

CHEROKEE NATION

REQUEST FOR SEALED PROPOSALS

CHEROKEE NATIONAL TRAIL SYSTEM STRATEGIC PLAN



**Acquisition Management
On behalf of
Natural Resources**

**CHEROKEE NATION
P.O. Box 948
Tahlequah, OK 74465
(918) 453-5000**

REQUEST FOR SEALED PROPOSALS

Cherokee National Trail System Strategic Plan

Introduction:

The Cherokee Nation is the federally recognized government of the Cherokee people and thereby has sovereign status granted by treaty and law. Tribal sovereignty is the right to self-governance. The seat of tribal government is the W.W. Keeler Complex near Tahlequah, Oklahoma, capital of the Cherokee Nation. The jurisdictional area of the Cherokee Nation (hereinafter referred to as Nation) covers 14 counties in Northeastern Oklahoma.

The Nation is seeking SEALED proposals from interested professionals to develop a comprehensive Strategic Plan for the Cherokee National Trail System (CNTS). The Nation will be accepting proposals from Indian and Non-Indian parties. Indian preference will be given only to responding parties who provide proof of current certification from the Cherokee Nation Tribal Employments Office (TERO) located in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, telephone number (918) 453-5000. Indian preference will be applied in accordance with Cherokee Nation Acquisition Management Policy and Procedures. Proof of TERO certification must accompany and be included in proposal submittal.

General Information:

Purpose of the Request for Proposal (RFP): The NATION, is soliciting detailed, proposals from qualified contractors interested in providing services as outlined in this RFP for the NATION. The complete scope of work and specifications are included in this RFP.

Other Licenses and Registrations Requirement: All contractors are required to hold any and all necessary applicable professional licenses and registrations required by law. Proof of professional licenses is required with the proposal. Obtaining and ensuring compliance to all licensing and registering requirements is the complete responsibility of the consultant.

TERO CERTIFICATION & INFORMATION: Indian preference will be given only to responding parties who provide proof of current certification from the Cherokee Nation Tribal Employments Office (TERO) located in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, telephone number (918) 453-5000. Proof of TERO certification must accompany and be included in sealed proposal submittal.

TERO requirements apply to award of contract. Successful bidder must complete required TERO paperwork and pay all applicable fees in accordance with current TERO Legislation for this project.

Please direct any questions for Cherokee Nation Tribal Employment Rights Office (T.E.R.O.) in written format by deadline, **April 22, 2026 by 5:00 p.m.** to email jeananna-hendricks@cherokee.org and janice-vaughan@cherokee.org as specified in this RFP. These questions will be addressed by TERO and included in any addendum issued by **April 24, 2026** on the website www.cherokeebids.org with bid announcement.

Conflict of Interest and Restrictions: If any contractor, contractor's employee, subcontractor, or any individual working on the proposed contract may have a possible conflict of interest that may affect the objectivity, analysis, and/or performance of the contract, it shall be declared in writing and submitted to *Cherokee Acquisition Management* (Attn: Jeananna Hendricks and Janice Vaughan) no later than **April 22, 2026**. The NATION will determine in writing if the conflict is significant and material and if so, may eliminate the contractor from submitting a proposal.

Verbal Instructions: Interested parties shall not initiate or execute any negotiation, decision, or action arising from any verbal discussion with any Cherokee Nation employee. Only written communications from the designated Contact Person at Cherokee Nation may be considered a duly authorized expression on behalf of the NATION regarding this RFP. Additionally, only written communications from interested parties are recognized as duly authorized expressions on behalf of the vendor. The same instructions shall apply to any subsequent award and agreement communications.

Contact Person: Any additional information required or questions regarding this RFP should be submitted, by specified deadline, in written format only to:

Cherokee Acquisition Management
Jeananna Hendricks and Janice Vaughan
jeananna-hendricks@cherokee.org; janice-vaughan@cherokee.org

Contractor's Review and Questions: Contractor's should carefully review this RFP for errors, questionable or objectionable materials, and items requiring clarification. Contractor's shall put these comments and/or questions in writing and submit them to the Cherokee Acquisition Management (Attn: Jeananna Hendricks and Janice Vaughan) no later than **April 22, 2026 by 5:00 p.m.** at email jeananna-hendricks@cherokee.org and janice-vaughan@cherokee.org.

