Responses to Questions Website Redesign, Content Management System, Hosting and Security Services RFP

Prospective proposers, please see Agency responses below. Also, please note that the Agency will be posting an Addendum with a revised Sample Services Agreement prior to the RFP closing date. Please check back at https://www.zone7water.com/business/construction-business-opportunities to review any additional proposal addenda prior to submitting your proposal.

1. How many non-technical content editors do you want to allow to edit the new website?

A minimum of 5 with varying permission levels and one primary account administrator, however, up to 20 would be preferred.

2. How many pages and documents are on the websites today?

Staff is unable to efficiently provide this information. The current website is outdated and should not be used as model to produce a new website. We do have a separate system to house all archived board meeting documents and records, so those documents do not need to be integrated into the new design.

3. Would you like for the consultant to migrate all the content into the new one?

Only selected content will need to be migrated. The consultant will need to hold stakeholder meetings with various departments to determine what content from the current website will need to be migrated.

4. We would like to integrate as many Internet and Social media communication applications as possible. Can you give us any idea on the budget range for this project so we can get the proper discounts to fit your budget?

The Agency has opted not to disclose a budget up front.

5. In the last 6 months there has been a 394% increase in government agency website hacking. The very first targets are website using non-proprietary software like Wordpress and Drupal. Because of this, will you consider a proprietary government CMS solution in your new website?
The Agency will consider a non-proprietary CMS.

6. Are you looking for custom designs or to leverage a new WordPress theme?
   
   Custom design is tailored for a government agency is preferred.

7. Can you share any plug-ins you are currently leveraging?
   
   Google Calendar, however we are open to alternative calendars.

8. Do you have any documented brand guidelines that can be leveraged for the design of the new website?
   
   Not at this time. Staff is working on developing brand guidelines.

9. How often does your team require to add new webpages i.e., then how many pages will your team need to add on daily or monthly basis?
   
   New pages are not added daily. This number fluctuates, perhaps 10-30 a year. We typically have relatively static pages, however, we do occasionally add pages for new programs, to relay new construction project information, or provide emergency messaging to the public, etc.

10. How many users visit your website on a monthly basis?
    
    The average monthly site traffic for the 2019 calendar year was 2,325 users per month.

11. What size if the current marketing team and what levels of training would you require – in person, online, train the trainer, etc?
    
    Marketing staff includes the Communication Specialist, Alexandra Bradley who will serve as the project manager. The new website should provide the Agency with the ability to delegate some of the website responsibilities out to non-communications staff to support the project manager. Overall, staff has very limited website experience. At the minimum the Agency prefers an initial onsite initial training and introduction to the CMS platform, though not mandatory. Later online trainings would be acceptable as well as the train the trainer model.

12. We noticed you preferred non-proprietary code. Is this a deal breaker?
    
    We will review and consider non-proprietary code. Please thoroughly make the case for utilizing non-proprietary software, provide supporting documentation and document the long term health of your firm if presenting such an option.
13. Do you have a budget range you can share with us? Your RFP is well written and an appropriate proposal response will require significant time to write. A budget range will help us determine if we can be competitive and guide our decisions regarding the design and development process details.

We have opted not to disclose a budget up front. Budget will only be one factor in the decision making process. Strength of the proposing firm, meeting the requirements of the proposal and strength of the proposed website, hosting and security services will be of high priority in the Agency’s decision making process.

14. Do you have a preferred CMS you would like the vendor to use? Conversely, have you identified CMS options you don’t want to use?

The Agency does not have a preferred CMS, though ease of use will be a high priority. The Agency currently uses Joomla and prefers to move away from that platform.

15. What is the approval process for major deliverables?

The project manager will oversee approvals for major deliverables.

16. Who is the incumbent vendor?

We do not have a current website designer. We have a vendor for website security services and support. The vendor is Davis and Associates.

17. Please provide the estimated budget & timeline of the project?

The Agency has opted not to disclose a budget up front.

18. Do you already have a preferred CMS platform besides Joomla? If so, what is it?

Joomla is what we currently utilize, however it is not the preferred platform. We are interested in a platform that is easy to train staff on and user friendly for staff without IT experience.

