

Indigenous Child & Family Services Directors

Our Children Our Way Society



Request for Proposals

Financial Auditing Services

Deadline for Submissions: April 26, 2024



1. Purpose of RFP

The Indigenous Child & Family Services Directors Our Children Our Way Society (OCOW), a registered not for profit society, is seeking proposals from qualified independent auditors to conduct a comprehensive audit of the Society's financial records and operations for the 2023/24 fiscal year. Reappointment for subsequent fiscal years is a possibility. These audits are to be performed in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and the financial statements are to be prepared in accordance with Canadian Generally Accepted Accounting Principles applicable to not-for-profit organizations.



2. Contextual Information

OCOW is a unique provincial organization that represents the 24 Indigenous Child & Family Service Agencies (ICFSAs), delegated by the Provincial Director of Child Welfare to provide child & family services, throughout British Columbia. Membership with the Society is also expanding to include BC Nations who do not receive services through an ICFA and are looking to re-assert jurisdiction over child and family well-being in their communities. The work of the Society is conducted through a Secretariat team.

OCOW aims to address child and family well-being issues that have a province-wide impact. Our mission is to support Indigenous Nations' vision for jurisdiction and self-government pertaining to the well-being of their children and youth. We aim to speak with a collective and expert voice on child welfare matters, with a focus on systemic changes to policy, practice, legislation, and funding to ensure the best interests of Indigenous children are being met. In a nutshell: our children, our way. We envision communities that are well equipped to provide high quality and culturally appropriate care for all their children.

The purpose of the ICFS Society is to:

- Support member agencies and organizations to share information and best practices;
- Advocate for appropriate, culturally based practices, standards and policies, and the resources to implement them; and

- Promote awareness of the successes, challenges, and recommended strategies to support Indigenous communities and organizations to achieve their vision for children and families.

The Our Children Our Way Society employs seven (7) full-time employees and one (1) part-time employee. The work of OCOW is also supported by several contractors, consultants and advisors.

Employees, contractors, consultants and advisors conducting work on behalf of the OCOW Society do so remotely. Most of the Society's records are maintained electronically.

3. Scope of Work

The successful bidder will be responsible for the following deliverables:

- Examine the Society's financial statements, including income, expenses, assets and liabilities.
- Assess the Society's internal financial controls and accounting practices.
- Evaluate the Society's compliance with relevant laws, regulations and funding agreements.
- Provide recommendations for improvements to the Society's financial management and oversight.
- Prepare a final audit report, which includes:
 - An opinion on the accuracy and completeness of the Society's financial statements.
 - An assessment on the effectiveness of the Society's internal controls.
 - Findings on the Society's compliance with applicable requirements.
 - Recommendations for enhancing the Society's financial management and accountability.
 - Letters to Management and the Society's Board of Directors.
- Review the auditor's report and letters to management and the Board of Directors prior to finalizing the audit report.
- Complete the scope of all work within the timelines noted below and/or communicate any expected or unforeseen delays in advance to the Society.
- Meet with the Society and/or the Society's Board of Directors as requested; and
- Provide regular updates to the Society.



4. Qualifications

Respondents to this RFP must meet the following qualifications:

- Certified as a Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA) in good standing.
- Minimum 5 years of experience conducting financial audits, preferably for non-profit or Indigenous organizations.
- Knowledge of Indigenous governance structures, funding arrangements, and financial reporting requirements.
- Strong communication and collaboration skills to work effectively with the Society's leadership and staff.



5. Timelines

Stage	Date
Company fiscal year end	March 31, 2024
Audit plan presentation to Audit Committee	June 1, 2024
Completion of year end audit work	July/August 2024
Audit Committee meeting to review financial statements	September 24, 2024
Board meeting to review and approve financial statements	October 22, 2024
Annual General Meeting	December 4, 2024



6. Submission Requirements

Respondents to this RFP must submit one proposal. Proposals specifically marked “RFP for External Audit Services” shall be received by the following:

Attention: Roberta Van Steinburg, Finance Manager

Email: Roberta.VanSteinburg@ourchildrenourway.ca

Proposals will be accepted until **4:00 pm on April 26, 2024**. Late proposals will not be accepted. Respondents must provide their proposal electronically in PDF file format on or before the specified submission deadline. All proposal amounts shall be indicated in words and figures and shall include applicable taxes and any other associated costs the successful respondent will require.

6.1 Complete Proposals

The requirements that each proponent must follow and include in its proposal submission are outlined herein. The OCOW Society reserves the right to determine, in its sole and unfettered discretion, whether any proposal meets the mandatory requirements.

6.2 Negotiation

The OCOW Society reserves the right to negotiate with any or all respondents including those that have submitted a proposal that does not fully comply, either in material or non-material ways, with the RFP requirements.

6.3 Request for Information

Each respondent is solely responsible for ensuring that it has all information necessary to prepare its proposal and for independently verifying and informing itself with respect to any terms or conditions that may affect this proposal. All inquiries related to the RFP shall be directed to: **Roberta Van Steinburg, Finance Manager, through email at Roberta.VanSteinburg@ourchildrenourway.ca**.

6.4 Acceptance of Proposals

The OCOW Society reserves the right to reject any or all Proposals or to accept the Proposal deemed most favourable to the OCOW Society. All proposals must include a statement of authorization to submit a proposal signed by a principal of the respondent.

