

## Removing Barriers Initiative: Request for Proposals

RFP# 2024-001

BC ELN, hosted at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, is situated on the unceded, traditional territories of the sə́lilwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh), kʷikwə́ləm (Kwikwetlem), Sḵwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nations. BC ELN recognizes that its work and the work of member libraries take place on traditional Indigenous territories across the province. We are thankful to the First Nations, Métis and Inuit people who have cared for these territories since time immemorial.

### INTRODUCTION

#### BC Electronic Library Network

[BC ELN](#) is an award-winning consortium of 34 public and private post-secondary libraries across British Columbia and the Yukon. BC ELN's mandate is to develop, promote, and maintain system-wide mechanisms that allow post-secondary libraries in B.C. to equitably meet the expanding information needs of the province's learners, educators, and researchers at the lowest possible cost.

#### Removing Barriers Initiative: Project Background and Goals

BC ELN is seeking to better understand the information and resource needs of post-secondary Indigenous students, educators, and researchers in B.C. Additionally, BC ELN recognizes a need to investigate barriers that might be impeding the consortium from serving and supporting Indigenous post-secondary students. BC ELN is seeking a strategy to foster relationships with and remove barriers to participation for Indigenous-led post-secondary institutions interested in joining the consortium.

This work supports BC ELN's mandate to equitably meet the information needs of the province's post-secondary learners, educators, and researchers. Furthermore, this work advances the following [BC ELN strategic goals](#):

- Review services to ensure they are steeped in a culture of continuous improvement and inclusion.
- Reach out to Indigenous communities to build respectful relationships in support of Indigenous information needs.

In relation to BC ELN's mandate, project goals include:

- Building relationships with post-secondary Indigenous-focused organizations such as the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA), the First Nations

Education Steering Committee (FNESC), Métis Nation British Columbia, and the First Nations Technology Council.

- Listening to and learning from Indigenous-led institutions about the needs and barriers Indigenous students, educators, and researchers face with regards to information access, preservation, and control.
- Raising awareness of BC ELN services and identifying where barriers to joining the consortium exist for Indigenous-led institutions.
- Recommending actions that will remove barriers to consortial participation for interested Indigenous-led post-secondary institutions and increase their membership in BC ELN.

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

BC ELN is seeking a consultant or consultancy to lead the Removing Barriers Initiative.

### **Scope of Services**

The selected consultant or consultancy will:

- Identify locations and types of Indigenous-led post-secondary institutions in British Columbia.
- Consult with staff at Indigenous-focused organizations such as the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA), the First Nations Education Steering Committee, Métis Nation British Columbia, and the First Nations Technology Council to identify trends and needs in Indigenous post-secondary education.
- Meet with education and library leaders at Indigenous-led post-secondary institutions to learn about students' and instructors' information-related goals and challenges, and to describe BC ELN offerings.
- Analyze BC ELN organizational structures (e.g. membership criteria, service commitment models, governance, relationships) to identify existing gaps and barriers for Indigenous-led institutions.
- Summarize key findings in an environmental scan report for the BC ELN Steering Committee.
- Make recommendations to the BC ELN Steering Committee for removing barriers and ensuring equitable inclusion of Indigenous-led institutions interested in joining BC ELN.
- Regularly report to the Executive Director, who reports to the BC ELN Steering Committee, and work with BC ELN staff.

## **Deliverables**

Deliverable 1: A project plan that provides a timeline of activities and tasks.

Deliverable 2: A final report presented in-person to the BC ELN Steering Committee. The final report must include:

Environmental Scan findings:

- a) Locations and types of Indigenous-led post-secondary institutions.
- b) Existing library and information access agreements between Indigenous-led institutions and other post-secondary institutions.
- c) Indigenous-led post-secondary institutions' existing library and student learning support services, and their information-related needs, goals, and challenges.
- d) Areas where BC ELN's existing (or possibly new) services could support Indigenous-led institutions to meet their information needs.

Recommendations that address:

- a) Barriers that exist for Indigenous-led institutions that wish to participate in BC ELN services.
- b) Recommendations for removing identified barriers.
- c) A sustainable, scaled approach to bringing on Indigenous-led post-secondary institutions that wish to join BC ELN.
- d) An evaluation process to ensure BC ELN continues to evolve in a way that is responsive to Indigenous-led institutions' needs and goals.

## **Timeline**

Request for proposals posted:	October 8, 2024
Deadline for submission of proposals:	October 29, 2024
Selection of consultant or consultancy:	Mid-November 2024
Consultant/consultancy starts work:	December 2024
Deliverable 1 due:	January 2025
Regular updates on work progress to Executive Director:	February – June 2025
Draft of Deliverable 2 (final report) due:	June 2025
Presentation of final report to BC ELN Steering Committee:	July 2025

N.B. Dates subsequent to the proposals being submitted are estimates only and are subject to modification.

## **Budget**

The budget for this project is up to \$40,000 CAD.

## **Experience and Qualifications**

BC ELN is seeking a qualified consultant or consultancy to lead the Removing Barriers Initiative. Preference will be given to an Indigenous consultant(s) or Indigenous-led consultancy. The individual consultant or consultancy:

- Must have knowledge or experience with B.C.'s post-secondary education, libraries, and/or consortial services.
- Must have experience working effectively with Indigenous peoples and groups with diverse perspectives and backgrounds.
- Must understand Indigenous peoples' histories and cultures and the impacts of colonialism in the post-secondary education sector.
- Must bring an understanding of key audiences and knowledge of what engagement, consultation, and cooperation looks like.
- Must have excellent project management skills.
- Must be willing to travel.

In addition, the consultant or consultancy should have:

- Strong communications skills, including the ability to work with a variety of external agencies/individuals.
- An understanding, or willingness to learn about, BC ELN and consortial ways of working together.
- An ability to synthesize complex issues in a clear and concise manner.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

### **Submission Requirements**

Responses must include the following elements:

- A resume and cover letter highlighting related experience and qualifications.
  - The cover letter should address the consultant's experience in relation to the work outlined in this RFP, including where the applicant has previously successfully supported Indigenous engagement, preferably in a post-secondary or library environment.

- If the applicant is a consultancy, it should describe its organization, location, size, structure, relationships, experience and connection to Indigenous communities, and areas of particular expertise.
- Names and contact information for three references for whom similar work has been completed.
- A short proposal (no more than 4 pages), outlining approach and timelines for completing project deliverables.
- Notice of subcontractors (if applicable).
  - Applicants must clearly identify any and all subcontractors that they intend to use in supplying services to meet the obligations of the RFP. Applicants are responsible for all work performed by subcontractors.
- Cost proposal:
  - All proposals should clearly demonstrate their value proposition and provide a detailed breakdown of proposed project costs against outlined deliverables.
  - Detail any other additional costs.
  - Proposals that are significantly outside the budget should clearly identify why.

### **Application deadline**

Deadline extended: Proposals are due November 8th, at 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time.

Please submit proposals to [office@bceln.ca](mailto:office@bceln.ca), quoting 'RFP# 2024-001 Removing Barriers Initiative' in the subject line.

Questions can be submitted via email to Leah Hopton ([leahh@bceln.ca](mailto:leahh@bceln.ca)). BC ELN reserves the right to seek clarification on any proposal submitted by a proponent to assist in making its evaluation, without notifying any other proponent of such. BC ELN reserves the right to not award the contract.