

Purpose

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation is requesting proposals for services related to the design and launch of a new website.

Overview

Background

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation invites people with a stake in the health of their planet to work with us to protect their place in it. Sanctuaries and monuments are our essential network of protected waters, owned by every American and championed by us. Connected by currents, they sustain miraculous species, coastal communities, and our shared heritage.

Founded in 2000 by America's most influential ocean conservation leaders, the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation works with communities and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) to conserve and expand nationally significant places for a healthy ocean, coasts, and Great Lakes. The Foundation is a leading voice for U.S. protected waters, and our work extends from the ocean floor to Capitol Hill. We inspire, creating energetic ambassadors for ocean conservation. We connect, working in close partnership with NOAA and the many communities who depend on and care for the sanctuaries. And we educate, showing the world how the sanctuaries can serve as a model for protecting marine ecosystems around the world.

As an organization, the Foundation works separately but closely aligned with the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and the staff at each of the 15 national marine sanctuaries and 2 marine national monuments. The Foundation also has four chapters at different sanctuaries: Monterey Bay, Gray's Reef, Florida Keys and Olympic Coast. The Foundation is experiencing a period of sustained growth, moving from around 50 full-time employees five years ago to upwards of 80 today.

Need

The Foundation is accepting proposals to design and develop a new website. The project will be a concept to completion project. The Foundation currently has a web presence that is outdated in appearance, structure, functionality, and content presentation. Outside of edits to the text, images, links, HTML & CSS, and video content – the existing site functionally has had only minor adjustments for several years. MarineSanctuary.org currently contains approximately 70 web pages and approximately 500 blogs and news releases in its content management system, not

including additional PDFs, images, videos, and unlinked archive pages.

An opportunity exists to re-engineer the site to reflect the mission of the Foundation better and incorporate the latest web technologies. Upon completing the site's development, the Foundation will assume full responsibility for website content maintenance and administration. All content, coding, and graphics will become the sole property of the Foundation.

Our new site should be responsive and engage visitors by presenting attractive visual images, intuitive navigation, and concise messaging, while at the same time increasing functionality, accessibility, and ease of use for supporters and donors, partner organizations, and the general public. The tools that are incorporated must allow for timely delivery of content using basic technical skills and limited personnel.

The Foundation also manages two active chapter websites (montereybayfoundation.org and graysreeffoundation.org) as well as an affiliated project website (teacheratseaalumni.org), and ideally those could be maintained or re-created as separate but connected entities. We are open to ideas about the best way to do that, and the timeline could be flexible in terms of creating those separately after the main site is launched.

Project Objective

The Foundation's objectives are to:

1. maintain an impactful and dynamic web presence to engage the public in messaging about its programs, policy and brand, including coordinated sites for its chapters and affiliated projects;
2. communicate with supporters, donors, policymakers and the public through original digital content and effective social media in order to inspire action and increase fundraising;
3. meet current technology standards, drive more engagement on the site, attract more donations and partnerships, and reduce site clutter to simplify navigation;
4. increase accessibility and engagement with diverse audiences by building translation tools and adhering to 508 (disability) compliance;
5. ensure a standard level of web security across platforms to reduce organizational risks;
6. reduce hosting and maintenance costs in the long term.

To achieve this, we hope to create a flexible, informative, up-to-date website that is easy to maintain and is responsive (viewable on desktop, tablets, and mobile devices). In addition to designing a user-friendly site with an intuitive interface, you must also incorporate a web-based, database-driven content management system that allows key personnel to easily update content without directly accessing source code. Our current site uses Wordpress to manage our blogs, news releases,

events, and we would like to keep much of that content on our new site. For pages and content that are not yet in existence, the preference is to have user-selectable, predefined templates to choose from that dictate the layout and color scheme. We will consider other hosting options based on recommendations. In addition, we are seeking a design partner that provides tools for search engine optimization and social sharing.

