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Request for Proposal (RFP)

Website Hosting Provider
Brunswick Housing Authority
12/3/2024

1. Introduction

The Brunswick Housing Authority (BHA) invites qualified website hosting providers with experience in serving Public Housing Authorities and other public sector organizations. The selected provider will host, maintain, and support a secure, ADA compliant, and reliable website that meets the needs of our agency and the residents we serve.

The BHA is a public housing agency with administrative offices located at 1126 Albany Street, Brunswick, GA 31520. BHA provides quality, affordable housing assistance programs to low-income families residing in its service area. BHA administers the following programs (with most recent funding level/eligibility shown for Federal programs):

- Low Income Public Housing (589 units)
- Capital Fund Program (with CFFP)
- Housing Choice Voucher Program (750 Vouchers)
- Business Activities (including privately owned apartments (51 units), and participation in joint venture and tax credit property)
- Component Unit (non-profit organization)

BHA is governed by a five-member Board of Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners hires the Executive Director to oversee the day-to-day administration of BHA. The accounting function is performed by the Director of Finance, who reports to the Executive Director.

2. Project Overview

BHA is seeking a website provider that can manage, maintain, and support a securely accessible website to its residents and the community on an ongoing basis.

3. Vendor Qualifications

Vendors interested in submitting proposals must demonstrate:

- A minimum of five years of experience installing and maintaining websites for agencies and other organizations.
- Proven capability in delivering websites that meet or exceed standards for Housing Authorities or other organizations in the public sector.

- Excellent references from previous clients, particularly within the public sector.

4. Scope of Work

The selected vendor will be responsible for the following tasks, with coordination and assistance from BHA staff:

1. Website Hosting:

- Reliable and secure website hosting with 99.9% uptime.
- Server resources sufficient to handle current and projected traffic.
- SSL/TLS certificate management.
- Support for CMS platforms such as WordPress, Drupal, Wix, etc.

2. Compliance and Security:

- Compliance with Section 508, WCAG 2.1, and ADA accessibility standards.
- Regular security updates and patches.
- Firewall and DDoS protection.
- Data backup and disaster recovery solutions.

3. Support and Maintenance

- 24/7 technical support with guaranteed response times.
- Routine updates to server software and CMS platform.
- Monitoring and performance optimization.

4. Vendor Independence

- Allow, at a minimum, all visible elements of all webpages to be edited by one or multiple BHA staff members
- Low- or no-cost options for changes outside of the abilities of the BHA, if allowed by CMS.

5. Additional Services

- Website migration from current hosting provider
- Routine updates to server software and CMS platform
- Monitoring and performance optimization
- DNS hosting through Cloudflare (BHA will maintain ownership and control of the domain registrar)

5. Proposal Submission Requirements

Proposals must include:

- Company background and summary of qualifications.
- Detailed approach to the project, including proposed technologies, installation, and configuration plans.
- Experience with similar projects, including references.
- Proposed project timeline for integration and migration, if applicable.
- Pricing model and detailed cost estimate, for upfront costs and recurring charges.

Vendor Requirements

In addition to the qualifications and experience outlined in Section 3, vendors must meet the following requirements to be considered for the Website Hosting Provider project:

Insurance

- Proof of general liability insurance to cover data breaches, cyberattacks, or other security incidents.
- Errors and omissions (E&O) or cyber liability insurance coverage for potential losses due to service disruptions or data breaches.
- Insurance certificates must name the Brunswick Housing Authority as an additional insured party. This requirement is intended to ensure that all potential risks associated with the project are adequately managed and covered, protecting both the vendor and BHA from unforeseen liabilities.

Certifications and Standards

- Compliance with industry security standards, such as ISO 27001, SOC 2, or PCI DSS (if applicable).
- Ability to demonstrate adherence to U.S. federal data privacy laws (e.g., GDPR or CCPA compliance, if necessary).

Support Infrastructure

- A U.S.-based customer support team or dedicated account representative for Housing Authority clients.
- 24/7 support availability with clear escalation procedures.

