedding Jordan's Principle in service practice and the interagency protocol
- Consulting with Indigenous communities to develop a unique agency-based plan to better address the needs of the children and families from those communities
- Continuing to develop relationships between the local agency and the local Indigenous communities
- Assisting those individuals wanting to see their historical files by accessing and providing the information they request

Over the past year, the Society hired a part-time Indigenous Consultant to guide us in the necessary work to better understand and evaluate the current relationship and quality of services for the Indigenous community in Hamilton. As part of this process,

the consultant completed an Environmental Scan (see [Appendix A](#)). The recommendations from the Environmental Scan (the “Scan”) have informed the Society of the areas of service delivery that require attention and the Scan highlighted areas where some progress has been made, as well as areas where change is needed.

2. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The Society will enter into a new agreement with a consultant to work towards the requirements of the attached recommendations as outlined in the Scan.

The Society wishes to enter into a contract with a consultant for the period March 2020 to March 2021. Progress on the recommendations will be assessed at the end of this period, and the consultant contract may be renewed for an additional period ending March 31, 2022. It is the expectation that the consultant will generally work 34 hours per week for the Society during this period.

The Society will provide office space for a consultant.

Requirements for the consultant:

- Provide their own laptop, cell phone and transportation. If the consultant does not have access to a laptop, the Society will provide one to be used for work related to The Children’s Aid Society of Hamilton for the duration of this contract.
- The consultant may be working in the community and should be willing to meet with both Society staff and community members.
- The consultant will be expected to keep their own notes except in the case where there is a worker present.
- The consultant shall be responsible for their own insurance.
- Any material created on the behalf of the Society shall remain the intellectual property of the Society with credit given to the author.
- The consultant will provide monthly invoices.

The consultant’s services will support and be an advocate for Indigenous children, youth and families involved with The Children’s Aid Society of Hamilton. The priority of this position is to guide the Society as we repair the relationship with the Indigenous community. The consultant will work with the Society in improving organizational policies, procedures and practices using Indigenous knowledge, customary laws, traditions and belief systems. The consultant will collaborate with The Children’s Aid Society of Hamilton to ensure the safety and well-being of children and youth, while supporting the strengths of families and their communities.

Specific objectives for this contract period:

The consultant will:

1. Develop a workplan that outlines the key objectives and activities based on recommendations from the Environmental Scan.
2. Consult with the Indigenous community on implementation of the recommendations.
3. Advise the new Indigenous specialization team on their guiding principles, learning needs and ways to build trust with the Indigenous community.
4. Support the organization in their work with Indigenous families (consistent with the recommendations from the Scan).
5. Review all Indigenous children in care files with an Indigenous worldview to make recommendations to the Service team on permanency.
6. Participate on the Indigenous Child Welfare Collaborative, and consult with the Coalition of Hamilton Indigenous Leaders as necessary

3. CONSULTANT REQUIREMENTS

The Society is seeking an individual who is connected to Indigenous culture and community through having Indigenous identity. The Consultant is required to:

- Have a solid understanding of, and sensitivity to, the experiences of Indigenous peoples in Canada and the impact of the legacy of Residential Schools and the “Sixties Scoop” upon them through an Indigenous worldview;
- Understand the child welfare system and its legacy with Indigenous people;
- Have knowledge of the local community Indigenous organizations and resources available;
- Demonstrate skills and experience in working with Indigenous people and communities in the Hamilton area;
- Have knowledge of the child welfare mandate and Duty to Report legislation;
- Demonstrate experience working with children, youth, and/or families;
- Have effective communication skills and ability to relate to individuals, families and community organizations;
- Demonstrate ability to utilize mediation and facilitation skills;
- Complete Vulnerable Sector Screening and Children’s Aid Societies Record Checks, deemed satisfactory in the exclusive opinion of the Society; and

4. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

The proposal should highlight the following key areas:

Experience

The proposal should outline the experience and qualifications of the consultant, specifically detailing how they satisfy the consultant requirements noted in Section 3. In addition, the proposal should provide information in response to the following questions:

- How long have you been providing services to Indigenous children, youth and families and in what capacity?
- Have you previously provided consultant services for non-Indigenous agencies? If so, provide an example.
- Provide an example of a time you have engaged with a child welfare agency in the context of providing service. Describe what went well as well as any challenges encountered in working together.
- Please share any relevant work experience from previous employment
- Share what you anticipate would be the biggest challenge in this role

Outline of Plan

The proposal should outline a plan for implementing the key objectives outlined in Section 2.

