

Plains Indian Museum

AT THE BUFFALO BILL CENTER OF THE WEST



Request for Proposals: Consultant Services for Osteological Assessment

Issue Date: October 15, 2026

Submission Deadline: December 15, 2026

PROJECT PURPOSE AND INTENDED OUTCOME

The Plains Indian Museum at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West (Center) has received funding to engage consultant services for an osteological analysis of ancestral human remains. The project will assess the currently identified minimum number of individuals (MNI) and examine faunal materials for possible ancestral human remains. This endeavor will support the Center's tribal consultation and submission of NAGPRA inventories by the 2029 deadlines.

It is expected that the contractors will work **in-person**. Over the course of the contract, respondents will visit ancestral remains in the care of the Plains Indian Museum and make use of institutional files, databases, and resources. Contractors will work closely with the Plains Indian Museum staff. Contractors will follow the Center's policy on *Destructive Sampling and Skeletal Articulation* which states that "no human remains in the Center collection will be utilized for destructive sampling purposes."

Contractors will **not** be asked to perform provenance research, or conduct research on associated funerary objects, but rather are tasked with assessing the ancestral remains as objectively as possible. The selected, trained osteologist will demonstrate the ability to identify and inventory skeletal and dental elements as well as naturally shed tissues and hair with reasonable accuracy.

Collections Statistics

- 31 identified minimum number of individuals (MNI)
- (<) 50 culturally modified ethnographic objects with faunal material
- 2500 estimated number of faunal materials

Project Deliverables

- Project Work Plan, Budget, and Schedule
- Draft Report on identified minimum number of individuals (MNI)
- Final Report on identified (MNI)

The final report will include a cover letter, table of contents, assessment including photographs, resource list / bibliography, and page numbers.

PROJECT SCHEDULE & BUDGET

The target date for entering an agreement with the selected professional is January 15, 2027. The target completion date of the project is May 2027, with the absolute requirement that the project is completed by June 30, 2027.

The project has a budget of \$12,000 for consulting services provided through the Center of the West. Consultants must meet the definition of an independent contractor and are expected to manage the payment of taxes and withholdings to state and federal authorities as applicable; the Center will not withhold any taxes for Contractors.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS, EVALUATION CRITERIA AND SELECTION PROCESS

Proposals should include the following materials:

- A coversheet that includes name, mailing address, email, and phone number of respondent(s).
- A cover letter and resume or summary of qualifications highlighting relevant experience, and history of working with faunal materials to successfully complete the project.
- Proposed work plan, budget, and schedule to complete the project deliverables within the timeline.

Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- The qualifications of the individual and/or organization to provide the services listed in the project description.
- Demonstration of osteological knowledge, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) 43 CFR Part 10, and acknowledgement that the assessment can be completed without destructive sampling.
- The ability to complete the project within the proposed schedule and budget.
- The overall presentation and completeness of the application.

INTENDED USE OF OPINIONS AND ASSESSMENT:

Internal Use and Distribution

The Contractors' report is intended for internal use and will be maintained by the Center's NAGPRA Coordinator and retained in institutional files. The report may be shared internally with administrators, staff, advisors, and the Board of Trustees.

Tribal Consultation and NAGPRA Documentation

Report or excerpts may also be shared with tribal communities during consultation or used as supporting evidence in National NAGPRA inventories.

Confidentiality, Background Check, Liability

Respondents agree to keep all correspondence, assessments, and findings confidential. Because onsite Contractors will handle sensitive materials and access non-public museum spaces, they must pass a background check. Contractors also waive liability to the Center of the West for injury.

Proposal Submissions:

Submissions should be sent via email in ONE, SINGLE PDF to NAGPRA@centerofthewest.org and must arrive no later than 5:00PM on December 15, 2026.

Any questions about this Request for Proposal should be directed to Hunter Old Elk, NAGPRA Coordinator & Curator of the Plains Indian Museum. (huntero@centerofthewest.org 307-578-4012).

CENTER OF THE WEST MISSION STATEMENT

Connecting People with the Stories of the American West.

PLAINS INDIAN MUSEUM MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Plains Indian Museum is to educate and advance knowledge about living American Indian cultures, their histories, art, spirituality, and traditions for current and future generations. To achieve this goal, the Plains Indian Museum will diligently seek to acquire, preserve, conserve, exhibit and interpret cultural materials from the prehistoric past to the present. It is the Museum's belief that the past is best used when it serves the present and future.

BUFFALO BILL CENTER OF THE WEST