

Introduction and Scope of Project

Blue Star Mothers of America (BSMA), Inc., a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, is composed of mothers who have, or have had, children honorably serving in the military, Guard, Reserve or who are honorably or medically discharged Veterans. Anyone else who wants to support the troops can join as an Associate Member. Blue Star Mothers of America is headed by a president with a nationally-elected slate of officers and governs over 5 Departments and/or regions and over 225 Local Chapters. There are over 10,000 records in the membership database.

BSMA is seeking the services of an experienced website design firm to re-design, develop, implement, and provide hosting and maintenance information for the organization's website.

This project will involve utilizing posted information on the existing website as well as the implementation of new information, products, and features as suggested by the organization and the firm selected.

BSMA's existing internet website is <http://www.bluestarmothers.org> which contains general information for the public and private information for our membership including minutes, specific events, rosters and functions. BSMA is committed to building a premiere website that is designed upon the ease of use from the visitor's view. The organization is interested in an innovative design that aids website visitors who generally know what information they need or service they want to secure. The site shall also equally facilitate usage by visitors who may not understand how to find that information or service within our organization.

It is BSMA's intention to expand the current usefulness of the website by permitting our Local Chapters and State Departments to build (own) subdomains off the BSMA site and integrating the latest social media tools. In addition, possible future needs and new functionality should be demonstrated in the proposal. The BSMA National President is committed to being available to provide information and support to respondents and will be actively involved in providing information and support throughout the re-design process. The successful firm must have substantial experience in website design, development, implementation and maintenance.

Respondents are encouraged to contact the National President with any questions or concerns. Final proposals submitted are to be emailed to BSMA.RFP@woh.rr.com no later than May 14, 2012.

Website Objectives

The goal of the BSMA's project is to provide simple electronic access to our services, serve as both a public and private communications tool, market BSMA, and to streamline and facilitate our website operations. The current site structure and design was developed 4 to 5 years ago and requires significant redesign to take advantage of new design elements and growing demand for secure, electronic services. Specifically, the organization would like the redesigned site to support e-commerce transactions, online forms and applications, online dues payments, online submission of organizational compliance documentation, and a variety of other activities. The redesigned site should have a theme promoting BSMA with a friendly and professional feel.

The organization's website should provide easy access to organization services, be adaptable to current and changing technology, provide content management capability for all three organizational levels (National, Department and Local Chapters) and be used as a communications tool. The website shall meet the following criteria:

1. Visually appealing – The site must have an attractive mix of text, photos and graphics.
2. Provide easy electronic access to public information for use by the target audience.
3. Easily updated, with a content management system (CMS). Respondent should list the software that would be used to create the site including all graphics software and recommend software and licenses that BSMA will need to purchase for the continued maintenance of the website while taking into consideration that BSMA is a non-profit organization.
4. Provide our membership and our officers with a bi-directional email means of communicating.
5. Common Theme/Consistent Design. Each section of the site should have a common look/theme (brand). The appropriate logo should be on every page as well as a common header. All font types and basic layout should be used throughout the site.
6. Provide the ability to conduct secure financial transactions online.
7. Design the capability to provide home pages for all Local Chapters (over 225) and Departments (5), if they so desire. As an alternative, provide the capability for Local Chapters and/or Departments to point to their existing websites (URLs) from the National site.
8. Provide both a public and private side to the website and all of its sub-domains using a customer relationship management (CRM) system to control website access.
9. Meet ADA Priority 1 requirements.
10. Be easily upgradeable/portable.

The information on the website should be directed towards the public, businesses, visitors, prospective members, prospective associate members, other government agencies, civic groups, associations, youth and senior citizen groups, and any person or agency seeking to donate, volunteer, or obtain information about the Blue Star Mothers of America.

Special Provisions

BSMA already has an Internet service provider (ISP) but is willing to consider alternative ISPs.

As such, hosting and maintenance service should be presented as options in your response to facilitate the design and maintenance of this site.