19. Are you open to recommendations of a new platform that will give you the solution you need for the website redesign?

Yes.

20. What are your expectations outside of the noted requirements from the selected vendor to bring your website on par within your industry?
The request for proposal is comprehensive and sufficiently outlines requirements of the vendor.

21. Do you require staff training or do you expect the selected vendor to provide ongoing website updates?

Technical and security updates should be provided by the vendor. Staff will require training, but will assume responsibility for content updates, with the vendor serving a supporting role when troubleshooting or updated staff training is required.

22. What are the pros and cons of using your current website hosting provider and CMS platform?

The current website is outdated; hosting is an annual subscription through Siteground and Joomla is the CMS. We would like all services bundled under one provider. The Agency does not have a specific pro/con list and expects a product markedly better than the current one that is easy for staff to utilize and is secure from viruses and security threats and easy for the public to use and navigate through.

23. What are your expectations of the prototype/demo from the vendors that are shortlisted?

The demo should be representative of the CMS that staff will utilize and showcase the benefits of selecting your firm to complete the redesign and provide ongoing support services.

24. Do you want both "look and feel" functionality without any compromise?

Yes, within a reasonable budget.

25. Who is the current incumbent that manages your current website needs?

Staff updates content. Davis and Associates provides security and software update services. We also have an IT firm, LanLogic that supports the Agency but does not support the website. The vendor would be expected to coordinate as needed with the requirements of our IT systems and policies.

26. What are the top attributes of the current website?

The Agency website is outdated and there are no particular attributes the Agency feels worthy to call out.
27. Approximately how basic website pages are on the current website?

Staff is unable to efficiently provide this information. The current website is outdated and should not be used as model to produce a new website. Assume the general number of basic pages consistent with a small government agency or special district.

28. Is the system to support conservation rebate programs something that should be developed by the selected vendor or be a 3rd party integration. If redevelopment is required, please address the following:

   a. Identify the number of program rebate programs to be established.

      Five

   b. Explain the Agency’s internal rebate process.

      Rebates are submitted either by mail or electronic through email at rebates@zone7water.com. The rebates submitted by mail are a pdf distributed form that is uploaded to a pdf file, exported to either a csv or excel format and then uploaded to a Access database. There is a database for each of the five program. The database allows staff to import and export reports to the water retailers and grant reporting. Monthly reports are generated in Access and exported into an Excel spreadsheet. The spreadsheets are emailed to the water retailer who then issues an invoice to Zone 7. The rebates are from the water retailer customers.

29. If permit applications are to be developed, please assist with the following:

   a. Identify the number of permit applications to be established.

   b. Explain the Agency’s internal application process.

Summary:

We have one permit application form and one supplemental form for supply wells (one application total). In short, we verify the fields are complete and correct, and the appropriate attachments are included (site map, well design when applicable) in the application. We check if the site is a contamination site, add the permit conditions, and email the permit.

This page describes the steps to submit a drilling permit:

https://www.zone7water.com/permits-a-fees/64-well-drilling-and-destruction-permits
The entire process in detail:

For “Borings and Remediation”, we make sure all fields except “Well construction” and “Well Specifications” are complete, and verify a site map is included in with the application. The number of borings on the site map should match the number of borings specified on the permit application. We require a well design to be attached for soil vapor and extraction work.

For all wells, we make sure all fields except “Borings and Remediation” are filled out, and verify a site map is included with the application. The number of wells should match the number described under well specifications.

For supply wells, the supplemental form should be submitted and as expected, we verify the appropriate fields are complete. We use this form to fill out an internal supply well checklist. For each well, a PLSS well ID is assigned, an ARCMap point is created, and well data is entered in the well database. A map (arcgis) is also created to include the existing well(s), proposed well(s), groundwater basin, toxics related layers when applicable, and water service area. For wells destructions, we determine the procedure and append a destruction specification.

For all drilling permits, we enter data into the permits database. The applicant name must match the signature and date, on the application and supplemental form. As mentioned earlier, we require a site map displaying the drilling locations, and if the site map does not clearly show the locations with respect to the groundwater basin, we add an additional map. Next, we verify if the site is a new or existing contamination/environmental site. Occasionally, the consultants submit their work plan, and we extract the relevant formation to add to the permit. Finally, we add the permit conditions to the permit and issue as a pdf via email.