Funding Availability and Matching

The expected budget for this work is up to a maximum of \$75,000 for the design and launch of the website, and we have budgeted \$1,000 monthly for hosting and basic maintenance costs going forward.

Eligibility

The organization or individual chosen should:

- Not have a paid staff member serving on the Foundation's Board of Trustees.
- Be a U.S. organization in the United States or territories and not be a federal government agency or a foreign entity.
- Be able to provide a federal tax id #.

How to Apply

Submit a proposal, budget, and 3 references to RFP@marinesanctuary.org by 11:59pm EST on June 30, 2023. Send your email with the subject line: Website Proposal: [Name of Organization]. Determinations will be made by July 19, 2023 and applicants notified shortly thereafter.

The Foundation will be reviewing all proposals received via a tradeoff approach, in which the different sections are weighed and graded by a committee, with the highest graded proposal to be the selected contractor.

In Your Proposal, please include the following, which will be weighted as such:

Past Performance – Maximum 10 points

- Tell us about your company, your experience in web design and production for projects similar to ours, and your experience in working with marine conservation or environmental organizations, if any.
- Provide links to your agency website, online portfolios, and social media, as well as past examples of website building.
- Provide a list of three references who can speak to services requested in this RFP

Technical approach – Maximum 15 points

- Describe your understanding of our current website challenges
- Summarize your proposed solution, and how your solution will resolve our current website challenges
- Identify the team that will work on this project
- Based on the elements included in the Project Scope/Objective section, tell us about your proposed solution in terms of creative design strategy, methodology, plan, and other important aspects of the redesign process

Financial – Maximum 10 points

- Provide a summary of pricing for the proposed services and products
- Include all project phases and tasks, along with a line-item breakdown of costs

Please be sure to address the following elements within your proposal:

- Project Management Tools – Your process for tracking and documenting project status
- Deliverables – Outline the products and/or services that will be delivered
- Schedule – Provide the suggested project schedule detailing the time required for each major step or phase of the project
- User Training and Support – Provide details on the user training and support included for our content editors along with the training support format (i.e., live web, chat, email, phone-based, hard copy, other documentation, etc.)
- Hardware – List any hardware necessary to host and/or support the proposed solution, and include hardware redundancy and/or disaster recovery recommendations
- Payment – Include any requirements or preferences regarding invoicing and payment (for both the initial project and the long-term support, if necessary)
- Anything else deemed relevant/important to the vendor, including clear expectations of client responsibilities if any.
- Include all terms and conditions

Period of Performance

Target Start Date: July 19, 2023

Target End Date: October 31, 2023

Scope of Work

Desired Outcomes

To be effective, our website must be:

- Informative
- Safe and secure
- Visually pleasing
- Easy and intuitive
- Quick to load and operate
- Responsive mobile devices, tablets, and desktop
- Improve Net Promoter Scores and Google Rankings
- Accessible
- Easy access to translation to other languages
- Versatility to integrate social media widgets
- Search Engine Optimized with proper Keyword Research

Vision

To meet our goals, our new website must:

- Serve as an ambassador for the Foundation brand
- Provide a modern, relevant design update
- Showcase the work and programs Foundation does across the sanctuary system
- Improve customer service and engage site visitors
- Strengthen relationships with Foundation partners and donors
- Make the Foundation accessible to all audiences
- Reflect a connection and integration with any chapter and affiliated project sites
- Drives and facilitates actions by supporters, including giving and donations, advocacy, and sharing on social and other communications networks

Strategies

- Utilize responsive design with the latest technologies to provide a consistent user interface across all devices
- Establish a clear path for visitors to access information relevant to them
- Present clear and concise information to end-users
- Integrate with the Foundation's social media platforms
- Provide an easy-to-use fit into the CMS platform
- Leverage limited human resources through improved efficiencies in web management
- Maximize search engine optimization through strategic mark-up language and content

- Provide an archival system for Foundation press releases, photos, videos and move historical data to a searchable database

