



SQUAXIN ISLAND TRIBE



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS SQUAXIN ISLAND TRIBAL COURT – PUBLIC DEFENDER

Introduction

This is a request for proposal (RFP) issued by the Squaxin Island Public Safety Department, seeking proposals from qualified individuals to serve as a public defender for the Squaxin Island Tribal Court, located at 10 SE Squaxin Lane, Shelton, Washington 98584.

The Squaxin Island Tribal Court is committed to ensuring that all individuals charged with criminal offenses in Tribal Court have meaningful access to legal representation, consistent with the Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968, 25 U.S.C. § 1302, applicable Tribal law, and the fundamental principles of due process and equal protection.

Counsel for Indigent Defense will be appointed by the Court to represent qualifying defendants who are unable to afford private legal representation and who face charges in the Tribal Court.

1. Request for Proposal

- 1.1 This RFP in no way constitutes a legally binding agreement between the Squaxin Island Tribe and any applicant. The objective of the RFP is the negotiation and execution of a contract between the Squaxin Island Tribe and a successful applicant to provide the scope of services described herein.
- 1.2 All submitted proposals are considered confidential.
- 1.3 The Squaxin Island Tribe reserves the right to retain all proposals submitted and to use any information or ideas contained in the proposal, without regard to whether it is selected or not.
- 1.4 The Squaxin Island Tribe reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, award the contract to an individual other than the lowest bidder, and to waive irregularities and formalities.
- 1.5 The Squaxin Island Tribe reserves the right to accept any proposal, which, in its judgement, best serves its interests.
- 1.6 Submission of a proposal indicates acceptance of any conditions set forth in this RFP.

2. Scope of Services

2.1 Client Representation

- A.** Represent defendants at all stages of criminal proceedings. The criminal docket is heard in person at 9:00 a.m. on the fourth Tuesday of each month at the Squaxin Island Tribal Court in Shelton, Washington.
- B.** Conducting thorough and independent case investigation, including review of charging documents, police reports, witness statements, and other evidence.
- C.** Advising clients on their rights under the Indian Civil Rights Act, applicable Tribal law, and any applicable federal law.
- D.** Negotiating plea agreements and zealously advocating for appropriate sentencing outcomes on behalf of clients.
- E.** Filing all necessary motions, briefs, and legal documents in a timely manner consistent with Court rules and deadlines.
- F.** Maintaining regular, confidential communication with clients throughout the duration of representation.

2.2 Eligibility Determination

- A.** Review financial affidavits or declarations submitted by defendants.
- B.** Advising the Court when a conflict of interest arises that would preclude representation of a particular defendant
- C.** Accepting Court appointments in a timely manner and notifying the Court promptly of an impediment to representation.

2.3 Compliance with Professional and Ethical Standards

- A.** Counsel shall comply with all applicable rules of professional conduct, including those of the Washington State Bar, and any rules of practice adopted by the Tribal court.
- B.** Maintain client confidentiality in accordance with attorney-client privilege and applicable ethical rules.
- C.** Avoid conflicts of interest and promptly disclose to the Court any conflict that arises during representation.

3. Qualifications and Proposal Requirements

- 3.1** Juris Doctor (J.D.) degree from an accredited law school.
- 3.2** Proof of licensure in good standing with the State Bar.
- 3.3** Demonstrated experience in criminal defense, including representation at trial.
- 3.4** Familiarity with the Indian Civil Rights Act and federal Indian law as it applies to tribal criminal jurisdiction.
- 3.5** Three (3) professional references from judges, attorneys, tribal officials, or other relevant persons familiar with the applicant's professional qualifications.
- 3.6** Disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest with the Squaxin Island Tribe or its members.
- 3.7** Indian Preference qualification, if applicable.
- 3.8** Cover letter that contains at minimum: legal name, contact information, number of years licensed as an attorney, your availability to perform the responsibilities outlined in the RFP, including your availability to appear at the criminal proceedings scheduled for the fourth Tuesday of each month.

4. Proposal Evaluation Procedure

- 4.1** Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by the Squaxin Island Public Safety Department.
- 4.2** The award of the contract will be based upon a comprehensive review of all proposals. The award shall be made to the most responsive applicant as determined by the Squaxin Island Public Safety Department.
- 4.3** The Squaxin Island Preference Law requires the Squaxin Island Tribe to apply Indian Preference to contracts for goods and services. Preference is intended to give an advantage to Indian owned companies and Native American employees in contracting.
- 4.4** Proposals will be reviewed for completeness to determine if all submission requirements were met. Failure to submit all required documents may result in the proposal being rejected.
- 4.5** During the evaluation process, the Squaxin Island Tribe reserves the right to request additional information or clarification regarding any portion of the proposal.

4.6 Selection Criteria. The initial evaluations will be based on the content of the proposals. The proposals will be ranked based on the following factors (weighting of each factor listed in parentheses):

- Assessment of the proposed attorney and/or firm for qualifications to perform the scope of work (65%)
- Assessment of overall project cost estimate on a comparative basis to the other proposals (35%)

5. RFP Timetable

5.1 To facilitate the Squaxin Island Tribe's review of the submitted proposals, applicants are required to provide the requested information within the timeframe outlined below. The timetable is provided for planning purposes and may be modified by the Tribe as required.

RFP Activity	Target Completion Date
Tribe releases RFP	August 4, 2026
Proposals Due	Until filled
Implementation Date	October 1, 2026

6. Selected Attorney Requirements

6.1 The selected attorney will be required to execute an independent contract agreement with the Squaxin Island Tribe. This contract agreement will require Squaxin Island Legal Department review and Tribal Council approval prior to implementation.

6.2 The selected attorney must maintain active Bar licensure and provide proof of professional liability insurance in an amount acceptable to the Squaxin Island Tribe throughout the contract term.

6.4 The selected attorney shall not engage in any outside representation that creates a conflict of interest with defendants assigned through this contract and shall promptly notify the Court of any such conflict.

7. Submit completed proposals to Madeena Rivera and Samantha Ackerman at mrivera@squaxin.us & sackerman@squaxin.us.