

# RFP for Guardian Ad Litem

The Seneca Nation of Indians has issued an RFP for Guardian Ad Litem services for the Nation's *Peacemakers Court*, the trial level court. Interested candidates are invited to submit a letter of interest, statement of qualifications, and a detailed rate and service proposal to the respective Cost Center Director. Proposals are due **Monday, December 11, 2023**. The Nation plans to schedule interviews the third week of December and select the Guardian Ad Litem by **January 1, 2023**. A copy of the RFP is available on the Nation's website at [www.sni.org](http://www.sni.org).

The Seneca Nation desires to enter into a contractual agreement with the selected Guardian Ad Litem and is interested in establishing and maintaining a long-term, stable relationship. Applicants should be experienced in Indian law, court procedural rules, custom and tradition, and related matters.

Proposals should be submitted to:

Darlene Lay, Cattaraugus Peacemaker/Cost Center Director  
Seneca Nation of Indians  
2 Thomas Indian School Drive  
Irving, New York 14081  
[Darlene.lay@sni.org](mailto:Darlene.lay@sni.org)

***Seneca Nation of Indians***  
***Peacemakers Court***  
***Request for Proposal***  
***Guardian Ad Litem (1)***

**A. Notice** - Information provided in this request is to be used only for purposes of preparing a proposal detailing the scope and cost of providing Guardian Ad Litem services to the Seneca Nation of Indians Peacemakers Court. It is expected that each candidate submitting a proposal will read this request with care, as failure to meet the conditions or specifications herein may invalidate a proposal.

Proposals are being solicited by the Seneca Nation of Indians Peacemakers Court. The Nation reserves the right to accept, reject or negotiate any or all proposals or any portion thereof. Price shall not be the sole criteria for selecting an attorney. Rather, scope of available services, experiences with similar clients in similar matters, and references shall also be considered.

Requests for additional information clarifying the specifications should be directed via email to Darlene Lay, Cattaraugus Cost Center Director at [darlene.lay@sni.org](mailto:darlene.lay@sni.org).

**B. Introduction** - The Seneca Nation of Indians is a federally recognized, self-governing Indian Nation in Western New York State with approximately 8,500 enrolled members. The Seneca Nation is one of the original Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy, which also consists of the Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Mohawk and Tuscarora nations. The Seneca Nation holds title to five distinct Territories, including land in Niagara Falls and Buffalo and land set aside by the 1794 Treaty of Canandaigua: the Allegany, Cattaraugus and Oil Spring Territories.

Under the Constitution of the Seneca Nation of Indians of 1848, as amended, the judicial power of the Seneca Nation is vested in two Peacemakers Courts, two Surrogates Courts, a Court of Appeals, and the Supreme Court. The forms of process and proceedings in the Peacemaker Courts are as prescribed by Nation law. Peacemaker Court determinations are subject to appeal to the Court of Appeals. Determinations of the Court of Appeals are subject to appeal to the Council, sitting as the Nation's Supreme Court upon the granting of a writ of permission.

**C. General Information**

**1. Agreement** - A written agreement will be drawn up between the Seneca Nation on behalf of the Peacemaker Courts, as the client, and the selected Guardian Ad Litem specifying the terms and conditions of the agreement.

**2. Terms** - The agreement would be until **September 30, 2024**.

**3. Records** - Records, files, data and legal work product regarding the Peacemaker Court, and the services provided thereto, will remain the property of the Seneca Nation. The Guardian Ad Litem has the right to review all pertinent case files and records regarding the child and family, unless consent is required by law (i.e., HIPPA). ALL matters will be held in the strictest confidence and a confidentiality oath will be administered.

**4. General Responsibilities** - In its discretion, the Court may appoint a Guardian Ad Litem to represent an Indian child in any proceeding under Articles 3 and 4 of the Seneca Nation Child Welfare Law.

**5. Qualifications** - A Guardian Ad Litem shall be at least twenty-one (21) years of age, be of high moral character and integrity, and not have any special interest in the case that would prevent the Evaluator from representing the best interests of the child in an objective way.

**6. Duties** - the Guardian Ad Litem shall meet and become acquainted with the child(ren) as soon as feasible after appointment. The Guardian shall, except where the best interest of the child indicate otherwise, attend all Court proceedings in the case, be present at interviews between the child and law enforcement officials, social workers, and other personnel who need to speak with the child(ren) in connection with the case, visit the child in any foster home or other Court ordered placement for the purpose of determining whether the placement is in the best interests of the child(ren), and determine the views of the child with respect to placement and communicate those views to the Court. The Guardian Ad Litem shall perform such other duties as the Court shall order in the best interests of the child(ren).

**7. Term** - the Guardian Ad Litem shall continue to serve until discharged by the Court. Guardian Ad Litem shall be notified of any Court proceeding involving the child(ren).

**8. Compensation & Billing** - the Custodial Evaluator shall be compensated \$50 per Court session or as otherwise determined by Council.

#### **D. Procedures for Submission of Proposals**

All proposals are to be submitted to the address indicated below no later than Monday, December 11, 2023. The Nation may reject any proposal that is received after the specified date and time.

**E. Consideration of Proposal** - The Peacemaker Judges and one member of the Seneca Nation Judicial Conference shall review and consider the responses to this request for proposal on behalf of the Seneca Nation. The Seneca Nation reserves the right to reject any or all proposals.

**F. Proposal Format** - The Proposal should include a discussion of your understanding of the scope of the legal services required. Please include in your proposal the following:

1. A short executive summary of why you should be selected.
2. Resume.
3. Names, addresses, phone numbers, and contact persons for at least character and/or professional references.

**G. Acceptance of Proposal** - The Seneca Nation anticipates that it will enter a fully executed agreement with the selected candidate by **January 01, 2023**.