Addendum to the RFP: The NATION reserves the right to issue written addendums to revise or clarify the RFP, respond to questions, and/or extend the due date of proposals. Any and all such interpretations and any supplemental instructions will be in the form of written addenda, and will be posted on the Nation's bid website www.cherokeebids.org with bid announcement no later than **April 24, 2026** any interest party orally. Failure to receive any issued addendum or interpretation shall not relieve responding party from any obligation contained in submitted proposal. All addenda so issued shall become part of the contract documents.

Proposals must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on May 01, 2026. Any and all costs to submit proposals are the responsibility of the offeror. The proposals must be emailed to jeananna-hendricks@cherokee.org or janice-vaughan@cherokee.org. The email with the proposal must contain in the subject line: Response to RFP – Cherokee National Trail System Strategic Plan. Any proposal received after the time and date will not be considered eligible for award. Cherokee Nation reserves the right to reject any and all proposals. Cherokee Nation reserves the right to determine if a proposal meets stated requirements. Award will be made subject to availability of funds. Cherokee Nation reserves the right to award to multiple offerors. No offeror may withdraw their proposal within 90 days after proposal due date.

Cancellation of the RFP: The NATION retains the right to cancel, modify or amend the RFP process at any time, at the NATION's sole discretion. The NATION shall not be responsible for costs incurred by contractors for proposal preparation.

Proposal Withdrawal and Correction: A proposal may be corrected or withdrawn by a written request received prior to the date of opening proposals.

Multiple Proposals: The NATION shall not accept multiple proposals from the same contractor.

Disclosure of Proposal Contents: A proposal's content shall not be disclosed to other contractors.

Retention of Proposals: All proposals and other material submitted become the NATION's property and may be returned only at NATION's option.

Cost of Proposal Preparation: Any and all costs incurred by contractors in preparing and submitting a proposal are the contractor's responsibility and shall not be charged to the NATION or reflected as an expense of the resulting contract.

Delivery of Proposals: NATION assumes no responsibility or liability for the transmission, delay, or delivery of proposals by either public or private carriers.

Media Announcements: Any and all media announcements pertaining to this RFP require the NATION's prior written approval.

Other Governmental Requirements: It is the responsibility of the contractor to indicate within their proposal the applicability of any other federal, state, municipal, or other governmental statutes, regulations, ordinances, acts, and/or requirements.

Qualification of Responding Party: The Nation may make such investigations as deemed necessary to determine the ability of the responding party to perform the work. The responding party shall furnish to the Nation all such information and data for this purpose upon request. The Nation reserves the right to reject any proposal if the evidence submitted by, or investigation of, such responding party fails to satisfy the Nation such responding party is properly qualified to carry out the obligations of the contract and to complete the work contemplated therein. Conditional proposals will not be accepted.

Binding Contract: This RFP does not obligate the NATION or the selected contractor until a contract is signed and approved by both parties. If approved, it is effective from the date of final approval by the Contracting Officers. The NATION shall not be responsible for work done, even in good faith, prior to final approval of the proposed contract.

Concerns with the Special or General Provisions: If a contractor has concerns with either the Special or General Provisions, they should put their comments and/or questions in writing and submit them to Cherokee Acquisition Management (Attn: Jeananna Hendricks and Janice Vaughan) no later than **April 22, 2026 by 5:00 p.m.** This will allow time for an addendum to the RFP to be issued, if required, to all recipients of the initial RFP.

The NATION reserves the right to not award or to cancel the award of a contract to a contractor who will not agree to all of the Special or General Provisions of said contract. It is the intent of the NATION to utilize only the NATION'S terms and conditions for any subsequent agreement based on award from this RFP.

An award for this project will be made subject to available funding. Firms are cautioned that proposals should be submitted initially on the most favorable terms, from both a technical and cost standpoint.