Keep in mind that many of our customers are drillers and are not very computer savvy, and therefore the option edit or request edits from the applicant will be useful. And finally, I would like to avoid anonymous application submissions with attachments.

30. Are there any concerns/challenges with a New York based firm submitting a proposal?

The firm must be able to adequately provide training and be available at a minimum during PST working hours and on call during emergencies.

31. Regard providing contact information for past clients, can you please confirm if four or five 4 or 5 references are needed?

Please provide 5 website examples and 4 professional references.
32. Can the technical proposal ten-page limit be waived or increased? Given all the requested proposal sections, it appears the page limit is a challenge. For instance, if we include a page cover, executive summary, Employee Qualifications and Experience, 5 employee resumes, timeline, and QC methods and testing procedures, the limit has been reached without addressing technical deliverables/SOW (which typically represents the bulk of the proposal). If the 10-page limit can't be waived, can non-technical sections/information (cover sheet, table of contents, exec. summary, Firm/company Qualifications and Experience, website references and description, timeline, etc.) not be counted towards the limit?

Cover page, table of contents and executive summary do not count toward page count. Employee resumes also do not count toward page limit. Cost proposal may be 5 pages maximum and does not count towards the limit. All remaining content will count towards the maximum page count.

33. In order to ensure that we are offering a suitable approach, range of deliverables and services, can you please share a project budget range for this project?

The Agency has opted not to disclose a budget up front.

34. Would you be open to working with a firm from Washington DC?

The firm must be able to adequately provide training and be available at a minimum during PST working hours and on call during emergencies.

35. Do you require the meetings to be done in person? Or would phone/videoconference calls be okay?

Initial meetings for design of the new website and initial training are preferred to be in person. Other meetings may be via phone/video conference.

36. Is there a set budget for the project? If not, could you please provide us with an approximate range?

The Agency has opted not to disclose a budget up front.

37. In terms of company information, do you require 5 website examples with contact information in addition to the 4 references? Or could the 4 references be the same as these examples?

Please provide 5 website examples for the purpose of viewing and exploring websites designed by your firm, contact information is not required. The 4 professional references may be the same as the website examples. The Agency will call these references to verify the abilities, timeliness and professionalism of the
proposing firm. Please make sure to include extension numbers, not general numbers for any references provided.

38. Please confirm that the one page resume requirement are included in the 10 page limit of the technical proposal?

Resumes are not included in the 10 page limit.

39. Are you looking to change the applications mentioned in Appendix C (Arc GIS, Survey monkey, Mailchimp...)?

No.

40. Would you be open to moving the site to Drupal as the new Content Management System?

Yes.

41. We partner with Pantheon (Monitored/managed Hosting) for hosting, would you be open to the idea?

Yes.

42. How many staff members would be responsible for updating the site in the future?

This number may vary. At a minimum 5 people, with varying degrees of permissions. The Communication Specialist will be the project manager for the website and will oversee what staff have permissions or responsibilities. However, it would be ideal if staff could add up to 20 users with limited permissions.

43. Can you elaborate on which level of ADA Compliance is required? (WCAG 2.1 A, AA or AAA?)

WCAG 2.0 AA

44. Can you please provide more context on the functionality mentioned in section b7.6? For example does it need to integrate with a CRM? Or would an email notification be enough?

Email notification would be sufficient.

45. Are there any existing brand guidelines we should follow for the designs?

Not currently, staff is in process developing brand guidelines.
46. What is your estimated budget for this project? Do you already have money set aside? This helps us determine the complexity of various features.

The Agency has opted not to disclose a budget up front. The Agency has funding set aside for this work and has completed research to ensure we have a sufficient budget to complete this project and the ongoing support services.

47. Do you have a separate budget for hosting and ongoing support?

The Agency has initial funding set aside as well as funding for ongoing support services.

48. Do you have a preference for an open source CMS like Drupal?

No preference. The Agency is looking to industry experts for recommendations on a platform best suited for our needs.

49. Please describe your technical / IT staff. How many members do you have and what is their level of experience, particularly with Drupal and/or PHP. This helps us determine the level of support you may require.