Location and Data Sovereignty

- Confirmation that all servers and data storage comply with U.S. data sovereignty requirements (if applicable).
- Availability of geographically redundant hosting options for increased reliability.

Performance and Termination Clause

The agreement will include an "Out" clause, allowing BHA to terminate the contract under the following circumstances:

- **Non-Performance:** Failure to meet Service Level Agreements (SLAs), including uptime, response times, and resolution timelines as outlined in the contract.
- **Compliance Failures:** Failure to comply with accessibility standards (e.g., Section 508, WCAG 2.1) or security requirements, resulting in risks to data or services.
- **Material Breach:** Any breach of the agreed terms that adversely impacts the functionality, security, or accessibility of the website.
- **Customer Support Deficiencies:** Inadequate or unresponsive support that disrupts website operations or user experience.



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Notice Period: The vendor will be provided with a written notice of deficiencies and an opportunity to rectify issues within a specified period (e.g., 30 days).

Termination Without Cause: The contract will allow for termination without cause, with a mutually agreed-upon notice period (e.g., 30 days), ensuring flexibility for either party.

Data Portability: Upon termination, the vendor must ensure that all website content, databases, and other related assets are transferred back to BHA or a new provider in a usable format, without additional fees.

Refund of Prepaid Fees: If the agreement is terminated due to non-performance, the vendor will refund any prepaid fees for services not rendered.

6. Evaluation and Selection Criteria

The Brunswick Housing Authority (BHA) is committed to a fair and transparent selection process for the Website Hosting Provider project. This section outlines the criteria and process used to evaluate proposals and select the winning vendor.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. **Compliance with Vendor Qualifications:** Demonstration of the required experience and qualifications as outlined in Section 3, including a minimum of five years' experience with similar projects.
2. **Technical Approach:** Quality, clarity, and feasibility of the proposed technical solution, including the proposed technologies, installation plan, and configuration approach.
3. **Project Management and Timeline:** The vendor's ability to manage the project effectively, including detailed project planning, realistic timelines, and adherence to the phased approach specified.
4. **Cost Proposal:** Overall cost-effectiveness of the proposal, including a detailed breakdown of costs for each phase and the total bid price. Consideration will be given to the most reasonable and justifiable costs that align with the scope and quality of services required.
5. **References and Past Performance:** Strength and relevance of references from previous clients, especially projects undertaken for housing authorities or quasi-governmental agencies.
6. **Insurance and Risk Management:** Adequacy of the vendor's insurance coverage and risk management measures, including proof of insurance as specified in the Vendor Requirements section.

Selection Process

The selection process will consist of the following steps:

1. **Initial Screening:** All proposals will undergo an initial screening to ensure they meet the minimum requirements and have provided all necessary documentation, including proof of insurance.
2. **Detailed Evaluation:** Proposals that pass the initial screening will be evaluated in detail against the criteria outlined above. BHA may request additional information or clarification from vendors as needed.
3. **Interviews/Presentations:** The top-ranked vendors may be invited to present their proposal and discuss their project approach with the selection committee. This step allows for further clarification and assessment of the vendor's capability.
4. **Final Selection:** The selection committee will make its final decision based on the proposal evaluations, interviews/presentations (if conducted), and best value for BHA. The vendor that best meets the evaluation criteria and demonstrates the ability to provide the best overall value will be selected for the contract award.



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5. **Notification:** All vendors will be notified of the selection committee's decision. The winning vendor will be invited to proceed with contract negotiations.

The BHA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to award the contract in the best interest of the Housing Authority. The decision of the selection committee will be final.

7. Proposal Submission

Proposals must be submitted by January 3rd, 2024 by 5:00 PM, to the following address:

1126 Albany Street
Brunswick GA 31520
Attention: Bradley Skipper

Electronic submissions can be sent to: bskipper@brunswickpha.org.

