

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Civil Legal Needs Assessment of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians

Issuing Organization

Mississippi Center for Legal Services Corporation (MCLSC)

RFP Release Date

September 15, 2026

Proposal Due Date

October 15, 2026

Contact Person

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I. Purpose

The Mississippi Center for Legal Services Corporation (MCLSC) seeks proposals from qualified consultants, research organizations, universities, or nonprofit entities to conduct a comprehensive **Civil Legal Needs Assessment** of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MBCI).

The purpose of the assessment is to identify the most significant unmet civil legal needs facing Tribal members; the barriers that limit access to legal assistance; and opportunities to improve access to justice through legal representation, advocacy, outreach, education, and community partnerships.

The findings will be used to inform MCLSC strategic planning, service delivery, outreach efforts, funding proposals, and future collaborations with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

II. Project Objectives

The selected contractor shall:

1. Identify the most prevalent civil legal issues affecting members of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.
2. Assess unmet legal needs and barriers to obtaining legal assistance.
3. Evaluate existing legal resources available to Tribal members and identify service gaps.
4. Assess the legal needs of vulnerable populations within the Tribe, including elders, youth, persons with disabilities, veterans, survivors of domestic violence, and low-income households.
5. Identify culturally appropriate methods for delivering legal services and legal education.
6. Provide recommendations for improving access to civil legal services and increasing legal awareness within Tribal communities.

III. Scope of Work

A. Project Planning

The contractor shall:

- Develop a project work plan and timeline;
- Coordinate with MCLSC and designated Tribal representatives;
- Ensure culturally appropriate engagement throughout the assessment process;
- Obtain any necessary approvals for data collection activities.

B. Legal Needs Assessment Methodology

The assessment should employ both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Methods may include:

- Community surveys;

- Focus groups;
- Individual interviews;
- Key stakeholder interviews;
- Listening sessions;
- Review of demographic, socioeconomic, and public data;
- Review of legal services data and intake information, where available.

Stakeholders should include:

- Tribal leadership;
- Tribal court personnel;
- Elders;
- Community members;
- Social service providers;
- Educational institutions;
- Healthcare providers;
- Housing providers;
- Legal aid and pro bono providers.

C. Areas of Inquiry

The consultant should examine legal needs that may include, but are not limited to:

- Family law matters;
- Domestic violence and protection orders;
- Child custody and guardianship;
- Elder law issues;
- Wills, estates, probate, and heirs' property;
- Housing and eviction matters;
- Home ownership and land issues;
- Consumer protection;

- Debt collection;
- Public benefits;
- Healthcare access and insurance issues;
- Employment rights;
- Education-related legal issues;
- Tribal member identification and documentation issues;
- Access to Tribal, state, and federal services.

D. Access-to-Justice Assessment

The consultant shall specifically evaluate barriers including:

- Geographic isolation;
- Transportation challenges;
- Economic barriers;
- Limited internet or technology access;
- Lack of awareness of legal rights;
- Cultural considerations and trust barriers;
- Availability of lawyers and legal service providers;
- Language or literacy barriers, if applicable.

IV. Deliverables

The selected contractor shall provide:

1. Work Plan

Detailed project schedule and methodology.

2. Data Collection Instruments

Copies of surveys, interview protocols, and focus-group guides.

3. Interim Status Report

Summary of progress, participation levels, and preliminary observations.

4. Draft Legal Needs Assessment Report

The draft report must include:

- Executive Summary;
- Methodology;
- Demographic Profile;
- Summary of Legal Needs Identified;
- Analysis of Access-to-Justice Barriers;
- Service Gap Analysis;
- Preliminary Recommendations.

5. Final Legal Needs Assessment Report

The final report shall include:

- Findings and conclusions;
- Prioritized civil legal needs;
- Recommendations for service delivery improvements;
- Recommendations for outreach and community education;
- Opportunities for partnerships and funding;
- Supporting data and appendices.

6. Presentation of Findings

The contractor shall provide an in-person or virtual presentation of findings to MCLSC and designated Tribal representatives.

V. Proposal Requirements

Proposals should include:

Organizational Qualifications

- Organizational background;
- Description of services;
- Experience conducting legal needs assessments.

Relevant Experience

- Experience with Native American and Tribal communities;

- Experience conducting access-to-justice or legal services research;
- Experience working with underserved rural populations.

Project Team

- Key personnel and qualifications;
- Roles and responsibilities.

Methodology

- Proposed assessment approach;
- Community engagement strategy;
- Data collection techniques;
- Analysis methods.

Timeline

Provide a proposed timeline for project completion.

Budget

Provide a detailed budget including:

- Personnel costs;
- Travel expenses;
- Survey and data collection costs;
- Reporting and presentation costs;
- Total project cost.

References

Provide at least three references from similar projects.

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VI. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

Criteria	weight
Experience Conducting Legal Needs Assessments	30%
Experience Working with Tribal Communities	25%

Quality of Proposed Methodology	25%
Cost Effectiveness	10%
References and Past Performance	10%

VII. Project Schedule

Activity	Date
RFP Issued	September 17, 2026
Proposal Due	October 15, 2026
Contractor selection	On or before October 30, 2026
LSC Approval, if any	Submitted to LSC after selection
Contract Executed	After LSC's approval, if any. Usually minimum of 30 day approval process
Assessment Begins	Coordinated date w/contractor
Draft Report Due	Coordinated w/contractor
Final Report Due	Coordinated w/contractor

MCLSC anticipates a project period of approximately six to nine months after contract execution.

*Contract may require Legal Services Corporation prior approval depending on the amount of the proposed contract.

VIII. Rights Reserved

MCLSC reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all proposals;
- Request additional information from proposers;
- Negotiate modifications to proposals;
- Award all or part of the work contemplated by this RFP;
- Cancel the solicitation at any time.

IX. Expected Outcome

The completed Civil Legal Needs Assessment will provide MCLSC, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, and other stakeholders with a comprehensive understanding of the Tribe's unmet civil legal needs and will guide the development of culturally responsive legal services,

outreach initiatives, advocacy efforts, and future funding opportunities.