



County of Alpena
Website Design and
Development
RFP

January 8th, 2018

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1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

The County of Alpena has issued the Request for Proposal (RFP) in order to select and contract with a company (“vendor”) to create a new WordPress website {www.alpenacounty.org} that is a modern, attractive and built with responsive web design and ADA compliant.

The County of Alpena is seeking proposals from qualified, experienced website development companies to design, develop and implement its public-facing website. The chosen strategic partner must be a firm that has experience in local government website design projects, and expertise with best practices regarding:

- Successful website redesign
- User experience and usability testing
- Information architecture
- Website development and deployment
- ADA compliance
- Content strategy
- Social media integration
- Search engine optimization
- Responsive design

The County of Alpena is looking only for the creation of the website and any training of WordPress plugins that may come with the website. The main goal is for design of the new website.

This RFP does not obligate the county to award a contract or complete the project and the county reserves the right to cancel the solicitation if it is considered to be in its best interest.

1.2 About the County of Alpena

The County of Alpena is in Alpena, Michigan

The population estimate is 29,000

The County of Alpena’s organization structure consists of the County Commissioners, County Clerk, County Treasurers, County Equalization, County IT Department, County Register of Deeds, County Circuit Court, County Family Court, County Probate Court, County District Court, County Prosecuting Attorney, County Veterans Affairs, County Sheriff’s Department, County Central Dispatch/911, County Housing, County Maintenance, County Fairgrounds, County Parks and Recreation

The current website was developed using Adobe Dreamweaver, developed in house and hosted and maintained within the county’s network.

1.3 Project Timeline

| Project Timeline Dates | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| RFP Release Date | 1/8/2018 |
| Written Questions Due | 1/12/2018 |
| Response to Vendor Questions | 1/18/2018 |
| Proposal Deadline | 1/22/2018 |
| Completion of Proposal Evaluations | 1/25/2018 |
| Presentations by Selected Vendors | 1/26/2018 |
| Final Vendor Selection | 2/7/2018 (pending board approval 2/27/2018) |
| Anticipated Website Launch | TBD |

1.4 County of Alpena Contact Information

This RFP is issued by the County of Alpena, 720 W. Chisholm St, Alpena, MI 49707

The point of contact for all questions or requests for additional information are:

IT Director:

Eric Vanderveer

County of Alpena

720 W. Chisholm St

Alpena, MI 49707

Email: evanderv@alpenacounty.org

All contact with personnel employed by the County of Alpena except for the contact persons named above with respect to this RFP shall be prohibited. Improper contact may constitute grounds for rejection of your proposal.

1.5 RFP inquiries

All inquiries regarding the RFP including requests for additional information or clarification and proposed modifications or amendments to the RFP must be submitted in writing in accordance with 1.4 above. All inquiries must be received no later than 10:00am EST on January 12th, 2018 and must be labeled "County of Alpena Website Design and Development Sealed Bid" Each inquiry must include the inquirer's name, firm, telephone number and email address. Each inquiry should begin by referencing the RFP page number and section to which it relates.

The County of Alpena will attempt to provide any assistance or additional information of a reasonable nature that may be requested by interested vendors. Telephone calls will

not be accepted regarding this RFP. If a call is needed, the point of contact for the County of Alpena will contact you.

Inquiries received after January 12th 2018, 10:00am EST deadline **will not** be considered. All inquiries received before the deadline will be compiled.

Responses to inquiries will be posted on the County of Alpena's website, located at <http://www.alpenacounty.org>

1.6 Terms of Service

The County of Alpena wishes to engage a vendor for the duration of this project only, all maintenance and updates for the website will be done in house. Specific deliverables related to the scope of work for this project will be included in the final agreement.

2. Goals and Background

2.1 Project Objectives and Goals

The primary objectives and goals of the website redesign are as follows:

2.1.1 Interactive and Engaging Website – We are seeking to redesign our website to include an intuitive, easy-to-use interface that allows residents, visitors and business partners to complete their quickly and easily regardless of the device they are using.

2.1.2 Purpose of our New Website – Our new site should:

- Serve the needs of all users by letting them easily find what they are seeking, providing them with access to key services on a 24x7 basis, allowing them to share information and interact with our staff.
- Promote transparency of our local government by making it easy for us to share and post information, and for our users to find and interact with the information.
- Represent or brand our community for residents, visitors, businesses and elected officials, and showcase our community in a way that highlights why this is a great place to live, visit and do business.
- Provide a pleasant and delightful experience to all users by making it easy for them to complete their tasks or find what they want in a straightforward manner.
- Be strategic and nimble, and focus on making our content useful, interactive and engaging. We know that things will change in the future, and we want our site to adapt and remain relevant.
- We need to be ADA compliant. Title II applies to State and local government that we have ADA standards for accessible design for our users.