Governing Laws and Contract: The Cherokee Nation will make this RFP and the successful Contractor's proposal a part of the contract. This RFP and any subsequent contract and related documents shall be construed under the laws of the United States and where applicable, the Cherokee Nation. Nothing in this RFP, any subsequent documents or contract or related documents shall be construed as a waiver of limitation upon the Nation's sovereign immunity. To the extent this statement is found to be inconsistent with any other language in this RFP or any subsequent document or contract or related document, this statement shall control. This statement shall survive the completion or termination of any subsequent contract. In the event of any dispute which may affect this Agreement, the Contractor agrees the Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the United States, and where applicable, the laws of the Cherokee Nation. The Cherokee Nation will make the final decision on the contract format to be utilized for any award(s) under this procurement. There will be no Arbitration, Mediations or Indemnification clauses, and the Nation will not waive sovereign immunity. By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, the Contractor agrees to these terms and conditions.

Additional Terms and Conditions: The NATION reserves the right to include additional terms and conditions during contract negotiations. However, these terms and conditions must be within the scope of the original RFP and will be limited to price, clarification, definition, and administrative and legal requirements.

Contract Negotiations: Upon completion of the evaluation process, contract negotiations may commence. If the selected contractor fails to provide the necessary information for negotiations in a timely manner, negotiate in good faith, or cannot perform the contract for any reason, including completion of the project within the amount of funds available for the project and/or as proposed, the NATION may terminate negotiations and negotiate with the next highest ranked contractor, or terminate award of the contract. The NATION shall not be responsible for costs incurred by the contractor resulting from contract negotiations.

Terms and Conditions

Acceptance of Conditions Governing the Procurement: Vendors must indicate their acceptance of conditions governing this procurement in their cover letter.

Acceptance of Business Associate Agreement: Vendors must indicate willingness to establish agreement should it be necessary to access protected health information.

Incurring Cost: Any costs incurred by the vendor in preparation, transmittal, or presentation of any proposal, or material submitted in response to this RFP shall be borne solely by the vendor. The vendor is responsible for all costs associated with travel for on-site demonstrations upon the Nation's request.

Amended Proposals: Any vendor may submit an amended proposal before the deadline for receipt of proposals. Such amended proposals must be complete replacements for a previously submitted proposal and must be clearly identified as such in the transmittal letter.

Proposal Offer Firm: Responses to this RFP, including proposal prices, will be considered firm for 90 days after the date of receipt of the proposal.

Proprietary Information: Any restriction on any data included in any proposals must be clearly stated in the proposal itself. Each and every page of the proprietary material must be labeled or identified with the word "PROPRIETARY".

Vendor's Right to Withdraw Proposal: Vendors will be allowed to withdraw their proposals at any time prior to the deadline for receipt of proposals. The vendor must submit a written withdrawal request addressed to Jeananna Hendricks, at jeananna-hendricks@cherokee.org, and/or Janice Vaughan, Janice-vaughan@cherokee.org.

Location of Services: 14 county jurisdictional area of the Cherokee Nation in northeast Oklahoma.

Term of Proposed Contract: The NATION anticipates establishing a contract with a performance period ending September 30, 2026 with the option to renew for three (3) additional years based on satisfactory performance, mutual agreement of both parties, and funding availability.

General Responsibility: The successful contractor will provide all necessary tools, equipment, parts, supplies, labor and supervision to provide the services as outlined in this RFP scope of work.

Contractor's Compensation: Compensation to the contractor shall be based on specific price and/or rates identified in the Contractor's proposal, as negotiated. This shall include any proposed subcontractor pricing.

Subcontracts: Contractor is solely responsible for fulfillment of the contract terms. NATION will make payments only to the Contractor. Contractor must identify in response to this RFP any subcontractors that may perform services on the project. Except for those subcontractors identified by the Contractor in response to the RFP, Contractor shall not subcontract any portion

of the services to be performed under this contract without prior written approval of NATION. The NATION reserves the right to approve or disapprove any subcontractors.

Contractor shall notify NATION no less than ten (10) days in advance of its desire to subcontract and include a copy of the proposed subcontract with the proposed subcontractor. Any subcontract must be in writing and contain provisions consistent with the Contractor's obligations pursuant to this contract.

