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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

1. GENERAL

Objective / Purpose

Keepers of the Circle is seeking proposals from qualified web design and development firms (“Vendors”) to build a custom Indigenous-focused job board website from scratch. This job board will serve as a centralized, culturally safe digital space that connects Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ job seekers with inclusive employers across Canada. It will reflect Keepers of the Circle’s mission, values, and commitment to supporting equity in the workforce.

The overall goals are the following:

- Fully custom-built (no pre-built job board platforms)
- User-friendly, mobile-responsive, and accessible
- Culturally safe in design, visuals, user flow, and language
- Easy for KOTC staff to update, maintain, and manage
- Designed to support future growth and potential monetization options

Key Dates

- RFP Release: January 30, 2026
- RFP Review: End February beginning of March 2026
- Vendor Selection: End of March 2026
- Project Start: April 2026
- Collaborative Design Period: May to July 2026
- Target Launch: (To be confirmed with vendor, approx. Summer 2026)

Diversity and Inclusion

As an Indigenous women-led organization, Keepers of the Circle prioritizes procurement practices that support equity. Preference will be given to:

1. Indigenous women-led businesses
2. Indigenous-led businesses
3. Women-led businesses
4. Northern Ontario-based businesses

Vendors must demonstrate cultural understanding and the ability to create a digital space rooted in respect, safety, and relationship-building with Indigenous communities.

2. BACKGROUND

Keepers of the Circle is an Indigenous hub operated by the Temiskaming Native Women's Support Group. We provide culturally grounded programming, economic development support, social services, and skills development across Northeastern Ontario.

The Indigenous Women in Skilled Trades (IWST) team works to increase representation of Indigenous women in skilled trades, support apprenticeship pathways, and help employers create culturally safe workplaces.

Purpose of the Job Board

The job board will:

- Help Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ job seekers find culturally safe, vetted employers
- Give employers an opportunity to showcase their commitment to inclusion, reconciliation, and training
- Allow KOTC to maintain oversight of the postings (no employer accounts to start)
- Provide a central digital tool that supports workforce development and community empowerment
- Strengthening KOTC's partnerships with industry and expand outreach efforts

3. SERVICE/WORK REQUIREMENTS

Format of Technical Submittal

To facilitate the evaluation of proposals, vendors should prepare their technical response in the sequence specified below:

- A. Cover Page
- B. Table of Contents
- C. Section 1: Letter of Intent/Executive Summary
- D. Section 2: Response to Technical Requirements
- E. Section 3: Vendor Attachments
- F. Attachment A – Vendor Offer Signature and Certification Form
- G. Attachment B – Vendor Profile
- H. Attachment C – Description of Services
- I. Attachment D – General Training Guidelines
- J. Attachment E – Vendor References and Examples

Format of Cost Submittal

The cost submittal must include:

- A breakdown of all costs involved, including all hardware, software, installation and training costs
- A description and cost of any reoccurring fees such as annual maintenance and support costs

The total budget cannot exceed \$75,000.

Scope of Work

The selected vendor will design and build a fully custom website that includes the following components:

1. Core Job Board Features

- a. Search and filtering by:
 - Sector/category
 - Location
 - Experience level
- b. Job posts must be linked to external employer websites or job application pages
- c. Clean, easy-to-navigate interface
- d. Fully mobile-friendly

2. User Experience Requirements

Job Seekers

- a. No account creation required
- b. Clear, supportive, culturally safe design
- c. Ability to view:
 - Job postings
 - Employers' profiles
 - Videos, resources, etc.

Employers

- a. No accounts required (Phase 1)
- b. Employers submit jobs to KOTC staff for review
- c. Employer profiles must show:
 - Cultural competency training completed
 - Organizational commitments to inclusion
 - Any Indigenous workforce initiatives

Keepers of the Circle Staff

- a. Full administrative control
- b. Approve/decline job postings
- c. Add/edit employer profiles
- d. Analytics dashboard:
 - Page views
 - Job post views
 - Click-through rates
 - General engagement metrics

3. Differentiators

The job board must support future expansion to include:

- a. A sector-identification quiz for job seekers (Phase 2 option)
- b. Pre-recorded videos:
 - IWST team describing the importance of cultural competency training
 - Highlights of KOTC's employer vetting process
- c. Employer exclusivity built into UX (e.g., badges, tags, or indicators for vetted employers)

- d. Ability to book engagement sessions with IWST team (linking to Calendly or similar)

4. Design Requirements

- a. Custom branded to Keepers of the Circle
- b. Culturally safe visual identity (nature-based, Indigenous-centered symbolism; no appropriation)
- c. Warm, welcoming, relational tone
- d. Simple language and supportive

5. Technical Requirements

- a. Fully custom build
- b. Secure hosting recommendations
- c. CMS functionality for KOTC staff
- d. Ability to scale for future monetization
- e. Basic SEO setup
- f. Integration with:
 - Calendly (or similar)
 - KOTC website (linked navigation)

6. Upkeep & Maintenance Requirements

Vendor must provide:

- a. At least 6 months of post-launch support
- b. Documentation on how to:
 - Add/edit job posts
 - Update employer profiles
 - Upload videos
 - Review analytics
- c. Training for KOTC staff
- d. Clear warranty terms
- e. Annual support/maintenance package options

7. Format of Cost Submittal

Vendor must provide:

- a. Full breakdown of project costs
 - Design
 - Development
 - Testing
 - Training
 - Support
- b. Cost of hosting (if the vendor provides or recommends hosting)
- c. Annual maintenance package costs
- d. Any optional add-ons (sector quiz, advanced analytics, etc.)