Following the evaluation of the submitted proposals, the OCOW Society will consider entering negotiations for a contract with a respondent it believes best meets the needs and expectations and offers the best overall content and value. The solicitation of proposals does not in any way commit the OCOW Society to accept any proposal or to commence negotiations with any Vendor.



7. Proposal Requirements

7.1 No Conflict of Interest

The successful respondent must not have a real or apparent conflict of interest regarding its ability to provide service to the OCOW Society. The respondent must disclose to the OCOW Society the names of any parties which it believes are, or may be, a real or apparent conflict.

7.2 Executive Summary

The respondent shall provide an executive summary with its proposal in addition to the minimum requirements/expectations as outlined. The executive summary shall briefly summarize the key aspects of the proposal and the primary contact person for the prospective respondent.

7.3 RFP Submissions

Interested respondents should submit a proposal that includes the following:

- Covering letter introducing the independent auditor, auditing firm and team, and outlines relevant experience and qualifications including the respondent's experience working with Indigenous non-profit societies.
- A description of the respondent's capacities related to audit services, clearly outlining if any services will be outsourced.
- Names and qualifications of those who would be involved in the auditing process, their proposed role, and their experience and qualifications to fulfil that role.
- A detailed workplan and timeline for completing the audit and indication of the proponent's ability to meet the timelines as set out herein.
- A detailed budget, including hourly rates and estimated number of hours.
- Two (2) client references (names, phone numbers and email addresses) who may be contacted to confirm the satisfactory delivery of service by key team member(s) on previous assignments.



8. Request for Proposal Process

8.1 General Information

The submission of a proposal does not constitute a legally binding agreement between the OCOW Society and any respondent. It is part of an overall selection process intended to enable the OCOW Society to identify a potential successful respondent for the provision of services described herein. The goal of this RFP process is to identify those respondents who offer the best delivery of service and value and demonstrate the highest degree of capability for providing and implementing the functions and objectives of the project.

A contract will be entered into between the successful respondent and the OCOW Society. The OCOW Society is not bound to negotiate with the lowest cost or any respondent and may, in its sole discretion, discontinue the RFP process and/or cancel the initiatives as outlined prior to the execution of the contract.

8.2 Proposed Schedule & Submittal Information

Milestone	Scheduled Date
Release of Request for Proposal (RFP)	April 8, 2024
Deadline for submitting questions	April 19, 2024
Proposals due	April 26, 2024
Selection of firm	May 10, 2024
Completion – Appointment of Audit Firm	May 21, 2024 BOD Meeting

The OCOW Society reserves the right to modify the schedule as circumstances may warrant.

Other Information

8.3 Confidentiality of Information

The OCOW Society will require the successful respondent to enter into a confidentiality agreement with the OCOW Society that protects all information provided to the respondent by the OCOW Society or by any party contacted by the respondent to complete this project.

8.4 Reporting and Questions

The successful respondent(s) will report to **Roberta Van Steinburg, Finance Manager**, and the OCOW Society Audit Committee Chair. Questions about proposal preparation should be forwarded by email to: Roberta.VanSteinburg@ourchildrenourway.ca.



9. Duration of Offer

Proposals will be accepted up until **April 26th at 4:00 pm**. Late proposals will not be considered. The OCOW Society reserves the right to extend the RFP deadline.

For clarity, the time and date of an electronic submission is solely determined by the time and date the proposal is received by the OCOW Society and without consideration as to the time or date it was sent or otherwise submitted by the respondent. A proposal received after the submission deadline, as documented by the applicable time and date stamp, will be deleted from the applicable server or otherwise not downloaded to the OCOW Society. It is the sole responsibility of the respondent to ensure that the proposal is received by the OCOW Society on or before the submission deadline.



10. Evaluation Criteria

10.1 Submission Evaluation

The evaluation process to determine the successful respondent will involve both qualitative and quantitative elements. As a general framework, all proposals presented by respondents will be evaluated in the context of the overall value that it brings to the initiative. While cost is a significant part of the evaluation criteria, it will not be the sole determinant.

10.2 Selection Rights

The OCOW Society reaffirms its right to make any selection it deems prudent, and responding firms or individual participants acknowledge through their participation that such selection is not subject to protest or contest.

The OCOW Society reserves the right to:

- not award a contract as a result of this RFP;
- modify the tasks based on negotiation with respondents; and/or
- award a contract to the same respondent for subsequent years.



11. Clarifications/Interpretations

Each prospective respondent shall be responsible for conducting its own due diligence on the data and information upon which their proposal is based. Prospective respondents shall be deemed to have gathered all information necessary to perform their obligations under the RFP.

Information referenced in this RFP, or otherwise made available by the OCOW Society as part of this RFP, is provided for the convenience of the prospective respondent only and the OCOW Society does not warrant the accuracy or completeness of this information. Prospective respondents that find discrepancies or omissions in the information provided, or who have questions as to the meaning or intent of various aspects of the project, shall at once notify **Roberta Van Steinburg, Finance Manager**, who will, if necessary, send written instructions, clarifications, or explanations to all prospective respondents who have submitted an expression of interest to this RFP.



12. Project Billings and Budget

Based on the scope of work contained within the submitted proposal, the successful respondents will be expected to submit a detailed breakdown of all fees relative to the specific project components as well as related expenses for 2024. A tally of all costs will be provided as a total lump sum fee for 2024 and for each of the subsequent years, if reappointed.

Respondents may propose to invoice on an interim or final cost basis. Regardless of the method used, invoices must clearly identify the costs associated.