



Women Are Sacred Conference

Request for Proposals – FY26

National Indigenous Women's Resource Center

RE: RFP for Event Planner for the Women Are Sacred Conference, Phase 1 Planning

Location: Southern California

Event Dates: October 2027

Event Duration: 3 days

Attendee Count: 600-800 anticipated in-person attendees.

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is issued by the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center (NIWRC). The purpose of this RFP is to establish a contract with a qualified event planner to organize, coordinate, and support phase 1 planning of the Women Are Sacred Conference (WAS), including concept development, planning, event site selection and inspection, contract negotiation, drafting RFPs, budget creation and management, creating an event planning timeline, and a role-based staffing plan. *Please note the following RFP is for phase 1 only; a separate RFP for subsequent phases will be released at a later date.* For more detailed information, see the *Scope of Work* below.

Organization Information:

NIWRC is the only national resource center specifically dedicated to ending domestic violence against Native women and addressing safety in Tribal communities. NIWRC houses the National Indian Resource Center Addressing Domestic Violence and Safety for Indian Women under the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA). In this capacity, NIWRC is charged with providing technical assistance and training resources to Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations to build their capacity to respond to domestic violence, consistent with the findings of section 901 of the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005, while also strengthening the intervention and prevention efforts to increase the safety of Indian women in support of the purposes of section 902 of the same Act.

Mission:

To provide national leadership to promote safety for Native women and communities by supporting culturally grounded grassroots advocacy.

Vision:

Collective liberation through the restoration of sovereignty and safety of Native women and communities.

Event Description:

The Women Are Sacred Conference has a long history of landmark achievements that continue to grow and gain momentum with each biannual event. It is a multifaceted, culturally specific, grassroots advocacy-based endeavor that continues to inform each event by the last. This event provides a safe and fruitful environment for relatives from across 500+ Tribal Nations and communities to network, listen, learn, and support one another, with the ultimate goal of increasing the safety of Native women and relatives in our Tribal communities. This



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will be a three-day event with an attendance goal of 600-800 participants. WAS is a collaborative effort led by NIWRC, in partnership with 14+ other cosponsoring organizations.

The conference has one general assembly in the morning on the first day and one general assembly in the afternoon on the last day. There will be 8-10 breakout sessions running simultaneously all three days, along with information booths and vendor tables (# depends on venue space). A luncheon is provided for the Tillie Black Bear Award presentation on the first day for all attendees. In addition, WAS offers optional early-morning and evening events on days one and two.

Scope of Work:

NIWRC is seeking an experienced event planner to successfully plan, organize, and support the lead organizing staff with phase 1 planning for this event. The event planner must be experienced, professional, detail-oriented, culturally sensitive, and flexible and adaptable. The selected event planner will be expected to demonstrate strong organizational, problem-solving, written, and verbal communication skills. The selected event planner must remain calm under pressure and negotiate in NIWRC's best interests.

The selected event planner will report directly to the lead organizing staff. All budgetary, legal, and contractual decisions necessary to complete the work outlined in this proposal will be approved by the Chief Executive Officer. The selected event planner will be expected to provide all services necessary and appropriate to plan and manage WAS, including the services detailed in this RFP.

Event Planner Primary Functions

Phase 1 (July 1, 2026, to September 30, 2026)

Goal: Pre-planning and venue contract.

This RFP is for phase 1 only. A separate RFP for phases 2 and 3 will be released at a later date.

General Management

The selected event planner will provide overall project management and coordination for Phase 1 planning activities, including:

- Organize and participate in staff meetings to stay informed and provide reminders and updates of deadlines and major tasks.
 - Create and manage calendar invites
 - Provide agendas in advance
 - Facilitate
 - Identify potential challenges and recommend solutions
 - Provide progress updates and budget review
- Create a detailed event planning timeline with all logistical and key organizing deadlines and tasks.
 - Food & beverage deadlines
 - Banquet event order deadlines
 - Rooming list deadlines
 - Room reservation deadlines
 - Target dates for the submission of presenter materials to NIWRC
 - OFVPS 90-day requirements
 - OFVPS review dates
 - Other dates identified by lead staff
- In collaboration with lead staff, create and manage event budgets to ensure planning and execution stay within budget parameters.
- Coordinate project file management with lead staff using Google Drive and Google Docs.

Deliverables

By September 30, 2026, the selected event planner will complete the following:

- Develop and disseminate an event site RFP and provide at least three venue options, including a comparison matrix, a ranking of recommended venues, and documentation supporting the final venue recommendation.
- Conduct venue evaluations and site inspections to assess capacity, layout, accessibility, lodging

availability, and suitability.