Approval of any subcontract shall not obligate NATION the subcontractor against NATION or its agents, employees, representatives, directors, officers, successors or assigns.

The Cherokee Nation, in giving such acceptance, assumes no responsibility in connection with the terms of the subcontract and their performance will be the responsibility of the Contractor. All sums due to any suppliers must be paid or will be paid within ten (10) days of receipt of any money received from the Cherokee Nation under any executed Agreement.

Debarment, Suspension, Proposed Debarment, and Other Responsibility Matters: The responding party certifies to the best of its knowledge and belief that the person, the firm, or any of its principals are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, or declared ineligible for the award of contracts by any Federal agency or Indian tribe. The bidder will also certify they have not, within a three-year period preceding this Request for Proposal, been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for: commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (Federal, State, Local or Tribal) contract or subcontract; violation of Federal or State antitrust statutes relating to the submission of offers; or commissions of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsifications or destruction of records, making false statements, and are not presently indicted for, or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity with, commission of any of the offenses enumerated in this provision. The responding party certifies they have not, within a three-year period preceding this Request for Proposal, had one or more contracts terminated for default by a Federal, State, Local or Tribal agency.

DRUG AND TOBACCO FREE WORKPLACE:

- Any Contractor performing work for the Cherokee Nation agrees to publish a statement notifying all employees, subcontractors, and other workers that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the Contractor's workplace and specifying the actions that will be taken against violators of such prohibition.
- The Nation will consider lack of enforcement or lax enforcement of the statement by Contractor a default of the contract.
- The Contractor further agrees to provide all persons engaged in performance of the contract with a copy of the statement.
- A copy of responding party's Drug Free Workplace statement shall be included with the proposal or else the successful responding party will be deemed to accept and agree to use the statement provided by Nation.
- The Contractor understands and recognizes that all Cherokee Nation buildings, whether

leased or owned, and the grounds surrounding those facilities are considered by the Nation to be a tobacco free workplace. The Contractor will ensure all employees, subcontractors, and other workers will abide by this policy.

Indemnity and Insurance: The Cherokee Nation assumes no responsibility for negligent acts of either the offeror or their employees; therefore, the offeror is responsible for obtaining the insurance coverage the NATION considers appropriate. The offeror will keep harmless and indemnify the Cherokee Nation against any or all loss, cost, damage, claims, expense or liability for all acts related to quality care management and enforcement of this contract.

Following are the insurance requirements for this contract:

- General Liability, including premises/operations and products/completed operations
\$1,000,000 each occurrence/\$2,000,000 annual aggregate
Such policy will name Cherokee Nation as an additional insured and include a waiver of subrogation in favor of the Cherokee Nation.
- Professional Liability covering professional services rendered under this contract.
\$1,000,000 each wrongful act/\$3,000,000 annual aggregate.
Professional Liability policies issued on a claims-made basis must include a three-year extended reporting endorsement, in the event the coverage is cancelled or non-renewed by the contractor.
- Pollution Liability, including Hazardous Waste Operations
Each Claim/Per Occurrence \$5,000,000 and \$5,000,000 Aggregate.
Such Policy will name Cherokee Nation as an Additional Insured by endorsement and include a waiver of subrogation in favor of Cherokee Nation.
- Automobile Liability, including hired and non-owned auto
\$1,000,000 combined single limit
Such policy will name Cherokee Nation as an additional insured and include a waiver of subrogation in favor of the Cherokee Nation.
- Workers' Compensation – statutory to the State of jurisdiction
Employers' Liability - \$500,000/\$500,000/\$500,000
Such policy will include a waiver of subrogation in favor of the Cherokee Nation

All coverage will be written with an AM Best "A X" rated carrier. Contractor will provide a certificate of insurance to the Cherokee Nation, evidencing coverage outlined above.

Availability of Funds: Any contract awarded as a result of this RFP is contingent on the appropriation of funds. A contract award may be terminated or reduced in scope if sufficient appropriations or authorizations do not exist. This vendor will be notified in writing of such terminations. The vendor will accept, as final, the Nation's decision as to whether sufficient appropriations and authorizations are available.

