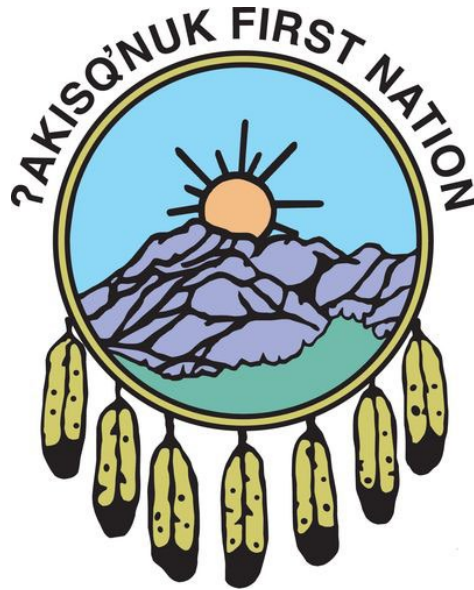


ʔAKISQ'NUK

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

*Public Relations and Government Relations Consulting
Services*

May 28, 2025



ʔakisqnuq First Nation, 3050 Highway 93/95, Windemere, BC V0B 2L2
250-342-6301
www.akisqnuq.org

Request for Proposals

Scope of Service	Public Relations and Government Relations Consulting Services
RFP Issued By	Lauren Nordquist, Procurement Coordinator
Issue Date	May 28, 2025
Closing Date & Time	June 25, 2025 at 4:30pm MST

AFN Contact Information & Questions	All enquiries related to this RFP including any requests for information, questions, and clarification, are to be directed to: lauren.nordquist@akisqnuq.org ʔakisqnuq First Nation. Response will be if time permits. Information obtained from any other source is not official and should not be relied upon. All questions related to this Request for Proposal (RFP) or any clarification with respect to this RFP must be made no later than 3 Business Days prior to the closing date of this RFP in order that staff may have sufficient time to respond. The Council reserves the right to extend the deadline for questions, if required, regarding this RFP.
Delivery of Proposals	Submissions will be accepted in the following formats: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. PDF Format2. Emailed to lauren.nordquist@akisqnuq.org
Short Listed Proponents	For those proponents which have not been contacted by end of business day on July 14, 2025, will serve as notice that their proposal submission was unsuccessful. Short listed applicates maybe asked to do a presentation to Chief and Council and Senior Leadership.
Successful Proponents Notified	Expected Proposal Acceptance Date: July 16, 2025
Proponent's Submissions	Only an individual with sufficient signatory authorization may sign on behalf of the proponent in the Proponent Section below, leaving the rest of this page otherwise unaltered and include the originally signed and completed page with the first copy of the proposal. Late submission will not be accepted.

Research shows that women and other underrepresented groups tend to apply only if they meet 100% of the criteria. We are committed to leveling the play field, and we encourage all, especially women, people of colour, Indigenous people, and those in the LGBTQIA2S+ community, to submit a proposal even if they do not necessarily check every box outlined in the RFP. ʔakisqnuq First Nation believes that our organization is made stronger through diverse perspectives and experiences.



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Proponent Section

To be completed by proponent and include as the “cover page” of the proponent’s response.

The enclosed proposal is submitted in response to the above-referenced RFP including any addenda. Through submission of this proposal, we agree to all of the terms and conditions of the RFP and agree that any inconsistencies in our proposal will not be considered. We have carefully read and examined the RFP and have conducted such other investigations as were prudent as reasonable in preparing the proposal. We agree to be bound by the statements and representations made in our proposal.

Signature of Authorized Representative:

Legal Name of Proponent:

Printed Name of Authorized Representative:

Address of Proponent:

Title:

City:

Province:

Postal Code:

Date:

Phone:

Authorized Representative Email Address:

Fax:



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Summary of the Requirement

The Akisqnuq First Nation (AFN) invites proposals from qualified individuals or firms for the provision of ongoing, as needed Public Relations (PR) and Government Relations (GR) consulting services. We are looking for a consultant with experience in strategic communications, public/media engagement, government relations, and storytelling to support Akisqnuq First Nation activities in land settlements, economic development, public events, community milestones, future-oriented initiatives, and long-term planning.

We are seeking a trusted partner who can be available on a flexible, ongoing basis, stepping in as needed to provide communications support aligned with Akisqnuq First Nation evolving priorities. The ideal proponent will be responsive, collaborative, and capable of supporting both planned initiatives and urgent or time-sensitive communication needs over the long term.

