



**Request for Proposal (RFP)
Strategic Communications & Public Affairs
Strategy Plan and Implementation**

Indian Law Resource Center
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RFP Issued: December 8, 2021

Submission Deadline: December 22, 2021

Bid Awarded: December 29, 2021

Start Date: January 2, 2022

A. Organizational Background

The Indian Law Resource Center (the Center) is a non-profit law and advocacy organization that provides legal assistance to Indian and Alaska Native nations and other Indigenous peoples in North, Central and South America. The Center works to combat racism and oppression and to help Native peoples protect their lands, environment, cultures, and ways of life, to achieve sustainable economic development and genuine self-government, and to realize their other human rights.

The Center seeks to overcome the grave problems that threaten Native peoples by advancing the rule of law, by establishing national and international legal standards that preserve their human rights and dignity, and by challenging the governments of the world to accord justice and equality before the law to all indigenous peoples of the Americas. Our principal goal is the preservation and well-being of Indian and other Native nations and tribes.

Founded in 1978 by American Indians, the Center has an international Board of Directors and is a Non-Governmental Organization in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. The Indian Law Resource Center is a tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and is funded by grants and contributions from individuals, foundations, and Indian nations.

B. Situational Awareness

The Center is currently litigating a case in the Inter-American Court of Human Rights: *Maya Q'eqchi' Agua Caliente Indigenous Community v. Guatemala*. The case centers on one community's 45-year struggle to secure legal ownership of their lands. Government agencies' illegal and endless delays and irregularities in survey, titling, and registry processes allowed the Ministry of Energy and Mining to issue permits (skirting the required community consultation processes) to exploit the minerals that lie beneath Agua Caliente and 15 other Q'eqchi' communities.

The facts of the case underscore the larger problems in Guatemala's legal framework. Guatemala lacks a basic land law and specialized procedures for surveying, titling, and registering Indigenous lands. Guatemala's failure to recognize the legal, political, and social character of Indigenous peoples – the collective rights of communities – contradict the international commitments the country has made and its human rights obligations under international law. The Inter-American Court has the authority to force countries to adopt or adapt laws to bring them in line with human rights norms and standards, and its ruling will be binding on Guatemala.

The case has the potential to set major precedent to strengthen Indigenous land ownership rights for Guatemala's Indigenous majority. In addition, it could significantly impact and help advance legal security for Indigenous communities' land and natural resource rights throughout Mexico and Central and South America.

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights will hold a public hearing to hear oral arguments and testimony on the case during the first quarter of 2022.

A strategic communications/public affairs firm, if selected, would be responsible for creating and executing a strategic communications campaign that mobilizes Guatemalan stakeholders, and United States national, and international support to compel the implementation of the Court's ruling in the favor of Indigenous communities.

C. Project Overview & Goals

The Center is currently seeking a U.S.-based strategic communications/public affairs firm (Firm) to create and implement a robust communications strategy including, but not limited to, in-depth messaging research and predictive message modeling, project benchmarking, stakeholder mapping and analysis, messaging development, media relations, media training, paid social media, and detailed reporting to support the legal efforts around the *Maya Q'eqchi' Agua Caliente Indigenous Community v. Guatemala* case.

The Center is looking to raise awareness and profile of the case through earned media opportunities and public affairs tactics in the United States, European Union, and global Indigenous-led organizations in both English and Spanish.

D. Project Timeline

Working in collaboration with the Center and its partner organizations, the selected Firm will deploy tactics over five months reaching and educating a diverse group of audiences in Guatemala, the United States, and internationally.

Activity	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
Request for Proposals Open	x			
Firm Selected	x			
Strategic Communications Planning	x	x		
Strategic Communications Implementation		x	x	x
Final Campaign Reporting				x

E. Key Audiences

(Guatemala, United States, & International)

- Public officials
- Civil Society/Indigenous-led Organizations
- Judges, attorneys, law clerks
- Educators and educational institutions
- International human rights bodies and experts
- Journalists/Reporters
- Diplomatic service officers

F. Eligible proposing firms must:

1. Have minimum of five (5) years' work experience in related field of strategic communications, public affairs, and/or public relations.
2. Provide biographies and resumes for the leadership team proposed for the project.
3. Provide at least three (3) case studies/samples of similar project work.
4. Provide at least three (3) client references.
5. Currently in good standing, and not be debarred or suspended from doing business with the federal, state, and/or tribal governments.