Legal Review: The Nation requires that all vendors agree to be bound by the general requirements contained in this RFP. Any vendor concerns must be properly brought to the attention of Michelle Parsons, Cherokee Nation Acquisition Management.

Governing Law: This RFP and subsequent agreements shall be governed by, construed, and enforced in accordance with the laws of the United States, and where applicable, the laws of the Cherokee Nation.

Contract Terms and Conditions: The contract between the Cherokee Nation and the vendor will follow the standard format of the Cherokee Nation.

Vendor's Terms and Conditions: Vendors must submit with the proposal a complete set of any additional terms and conditions that they expect to have included in a contract negotiated with the Cherokee Nation.

Right to Waive Minor Irregularities: The proposal evaluation committee reserves the right to waive minor irregularities. This right is at the sole discretion of the proposal evaluation committee.

The Nation reserves the right to determine a proposal acceptable in terms of meeting RFP requirements. The Nation reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals received and to negotiate with offerors regarding the terms of their proposals or parts thereof. The Cherokee Nation reserves the right to award a contract in the best interests of the Cherokee Nation.

Ownership of Proposals: All documents submitted in response to this RFP shall become the property of the Cherokee Nation. Responses received will be retained by the Acquisition Management Department.

Prompt Payment: The successful firm agrees to pay all sums due to subcontractors, laborers and material suppliers within ten (10) days of receipt of payment by the Cherokee Nation.

Review of Proposals

1. **Proposal Format:** Proposals must be received no later than **5:00 p.m. on May 01, 2026.** Any and all costs to submit proposals are the responsibility of the offeror. Sealed proposals may be mailed to Cherokee Nation, Sealed Bid: Cherokee National Trail System's Strategic Plan, Attn: Jeananna Hendricks, P.O. Box 948, Tahlequah, Oklahoma 74465 or hand delivered to Cherokee Nation, Sealed Bid: CN Trail Systems Strategic Plan, 17665 S. Muskogee, Tahlequah OK 74464. Response to RFP – Cherokee National Trail System Strategic Plan. Any proposal received after the date and time will not be considered eligible for award. Cherokee Nation reserves the right to reject any and all proposals. Cherokee Nation reserves the right to determine if a proposal meets stated requirements. Award will be made subject to availability of funds. No offeror may withdraw their proposal within 90 days after proposal due date.
2. **Table of Contents:** The proposal will have a table of contents with page numbers and pages numbered throughout the proposal (see specifics under Specifications Section).
3. **General Information:** Brief introduction which includes (see specifics under Specifications Section):
 - a. The contractor's name and address.
 - b. Statement that indicates the proposal is valid for at least 90 days from the proposal submission deadline.
 - c. Statement that indicates the contractor's willingness to perform the services described in this RFP.
 - d. Proof of any other licenses and/or registrations as required by this RFP.
 - e. A statement that all staff and other resources which are required to perform the services described in this RFP will be made available by your organization over the life of the anticipated contract.
 - f. Statement that the signatory has authority to bind the contractor; and
 - g. Signature of authorized individual.
4. Specific requirements listed in the Specifications provided by the Nation's Human Resources in this RFP must be included in responses.
5. **TERO CERTIFICATION:** Indian preference will be given only to responding parties who provide proof of current certification from the Cherokee Nation Tribal Employments Office (TERO) located in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, telephone number (918) 453-5000. Indian preference will be applied in accordance with Cherokee Nation Acquisition Management Policy and Procedures. Proof of TERO certification must accompany and be included in proposal submittal.