SCOPE:

Akisqnuq First Nation Public Relations and Government Relations Consulting Services

Description of the Scope of Work

The successful proponent will provide on going comprehensive Public Relations (PR) and Government Relations (GR) consulting services to support Akisqnuq First Nation's strategic initiatives, public image, and communications priorities. This work will include ongoing priorities such as the development and implementation of a culturally sensitive communications strategy, media relations support, preparation of press releases and key messaging, event publicity coordination, and public engagement planning. The consultant will also provide continued support around land settlements, economic ventures, public events, major announcements, and new strategic initiatives. The role requires working closely with leadership, administration, and community members to ensure all messaging reflects the values, vision, and protocols of Akisqnuq First Nation while fostering strong relationships with government, media, and public audiences.

Definitions

Bidder/Proponent – any individual, company or corporation that has submitted a bid to Akisqnuq First Nation

Successful Bidder/Proponent – the successful bidder, as decided by the Akisqnuq First Nation, from the bidders to perform all or part of the quotation

Contractor or Consultant – interchangeable with successful bidder

Akisqnuq First Nation – First Nation recognized by the Government of Canada and assigned the number 0604.

Public Relations (PR) - the strategic management of communication between an organization and its community, media, and the public to build positive relationships and promote key initiatives.

Government Relations (GR) -the process of building and maintaining relationships with government officials, agencies, and decision-makers to advocate for and advance the interests of an organization or community.



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Background

The ʔakisqnuq First Nation is a proud, progressive community located in the Columbia Valley region of British Columbia, dedicated to fostering growth through stewardship, economic empowerment, and the revitalization of culture and language. As ʔakisqnuq First Nation continues to advance key initiatives such as land negotiations, business ventures, and community development projects, the importance of strong, culturally respectful, and strategic communication has never been greater. To support these efforts, ʔakisqnuq First Nation is launching a Public Relations and Government Relations strategic initiative aimed at strengthening relationships with government partners, media, and the broader public. This initiative will ensure that the voice of ʔakisqnuq First Nation is consistently represented in a way that reflects the community's values, vision, and priorities, while promoting its achievements, protecting its interests, and guiding public engagement around important developments over time.

Implementing a dedicated and sustained Public Relations (PR) and Government Relations (GR) approach empowers ʔakisqnuq First Nation to represent itself with confidence and clarity, manage its public presence, and advocate for its interests in ways that respect its governance, culture, and long-term vision. This process also requires reflection on how ʔakisqnuq First Nation wishes to be represented publicly, what relationships it wants to cultivate with government and media, and how community voices will be included in shaping those narratives.

Ongoing Priorities

The primary objectives of this Public Relations and Government Relations future focused goals are to:

- a) Create a strategic and ongoing communications plan that aligns with ʔakisqnuq First Nation priorities, values, and protocols, providing clear direction for all public and government-facing messaging.
- b) The consultant will assist with ongoing media relations, write press releases, and manage public announcements.
- c) The consultant will support the long-term promotion of member achievements and community success stories in public and media spaces.
- d) The consultant will assist in providing long-term support in coordinating event publicity and manage communication before, during and after events.
- e) The consultant will assist in providing long-term communication support for land settlements, business ventures and new projects.
- f) The consultant will create consistent, respectful branding and messages that reflects ʔakisqnuq First Nation values.
- g) The consultant will offer ongoing timely and culturally sensitive crisis communications support as needed, ensuring consistent and reliable assistance during critical moments over the long term.
- h) The consultant will work with leadership, members, government, and partners to ensure collaborative communication.
- i) Take time to learn about the Ktunaxa and ʔakisqnuq by listening, showing respect, participating in cultural activities, and building genuine relationships with the community.
- j) The consultant will support in the facilitation of introductions and provide guidance on maintaining ongoing relationships with other government officials.



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The successful proponent shall provide the following information for this proposal:

- a) a cover letter and executive summary summarizing the proponent's qualifications, experience, and commitment to the project.
- b) company or individual profile including relevant qualifications, experience with similar projects and key people assigned to the work.
- c) Description of your proposed approach, including a roadmap for implementing sustained Public Relations and Government Relations strategies that support long-term engagement, relationship-building, and continuity with ʔakisqnuq First Nation.
- d) Outline key activities, deliverables, and timelines.
- e) Providing rates and total estimated cost
- f) Two references
- g) Identifying other professional involvement
- h) Include insurance, WCB number and GST number (if requested upon short listing)
- i) Seek assistance in consulting with and establishing ongoing relationships with relevant external governance officials. Develop Government Relations strategies that support Akisqnuq Chief and Council in engaging with other governance organizations.
- j) Consult and provide support to identifying, building, and maintaining relationships with relevant external governance officials.
- k) Offer strategic advice on approaches and messaging when interacting with external organizations.

