



WORKING WITH
COMMUNITIES IN
PEEL, TORONTO &
YORK REGION

Request for proposals

Indigenous Investment Framework

March 2026

1. Invitation

UWGT invites proposals from Indigenous consultants (individuals or teams) with demonstrated experience in community-based research and engagement, nonprofit and philanthropic sectors, and the health and social services ecosystem. This project will generate evidence-informed community validated insights that will strengthen alignment between UWGT's strategic priorities and UWGT's Community Investment Funding Model Refresh, as we advance UWGT's 10-year strategy to build vibrant, equitable communities across the GTA by 2035.

The consultant will bring deep understanding of the lived realities of urban Indigenous communities across Peel, Toronto and York Region, describe their relationship or connection to Peel, Toronto, or York Region. The consultant will have expertise in applying Indigenous, methodologies, analytical frameworks and engagement approaches that are respectful, culturally grounded, relational, must enable meaningful interpretation of community priorities, and investment patterns affecting Indigenous-led and serving organizations.

The work should be grounded in a Two-Eyed Seeing approach—_weaving strengths of Indigenous and Western knowledge systems through a relational process, while centering Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing throughout the research and engagement process.

2. Project Objective

The objective of this project is to produce:

1. **A community-facing Indigenous Investment Analysis Report** (macro–mezzo–micro).
2. **An internal-facing analysis and recommendations** for UWGT to influence future funding investment model considerations.
3. **Evidence-informed, community-validated Indigenous Investment Framework** that integrates findings from deliverables 1 and 2 and maximizes community impact relevant to Indigenous communities across Peel, Toronto, and York Region.

These deliverables will inform the **Community Investment (CI) Funding Model Refresh**, deepen UWGT's understanding of Indigenous community priorities, and support equitable and culturally grounded investment approaches.

While the primary geographic focus is the GTA in general and specifically Peel, Toronto and York Region, the analysis should also consider relevant provincial and federal trends, including government priorities, funding patterns, and broader social and economic developments.

3. Background

Since 2017, United Way Greater Toronto (UWGT) has been working with greater intention to strengthen its relationships with Indigenous-led organizations and Indigenous communities across Peel, Toronto and York Region. In 2021, the Indigenous Partnership Council (IPC) was established, and is led by Indigenous voices, guided by Indigenous decision making and remains accountable to First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples the Council serves across Peel, Toronto and York Region.

Through ongoing discussions with the IPC, UWGT has heard and affirms the importance of Indigenous-led, evidence-informed, and community-validated approaches when considering the community investment model refresh. This includes recognizing how Indigenous knowledge systems, methodologies, community identified priorities will need to be weighed in consideration with broader insights generated through a PESTLE analysis. While the primary geographic focus is the GTA in general and Peel, Toronto and York Region specifically, the analysis should also consider relevant provincial and federal trends, including government priorities, funding patterns, and broader social and economic developments.

UWGT is currently reviewing its community investment portfolio to align with the organization's 10-year strategic plan. The CI refresh process uses a range of tools and approaches to assess sector trends, investment priorities in relation to UWGT's mission and the evolving needs of communities UWGT serves across Toronto, York and Peel region.

4. Purpose

This work is grounded in a commitment to ensuring UWGT's decisions are relational, data-driven, future focused, and that approaches intended to benefit Indigenous communities are meaningfully informed by Indigenous perspectives, and aligned with the Seven Grandfathers Teachings, which guides the Indigenous Partnership Council (IPC). Indigenous led and serving organizations have consistently emphasized the importance of funding approaches that reflect consideration for cultural contexts, community priorities, financial flexibility and upholds self-determination. The Indigenous Investment Framework will translate the analysis into a practical, evidence-informed, and community-validated tool, that supports UWGT in considering Indigenous perspectives, as UWGT works toward its vision of building a GTA for all by 2035.

UWGT hopes to answer the following questions through this work:

1. What broad trends and urgent or disruptive issues are shaping the community services and philanthropic sectors, and how might these shifts impact Indigenous-led and Indigenous serving organizations at the macro, mezzo, and micro levels?
2. Which areas present the greatest potential for impact and offer the strongest opportunities to maximize UWGT's role, influence, and investments in Indigenous communities?