2.1.3 Customers - We take a broad customer-centric view of our community since we view anyone who visits our website or community as a customer. Our website

is our digital front door and our goal is to focus on the needs of our customers, and on improving our interactions and engagement with our customer base.

2.1.4 Strategic Partnership – We want a vendor partner who understands the local government market, who will help guide us to where we want to be today.

2.1.5 Research Based Design – We want a site that meets the unique needs of our community, and are not looking for a cookie-cutter or templated solution. Our vendor should employ a strategic research-based and data-driven process to gather input, define expectations and design a consistent, user-friendly navigation framework for the website that meets the needs of all users.

2.1.6 Responsive Site – Visitors to our site will utilize a wide variety of devices to access our website, including computers, tablets and mobile smart phones. Our new website should automatically detect the screen resolution of any device and respond with a view of the site that is optimized specifically for that screen. This will ensure that all users will be able to view our site, no matter what device they are using.

2.2 Target Audiences

Audiences served by the website will include:

- 2.2.1 Residents and potential residents of varying backgrounds, reading and language ability
- 2.2.2 Potential visitors to the community
- 2.2.3 Businesses operating in the community and/or businesses looking to relocate to the community
- 2.2.4 State/local government and non-profit agencies that support and complement our community's business
- 2.2.5 Elected and appointed officials
- 2.2.6 Community members and organizations
- 2.2.7 Local and national media
- 2.2.8 Local school districts and students
- 2.2.9 Land owners and developers (resident and non-resident)

2.3 Our Current Environment

This is a summary of our existing website environment.

- 2.3.1 **Existing Website** – The existing website was launched in 2011
- 2.3.2 **Content Management** – The website consists of web pages managed by 2 people in the IT Department using text editors to code html.
- 2.3.3 **Content Strategy** – Approximately 42 static pages are managed through the current webpage.
- 2.3.4 **Website Documents** – The site contains approximately 269 PDF documents
- 2.3.5 **Website Platform** – The site has been developed with Adobe Dreamweaver.
- 2.3.6 **Website Hosting** – The site is hosted in house.

3. Scope of Work

3.1 Vendor Experience and Development Criteria

Preference will be given to vendors with experience developing local government websites, with special attention given to vendors' breadth of experience, references, number of years of experience and expertise of staff.

Additional development criteria include:

- 3.1.1 **Collaborative Effort** -- The website will be developed through the cooperation of the County of Alpena and the vendor, and facilitated under the supervision of a dedicated project management professional in the direct employ of the vendor.
- 3.1.2 **Skilled Team** – Vendor will supply a team of user experience, design and development professionals to supplement the development process led by the project manager. This team should include staff members skilled in local government website user experience, navigation and information architecture, local government website design, accessibility, and support and training of the content management system.
- 3.1.3 **Proven Development Process** – Vendor should have a proven development process and flexible timeline structure that favors the availability and time commitment of the County of Alpena.
- 3.1.4 **Internal Development Staff** – The County of Alpena prefers a vendor utilizing its own development staff rather than subcontracting pieces of the project development to additional vendors.

3.2 Design Guidelines and Qualifications

The design of the website should be welcoming, attractive and created by a member or members of the vendor's professional design staff. The final version of the design should be a collaborative effort between the County of Alpena and the vendor, incorporating elements that effectively represent the County of Alpena's brand and image through a data-driven and consultative development process.

Specific design guidelines include:

- 3.2.1 **Accessibility** – Website design and associated elements should comply with ADA Title II regulations.
- 3.2.2 **Consistent Website Design** – Website design must remain consistent throughout all pages to maximize usability, except where differentiating between departments or sections of the website as requested by the County of Alpena.
- 3.2.3 **Design Overview** – Website design must be visually appealing, incorporating the County of Alpena's colors and logo where appropriate.
- 3.2.4 **Design Process** – The vendor shall develop an original design for the County of Alpena and over a period of time during the development of the website, consult with key members of the County of Alpena's website redesign committee to make revisions and alterations to the vendor's original design submission.

3.2.5 **Easy Updating** – Design elements should include background images, photographs, logos and buttons that are easily updated or swapped out by our staff at any time and without incurring any additional implementation or update charges.