Deliverables

- a) Development and ongoing refinement of a comprehensive, culturally appropriate communications strategy for ʔakisqnuq First Nation, with long-term support to ensure it evolves with the community's needs and priorities.
- b) Media advisories and public announcements, with continued support as needed to ensure timely and consistent communication.
- c) Development of key messaging documents and briefing materials for leadership and community use, with a focus on providing continued support and adapting materials as needs evolve. The successful proponent will act as a long-term partner, offering strategic communication guidance and updates over time.
- d) Public engagement plans and strategies to involve members in important items.
- e) Event publicity coordination, including monthly and project-based reports.
- f) On call support for urgent or crisis situations
- g) Social media and digital communication support, if required
- h) Final copies of all communication materials, plans and reports in both digital format and hard copies.
- i) An interview will be required as part of the selection process.



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Technical Details

Project Management:

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

Role Of the Consultant:

The consultant will act as a communications advisor and strategist for ʔakisqnuq First Nation, providing independent expertise in Public Relations and Government Relations. The consultant's role will be to develop, manage, and support the delivery of clear, consistent, and culturally appropriate communications that reflect ʔakisqnuq First Nation's values and priorities.

Key responsibilities include:

- Developing a long-term comprehensive communications strategy and public engagement plan.
- Providing future-focused goals, expert advice and direction on public relations, government relations, and media engagement.
- Managing media relations and preparing press releases, public announcements, key messaging, and briefing notes, with ongoing support to ensure consistent and responsive communication over an extended period.
- Coordinating publicity and communications for events, milestones, and community achievements.
- Offering communications support for land settlements, business ventures, and new initiatives.
- Providing on-call crisis communications support when necessary.
- Collaborating closely with leadership, administration, community members, and external stakeholders to ensure messaging is respectful, effective, and aligned with ʔakisqnuq First Nation's goals.
- Advising on best practices in communications and public relations, with an emphasis on Indigenous values, protocols, and sensitivities.
- Focus on asserting and protecting the inherent rights of ʔakisqnuq, including Aboriginal rights, constitutional Section 35 rights, and title.

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- Promote recognition and respect for Akisqnuq First Nation's territorial rights and governance.
- Assisting with initiating and fostering ongoing relationships with government officials, including facilitating introductions and offering strategic advice.

The consultant will work under the direction of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and leadership team and maintain open, ongoing communication throughout the project.

Project Costs

Provide hourly rate to complete the project. Hourly rate must be fully burdened to include all costs (overhead, profit, and non-labour expenses, such as travel, mileage, per diem for meals and incidentals, legal research, copies, etc. And clarify any additional cost.

Invoicing

It is understood that the successful proponent shall submit invoicing in the following format:

- a) A covering statement which will include the following:
 - i) The legal name and address of successful proponent
 - ii) The date of the statement of account and the billing period covered by the statement of account
 - iii) GST registration number
 - iv) A listing of all invoice numbers for that billing period, including the respective dollar amount for each invoice. (sub-total, plus applicable taxes)
 - v) A total dollar amount of all invoices being submitted in the billing period
- b) All invoices described in the covering statement and attach all supporting documentation.
- c) Any other billing information reasonable requested by AFN.

Responsibility and Work Performed by AFN Staff

The successful proponent will:

- a) Have the full cooperation of Akisqnuq First Nation staff and access to information necessary to meet the accountabilities set out in this request for proposal and respond to reasonable inquiries.

AFN will:

- a) Provide a mutually agreed upon level of resources (human and financial resources) to the successful proponent to meet the accountabilities set out in this request for proposal.
- b) The following mutually agreed upon resources will be provided by AFN:
 - Provide feedback to the successful proponent(s) in a timely fashion; and
 - Be available for meetings during duration of agreement period.



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Proposal Format

The following format, sequence, and instructions should be followed in order to provide consistency in Proponent response and to ensure that each proposal receives full consideration. All pages should be consecutively numbered, and as follows:

- a) One (1) unaltered and completed Request for Proposals cover page, including Proponent Section completed in original form as per instructions.
- b) Provide a cover letter no longer than two (2) pages in length, signed by an authorized representative of the firm that can legally bind the company and provide his/her title, address, phone number, and email address. Provide a positive commitment to perform the required scope of services. Respondent should also provide the primary contact person for this solicitation including his/her title, phone number, and email address. A table of contents should follow the cover letter.
- c) A short (one or two page) summary of the key features of the proposal.
- d) The body of the proposal, including pricing, i.e. the “Proponent Response;” and
- e) A detailed description of all costs associated with the requirements listed in this RFP.
- f) Proponents shall submit their submissions via email at: lauren.nordquist@akisqnuq.org

