Request for Proposals

Second-Floor Indigenous Supportive / Transitional Housing – Feasibility, Design and Optional Implementation Services

274 Colborne Street, Brantford, Ontario

ISSUED BY: Brantford Region Indigenous Support Centre also known as **Gihękdagye Friendship Centre**

Release date	**October 29, 2026**
Optional site visit	November 4, 2026, 10:00 a.m. – confirm before issue
Deadline for questions	November 12, 2026, 12:00 p.m.
Proposal closing	November 20, 2026, 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time
Anticipated selection	Week of November 23, 2026
Anticipated start	December 1, 2026, subject to agreement and approvals
Submission email	ed@briscfc.org
RFP contact	Executive Director, Gihękdagye Friendship Centre

1. Invitation and Project Background

Gihękdagye Friendship Centre (BRISC) invites qualified Ontario architects or architect-led multidisciplinary teams to propose professional services to assess and plan the conversion of the second storey of its existing Friendship Centre building at 274 Colborne Street into culturally appropriate, affordable Indigenous supportive/transitional housing. The Centre is exploring a target of up to ten (10) self-contained bachelor/studio units. The achievable unit count is not predetermined and must be established through the feasibility assessment.

The project is intended to integrate housing with existing Friendship Centre programs and culturally grounded supports while preserving safe and functional operations for staff, participants and visitors. The Centre is pursuing capital funding; funding approval, final scope and construction authorization are not assured.

2. Procurement Approach and Phasing

The Centre intends to award Phase 1 only initially. Proponents must provide separate, optional pricing for Phase 2. No Phase 2 work may proceed without a separate written authorization and satisfactory funding and Board approvals. The Centre may stop after Phase 1, change scope or procure later services separately.

Phase 1 – Feasibility and Concept Design (base scope)

- Kickoff, records review, measured site assessment and inventory of existing building conditions, available drawings and existing infrastructure.
- Assess structural capacity, access and egress, fire separations and alarms, accessibility/AODA and Ontario Building Code requirements, plumbing, HVAC, electrical capacity, ventilation, life-safety and implications for existing Centre operations. Identify specialist investigations required and separately price them.
- Verify the parcel's exact zoning and applicable Historic Mainstreets provisions with the City of Brantford, including residential permissions, location of at-grade residential uses, heritage considerations, parking, site plan/permit requirements and any change-of-use approvals. Provide written planning findings and municipal consultation record.

- Prepare at least two practical layout options, including a maximum-feasible unit scenario and a lower-risk/lower-cost alternative, with approximate unit sizes, common/support space, circulation, entrances and security, waste/laundry and accessibility strategy.
- Hold one staff/leadership requirements session and one Board/community design input session; demonstrate how Indigenous values, privacy, trauma-informed design and cultural safety inform options.
- Develop Class D / order-of-magnitude capital cost estimates for each option, including hard costs, professional fees, permits, investigations, contingencies, escalation and likely operating-cost implications; identify major risks and funding gaps.
- Deliver a written feasibility report, concept floor plans, recommended option, go/no-go considerations, approvals pathway, project schedule and Board presentation.

Phase 1 deliverables and target timing

Within approximately 6–8 weeks of contract start (or bidder-proposed achievable schedule): existing conditions summary; code/zoning and servicing review; two concept options; preliminary capital estimate; risk register; phased implementation plan; and a final presentation to the Executive Director and Board. Identify assumptions and any matters requiring intrusive investigation.

Phase 2 – Optional detailed design and implementation support

- Schematic and design development; coordinated architectural, structural, mechanical, electrical and other engineering documents; accessibility and energy-efficiency specifications.
- Planning, heritage and building-permit applications and responses to municipal review; tender-ready drawings and specifications.
- Tender support, bid evaluation, construction administration, site reviews, change-order advice, deficiency reviews, occupancy and closeout assistance.
- Provide an itemized fee by stage, expected subconsultants and a schedule; the Centre reserves the right to authorize none, some or all of these services.

3. Design and Operating Priorities

- Maximize safe, self-contained studios while prioritizing resident dignity, safety, privacy, accessibility, affordability and a realistic construction budget.
- Maintain a functioning Indigenous Friendship Centre during any construction; address noise, dust, security, accessible circulation, fire exits and program continuity.
- Support culturally responsive and trauma-informed spaces, opportunities for cultural expression and appropriate shared/service spaces without assuming all residents have identical needs.
- Assess energy-efficient systems, water conservation, resilient materials, maintenance access and lifecycle operating costs; identify opportunities to exceed code minimums where feasible.
- Identify heritage-related constraints, building-envelope conditions and whether geotechnical, hazardous-material, environmental or other reports are necessary; do not assume an existing ESA substitutes for other investigations.
- Document options for phased delivery if ten units cannot be achieved within regulatory, structural or funding limits.