6. **Responsiveness:** Prior to evaluation, each proposal shall be reviewed to determine whether or not it is responsive. Nonresponsive proposals shall be eliminated and will not be evaluated. Factors that may result in a proposal being declared nonresponsive are:
- a. Not providing evidence of meeting the Minimum Requirements.
 - b. Substantive and material conflicts of interest which were not declared and/or were declared and determined to be significant enough that the NATION requested the potential contractor not submit a proposal.
 - c. Substantive and material noncompliance to requirements of the RFP proposal submission guideline.
 - d. Not providing a price, if applicable.
7. **Evaluation Process:**
- The Nation will appoint a proposal evaluation committee.
 - Vendor’s proposals must meet all mandatory specifications or they will be disqualified.
 - The proposal evaluation committee will review all proposals received, determine if the mandatory specifications have been met, and, if so, score the proposals in accordance with the predefined scoring methodology.
 - Composite scores will be developed summarizing the individual scoring efforts of each proposal evaluation team member.
 - Vendors will be ranked by composite score.
 - The vendor with the highest score will be selected.
8. **Evaluation Factors:** The following is a summary of the proposal evaluation factors and the point value assigned to each. These factors will be used in the evaluation of the individual vendor proposals. The evaluation factors are listed below and must be clearly stated and addressed and stated in the proposal. Points will be awarded on the basis of the following factors:

| SPECIFICATIONS | POINTS |
|---|------------|
| 1. Experience, service and support provided | 25 |
| 2. Cost & Price | 25 |
| 3. Ability to meet established dates to include delivery performance | 25 |
| 4. Service Portal and on-line access/reports | 10 |
| 5. Insurance (submitted with proposal) | 10 |
| 6. Indian Preference/TERO – Copy of Certification must be included in RFP | 10 |
| TOTAL | 105 |

Notice of Award: After award of Contract, award information will be posted on the Nation’s website www.cherokeebids.org with RFP announcement.

Request for Proposal (RFP)

Title: Cherokee National Trail System Strategic Plan

Introduction

The Cherokee Nation Natural Resources Department is soliciting sealed proposals from qualified firms or teams (“Respondents”) to develop a comprehensive Strategic Plan for the Cherokee National Trail System (CNTS). This plan will support the implementation of the Cherokee National Trail System Act (“the Act”), which mandates the long-term planning, development, construction, and/or designation of a system of pedestrian and bicycle trails across the Cherokee Nation Reservation. The plan will guide long-term development of a connected, culturally grounded network of walking, biking, and multi-use trails that support health, mobility, tourism, environmental stewardship, and Cherokee cultural preservation.

This RFP outlines the scope of work, proposal requirements, evaluation criteria, and submission instructions.

Background

The Cherokee Nation Reservation spans approximately 7,000 square miles across northeastern Oklahoma, encompassing diverse landscapes, communities, and cultural sites. The Nation seeks to expand outdoor recreation opportunities, improve community connectivity, and strengthen cultural tourism through a unified trails strategy.

The strategic plan will support:

- Community wellness and active transportation
- Cultural and historical interpretation
- Environmental conservation and land stewardship
- Economic development and tourism
- Partnerships with other sovereigns and external entities
- Long-term statutory milestones, reporting and oversight mechanisms

The Nation intends for this plan to serve as a guiding document for phased implementation over the next ten (10) years.

Purpose of RFP

The purpose of this RFP is to solicit proposals from qualified consultants to work collaboratively with Cherokee Nation, community stakeholders, and leadership to develop a strategic plan to include, but not limited to:

- Proposed trail system depicted on a map of the Cherokee Nation Reservation with delineated existing trails, approximate location of future trails, and the basic land title status through which each proposed component passes.
- Approximate economic impact
- Public Health benefit
- Approximate investment to complete CNTS
- Potential partnerships
- Timeline for major milestones

Scope of Work

The scope includes, but is not limited to, the following tasks:

1. Project Management & Coordination

- a. Kickoff meeting with Cherokee Nation project team
- b. Regular progress meetings
- c. Project timeline for strategic planning
- d. Project timeline for construction completion not to exceed September 20, 2036.

2. Community & Stakeholder Engagement

- a. Engagement strategy tailored to Cherokee communities
- b. Integration of Cherokee language and cultural values
- c. Identification of potential partners for development, construction, management and cross-jurisdictional trail connectivity.