Our internal staff does not have technical/IT experience. We have a consultant, LanLogic which provides IT support for the Agency unrelated to the website. The consultant will be expected to provide IT support for the website.

50. RFP Section V.b.7: The RFP states that the Technical Proposal is limited to 10 pages, including resumes of assigned staff. With this limited number of pages, it will be nearly impossible to provide all of the requested information, detailed in Section V.b.1-6). Section V.b.5 requests “as much information as possible” regarding specific staff to be assigned to the project. We frequently assign more than 10 employees, including at the least our Senior Project Manager, Lead Developer, Creative Director, Lead UX/UI Designer, Back-End Developer, Front-End Developer, Research Analyst, Research Manager, Content Strategy Specialist, Q/A Specialist, DevOps Engineer, and Support Manager. These resumes alone would surpass the limit. Additionally, we are required to include:

- A one-page Executive Summary
- A section on Company Information including our relevant experience, details of 5 similar websites we have designed, 4 client references, references for our staff.
- A section on our Project Proposal including an overview of the features and functionality proposed website, how we will meet the Agency’s needs, details of our training plan and timeline, how we will collaborate with your team,
justifications and benefits for proposed technologies and third-party applications, a proposed schedule and timeline with a “thorough description” of our implementation process, a description of our quality control features and testing, value-added ideas, a description of ongoing support services, our strategy for keeping software current, an explanation of our licensing and maintenance services, how we ensure ADA compliance, a description of our security, backup, and related processes and procedures, our proposed hosting services, and a description of our UX/UI improvements for 5 to 6 websites we have designed.

- A section on our Firm/Company Qualifications and Experience
- A section on Employee Qualifications and Experience, including the aforementioned information about assigned staff
- A section on Anticipated Potential Problems.

The 10-page limit leaves less than 2 pages per section, which is insufficient to provide a full and meaningful response. Thus, we are requesting the page limit requirement for the technical proposal be dropped, or extended to 50 pages (including resumes) to allow us and other responders to fully explain the services we are providing. We believe anything less than this will not allow you to meaningfully evaluate submissions.

The main body of the proposal should not exceed 10 pages. A one-page Executive Summary can be excluded from the page count. References for individual staff should be included on individual staff resumes. Resumes do not count towards the 10 page limit. Cost proposal should not exceed 5 pages.

51. RFP Section V.b.8: The Cost Proposal also appears to be limited to 2 pages, the first page for general information, and the second page for a specific breakdown of the cost and hours associated with the tasks. We typically provide a detailed list of the services included in our prices and optional features, as well as options for ongoing support. Thus, our cost proposals are usually 5-6 pages. Thus, we are requested any page limit for the Cost Proposal be dropped, or extended to 6 pages to provide you with an accurate understanding of what our proposal entails.

The cost proposal may be up to 5 pages.

52. Appendix B, Minimum Site and Service Requirements: We typically respond to each technical requirement, describing exactly what our proposal will or will not include so there are no surprises during the project. The proposal submission does not appear to allow space to provide such a response. May we respond to Appendix B within the Technical Proposal, or provide our response as an appendix to the proposal?

Please do your best to provide the requested information within the limits provided and as clarified in this Addenda 1. We will select the best firms from the received
proposals for interview at which time you may have the opportunity to provide the Agency with supporting documentation to further aid our decision making process as staff is limited in the amount of time it can dedicate to reviewing initial proposals and therefore needs them to be succinct.

53. Are startup firms disqualified if they do not yet have 5 public facing websites?

Yes, we require a proven track record of working with Agencies similar to ours.

54. Would you accept bids from Startups that had at least 1 public facing government website to date, and could provide other examples of their work?

Not at this time.

55. Would Zone 7 be open to a proposal from a non-US firm?

No.

56. Will a web team or task force be created by the agency?

Yes, the task force will be formed to assist in approving design concept and aiding the consultant in setting priorities for the new website content and design.

57. How would you like us to involve non-agency stakeholders or partners in the design and development process?

The project manager will be the liaison for the project to ensure coordination with the Agency’s communications consultant JPW Communications and IT consultant LanLogic are included as needed to integrate Agency messaging and IT security and functionality.