Schedule and Fee

Include the proposed plan for a typical weekly schedule (up to 34 hours/week) that would allow the consultant to achieve the objectives of this contract.

Include the daily or hourly rate for the work to be provided by the consultant. This rate should be before all taxes.

5. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:

The submission is to be submitted to the individual noted below on or before the closing date of **February 26, 2020**.

Submissions shall not be accepted after the closing date. Proponents may not make modifications to their submissions after the closing date and time. Submissions can be sent via email. For submissions sent via email, an email confirmation will be returned to the sender.

Address submissions to:

Kristin Roe, Manager of Equity, Inclusion and Community Development

26 Arrowsmith Road, Hamilton ON L8E 4H8

Email – kroe@hamiltoncas.com

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6. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

To ensure fairness to all proponents, all questions that require detailed clarification or that may materially alter this submission shall be submitted in writing (email form is acceptable) by February 14, 2020.

The Society reserves the right to not respond to any questions after this date.

Should any error, ambiguity, divergence, omission, oversight, contradiction, or item subject to interpretation be identified in this submission, the proponent shall, as it is discovered, notify the primary contact (in writing) requesting instruction, decision, direction or clarification of same. The primary contact will determine the extent of resolution required.

Questions and requests for clarification can be directed to:

Kristin Roe at kroe@hamiltoncas.com

Any revision to this RFP will be issued as an addendum to all proponents.

7. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The proponent hereby declares by submitting a bid that they do not and will not have any conflict of interest, actual or potential, by providing a submission.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The proponent acknowledges that they have carefully reviewed this RFP, including all other related relevant documents, and understands the scope of work proposed; further, they confirm that their submission is based entirely on the terms, specifications, requirements and conditions as set out in the RFP document.

9. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Each response to this RFP will be evaluated by an internal evaluation committee. Proposals will be evaluated based on all information provided by the proponent at the time of submission as well as any additional clarification information requested. The evaluation will consider experience of the consultant and the service plan outlined in the proposal. The evaluation will also consider the fee set by the consultant for this work.

Each proposal will be reviewed to determine if the proposal is responsive to the submission requirements outlined in the RFP.

The evaluation committee is comprised of individuals from the Society and an Indigenous organization in Hamilton.

The Society retains the right to schedule finalist interviews. All proponents may not be selected for an interview. If short listed for an interview, the proponent will be required to make a presentation to the evaluation committee related to the credentials and capability of the consultant, as well as an outline of the proponent's service plan. The format of the interview will be a 30-minute presentation by the consultant with a 15-minute period for the evaluation committee to ask questions.

The assessment criteria weighting outlined below will be used in the evaluation process. The highest scoring proponent will be awarded the contract. In the event of a tie, proponents may be asked to return for a second interview. In evaluating any of the categories, the score to be ascribed to the category or weighting to be ascribed to the category shall be determined by the Society in its sole discretion given that these are often subjective matters, that there is no requirement on the part of the Society to use any formulas or mathematical approach and that the Society's opinion and assessment of each proposal is to be determined by the Society in its sole and absolute discretion.

Issuance of this RFP does not obligate the Society to accept one or any of the proposals received. Following the evaluation, the Society reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals.

The evaluation criteria are outlined as follows:

Relevant experience and references of the consultant	35%
Existing partnerships and collaborations within the Hamilton Indigenous Community	20%
Service plan approach and details	30%
Hourly rate	15%
TOTAL	100%

All unsuccessful proponents will be notified by the Society in writing of the outcome of the procurement process.

A proponent who did not receive an award letter may request a debriefing after receipt of a notification of award. All requests must be in writing to Kristin Roe, Manager of Equity, Inclusion and Community Development, and must be made within 60 days of notification of the award. The intent of the debriefing information session is to aid the proponent in presenting a better proposal in subsequent procurement opportunities. Any debriefing provided is not for providing an opportunity to challenge the procurement process. An unsuccessful proponent may dispute the process as not being open and fair, by lodging a written complaint with the Director of Finance within 72 hours of being notified of the results. The complaint must contain specifics of the violation of open and fair practices. The complaint will be reviewed with the Executive Director.