General and Desired Enhancements:

1. Re-create and greatly enhance BSMA's existing website to be resourceful, informative, and serve as a marketing asset that provides a friendly environment which emphasizes access to the public and our members.
2. Develop a highly beneficial, cost-effective, easy to use, interactive, and architecturally sound website that will remain viable for a minimum of five years.
3. BSMA's preferred website model calls for authorized members at all three levels (National, Departmental, and Local Chapters) to have some ability to perform routine content management tasks related to information such as the posting of meeting dates, agendas, minutes, calendar events, removing old and outdated information and general noticing. A National-level webmaster(s) should have more comprehensive ability to provide quality control and the ability to update non-routine information. Therefore, a system needs to be structured for maintenance and updating capabilities by non-technical staff. BSMA is interested in a content management process and is open to ideas on how best to accomplish this aspect of the website.
4. Create a consistent and standardized format and enhanced graphical look for all pages; thereby establishing a unified theme (brand) throughout the BSMA website. However, the established theme should allow the flexibility for the National, Departmental, and Local Chapters to exercise some individuality.
- 5.
6. For ease of use, the BSMA's website must provide consistent orientation and navigational aids, such as hierarchical menus that tell users how deep they are into a topic or subtopic as well as a homepage link or icon on each page in the same position.
7. BSMA anticipates future expansion of its e-commerce use, and the re-design should facilitate future capability of online transactions such as dues payments (split disbursement, if possible, between National and Local Chapters) and donations, convention registration, secure credit card payments, and membership applications. Geographical Information System functions would be a nice-to-have.
8. Allow for interactivity. Include e-mail response, surveys, feedback, online forms, online payments, and access to various BSMA calendars. The designer must incorporate the ability for users to complete interactive online forms for such tasks as membership, chapter compliance, donations, and election results.
9. Graphic and/or image files should be relative to site. Design with simplicity to allow for quickest loading. Web pages should be tested using multiple browsers (Firefox, Chrome,

Internet Explorer, etc.) and varying load speeds (dial up – fiber optic) to ensure each webpage can be accessed in a timely manner.

10. Allow for search capabilities. Use existing search engines and/or create BSMA database within home site (i.e., search for chapters closest to a zip code, map locations of chapters, etc.). Suggest a tagging schema to maximize exposure across the World Wide Web.
11. Track page hits per level (National, Departmental, or Local Chapters). Maintenance software which includes reporting functions would be valuable.
12. Form Printing. A number of static forms will be available for printing. Website must have links or embedded plug-ins such as Java and Adobe for opening and viewing these documents.
13. Although BSMA has some specific requirements, we are also interested in your ideas for content, and more specifically, your approach in re-designing the style of the BSMA website. We encourage respondents to consider and propose alternative solutions, recommendations and improvements.
14. Develop or be able to reference online training materials that permit content creation, loading, editing, deleting, and archiving by our web masters.
15. Develop or be able to reference online training materials that permit our designated officers to effectively utilize the CRM system.
16. Enable both public and private forums.
17. Transfer relevant content from the existing National site to the new site. Archive any remaining data. Develop a cost plan for the Departments and Local Chapters to exercise, if they so choose, to port their information to the new website.
18. Provide an e-store capability for customers to purchase and securely pay for items sold by BSMA.

Services to be Provided

1. The website must provide for high-speed upload/download response times for both low and high speed computers that are used by the average user.
2. As per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), BSMA must provide the same level of service to individuals with visual, hearing, motor, or cognitive disability that we do to the general public. BSMA expects respondents to offer suggestions regarding accessibility.
3. The site should be developed to minimize loading times for analog dial-up customers.

4. The site must be designed to function effectively with common versions of software and hardware, which must be identified in your proposal.
5. All documents, including maps and tables, should be in HTML, Portable Document Format (PDF), or in a format approved by BSMA to provide ease of viewing, printing, and downloading, and in alternate ADA-acceptable download formats.
6. Include links for citizens to download any browser plug-in products, such as Acrobat Reader, that are necessary to view information on the site.
7. The site must be compatible with current versions of commonly used Internet browsers. Please identify proposed compatibility with your response.
8. The site should take into consideration BSMA's future desire to include e-commerce capabilities, enabling secure online credit card purchases, verifications, fulfillment, and acceptance, and BSMA's ability to conduct transactions such as online chartering, event reservations, member registrations and other interactive forms.
9. On-going maintenance for both CMS and CRM systems plus all supporting software. Propose a fee structure for consultancy and/or limited upgrades (.i.e., page modification, new page development, database query development, etc.)