3. Existing Conditions Assessment

- a. Inventory of existing trails, parks, public lands, and rights-of-way
- b. Review of relevant tribal, federal, state, and local plans
- c. GIS mapping of environmental constraints, land ownership, and cultural resources
- d. Identification of gaps, barriers, and opportunities

4. Benefit Analysis

- a. Approximate Economic Impact of:
 - i. The fully completed CNTS
 - ii. Any component trails that may be completed ahead of full-system buildout
- b. Public Health Impact in consultation of Cherokee Nation Public Health:
 - i. Public health benefits of a fully completed CNTS
 - ii. Public health benefits of individual trail segments

5. System Vision & Concept Development

- a. Vision statement and guiding principles
- b. Conceptual trail network map
- c. Identification of trail typologies (walking, biking, accessible routes, etc.)

6. Design Standards & Branding with consultation of Cherokee Nation Communications

- a. Development of standardized insignia
- b. Trail design guidelines (surfacing, width, accessibility, safety, amenities)
- c. Wayfinding and signage standards
- d. Branding concepts reflecting Cherokee identity
- e. Recommendations for interpretive signage and cultural education

7. Prioritization & Implementation Strategy

- a. Project prioritization matrix

- b. Phased development plan
- c. Cost estimates for priority segments
- d. Maintenance and operations considerations
- e. Funding and grant strategy (tribal, federal, partnerships)

* The plan must demonstrate how proposed routes advance the following national interests identified in the Act: Access to areas of notable natural beauty; Access to locations of historic significance; Meaningful accessibility for individuals with mobility challenges; Geographic and population equity; and connectivity to trail systems beyond the Cherokee Nation Reservation.

Final Deliverables

- Draft CNTS strategic plan by October 1, 2026.
 - Maps, narrative, analyses, and all required components
 - Ready for release to Council and the public for a 60-day review period
- Final CNTS Strategic Plan no later than December 31, 2026
 - To incorporate revisions after the 60-day review period
- Public-Facing Presentation Materials
 - Executive Summary documents and visual aids for public engagement
 - Digital map files compatible with Cherokee Nation GIS

Minimum Qualifications

- Expertise in trail system planning, landscape architecture, outdoor recreation design, or similar disciplines
- Experience in largescale, reservation wide planning projects
- Capacity to conduct economic and public health impact analyses (directly or through subcontracted specialists)
- Familiarity with Indigenous land management principles preferred
- Demonstrated ability to conduct culturally respectful community engagement

Proposal Requirements

Proposals should include the following:

1. Background and Qualifications

- a. Provide a clear overview of the organization, including its mission, history, and areas of expertise. Include a summary of two to three relevant projects that demonstrate the firm's capability and experience in delivering comparable work

2. Project Team

- a. Identify all key personnel who will be assigned to the project. For each team member, include the individual's name, role, and a concise professional biography outlining relevant qualifications and experience.

3. Proposed Approach

- a. Describe the proposed methodology and overall approach for completing the project. This section should include:
 - i. A detailed explanation of the methods and analytical processes to be used
 - ii. A culturally responsive community engagement strategy
 - iii. A proposed project timeline outlining major tasks, milestones, and deliverables

4. Cost Proposal

- a. Provide a comprehensive cost proposal that presents the total project cost along with a detailed breakdown of fees. Clearly identify any optional or add-on services, including associated costs, if applicable.

5. Administrative Requirements

- a. Proof of Tribal Employment Rights Office (TERO) compliance
- b. Proof of liability insurance
- c. List of subcontractors
- d. Conflict of interest disclosures

Timeline

- RFP issued: 4/13/2026
- Questions due by: 4/16/2026
- Proposal Due Date: 4/30/2026
- Selected Consultant: 5/1/2026
- Anticipated Award Date: 5/15/2026
- Draft Plan Submitted: 10/1/2026
- Final Deliverables Due: 12/31/2026

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated on:

- Alignment with organizational needs and values
- Quality and clarity of proposed approach
- Relevant experience and qualifications
- Cost-effectiveness
- References

Additional Terms

- Cherokee Nation reserves the right to reject any and all proposals.
- All work products become the property of the Cherokee Nation.
- Any program or publication resulting from this project must attribute credit to the Cherokee National Trail System, per the Act.
- The successful Respondent may be required to enter into additional agreements necessary to perform the work.