Total project budget will be discussed during evaluation; vendors must submit a transparent breakdown.

4. SUBMISSION DETAILS

Please submit your proposal and any needed documents by email to s.gauvreau@keepersofthecircle.com with the subject title “*RFP Submission – Digital Job Board*” before **5:00pm EST February 20, 2026**. If your files exceed the limit for attachment, please include a link to a Google Drive folder or Dropbox with any instructions for access.

If you have any questions about the RFP process or submission or would like a copy of the package/template, please email r.yik@keepersofthecircle.com.

ATTACHMENT A – VENDOR SIGNATURE & CERTIFICATION FORM

Vendor Name: _____
(Please type or print name of Vendor)

Street Address: _____

City: _____ **Province/Territory:** _____ **Postal Code:** _____

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

I certify that I am a duly authorized representative of the Vendor listed above. Keepers of the Circle is hereby authorized to request from any individual or Vendor any information it deems necessary to verify any information provided by in this Proposal and to determine the capabilities and responsibility of Vendor as a prospective contractor with Keepers of the Circle.

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

ATTACHMENT B – VENDOR PROFILE

1. Vendor Legal Name:
2. Address of the office handling the project:
3. Business Number:
4. Type of Organization:

Individual For-Profit Organization Government Non-Profit Organization

Indigenous Organization/Community

5. Is the vendor currently for sale or involved in any transaction to expand or to become acquired by another business entity? If yes, please explain the impact both in organizational and directional terms.

Yes No

6. Are there any past or pending litigation or claims filed against the Vendor? If yes, please provide details of each including any effect they may have on their performance.

Yes No

7. Is the Vendor currently in default on any loan agreement or financing agreement with any bank, financial institute, or other entity? If yes, specify date(s), details, circumstances, and prospects for resolution

Yes No

8. Are there any circumstances impacting the Vendor that could affect their ability to perform under any award made through RFP process? If yes, please explain both the circumstances and impact.

Yes No

9. Does any current relationship whether a relative, business associate, capital funding agreement or any other kinship, exist between the Vendor and any Keepers of the Circle employee? If yes, please explain relationship.

Yes No

10. Please provide a brief overview of the Vendor's history and relevant experience.

11. What additional value can the Vendor provide over its competition?

ATTACHMENT C – DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES

1. Provide a statement of the project approach, any unique benefits, and other considerations
2. Provide an estimate of the earliest start date following execution of a contract
3. Submit a work plan with key dates and milestones. Responses should include:
 - a. Identification of tasks to be performed by Vendor
 - b. Identification of tasks to be performed by Keepers of the Circle
 - c. Timeframes to complete performance of the identified tasks or expected timeframe in which the project would be completed
 - d. Implementation strategy including transition plan if necessary
4. Provide summary resumes for proposed project team members of assigned staff, including their specific experiences with similar projects, qualifications and special expertise, and number of years with your company.

ATTACHMENT D – GENERAL TRAINING GUIDELINES

The Vendor shall provide Administrative/Technical Support, Supervisor and End User training. Training is defined as the hours specifically set aside for the sole purpose of training and not time spent providing instructions to staff prior to final inspection and acceptance.

The training should provide users with an understanding of how to best integrate and configure the system, assist them with development of skills necessary to take full advantage of the system's functions and features, and provide them with a working knowledge of the system as it relate to their daily job functions and the procedures of the department.

The agenda of training should include, but not be limited to, installation and upgrades, configuration, administration and maintenance of the system, system failure, backup and recovery procedures, data and program backup procedures, understanding the elements of each application and how it relates to the total system, integration between systems, basic and advanced used of each application of the software, etc.

Vendor should include in the cost proposal all training that will be offered as part of the total bid inclusive of all travel and per diem expenses and/or fees. Vendor should include on-site instructors, instructional materials, guides, training aids or workbooks, sample techniques, etc. If a “train the trainer” concept is proposed, please also provide cost options for complete on-site training, if available.

Vendors should keep the following parameters in mind when proposing a training regimen:

- Hands-on training is the preferred method
- Training should include a documentation of processes, including examples
- Any “train the trainer” sessions should include multiple staff
- Specify a variety of cost, content, etc. of training sessions to allow flexibility in selecting training options

ATTACHMENT E – VENDOR REFERENCES

REFERENCE (1):

Customer Name:

Address:

City:

Province/Territory:

Postal Code:

Description of Project:

Contact Name:

Telephone:

Email:

No. of Years Installed:

REFERENCE (2):

Customer Name:

Address:

City:

Province/Territory:

Postal Code:

Description of Project:

Contact Name:

Telephone:

Email:

No. of Years Installed: