REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Request for Proposals for Bay Mills Indian Community Tribal Tourism Diversification Feasibility Study

The Bay Mills Indian Community is requesting proposals from qualified individuals and firms to assess economic diversification opportunities for Tribal Tourism on Bay Mills Indian Community lands.

Background:
Bay Mills Indian Community (“BMIC”) has been awarded funding from the Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs (“BIA”), through the Office of Indian Economic Development (“OIED”), Division of Economic Development (“DED”) for the Tribal Tourism Grant Program (“TTGP”). This grant funding will help BMIC conduct a feasibility study to assess economic diversification opportunities as it relates to tribal tourism.

BMIC is a federally recognized Native American Tribe located in the rural Eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan on the shores of Lake Superior. The people of Bay Mills are Ojibwa (or Chippewa), and they have resided in this area for hundreds of years. BMIC was granted a federal Corporate Charter pursuant to Section 16 of the Indian Reorganization Act on June 18, 1934. BMIC is one of the four (4) original reservations established in Michigan. BMIC consists of around 3,870 acres with two (2) separate inhabited reservation areas, approximately 25 miles apart, with a service district that includes Chippewa, Luce, and Mackinac Counties.

BMIC is located on Lake Superior between major tourist attractions in Sault Sainte Marie and Paradise, Michigan, and is often bypassed by vacationers for seeking out the Sault Locks and other popular tourist attractions such as, Tahquamenon Falls, Crisp Point Lighthouse, Whitefish Point Lighthouse and Shipwreck Museum, Point Iroquois Lighthouse, Mackinac Island, International Bridge, Castle Rock, Wawatam Lighthouse, and Fort Michilimackinac. These destinations create huge revenue streams, employment opportunities, and economic diversification for their respective areas and have significant tourist power. To reach many of the aforementioned areas, a person does not need to drive through BMIC (see attached map).

BMIC currently operates the Bay Mills Resort and Casino, with a $90 million dollar expansion project currently under construction. This expansion will include a pool, splash pad, spa, and restaurant. Additional operations include Wild Bluff Golf Course, two public (2) camping locations: Sunrise RV Park and Riverview Campground, Four Seasons Market and Deli, Bay Mart Gas Station, Northern Light Cannabis Company, and the Brimley/Bay Mills Farmers Market. Small businesses are run by local community members, including Fish Markets, a fireworks store, a coffeehouse, two (2) food trucks, restaurants, and various local art producers.
Tourism is one of the primary economic drivers in the State of Michigan. BMIC would like to become known as a destination spot for unique experiences while helping boost community tourism. BMIC recently worked with Michigan State University-Extension to complete a First Impressions Tourism Assessment (final report can be provided upon request). This assessment provided basic information about key community assets, strengths, and weaknesses. Performing a feasibility study will build on this effort to determine the most viable tourism diversification strategy for BMIC and will allow the Tribe to pursue additional funding to support implementation.

**This Project Is Defined As Follows:**
The Bay Mills Indian Community is interested in performing a feasibility study to assess tourism diversification opportunities. A consultant with tourism and marketing experience will meet with stakeholders to identify and assess which tourism options are most viable for the area. This study will encompass the development of a tourism model and will create the framework for sustainable, diversified tourism operation(s). Emphasis will be concentrated on deciphering viable means of tourism diversification and what the economic impact of such a business would have on BMIC and the outlying areas. BMIC can determine its next course of action through recommendations in a final report.

Should the opportunity be deemed feasible through the project, a final report will contain a roadmap for the execution and assistance in positioning the Bay Mills Indian Community to pursue further funding for the business’s plan development and implementation.

**Scope Of Work:**
The successful Proposer shall perform the tasks listed below for the project and shall work closely with designated Tribal personnel to accomplish these goals:

**Phase I (90 days or less)**
Research. Research as determined by the consultant. This may include but is not limited to collecting feedback from community members, stakeholders, and the Executive Council. It will involve the initial planning and discussion regarding the approach of this study and what BMIC wants to accomplish. Areas to be assessed include but are not limited to Eco-tourism, tours and events, outdoor recreation, cultural tourism, and hospitality.

**Phase II (150 days or less)**
Specific analyses will be tailored by the consultant and should include, at a minimum:
- Market Analysis and Feasibility to determine tourism opportunities
  - Demographic studies, market demand, site studies, competition determination, SWOT, labor force qualifications, assessment of land holdings, etc.
  - Identification of pertinent economic and demographic data for immediate and broader market areas. This analysis should include, but not be limited to, actual and potential customers and other relevant demographic data necessary to support development decisions.
• Analyzation of the travel tourism industry in and around the Brimley area, including historical trends, origins of demand (convenience, residential, destination, and day vs. overnight), transportation infrastructure, and other factors affecting the overall appeal. This should include a discussion of local and regional attractions.

• Economic Analysis and Feasibility
  o Creation of a financial model to include, at a minimum:
    ▪ Estimations of revenue that BMIC can expect from the proposed tourism opportunities.
    ▪ Projections of expenses that BMIC can expect to incur in operating the proposed tourism opportunities, including the level of cash flow available for debt service for the initial five years of operation.
    ▪ Audit project cost estimates with project team members and provides reasonable assumptions if necessary.
    ▪ Report of the annual Return on Investment (ROI) for the proposed project for the next five years of operation.
    ▪ Estimation of the demand for tourism opportunities in the Bay Mills area for the next five (5) years.

• Organization Structure Analysis and Feasibility
  o Current staffing, staffing needs, areas to enhance, potential challenges, etc.

Phase III – Final Report and Presentation (75 days or less)

Final report creation to outline findings. The report will be presented to the BMIC Executive Council and other stakeholders. The final deliverable will be the overview of the actionable steps to move forward with the selected opportunity(s) if determined feasible and pursue further funding for detailed business plans and implementation.

*Proposals to assist with these services must be submitted to Bay Mills Tribal Administration by Friday, March 15, 2024, 4:00 pm EST.*

Please email proposals in PDF format to Tara Parrish at tparrish@baymills.org. Proposals received after the deadline will not be accepted. Please get in touch with Tara Parrish via email or at 906-248-8122 with any questions regarding this Request for Proposals or any of the requirements outlined in the scope of work to be completed.

**Proposal Requirements:**

1. Cover letter
2. Resumes and/or Biographies: Please include resumes and/or bios of key principals and individuals overseeing or involved with this project.
3. Description of Experience related to feasibility studies:
   a. Please describe the firm’s general experience, including the number of years the firm has been in operation.
   b. Please describe the firm’s experience providing research consulting and feasibility studies services.
   c. Description of experience in Indian Country: Please describe any relevant experience of the firm, involved principals, and any assigned staff in projects located on Native American land.

4. Associations: Please describe any associations with other firms or any form of subcontracting planned for the project. Please include pertinent information as to subcontracted firms.

5. Certifications and Licenses: Please include a copy of any pertinent licenses or certifications.

6. References: Please include a minimum of three (3) references that the BMIC can contact. Provide three references of significant subcontractors as well.

7. Disclosure of Claims: Please disclose any claims, lawsuits, or formal disputes for work or services previously or currently being performed.

8. Methodology: Please provide an explanation of the methodology for all services.

9. Cost proposal: Please detail all costs required to assist with these services and the required timelines for payments.

10. Indian Preference (Optional): Please provide any evidence to demonstrate that the firm is a qualified, Indian-owned enterprise, with at least 51% active ownership by a member of a federally recognized Indian tribe.

### Project Award

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The Tribe, at its sole discretion, may elect to interview the selected firm(s). If a firm is requested to take part in an interview (via Tribal arranged remote means), the key proposed project staff will be expected to take part. The interview will be an opportunity for the Tribe’s selection team to review the firm’s proposal and other matters deemed relevant to the evaluation.

**Compensation**

The proposal should provide a cost for all work associated with the provision of these services. The final cost of services may be negotiated before the award contract. Total cost must not exceed $125,000.

*The red dots indicate other areas of high-traffic tourism in the Upper Penninsula.