3.2.6 **Website Design and Content Ownership** – Ownership of the website design and all content should be transferred to the County of Alpena upon completion of the project.

3.3 Responsive Website

We recognize that there are two ways to build a responsive website – using responsive design and adaptive design. Responsive design provides one layout that fluidly changes depending on the size of the screen. Adaptive design has several distinct layouts for multiple screen sizes that is built for the distinct needs of that device. We are seeking a vendor partner who has experience in both approaches and who will recommend the best solution for our needs.

The vendor is expected to produce a responsive website for the County of Alpena to meet the needs of users accessing the site on a variety of devices, including computers, tablets and smart phones. Vendor must have proven success in previous responsive design projects. The solution should automatically detect the screen resolution of any device and respond with a view of the site that is optimized specifically for that screen. This will ensure that all users will be able to view our site, no matter what device they are using.

The project is expected to include:

3.3.1 Clean visual design incorporating the County of Alpena’s logo and branding as identified in 3.2.

3.3.2 Responsive site creation that includes, but not limited to:

- Creation of responsive templates
- Creation of fluid grids
- Navigation redesign
- Taxonomy and site map
- Image adjustments
- Ability to adjust or modify responsive views on individual pages or templates.

4. Evaluation of Proposals

4.1 Evaluation of Submitted Proposals

The County of Alpena intends to conduct a comprehensive, fair and impartial evaluation of proposals received in response to this RFP. All proposals that are properly submitted will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria listed below. All proposals that are properly submitted will be evaluated by the Evaluation Committee that will make recommendations for the award.

4.2 Evaluation Criteria

This set of criteria will be used to evaluate each vendor's proposal. A contract will be awarded to the vendor that best satisfies the overall requirements of the RFP. Each proposal will be evaluated based on the level of creativity, differentiation and measurability.

4.2.1 Local Government Experience and Capacity

4.2.2 Technical Expertise

4.2.3 Client List and References

4.2.4 Pricing

4.3 Evaluation

Proposals will be distributed to the members of the Evaluation Committee for evaluation utilizing the criteria set forth above.

4.4 Interviews and Demonstrations

Interviews will be done on a certain amount of qualified vendors. We will contact each individual vendor to go over any questions that need to be answered so we can finalize the final candidate.

4.5 Recommendation for Award

After the interviews have been conducted, the Evaluation Committee shall recommend to the IT Director the Successful Vendor, based on the outcome of the interview process. The IT Director reserves the right to make an award, not to make an award or to cancel this RFP either before or after the date of the RFP response deadline.

4.6 Contract Discussions

Upon approval by the County of Alpena Commissioner's Full Board, the County of Alpena shall enter into contract discussions with the Successful Vendor. If the terms and conditions of a contract cannot be successfully established within a reasonable amount of time (as determined by the County of Alpena), then contract discussions will be terminated and contract discussions with the next highest ranking Vendor will commence. Negotiations shall continue at the sole option of the County of Alpena until a contract is signed and approved or all proposals are rejected and the RFP is withdrawn.

4.7 Notice of Award

All vendors submitting a response to the RFP will be notified in writing of the award of a contract if and when an award is made. If no award is made, all vendors will be notified accordingly. For the purposes of the RFP, an award shall be deemed to have been made upon the completion of contract negotiations.

5. Vendor Qualifications and Obligations

All questions contained in the RFP must be answered. Failure by a vendor to answer all questions may result in the proposal being rejected.

5.1 Documents to Be Submitted

Vendor must submit the following information to be considered (include the corresponding item number with each response):

5.1.1 Executive Summary

5.1.1.1 Summarize on one page or less the key products and services you are proposing. Explain which RFP requirements these products are intended to meet and the benefits if we use these products and services.

5.1.1.2 Summarize your overall strategy and approach for delivering web redesign and development projects.

5.1.2 Corporate Profile

5.1.2.1 Provide a brief overview of your firm's history and philosophy.

5.1.2.2 State the year the vendor started in the business of selling CMS solutions and web design services.

5.1.2.3 Where is the vendor company's headquarters located?

Describe the process of how your company works with remote customers.