Candidates must have extensive experience in strategic communications and/or public affairs working in international issues and/or multicultural and multilingual (English and Spanish) capabilities.

Expertise in working with Indigenous communities and colloquial knowledge of Guatemalan Spanish is also preferred.

Proposing firms may bring on subcontracting partners to fulfill diverse requirements outlined in the RFP. All subcontracted partners need to be included in the leadership team biographies and resumes.

G. Scope of Work

The selected Firm will help create clear, jargon-free, and moving messages about the case and about Indigenous lands and will help create powerful written and graphic materials, community engagement, and earned media.

The Firm shall act as the managing agency to engage directly with key audiences in Guatemala or through a Guatemalan communications partner to execute a three-pronged outreach strategy to Guatemalan, United States, and international audiences.

1. **Research & Benchmarking** – The Firm will provide in-depth research on the media landscape and a report on messaging styles and recommendations on reaching key audiences through current messaging trends, stakeholder mapping & analysis, and project benchmarking.
2. **Messaging Development** – The Firm will also provide messaging development and establish working messaging models in English and Spanish for all materials.
3. **Materials & Toolkits** – Based on approved message modeling, the Firm will be responsible for producing and designing communications materials such as fliers, social media toolkits, media kits, and related promotional materials in both English and Spanish.
4. **Press & Media Relations** – The Firm will be especially important in implementing a media relations strategy. This would include helping to identify and build relationships with journalists, writers, and key news outlets in Guatemala and internationally and developing an outreach calendar and content that keeps them informed and engaged: op-eds, press releases, virtual press events, and other media kit materials, as well as a social media campaign and content.
5. **Reporting** – Firm will establish a regular reporting structure and benchmarking to ensure progress and active engagement throughout the duration of the project. The Firm shall also provide an end of project report encompassing success, key learnings, and found pain points.

H. Proposal Submission Requirements

1. Cover letter no more than two pages in length including:
 - a. The legal name of the Firm, address, phone, fax, email address
 - b. Year the Firm was established
 - c. Total years in strategic communications, public affairs, or public relations.

2. Organizational chart identifying roles of all individuals and partners involved in this project, as appropriate including brief biographies/resumes for all individuals identifying their qualifications and experience.
3. Proposed schedule and description of the deliverables and execution plan.
4. A summary of qualifications, related experience, and references. Specify any passed Indigenous or tribal government work executed in the past similar in scope to this RFP.
5. Describe your Firm's approach to the scope of work and methodology in managing and implementing a project of this size and scope and experience of developing and supporting the implementation of a comprehensive strategic plan.
6. A minimum of three (3) case studies/examples of relevant written work related to communications/public affairs. (250-500 words each)
7. Fee schedule and proposed fee to accomplish the work.

I. Evaluation & Scoring

- a. The Center will be evaluating all RFPs internally through a scoring process based on 100-point scoring system:
 - i. Cover Letter (0-30 points)
 - ii. Scope of Work & Management Approach (0-40 points)
 - iii. Budget & Fee Schedule (0-20 points)
 - iv. References (0-10 points)

J. Responsibility for Proposal Preparation

Each proposing Firm submitting responses to this RFP shall provide and pay for all costs to for materials, labor, fees, or expenses incurred, during the bidding process including travel and presentation costs, if applicable.

It is the responsibility of the proposing Firm to assure that a proposal is delivered and received in a timely manner.

K. Proposal Submission Instructions

Submit all proposals by the submission deadline, December 22, 2021 at 5:00pm MST, via email in a PDF form to Lisa Myaya at lmyaya@indianlaw.org.

Maximum page length for each submission is 10 pages in length.

Firms may only submit one proposal each as a primary firm. If submissions are received post-deadline, submissions will be deemed ineligible.

Title of the email submissions should have the following subject line: **“Maya Q’eqchi’ Agua Caliente Indigenous Community RFP Response”**