- Negotiate and finalize the venue contract in collaboration with the lead staff
- Develop a detailed event planning timeline that identifies key planning milestones and deadlines for future conference phases.
- Coordinate venue-related planning requirements, including food and beverage considerations, rooming needs, AV requirements, floor plans, and other logistical considerations necessary to inform future planning phases.
- Create a role-based staffing plan and planning recommendations to support future event planning and execution.
- Organize and maintain planning documentation, venue records, and project files to support continuity into future phases of conference planning.
- Other duties as assigned and agreed upon by both parties.

Phase 2 (October 2026 to September 20 27)

Goal: Programming and logistics.

A separate RFP for phases 2 and 3 will be released at a later date.

General Management

- Organize and participate in staff meetings to stay informed and provide reminders and updates of deadlines and major tasks.
 - Create and manage calendar invites
 - Provide agendas in advance
 - Facilitate
 - Present challenges and proposed solutions
 - Provide progress updates and budget review
- Using the event planning timeline created in phase 1, manage and update all logistical and key organizing deadlines and tasks.
 - Food & beverage deadlines
 - Banquet event order deadlines
 - Rooming list deadlines
 - Room reservation deadlines
 - Target dates for the submission of presenter materials to NIWRC
 - OFVPS 90-day requirements
 - OFVPS review dates
 - Other dates identified by lead staff
- In collaboration with lead staff, create and manage event budgets to ensure planning and execution stay within budget parameters.
- Coordinate project file management with lead staff using Google Drive and Google Docs.

- Manage the submission of all invoices to ensure payments are made in a timely manner.
- Create a role-based staffing plan for the event to ensure operational efficiency and an enhanced attendee experience.
- Other duties as assigned, agreed by both parties.

Deliverables

- Manage and coordinate general logistics, including catering, venue coordination, contracts, staging, special events, floor plans, seating plans, décor, technical equipment, presentations, and any other relevant tasks as required, in coordination with lead staff.
- The hotel will require notifications for selections and changes in our needs along the way. The event planner, in accordance with and in support of the lead staff, will be the primary conduit for these notifications to the hotel. They will keep the main lists, confirm all updates, and copy lead staff on all changes and communication for transparency, since all adjustments are made with consideration of the overall budget managed by NIWRC. Frequent, transparent communication is a must in this support section.
 - F&B, BEO, final headcounts, etc.
 - Rooming list
 - AV needs for all sessions
 - Reviewing BEOs with the required staff for final numbers.
 - Review of the final bill for any edits with the required staff.
 - Follow up with the hotel as needed.
- Work with lead staff to coordinate vendor processes.
 - Pre-registration
 - Ongoing communication and follow-up for vendor information and notices
 - Create assigned spaces/ map
 - Payment confirmation
 - Responsive to vendor needs before the event.
- Event Marketing
 - Assist with implementing the marketing and communication plan.
 - Ensure the timely execution of all creative materials for the event. This includes invitations, letters, press kits, press materials, table signs, sponsor signage, advertising materials, etc.
- Management of event software for registration.
 - All participant registration will go through an identified system.
 - Paid participants
 - Unpaid participants
 - Staff registrations
 - Scholarship participants

- Printing and promotional item vendors sourcing:
 - Work with the lead staff for event printing and ordering. This may include name badges, surveys/evaluations, registration and session signage, or other promotional items.
 - Getting quotes from vendors, organizing, tracking deadlines and key tasks, and storing files for printing.
 - All finals are approved by lead staff before printing or ordering occurs.
- Work with lead staff to finalize ticket pricing.
- Manage role-based staffing plan for the event to ensure operational efficiency and an enhanced attendee experience.
- Other duties as assigned, agreed by both parties.

Phase 3 (October 2027-TBD)

Goal: Execution and closing post-event duties.

A separate RFP for phases 2 and 3 will be released at a later date.

General Management

- Organize and attend staff meetings to stay informed and provide reminders and updates on deadlines and major tasks.
 - Create and manage calendar invites
 - Provide agendas in advance
 - Facilitate
 - Present challenges and proposed solutions
 - Provide progress updates and budget review
- Using the event planning timeline created in phase 1, manage and update all logistical and key organizing deadlines and tasks.
 - Food & beverage deadlines
 - Banquet event order deadlines
 - Rooming list deadlines
 - Room reservation deadlines
 - Target dates for the submission of presenter materials to NIWRC
 - OFVPS 90-day requirements
 - OFVPS review dates
 - Other dates identified by lead staff
- Registration management
 - Coordinate with the lead staff for the on-site registration process and setup
 - Check in all participants
 - Process onsite registration if required

- Taking payment if payment has not been received.
- Work with lead staff to create and support a check-in process
 - Presenters
 - Scholarships
 - Vendors
- Management of event software for registration.
 - All participant registration will go through an identified system.
 - Paid participants
 - Unpaid participants
 - Staff registrations
 - Scholarship participants
- Coordinate project file management with lead staff using Google Drive and Google Docs.
- Manage the submission of all invoices to ensure payments are made in a timely manner.
- In collaboration with lead staff, manage event budgets to ensure planning and execution stay within budget parameters.
- Other duties as assigned, agreed by both parties.