4. Proponent Qualifications

The prime consultant must identify an Ontario architect with current authorization to practise and provide evidence of appropriate professional liability and commercial general liability insurance. Identify engineering disciplines, any specialist consultants, professional registrations, relevant multi-unit adaptive reuse and supportive/affordable housing experience, Indigenous-community engagement experience, references, current availability and conflicts of interest. Provide WSIB status where applicable. Business licensing, bonding and statutory requirements apply only where legally relevant to the proposed professional services.

5. Site Visit, Questions and Addenda

An optional escorted site visit is proposed for November 4, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. at 274 Colborne Street, Brantford. Interested proponents should register by email to ed@briscfc.org. The Centre may change the visit time by written notice. Questions must be emailed by November 12, 2026 at noon Eastern. Material answers will be distributed to all registered proponents by email as written addenda; verbal answers do not amend the RFP. Proponents must not undertake destructive testing without written consent.

6. Proposal Submission Requirements

Email one searchable PDF titled "Second-Floor Housing Design and Feasibility RFP – [Firm Name]" to ed@briscfc.org no later than November 20, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. Eastern. Late proposals may be rejected. Include:

- Signed cover letter and clear understanding of the project and key risks.
- Team organization chart, professional qualifications, registrations, insurance, relevant experience and at least three comparable project references.
- Phase 1 methodology, work plan, schedule, consultation plan, deliverables, assumptions and exclusions.
- A fixed or upset-limit Phase 1 fee broken down by task and discipline, with HST separately identified, reimbursables and optional investigations clearly priced.
- Separately itemized optional Phase 2 fees by stage, billing rates, anticipated subconsultants and conditions for any additional services.
- Approach to zoning/code/heritage verification, project risk management, cost estimating and ongoing Centre operations.
- Declaration of actual or perceived conflicts of interest, availability, proposed contract exceptions and sample invoice.

7. Evaluation Criteria

Relevant adaptive reuse / housing expertise	**25 points**
Feasibility methodology, regulatory and technical approach	25 points
Indigenous engagement and culturally safe design approach	15 points
Project team, capacity and schedule	15 points
Fee transparency and value	20 points
Total	100 points

A Board-designated evaluation committee may seek clarification, check references and interview shortlisted firms. Lowest price will not necessarily be selected. The Centre may reject all proposals, cancel or reissue the RFP, or negotiate a final scope and agreement, subject to applicable policies and law.

8. Commercial and Contract Conditions

- Proposals must remain open for 60 days after closing. All proposal preparation costs are the proponent's responsibility.
- The Centre retains ownership and a perpetual project-use licence to paid-for reports, drawings and deliverables, subject to mutually agreed professional copyright and reliance terms. Editable files and PDF deliverables are required.
- No work is authorized until a written professional services agreement is signed. Fee changes, additional investigations and Phase 2 work require prior written approval.
- Invoices should be monthly against completed deliverables and approved milestones, with task-level detail. HST must be shown separately. Payment terms will be set in the agreement.

- The successful firm must maintain appropriate professional liability and commercial general liability insurance and comply with applicable privacy, safety, accessibility and professional requirements.
- All project information, floor plans and client/program details are confidential; no publication or public use without the Centre's written consent.
- The Centre may terminate for convenience on written notice, paying only for properly authorized services performed to the termination date, as set out in the final agreement.
- Any procurement award remains subject to Board-delegated authority, approved budget and satisfactory contract negotiation.

9. Owner-Supplied Information and Limitations

Subject to availability and confidentiality arrangements, the Centre may provide existing building drawings, title information, environmental reports, building condition information, preliminary funding materials and program requirements. Proponents must identify missing information and should not assume the zoning, heritage status, occupancy classification, structural capacity or utility capacity has been verified. The registered legal owner and contracting party must be confirmed before agreement execution.

10. Anticipated Procurement Milestones

Board review: October 28, 2026. Proposed RFP release: October 29. Optional site visit: November 4. Questions close: November 12. Proposals due: November 20. Evaluation: week of November 23. Proposed contract start: December 1. Phase 1 completion: approximately January 2027, subject to contract award, holidays, access and municipal response times. Dates may be amended by written addendum.

11. Submission Contact

Executive Director, Gihękdagye Friendship Centre
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