3. What strategic actions can UWGT take to remain responsive to Indigenous communities, including community partners, Indigenous-led organizations, and donors—while strengthening UWGT’s resilience, and ability to futureproof its investment strategy?
4. What community-validated insights, grounded in Indigenous worldviews and aligned with UWGT’s mission to meet urgent human needs and improve social conditions, should guide UWGT’s approach to investments?
5. Where might increase Indigenous-focused investments be both possible and meaningful, and under what conditions? What enablers, risks, barriers, or misalignments should UWGT consider or avoid?

5. Key Activities

UWGT will rely on the consultant(s) to propose a methodology and to complete the deliverables of this project.

1. Research & Analysis

- Conduct a comprehensive scan and analysis of external research and UWGT materials to identify current trends and issues affecting Indigenous communities.
- Assess alignment between identified trends and UWGT’s impact areas:
- Housing Stability, Community Real Estate, Financial Opportunity, and Wellbeing, Wellness & Belonging.
- Review and synthesize all relevant source documents supporting the analysis.

2. Indigenous-Led Methodological Approach

- Apply Indigenous research methodologies and engagement principles throughout all phases of the project.
- Work collaboratively with UWGT, the Indigenous Partnership Council (IPC), and Advisory Circle members throughout all phases of the project.

3. Engagement

- Develop a culturally grounded key informant interview guide and question set.
- Lead and conduct engagement key informant interviews with UWGT staff, Indigenous community partners, Indigenous-led and serving UWGT funds across Toronto, Peel and York Region.
- Summarize findings, themes, and insights emerging from engagement activities.

4. Synthesis & Reporting

- Integrate research findings, community insights, and interview feedback into a cohesive analysis that directly shape each of the deliverables.
- Integrate research findings, interview insights, and community feedback.
- Produce drafts and final versions of the three deliverables.

6. Key Deliverables

The following deliverables will need to be included to complete this project:

1. Community-Facing Indigenous Investment Analysis (Macro–Mezzo–Micro)

A comprehensive, accessible, evidence-informed and community-validated report that:

- Identifies current and emerging trends, funding patterns, opportunities, and risks to Indigenous-led and Indigenous-serving organizations.
- This should include analysis of Indigenous community priorities through community generated reports and how that relates to UWGT impact areas, including housing stability, community real estate financial opportunity, and community wellbeing, wellness and belonging at the macro, mezzo, and micro levels.
- This community facing report should serve as a shared learning resource and an act of reciprocity for the Indigenous Partnership Council and the Indigenous communities we serve. It should inform future considerations across philanthropic, nonprofit, and broader social impact sectors, support community partners, emphasizing that any future responses must always be made with the guidance and partnership with local Indigenous communities.
- This community facing report will support informed contributions to UWGT's Community Impact, 2035 strategic priorities.

2. Internal Analysis and Recommendations for UWGT

A UWGT focused analysis that:

- Synthesizes key issues, opportunities, and identifies potential areas of impact for Indigenous investments within our current funding model for community service and real estate and future state considerations.
- Identifies enabling conditions, risks and opportunities for greater alignment.
- Outlines practical considerations and possible actions UWGT may consider, including how insights from the analysis could inform partnership approaches, and implementation of the development of the Indigenous Investment Framework.
- Provides clear recommendations on where increased Indigenous-focused investments are feasible, the enabling conditions required and identifies risks or misalignments with UWGT's proposed investment model, paying specific attention to advancing UWGT's Reconciliation and Equity KPI as it relates to Indigenous communities.
- Directly supports decision-making for the CI Refresh and internal alignment across research, evaluation, and public affairs.

3. Indigenous Investment Framework

A community validated, Two-Eyed Seeing Indigenous Investment Framework that:

- Synthesizes findings from Deliverables 1 and 2 into a coherent, actionable tool.

- Provides guidance on funding models, investment streams, governance, and partnership approaches that uphold Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing.
- Maximizes community impact with Indigenous Peoples across the GTA strengthens Indigenous self-determination and community-driven responses.
- Supports UWGT in strengthening relational, evidence-informed, including data-driven, and community-validated future proof of investment strategies.