Deliverables

- On-site pre-event organizing
 - Assist in the setup and breakdown of all stations.
 - Help desk
 - Registration
 - Others, as decided by the lead staff.
 - Receive all packages shipped to the Specialty Institute venue. This will require tracking of shipping to ensure it is received on-site. Locate and place packages in their appropriate areas. ○ Bag stuffing for registration day: Maintain a list of identified items that will be stuffed into the event bags. Stuff a set number of bags and keep a count for NIWRC records.
 - Receive all packages shipped to the WAS venue. This will require tracking of shipping to ensure it is received on-site.
 - Locate and place packages in their appropriate areas.
 - Bag stuffing for registration day
 - Maintain a list of items identified for stuffing into the event bags. Stuff a set number of bags and keep a count for NIWRC records.
 - Prep name badges
 - This number will align with registration numbers.
 - Item runner
 - There will be items to be picked up and brought back in a timely manner to support the event.

- Designated key carriers for all spaces. NIWRC lead staff will be key carriers, but we require additional carriers to assist with getting in and out of spaces such as session rooms before and/or after scheduled session times, as needed or required by the agenda.
 - Work with lead staff to coordinate vendor processes.
 - Pre-registration and on-site check-in
 - Payment confirmation
 - Responsive to vendor needs before the event, as well as on-site.
 - Manage role-based staffing plan for the event to ensure operational efficiency and an enhanced attendee experience.
 - Day-of Event
 - In coordination with the lead staff, supervise all aspects of the event and implementation of logistics.
 - Assist with the Help Desk
 - Answering questions such as how to navigate the venue and identify session rooms.
 - Work with staff to set up events, conduct walkthroughs, and establish points of contact for emergent needs.
 - Check-in process for participants (see details in registration management section above).
 - Post Event
 - Coordinate evaluation and lessons learned meeting with staff.
 - Reconcile the financial report
 - Other duties as assigned, agreed by both parties.
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Human Authorship & Originality:

The selected event planner is expressly prohibited from using third-party AI platforms such as ChatGPT, Claude, etc., for the services detailed in this RFP. Planning documents and deliverables must be entirely human-authored.

Schedule of Key Dates:

- RFP Circulated: Wednesday, June 6, 2026
- Proposal Due Date: Monday July 6, 2026
- Anticipated Decision Date: Thursday July 9, 2026
- Anticipated Start Date of Project Work: Monday July 20, 2026
- Project Performance End Date: Wednesday, September 30, 2026

Request for Proposal Process

This RFP represents the opportunity to be involved in the delivery of the Women Are Sacred Conference. This is a one-time event contract. The contract duration is approximately July 2026 to September 2026. NIWRC will negotiate a contractual agreement with the preferred consultant. By responding to the RFP, the applicant understands that they will be fully responsible for meeting the requirements of the RFP and will ask and execute the necessary tasks to ensure that the event is successfully completed. The RFP review team has the right to accept or reject any or all submissions/responses to this RFP in whole or in part.

Confidentiality

All submissions will be treated as confidential between the RFP review team and each participant. The RFP review team will not disclose the contents of the RFP to other participants or the general public. NIWRC reserves the right to discuss submissions with consultants and related parties.

Contractual status

The RFP review team and NIWRC are not bound to accept any RFP. Participants should be aware that no contractual relationship with NIWRC will arise upon submission to the RFP. All submissions become the property of NIWRC.

All applicants must submit the following information:

- Name, phone number, and business address for main contact.
- Short description of work history in planning fundraising events/galas.
- Description of event planning services offered.
- Two event references (including a description) for events of similar size/type that the event planner has coordinated.
- Explanation and listing of all costs and fees the applicant proposes to charge for event planning services.
- The proposal shall not exceed 25 pages, single-spaced, in 11-point font, with 1-inch margins (excluding the cover page and appendices).
- The subcontractor must clearly state their ability to complete the project within the stated time frame.

RFP Schedule:

Respondents must submit the proposal electronically to: Paloma Sánchez, Director of National Training and Resources, at psanchez@niwrc.org. Please submit by 5:00 p.m. EST, June 22, 2026, or earlier.

Questions

Participants may submit questions about the RFP via email to Paloma Sánchez, Director of National Training and Resources, psanchez@niwrc.org. Please refrain from contacting other NIWRC staff or board members.