United Way Greater Toronto

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES IN PEEL, TORONTO & YORK REGION

Request for proposals

Jane Finch Community Development Plan - Indigenous Implementation Plan

October 2026

1. Invitation

United Way Greater Toronto (UWGT) invites Indigenous consultants with demonstrated experience in community-based research to respond to this Request for Proposals (RFP). The ideal consultant will bring a strong understanding of the lived realities of urban Indigenous communities across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), including housing, health, arts and culture, economic opportunities, infrastructure, public spaces; have a proven ability to gather community insights in ways that are respectful, culturally grounded, and collaborative. The consultant will lead the development of a concise Indigenous Implementation Plan for the Jane Finch Community Development Plan. This work will support meaningful Indigenous engagement, uphold Indigenous self-determination, and translate earlier insights into actionable next steps, that will be guided by an Indigenous advisory circle with a relationship to the Jane Finch community and City of Toronto's approach to implementation.

2. Background

The Jane Finch community is entering a period of significant transformation with the opening of the Finch West Light Rail Transit (LRT), bringing both opportunity and risk. The area has long been shaped by a vibrant community with rich stories, experiences, talents, and leadership. It also reflects a colonial history of structural underinvestment, systemic inequities, and ongoing experiences of displacement and disruption to the ecosystem. For Indigenous Peoples, who have longstanding relationships to these lands and whose presence in Tkaronto continues to grow—urban development processes have too often failed to reflect First Peoples knowledge systems, ways of doing, and priorities.

Building on Indigenous engagement work undertaken in 2022, this initiative that will be guided by an Indigenous advisory circle with a relationship to the Jane Finch community and in collaboration with the City of Toronto seeks to advance a renewed and intentional approach that centers Indigenous self-determination, strengthens relationships with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities, and supports the co-creation of a future grounded in holistic wellbeing, and guided by Indigenous teachings, including the concept of *Mino Bimaadiziwin* (the "good life") and the Great Laws of Peace. This work recognizes wellbeing as deeply interconnected—across individuals, families, communities, and the land—and calls for development that is restorative, culturally grounded, and community-led.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this RFP is to retain an Indigenous-led consultant to develop a clear, responsive and practical Indigenous Implementation Plan that aligns community-identified priorities grounded in Indigenous Principles and supports a pathway toward Indigenous-led participation in the long-term community development process grounded in the traditional teachings of the territory.

4. Key Activities

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

- Review prior Indigenous community consultation findings (2022) and validate what still holds true.
- Using desk research and engaging in community engagement process to conduct an analysis and draw conclusions about the trends in each priority and issue area as articulated in previous consultations.
- Develop a culturally grounded interview guide and question set with input from UWGT staff/Advisory Circle.
- Lead and conduct engagement circles, gatherings and key informant interviews
- Engage Indigenous leaders, Elders, youth, and local FNIM residents to refine and validate insights.
- Identify immediate and long-term implementation priorities informed by Indigenous knowledge. Indigenous community partners, Indigenous Leaders, Elders, Youth and local FNIM residents.
- Summarize findings, themes, and insights emerging from engagement circles, gatherings, and key informant interviews.

5. 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 in partnership with the Jane Finch Indigenous Advisory Circle and collaboratively with City of Toronto partners and members of the community. The consultant(s) will be asked to attend meetings with the Project Team and the Jane Finch Indigenous Advisory Circle (as necessary).

6. Deliverables and Timelines

The selected consultant will be responsible for delivering the following:

- **Project Workplan and Methodology**
  A detailed workplan outlining approach, timelines, engagement methods, and alignment with Indigenous knowledge systems and protocols.

- **Ongoing Collaboration and Reporting**
  Participation in project meetings, updates to Project Team and advisory structures, and incorporation of feedback throughout the engagement.
- **Honoraria**: Proposals must include resources for Elders/Knowledge Keepers and youth, with honoraria and protocols budgeted.
- **Engagement Plan and Tools**
  Design and implementation of a culturally grounded, trauma-informed engagement approach, including key informant guides, outreach strategies, and facilitation methods.
- **Summary of Validated Insights**
  A synthesis of findings from engagement activities, desk research and the 2022 engagement findings identifying key priorities, opportunities, gaps, and emerging issues.
- **Learning Brief / Findings Summary**
  A concise community accessible assessment, that synthesizes key themes, including community-identified priorities, barriers, opportunities and learnings that captures insights from this initiative and emerging learnings to support future decision making, knowledge sharing, and related initiatives.
- **Indigenous Implementation Plan (10–15 pages)**
  A clear, action-oriented roadmap that includes:

    a) Strategic priorities and focus areas

    b) Recommended actions (short- and long-term that state measurable goals)

    c) Timelines and sequencing considerations

    d) Governance and partnership considerations

    e) Resource and capacity requirements

    f) Risks, cautions, and mitigation approaches

- **Final Presentations**
  Presentation of key findings and recommendations to United Way Greater Toronto, the City of Toronto, and relevant partners/advisory bodies.

The project is expected to run from December 2026 – May 2027

- **December 2026:** Project onboarding, workplan refinement, confirmation of honoraria/protocols, and review of existing materials.

- **January 2026 - March 2027:** Development of engagement plan and tools; community engagement, validation of prior insights, and ongoing collaboration with project partners.
- **March 2027– April 2027:** Analysis, summary of validated insights, development of learning brief/findings summary, and preparation of draft Indigenous Implementation Plan and supporting materials.
- **May 2027:** Finalization and submission of a concise Indigenous Implementation Plan (10–15 pages), final presentations, and handoff of findings and recommendations.

7. Consultant qualifications and considerations

The proposal will be assessed with the following criteria:

- First Nations, Inuit, Métis consultant and/or 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 and funding environment.
- Experience with public policy, related to federal, provincial, regional, and municipal governments, priorities and regulatory frameworks.
- Demonstrated experience in Indigenous community action research, Indigenous data sovereignty principles, with a strong commitment to community-driven approaches that ensures the work benefits the communities it is intended to serve.
- Demonstrated ability to analyze quantitative and qualitative data and produce a plain language written report as well as a document to inform relevant City staff and divisions.
- Ability to work collaboratively with UWGT staff, Jane Finch Indigenous Advisory Circle, and the Project Team.
- Resources and ability to manage this project as necessary to meet deadlines and delivery high-quality deliverables.
- Proven experience in organizing, facilitating, and evaluating community consultations.
- Demonstrates a 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.

- Priority will be given to those with demonstrated experience working across Toronto and have existing relationships with the Rightsholders and the broader Indigenous communities across the regions.

8. 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

9. Budget

The total budget should not exceed a maximum of $75,000 including honoraria, participatory support and taxes.

10. Application deadline

Please submit one (1) electronic copy of your proposal by 5 p.m. on November 25, 2026

Michelle MacDonald Senior Manager- Indigenous Collaboration

MiMacDonald@uwgt.org

Subject/Reference: Jane Finch Community Development Plan - Indigenous Implementation Plan:

All candidates can anticipate a response by the week of November 30, 2026, regarding the status of their application.

11. Questions/inquiries

Please contact Michelle MacDonald – Senior Manager Indigenous Collaboration

Mimacdonald@uwgr.org

If you have any questions regarding this RFP.