4: Presentation Deck

- A clear and accessible slide deck synthesizing the key findings, insights, and recommendations from Deliverables 1–3. This deck will support internal updates, leadership briefings, and knowledge-sharing discussions with the IPC, UWGT teams, and Indigenous community partners.

7. Consultant role and relationship with UWGT

The consultant(s) will report directly to Michelle MacDonald, Senior Manager, Indigenous Collaboration, and Sadora Asefaw, Executive Lead, Reconciliation and Equity. In addition, they will work collaboratively with UWGT staff, members of the IPC, and related partners across Peel, Toronto, and York Region. The consultant(s) will be asked to attend meetings with the project team and advisory circle.

8. Timelines and deliverables

The project is expected to begin in May 2026 and conclude by August 2026.

RFP released	March 27, 2026
Proposal submission	May 5, 2026
Selection and awarding of contract	Week of May 8, 2026
Initial meeting with UWGT to review workplan and implementation timelines	Week of May 11, 2026
Final submission	August 23, 2026

9. Consultant qualifications and considerations

The proposal will be assessed with the following criteria:

- First Nations, Inuit, Métis consultant/led consulting firm with lived experiences and understanding of Indigenous world views, unique histories, diverse protocols, cultures, and anti-oppressive and anti-racist values.
- Deep understanding of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples governance models, social, health and cultural needs.
- Demonstrated knowledge of the community, non-profit, social, health, and cultural needs.
- Demonstrated knowledge of and experience with public policy analysis, particularly related to federal, provincial, regional, and municipal government funding priorities and regulatory frameworks, economic and philanthropic sector analysis, including trends in funding, donor behaviour, and market conditions.
- Social research, with a focus on shifting demographics, community needs, and equity considerations.
- Ability to analyze quantitative and qualitative data and produce a plain language written report.
- Ability to work collaboratively with UWGT staff, the Project Team, and the IPC.
- Resources and ability to manage this project as necessary to meet deadlines and delivery of high-quality deliverables.
- Proven experience in organizing, facilitating, and evaluating community consultations.
- We value a demonstrated commitment in approaching relationships and the work with respect, kindness and tact, navigating issues as they arise with care and regard for confidentiality in all interactions.
- We are prioritizing those with demonstrated experience working across Peel, Toronto, and York Region and have existing relationships with the Rightsholders and the broader Indigenous communities across the regions.

10. Proposal requirements

The proposal should not exceed 3,000 words in total, including details on how the budget will be used. Type size should be 12 pt. The following specific content should be included in the proposal

Name, Contact and Reference Information

- Name and contact information
- The lead consultant's connection and relationship to their First Nations, Inuit, Métis community.

- Description of the lead consultant’s relationship, related expertise, including experience in projects involving First Nations, Inuit, Métis Peoples, in cultural and community supports, health, mental wellbeing, or similar projects.
- 2-3 work samples completed reports.
- Demonstrated commitment to recognizing, respecting and upholding Indigenous self-determination, Seven Grandfathers Teaching and equity.
- Three (3) references for whom the applicant has completed relevant projects and at least one of those references should be from an Indigenous-led and serving organization and/or community.

1. **Proposal**

- a) Overview of the applicant’s understanding of the scope and requirements of the project, and the approach that the applicant will take.
- b) A work plan that considers the deliverables and implementation timelines.
- c) A budget for the total cost of the work, including all personnel, materials, and other expenditures.

11. Budget

The total budget should not exceed a maximum of \$25,000 including honoraria and taxes.

12. Application deadline

Please submit one (1) electronic copy of your proposal by 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 5, 2026, to:

Michelle MacDonald
Senior Manager, Indigenous Collaboration
MiMacDonald@uwgt.org

Subject/Reference: Indigenous Investment Framework

All candidates can anticipate a response by May 13, 2026, regarding the status of their application

13. Questions/inquiries

Michelle MacDonald
Senior Manager, Indigenous Collaboration
MiMacDonald@uwgt.org