10. TIMELINE

The RFP timeline is as follows:

RFP Release to Proponents:	February 5, 2020
Final Date for Inquiries:	February 14, 2020
Inquiries Answered By:	February 19, 2020
Closing Date and Time of Proposal:	February 26, 2020 at 4pm
Interview Notification:	February 28, 2020
Interviews:	March 4-6, 2020
Proponent Selected and Notified:	March 9, 2020
Contract Start Date:	March 2020

Although every attempt will be made to meet all dates, the Society reserves the right to modify or alter any or all dates at its sole discretion. All proponents will be notified via email, to the address provided by the proponent, of any dates subjected to change. The successful proponent will work with the agency on a suitable start date (preferably within month of March, 2020).

11. SERVICE AGREEMENT

The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton will enter into a Service Agreement with the successful proponent for the period March 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021, and an option in favour of the Society to extend the agreement on the same terms and conditions for an additional annual period.

APPENDIX A

Summary of Environmental Scan regarding Service to Indigenous Children, Youth & Families

Scan conducted by Tammy Hill, Indigenous Consultant

Over the past year, Tammy Hill, an Indigenous Consultant, conducted an Environmental Scan at the agency to better understand and evaluate the current relationship and quality of services for the Indigenous community in Hamilton.

Summary

The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton has demonstrated strength in its ability to be open and transparent within this process and committing to facilitate change within the agency to improve outcomes for Indigenous children and families. The first step in change is being open to the possibility of change. It is imperative to have an accurate understanding of the areas of service delivery that require attention and the environmental scan highlighted areas where some progress has been made, as well as areas where change is needed.

Process

The opportunity was provided for all service employees of the agency to contribute to this scan through a series of focus groups, organized by function. Community partners, as available within the time frame, were also included.

The consultant facilitated conversations with respect to service delivery for Indigenous children and families including what was working and identifying challenges. Overall, there was an awareness that Indigenous children, youth and families require a different approach of service delivery in order to facilitate better outcomes. In addition, there have been efforts to build relationships with local Indigenous service providers to support the work the Agency is doing. There have also been efforts to increase staff knowledge of the shared history with Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous ways of knowing and being, as well as information regarding community programs and services.

Areas of focus identified:

- Accountability
- Building relationships
- Communication

Accountability

There is currently a lack of structure and tools within the Agency to support service to Indigenous children and families. Awareness and understanding of historical and contemporary issues plaguing Indigenous Peoples across Canada is important to ensure

consistent services for all children and families.

There is a need to create a process for the agency to be accountable to the Indigenous community. This mechanism would ensure transparency, provide opportunity for Indigenous input into some areas of service delivery and facilitate conversation around child welfare services within an Indigenous context. An existing structure that could provide this accountability includes the *Indigenous Child Welfare Collaborative and Coalition of Hamilton Indigenous Leaders*, however, using these groups for this purpose and the role they could play requires more discussion to determine if there is a willingness to take on this responsibility and if so, develop a process.

The lack of an accountability mechanism influences the relationship between the Indigenous community and The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton. It eliminates the ability to access each other as avenues of support for children and families. It also limits the ability of frontline workers to work in a cohesive way that is necessary for Indigenous children and families to feel completely wrapped around in services that will support their healing journey.

Building relationships

One of the initial recommendations to foster and enhance relationships, includes development of a specialized team. In the past this has not been an area of focus. Given the historical relationship between Indigenous people and the child welfare sector, there is an opportunity to build, foster and sustain a positive relationship with the Indigenous community at all levels—foster parents, staff, leaders and Board.

Communication

An emphasis on internal and external communication strategies will help the agency to fill in gaps of understanding and awareness. These are foundational to ensure the agency is using sector specific tools available to support Indigenous children and families. One of the suggestions for internal communication includes development of a shared, accessible space where information, resources and contacts are readily available when needed. In addition, communication strategies for external communication with community partners and service users should identify a case resolution process and identify point(s) of contact.

There are opportunities for the successful composition of a better model for providing child welfare services to Indigenous children and families. The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton has committed to putting forth a concentrated effort to put a plan in place and take action to mitigate through the identified areas, thus making strides towards providing more effective services for Indigenous children and families.