5.1.2.4 Provide the total number of vendor's employees and the number of employees in user experience and web design.

5.1.2.5 Specify the number of public sector vs. private sector clients.

5.1.2.6 Indicate whether the business is a parent or subsidiary.

5.1.3 Services and Implementation

5.1.3.1 Provide an in-depth list of your firm's capabilities.

5.1.3.2 Explain your firm's experience in developing responsive websites.

5.1.3.3 Identify what uniquely distinguishes your offering from your competitors.

5.1.3.4 Describe your experience in implementing public sector and local government market solutions.

5.1.3.5 Describe your implementation approach, project management tools and methodologies for the proposed solution.

5.1.3.6 Submit a detailed implementation plan which will address requirements, customizations, content migration, implementation schedule, delivery milestones and responsibilities for each party as Attachment C in your response.

5.1.3.7 Describe any optional services that could be included with our solution.

5.1.4 Client Examples

5.1.4.1 Provide three examples of responsive websites your firm has developed. Clearly explain the design objectives, the outcome and whether your firm managed the entire site or specific modules or applications within the site.

5.1.4.2 Provide three client references in your proposal, including a current contact name, organization name, phone number and email.

6. Submission Format and Delivery Requirements

6.1 Proposal Response Delivery

All vendors must send their RFP by means of email or hard copy. Please email to bids@alpenacounty.org and in the subject line please add "County of Alpena Website Design and Development". If sending by mail send to:

Alpena County Commissioners

ATTN:County of Alpena Website Design and Development **Sealed Bid**
720 W. Chisholm St
Ste. #7
Alpena, MI 49707

6.2 Date and Hour of Submission

Response must be received on or before January 22nd, 2018 at 10:00am EST. Any proposal that has not been received at the above address by 10:00am EST on January 22nd, 2018 shall be disqualified from further consideration.

6.3 Acceptance or Rejection of Submissions

The County of Alpena reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive technicalities or irregularities and to accept any proposal it determines to be in the County of Alpena's best interest. The acceptance of any proposal submission shall not in any way cause the County of Alpena to incur any liability or obligation to vendor, financial or otherwise. The County of Alpena may cancel the RFP in whole or part without making any award at its sole discretion, without any liability being incurred by the County of Alpena to any vendor for any expense, cost, loss or damage incurred or suffered by the vendor as a result of such withdrawal.

6.4 Costs for Document Development

Costs for developing the response to this RFP are entirely the responsibility of the proposing party and shall not be chargeable in any manner to the County of Alpena. All Vendors agree to provide all such additional information as, and when, requested at their own expense. No vendor in supplying such information shall be allowed to change the pricing or other cost quotations originally submitted.

6.5 Proposal Validity

A proposal submitted in response to this RFP is irrevocable for 90 days from the date of submission. The County of Alpena reserves the right to withdraw a bid acceptance at any time if in the opinion of the County of Alpena the vendor is unwilling or unable to enter into a form of contract satisfactory to the County of Alpena. Acceptance will be defined as the County of Alpena selecting you as our provider of service for the intent of negotiating a contract for services.

6.6 Contract Evaluation and Award

The County of Alpena reserves the right to execute any of the following options:

- Issue no contract award for any of the services described within this RFP.
- Award all services to one vendor.
- Issue contract awards for any combination of services and vendor, either all of part of the business as the County of Alpena sees fit.
- The County of Alpena is not obligated to accept the lowest price or most technologically advanced proposal.

The County of Alpena has no obligation to reveal the basis for contract award or to provide any information to vendors relative to the evaluation or decision-making process. All participating vendors will be notified promptly of bid acceptance or rejection.

7. Contract Negotiation and Execution

It is the intent of the County of Alpena that after the successful vendor has been selected, the County of Alpena and the selected vendor will enter into contract negotiations containing all terms and conditions of the proposed service. Any acceptance of a proposal is contingent upon the execution of a written contract and the County of Alpena shall not be contractually bound to any bidder prior to the execution of such written contractual agreement. The contents of the bid submitted shall become part of the contractual obligation and incorporated by reference into the ensuing contract. The contract with a successful vendor will include penalties for non-performance and failure to meet the proposal implementation schedule.

Contract execution is contingent upon approval by the County of Alpena's Governing Body.

7.1 **Proposal Submission Certification**

By submitting a proposal, vendor certifies that he or she has carefully examined all the documents for the project and has carefully and thoroughly reviewed this RFP, and understands the nature and scope of the work to be done and the terms and conditions thereof. The vendor further agrees that the performance time specified is a reasonable time.

7.2 **Insurance Requirements**

The acceptance of a bid proposal is contingent on vendor providing satisfactory proof that the vendor has adequate insurance coverage. It is in the County of Alpena's sole discretion the amount of insurance coverage required for the period of work under this contract.