Submission Deadline and Instructions

Publication Date: 12/2/2024



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Submission Deadline:

- Electronic Submissions: Must be received by January 3rd, 2024, by 5:00 PM EST. Please submit electronic copies in PDF format to bskipper@brunswickpha.org with the subject line containing the RFP title and the proposer's name.
- Mail-in Submissions: Must be postmarked by January 3rd, 2024, to be considered. Ensure that proposals are sealed and properly labeled with the RFP title and the proposer's name.

Proposal Submission Requirements

Vendors must adhere to the following format guidelines for their proposals:

Proposal Format:

- Proposals must be signed, in ink, by an individual duly authorized to bind the proposal.
- Proposals must be sealed and labeled on the cover with the RFP title ("Web Hosting Provider Project") and the proposer's name.
- Proposals must be 1 ½ spaced (or double-spaced) and typed in Arial font size of 12 or larger. Proposals typed single-spaced or in a font size smaller than 12 will not be accepted. This requirement is to ensure clarity and readability of the proposals submitted for review.

Content and Organization: Proposals should be organized as outlined in this RFP, including sections on company background, project approach, detailed scope of work, timeline, cost estimates, and any other information requested.

Submission Method: Please submit one signed original and one copy of the original (if physical copies are required) or an electronic copy in PDF format (if digital submission is preferred), to the address or email provided. Ensure that electronic copies are virus-free and accessible without the need for special software beyond a standard PDF reader.

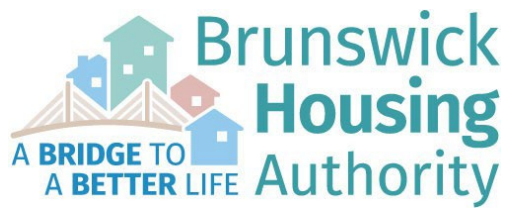
Submissions by facsimile (fax) will NOT be accepted.

Compliance with these formatting and submission guidelines is mandatory. Proposals not adhering to these guidelines will not be considered, as uniformity in proposal presentation assists our evaluation team in efficiently reviewing and comparing submissions.

After the Submission Deadline

Upon the closing of the submission period, BHA will proceed with the following steps:

- **Review and Screening:** All submissions will be reviewed to ensure compliance with the submission and formatting requirements. Proposals not meeting these criteria or submitted after the deadline will be disqualified.



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- **Evaluation:** Qualified proposals will undergo a detailed evaluation process based on the criteria outlined in the "Evaluation and Selection Criteria" section.
- **Notification:** Vendors may be contacted for further information or clarification during the evaluation process. The final selection decision is expected to be made within [specify number of weeks] weeks after the submission deadline. All proposers will be notified of the decision via email.
- **Contract Negotiation:** The successful vendor will enter into contract negotiations with BHA. Unsuccessful vendors will be given feedback upon request.

By clearly outlining these dates and steps, BHA ensures transparency in the RFP process and sets clear expectations for all parties involved. This structured approach helps to facilitate a smooth selection process and timely project initiation.

8. Terms and Conditions

- BHA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason.
- Contracts will be awarded to the proposal deemed of the highest value to the Housing Authority.
- All proposals should remain valid for a period of 90 days from the submission deadline.
- **Price Guarantee:** The Bidder shall guarantee the "Total Bid Price" for no less than ninety (90) calendar days from the date of the bid opening. This ensures that the pricing offered in response to this RFP will remain unchanged and valid for evaluation and potential award within this defined period.
- **Failure to Execute:** In the event that the selected vendor fails to execute the project according to the agreed terms and conditions, timelines, or fails to meet the quality and performance standards as set forth in this RFP, BHA reserves the right to terminate the contract immediately. Furthermore, the vendor may be subject to penalties as outlined in the contract, which may include but not limited to forfeiture of any performance security, compensation for damages incurred by BHA, and disqualification from future BHA projects. The vendor must ensure adequate measures are in place to mitigate any potential failures and maintain open communication with BHA to address any concerns that may arise during the project execution.

For further inquiries, please contact:

Bradley Skipper, Director of I.T.
bskipper@brunswickpha.org
912-265-1334 ext. 111
912-506-8720

We look forward to receiving your proposal and thank you for your interest in contributing to the safety and well-being of our communities.