

Request for Proposal

Website Design, Development and Implementation Services

RFP Release Date:

June 1, 2017

Proposal Submission Deadline:

July 15, 2017

Houston County
Economic Development Authority
304 S Marshall St
Caledonia, MN 55921

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INTRODUCTION

Houston County, located in southeastern Minnesota, is home to approximately 18,800 citizens. The County is largely rural, with seven incorporated communities interspersed between expanses of fertile farmland and breathtaking bluffs. Houston County borders the Mississippi River and boasts a unique Driftless landscape.

The Houston County Economic Development Authority is committed to a focused marketing strategy to attract new visitors, residents, and entrepreneurs. With no comprehensive, County-wide website currently available to visitors or potential residents, it's the goal of the EDA to augment the County's online presence and market its communities as great places to live, work, and play.

The Houston County EDA is soliciting the services of an experienced website design firm to design, develop, and implement a new website which is to include the transfer of some existing content on the EDA webpage, as well as new information and features as required by the County. The new website should streamline content and incorporate features that will allow ease of navigation while appearing professional and aesthetically pleasing in design. In addition, the website must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) criteria.

The County is searching for a cost-effective means of completing this project. Innovative solutions from respondents are encouraged.

WEBSITE BACKGROUND

The EDA's current website is <http://www.co.houston.mn.us/EDA>, which is hosted by the County's internal IT department. Some of this information will be transferred to the new website, and new content will also be provided. The new EDA website will be independent of the current Houston County website.

SCOPE OF WORK

The scope of work for this project assumes that content from the existing website is relocated to the new website as a part of implementation (in addition to adding new content). Requirements include but are not limited to the following tasks:

1. Develop a website that is easy to navigate.
2. Design a website format that is visually appealing and incorporates unified color schemes, font styles/sizes, and layouts.
3. Establish a documented system for content management, which is flexible and manageable for uploading, downloading, and maintenance by County staff. Provide all necessary end-user training.
4. Address the addition of future features/services/demands to the website.

INTENDED USERS

The County website will be intended for uses by the following audiences:

1. Prospective visitors
2. Prospective entrepreneurs
3. Prospective residents
4. Current residents
5. Businesses
6. Developers
7. Civic groups and organizations
8. Other governmental agencies
9. Any person/entity searching for information about Houston County

CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

Content will be transferred from the existing website; costs of this transfer should be included within the proposal to the County. Additional information may be provided from County staff or developed in collaboration with the contracted respondent. The items listed below will provide a representative set of information.

1. Home page
2. Individual pages for a variety of topics/departments
3. Live feed of social media (Facebook)
4. Activity calendar
5. Contact Us section
6. Secure dashboard or portal for content management by County staff
7. Meet ADA Priority 1 requirements for accessibility of content

DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

Proposals should address the following, and any additional, desired components:

1. Positive user experience at both high and low speed internet connectivity. The site should also strive to minimize loading times for analog dial-up customers.
2. Functional for use with all common software/browsers/hardware. Please include compatibility information and limitations within the proposal.
3. No requirement for plug-in installation as a condition for viewing or visiting the website.

4. Easy to navigate and well-organized website layout.
5. Printer-friendly option for pages.
6. Cohesive and consistent formatting theme throughout homepage and department pages.
7. Searchable for content and files.
8. Optimization for mobile viewing and searching. Responsive design.
9. Incorporation of already established and maintained social media platforms.
10. Intended for continuous (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) operation, with an exception of *scheduled* maintenance.
11. Management system in place that allows for staff updates and changes to site content. Page level permissions should be established for the management of pages for each applicable department/council/authority. The system should allow for non-technical members to be able to easily update the site.
12. Flexibility in template that will easily accommodate future changes, optimizations, and features, such as advertisements.
13. Functionality for a master calendar, which shares events, meetings, holidays, etc. throughout the website. This calendar should include interactive maps of event locations for GPS utilization.
14. Capability for document gallery creation on pages by County staff. Staff should be able to upload, publish, and organize photos, videos and/or podcasts.
15. All cross-referenced information should be hyperlinked from page to page.
16. Incorporate search engine optimization, as well as access to analytics. Please specify what is included in ongoing maintenance of the website, such as hosting and security updates.
17. The County will have exclusive rights to all code and content developed for this proposal including but not limited to template modifications, photos, graphics, domain names, and analytics.
18. The County will purchase Domain and Hosting with a unique account after discussing with the developer. The County will give rights to the developer as necessary.

SECURITY

1. The County will have control over all levels of permission and approval for County employees uploading and changing information.

SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

All proposals must be received by the deadline of **July 15, 2017** via email to Courtney Bergey, EDA Director at courtney.bergey@cedausa.com.

Any proposals received after 5 p.m. on the due date will not be considered.

All costs must be itemized in a detailed fashion.

In addition to the requirements for content and design stated above, each proposal should include pertinent details about the organization's experience in website design.

Specifically, a list of similar websites (including web addresses) designed by the firm should be included.

Please ensure that the submission incorporates a reasonable timeline for redesign, development and implementation of the website. Once submitted, all proposals will become property of the County.

CONDITIONS AND LIMITATIONS

1. Any proposal submitted as a response to this RFP shall be submitted at the sole expense of the respondent.
2. The County reserves the right to indiscriminately accept or reject any and all proposals.
3. Should the County choose to contract with one of the respondents, that contract may be negotiated. It is possible that the County may decide to award a contract as proposed, in part, or with conditions and/or changes. The County reserves the right to change or revise the criteria set in this proposal as it sees fit and without notice.
4. The County may request additional information or clarification from a respondent. In addition, respondent(s) may be asked to attend a meeting with a time and date established by the County.
5. Any contract awarded will specify that, upon completion, all intellectual property incorporated in the design, development, and implementation of the website will belong exclusively to the County.
6. In accordance with Minnesota Government Data Practices Act and the Minnesota Open Meeting Law, confidentiality of proposals and supporting documentation cannot be guaranteed. Documents may be a part of the public record and made available for inspection by the public.
7. Any selected contractor must indemnify and hold harmless the County against any expenses incurred as a result of the contractor's acts or omissions. It is assumed that the contractor will have not infringed the rights of any third parties in the development and design of the County website.
8. Any respondent awarded a contract implicitly agrees that no person shall be subject to any discrimination outlined in applicable federal and state regulations including but not limited to the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

9. Any selected contractor must comply with any federal and state regulations regarding insurance. Any associated cost is to be incurred by the contractor alone.

EVALUATION OF RESPONSES

The County will review the responses following the due date, and may consider the following information during its evaluation:

1. Experience
2. Cost
3. Compliance with terms of the RFP
4. Aesthetics
5. Functionality
6. Maintenance and upgrades
7. Project management
8. Review of reference material
9. Any other set of criteria as established by the County

OTHER INFORMATION

1. If a respondent is selected for a contract, the firm must provide a period of at least 60 days after the implementation of the site for County review, comment, and correction.
2. For questions and clarification, please contact:
Courtney Bergey
Houston County EDA Director
Cell: 507-251-9272
E-mail: courtney.bergey@cedausa.com