Development Guidelines

The website designed by the successful candidate must meet the following criteria:

- Include templates that incorporate into the content management system that will permit both communications and non-communications Foundation staff to update website content on specific pages
- Once the site has been completed and accepted by the Foundation, the site will be maintained by the Foundations communications team, as well as potentially others in the organization (this should be kept in mind when selecting the tools that are included)
- Convert and revamp substantial amounts of existing content
- The site must be clean and attractive, with a mix of text and graphics
- Visually, the site should be modern, distinctive, memorable, and engaging
- It should fit as close to a single displayed page on a typical size monitor as possible
- Each section of the site should have a common look and feel
- The Foundation logo should be prominently displayed on every page as a common header
- The use of photography and fonts should be consistent throughout the site, with the layout of each page having a great deal of consistency
- The site should be easy to navigate, where information is grouped and presented in a logical manner with a minimal number of levels needed for the user to find the desired information
- The site should include easy integration of the Foundation's donation, advocacy and other platforms for supporter action;
- The site should have the capability to create a password-protected login-enabled section for small, select groups to access for non-public information, such as a Board of Trustees
- The navigation design should complement the capabilities of touch-enabled, mobile devices
- Development of templates that adhere to the proposed navigation scheme enabling non-technical users to easily add new sections/pages
- Provide search capabilities using keywords or phrases that will identify content throughout the site and optimize Google Rankings
- Once the website has been completed and accepted by the Foundation, the website design and all of its contents, software and architecture become the property of the Foundation

Site Specifications

The Foundation highly encourages creativity in the proposals submitted, but there are certain requirements for the website project. Your proposal must account for all of these requirements.

- The site must be compatible with current and one (1) previous versions of Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome, and Safari browsers
- Websites must not require plug-ins as a default
- The site should be developed to meet all current ADA access and 508 compliance requirements
- The site should be able to be translated into multiple languages
- The site must be built in accordance with the latest Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and should also be easily accessible to the novice as well as the experienced Internet user
- The website must be designed with a mix of text and graphics such that each page loads in a way that is acceptable to the typical user having an average home Internet connection speed

Useful Resources

MarineSanctuary.org

MontereyBayFoundation.org

GraysReefFoundation.org

TeacherAtSeaAlumni.org

SaveSpectacular.org

DeepOceanEducation.org

Application Logistics

Timeline

The proposal submission deadline is on June 30, 2023. Determinations will be made by July 19, 2023 and applicants notified shortly thereafter. The goal is to begin project work in July.

Please contact Chip Weiskotten chip@marinesanctuary.org with any questions.

Additional Information

Terms and Conditions

This is a Request for Proposals only. Issuance of this RFP does not in any way obligate the Foundation to make an award or pay for costs incurred by potential offerors in the preparation and submission of an offer. In addition:

- (a) The Foundation may cancel RFP and not award;
- (b) The Foundation may reject any or all responses received;
- (c) Issuance of RFP does not constitute award commitment by The Foundation;
- (d) The Foundation reserves the right to disqualify any offer based on offeror failure to follow RFP instructions;
- (e) The Foundation will not compensate offerors for a response to RFP;
- (f) The Foundation reserves the right to issue an award based on an initial evaluation of offers without further discussion;
- (g) The Foundation may negotiate with short-listed offerors for their best and final offer;
- (h) The Foundation reserves the right to order additional quantities or units with the selected offer or;
- (i) The Foundation may reissue the solicitation or issue formal amendments revising the original RFP specifications and evaluation criteria before or after receipt of proposals;
- (j) The Foundation may modify the specifications without issuing a formal notice to all offerors when the revisions are immaterial to the scope of the RFP;
- (k) The Foundation may choose to award only part of the activities in the RFP or issue multiple awards based on multiple RFP activities; and
- (l) The Foundation reserves the right to waive minor proposal deficiencies that can be corrected prior to award determination to promote competition.