Mandatory Items in the Proposal

Proponent responses must clearly demonstrate that they meet the following mandatory criteria, or they will be excluded from further consideration during the evaluation process:

- a) The Proponent’s proposal must be received before the specified closing time.
- b) The Proponent’s proposal must be in English.
- c) Proponents must submit one (1) Request for Quote cover page, with the Proponent Section in its original form, unaltered, fully completed and signed.
- d) Evidence of expertise and experience in undertaking projects of this complexity with similar scope of work and subject matter. Documentation will include the team names of personnel and all subcontractors and their education, skills, experience, and professional designations. Such management experience must lay out both technical and business skills and ability.
- e) The name and address of the person in your firm who will be the official contact person for your bid.
- f) Description of the Proponents organization, size, and structure. Indicate, if appropriate, if the Proponent is a small or minority-owned business or First Nations owned.

Proposal Content

Proposals should include, but not be limited to, the following components:

- a) Outline the consultants understanding of the work to be undertaken and the consultant’s experience in similar projects.
- b) Outline the consultant’s approach and strategies.
- c) Outline how the data will be collected and evaluated.
- d) Outline how the options will be developed and evaluated.
- e) Identify the tasks to be undertaken by ʔakisqnuq First Nation leadership, management, and staff.
- f) Identify the stages of interim reporting.



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g) Identify the final reporting methods and products.

The consultant or firm should, at the very least incorporate the following activities into its proposal:

- a) Facilitate strategic planning sessions with political leadership and community.
- b) Gather information from on and off First Nation members.
- c) Review and provide summaries of key governance documents pertaining to custom membership codes ratification.
- d) Take time to become acquainted with historical membership statistics and speak with present electoral officers.
- e) Take the necessary time to become familiar with policies, procedures, and key governance activities in place today.
- f) Meet with leadership and committee members.
- g) Provide regular progress reports and periodic presentations.
- h) Prepare budget estimates on cost of administering the Code once adopted.
- i) Facilitation of community meeting(s).
- j) Development of a community consultation protocol; and
- k) Development of draft and final ratification process and protocol.

Evaluation

Akisqnuq First Nation will form an evaluation committee. All personnel will be bound by the same standards of confidentiality. The mandatory and desirable criteria against which proposals will be evaluated are identified below. Proponents should ensure that they fully respond to all criteria to be comprehensively evaluated. AFN may request and receive clarification from any Proponent when evaluating a proposal. The evaluation committee may invite some or all of the Proponents to appear before the committee in order to clarify their proposals. In such event, the evaluation committee may consider such clarifications in evaluating proposals.

Price may or may not be the determining factor in the proponent selection process.

Evaluation and acceptance of any proposal shall be subject to purchase authorization.

AFN reserves the right to reject any and all proposals after evaluation.

Short Listed Proponents

The short-list will comprise the three highest-ranked Proponents. Proponents which are short listed may be requested to interview in person, and/or teleconference, with the assessment panel to discuss certain aspects of their submitted proposal.

Short-listed bidders will be required to provide:

1. Proof of liability insurance, WCB # and GST # (where applicable)

Additional RFP Terms and Conditions

- a. The proponent's response to this RFP must be sent to AFN via email, as specified above.

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- b. Proponents may provide additional information beyond that requested in the RFP, which AFN may consider in its sole discretion.
- c. Proponents may be asked to submit additional information pertaining to their past experience, qualifications, and other information that AFN might reasonably require.
- d. Any questions or changes requested by a Proponent must be answered by an addendum going out to all Proponents.
- e. All responses and materials submitted in response to the RFP will become the property of AFN.
- f. AFN may, in its sole discretion, allow additional time for the proponents to submit a proposal.
- g. Proposals and accompanying documentation provided to AFN in response to this RFP will not be returned.
- h. Prices are in Canadian dollars.
- i. GST is applicable and should be included in any quotes. We are not tax exempt.
- j. Price may or may not be the determining factor in Proponent selection process. The award may be made to the Proponent whose proposal is determined to be of highest value in terms of quality and price.
- k. Proponent's proposal shall be valid for sixty (60) days from the date of proponent's submission.
- l. Any costs or fees incurred by the proponent to submit a proposal are the sole responsibility of the proponent.
- m. No contract or agreement is created by the submissions of a proposal.
- n. AFN has the right to refuse any and all submissions, at its sole discretion.