

SERVICE SOLICITATION:

Unity Trail Project Indigenous Community Engagement Liaison

Dakota County Parks Department Anna Ferris
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KEY DATES:

- Release Date: 8/26/2025
- Responses are due: 9/19/2025 at 4:30 P.M. by email to the project manager at anna.ferris@co.dakota.mn.us. No responses will be accepted after this date and time.
- See Schedule section below for more details.

SCOPE OF WORK

The Unity Trail will be a 5-mile loop made up of existing pedestrian pathways along the Mississippi River Greenway that, at different stops along the route, will highlight the contributions from Dakota County's diverse community members – and provide a space for educational activities. The project is a partnership of Dakota County Parks, Inver Hills Community College, ISD 199, City of Inver Grove Heights Parks and Recreation and Dakota County Library – Inver Glen Branch. The vision of the Unity Trail is to honor and recognize the contributions of Black, Indigenous and communities of color and emphasize the connection between racial equity, sustainability and environmental conservation. It will connect community spaces including the Mississippi River Greenway, library, schools and Inver Hills Community College to reach new and underrepresented users.

Unity Trail Project Components:

1. Activities that highlight themes of the Unity Trail project, including opportunities for educational materials and programs and events.
2. An interpretive trail that recognizes the contributions and experiences of Black, Indigenous and people of color. This will include seven interpretive points located on the Mississippi River Greenway as well at Inver Hills Community College, Inver Grove Heights Community Center, Simley Island Park and Inver Glen Library.

The interpretive point at Inver Hills Community College is planned to include a Native Trail Project consisting of soft-surface trails and interpretive signage focused on the interpretation of culturally significant native plants, developed following the leadership and recommendations of Indigenous stakeholders. The goal of this project is to honor Dakota heritage and culture and educate users on the proper recognition of the land on which Inver Hills land resides. In October 2020, the project was presented to the Inver Hills Community College American Indian Advisory Council, who provided support, input and direction on the effort. Since that time, the Council has dispersed due to staff turnover.

We are seeking an Indigenous Community Engagement Liaison to consult with stakeholders and Indigenous community members, and, where available, members of the Advisory Council previously

convened by Inver Hills Community College, advise and provide direction on the Native Trail Project. This project was initiated in partnership with and continues to be planned with the Inver Hills Community College Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion department. The Native Trail signage visual content (drawings, paintings or images) will be developed in collaboration with students in the Inver Hills Community College art department.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Experience creating, facilitating, planning and managing Indigenous or American Indian advisory councils, project advisory groups or committees for colleges, technical/community colleges, universities, government entities, educational institutions, schools, Indigenous nations or non-profit organizations.
- Skilled in facilitating welcoming, inclusive, culturally appropriate and collaborative advisory groups.
- Familiarity and experience working with the Indigenous community in the project zone, which is the city of Inver Grove Heights.
- Strong connections with Indigenous communities, individuals, organizations and/or nations.
- Strong understanding of the project and demonstrated ability to meet project deadline

REQUIREMENTS:

- Applicants must be 18 years old or older.
- Current Dakota County employees are **not** eligible to apply. This includes full-time, part-time, and temporary and seasonal employees.
- Provide a W-9 form upon selection in order to execute a contract.
- Dakota County background checks to be completed upon selection.

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT LIAISON RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Consult with stakeholders and Indigenous community members, and, where available, members of the Advisory Council previously convened by Inver Hills Community College, to advise on the content and design of the interpretative installations to be included on the Native Trail Project at Inver Hills Community College as part of the Unity Trail as well as other topics related to the project.
- Create an accessible space and structure for consulting with stakeholders and Indigenous community members that values members contributions and creates an inclusive and accessible environment for input and discussion.
- Conduct outreach to Indigenous community members living in Inver Grove Heights and in the region, with an emphasis on Dakota County, to provide feedback on the project.
- From October 2025 - April 2026 consult with stakeholders and Indigenous community members to obtain feedback and guidance on the Unity Trail project including content (interpretive signage, art, etc.) that will be included along the Native Trail Project at Inver Hills Community College.
- Provide reports of the feedback and direction provided by stakeholders and Indigenous community members to Dakota County Parks staff and other project partners.
- Facilitate connections with Indigenous educators to provide cultural expertise related to culturally significant plants to be included in the installations.

- Unity Trail partners, including Inver Hills Community College, will provide meeting spaces. Meetings can also be conducted virtually if that approach is identified as the most effective.
- Meet with the Unity Trail partner group once per month to share out information, coordinate listening sessions and facilitate communication

BUDGET:

Maximum budget allocated for this work is \$20,000. This role is funded through the MET Council Equity Grant.

PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY:

Professional Liability (errors and omissions) insurance with respect to its professional activities to be performed under this Contract. This amount of insurance shall be at least \$1,000,000 per occurrence and aggregate (if applicable). Coverage under such policy may be subject to a deductible, not to exceed \$25,000 per occurrence. Contractor agrees to maintain such insurance for at least one (1) year from Contract termination. Please review the attached Insurance Terms for more details.

SOLICITATION TIMELINE:

- Solicitation Sent: 8/26/2025
- Pre-award meeting: 9/17/2025; 4:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m. via Microsoft Teams. Sign-in information is included below:
 - Microsoft Teams
 - [Join the meeting now](#)
 - Meeting ID: 264 692 999 346 1
 - Passcode: Li6FD78y
 - [Need help?](#)
 - Dial in by phone
 - [+1 651-273-3070,,328843017#](#) United States, Hastings
 - [Find a local number](#)
 - Phone conference ID: 328 843 017#
- Questions due by email: 9/17/2025
- Submissions due: 9/19/2025 at 4:30pm

QUESTIONS:

Dakota County staff will not be able to respond to questions about this solicitation via phone, in-person, or text messages. All questions must be submitted by email to anna.ferris@co.dakota.mn.us. All questions received and their responses will be posted on the addendum on the project webpage.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS:

Please send your submission including your project understanding, approach to the project, budget, timeline, experience managing similar projects as well as the names and qualifications of the individual(s) that will be involved the project. Submissions are due by Friday, September 19, 2025 at 4:30pm.

JOINT SUBMISSIONS:

To submit with another person or persons, one person must act as the primary and another as the subcontractor. Please indicate in your application which person would be the primary and which would be the subcontractor(s). Please include the qualifications of all parties submitting together.