Other requirements and features:

1. Cross-reference information should be hyperlinked from page to page within the website with the Home Page link always visible.
2. Information currently provided on the website must be included in the proposal.
3. The proposal should include a comprehensive timeline for each phase of the website re-design, including meetings with the BSMA Web Site Team, re-design, development, draft presentation, implementation, hosting and training.
4. Graphical files should be relative to the site and provide for quickest loading, with little use of cartoons or caricatures.
5. The site must be designed for continuous operation 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with exception for times of scheduled maintenance.
6. Capability to maintain an archive of existing and past records such as agendas, minutes, press releases, newsletters, etc. and the ability to render any retrieved item in HTML format.
7. The proposal should include basic training for a minimum of 5 people, training plan and timeline for same. Requisite training requirements can be satisfied by conducting the training sessions at the upcoming National Convention (July31-August 4, 2012).

Start and Completion of Work

The tentative schedule for this project/process is as follows:

<u>Duration</u>	<u>Schedule Item</u>
0	Proposals Due
1 weeks	Web Site Team deliberations
1 weeks	Recommendation to President
0	Board Presentation
1 weeks	Contract Award
TBD	Web site delivered for testing
TBS	Web site reaches an Initial Operating Capability
TBS	Web site declared Fully Operational Capable

Note: TBD – to be determined in conjunction with the selected vendor

Services required after selection:

1. The selected firm's representatives will be required to meet regularly with BSM's Web Site Team to discuss and plan the project with its various phases and provide progress reports as needed.
2. In conjunction with performance under the approved contract, the contractor may be required to attend additional progress meetings. In the event the contractor is not in conformance with the contract, these meetings will be provided at no additional cost to BSMA.
3. The successful respondent will be required to meet information requirements for each BSMA level (National, Departmental, and Local Chapters) and determine a list of information to be presented and agree on a final layout for those level's web pages.
4. Initial draft website design templates and site maps, will be provided to BSMA within 4 weeks from the date of the approved contract for review prior to implementation.
5. A testing period and subsequent acceptance testing period, either period not to exceed 15 business days, shall be provided, during which BSMA may evaluate the website to ensure satisfaction with the website functions and conformance with the RFP. At the completion of each testing period, a letter of acceptance or failure will be provided to the firm selected. Items requiring correction at either testing period must be corrected within 7 calendar days by the firm selected.

Website References:

1. Blue Star Mothers of America

<http://www.bluestarmothers.org/>

2. BSMA Department of Oklahoma
<http://www.okdeptbluestarmothers.org/>

3. Architecture for Humanity
<http://architectureforhumanity.org/>

Notional Department/Local Chapter home page

Website reference 2 provides an existing Departmental website of which there are 5 Departments and/or regions. Reference 3 is well organized and contains most of the facets envisioned for both Departmental and Local Chapter sites (over 225). Incorporate a discreet member login on the home page such that it would not detract from nor diminish the homepage information. Upon successful login, a “Members” tab would appear. The members’ page would consist of pointers/tabs to items such as:

- List of Officers
- Department/chapter roster
- Calendar (which may be cross referenced from the home page)
- Minutes
- Archives
- Projects/fund raisers
- Feedback received (deployed troops thank-yous, community, etc.)

Requested Information and Proposal Format

This section instructs respondents on procedures related to the submission of proposals.

1. The title page of the proposal must contain your firm’s name, address, telephone number, principal contact, fax number and email address.
2. The proposal should contain a table of contents.
3. The proposal should include necessary software and hardware, any additional communication requirements, integration needs and potential costs necessary to host and maintain the website (i.e. hardware, software, installation, licensing, training, etc.)
4. Proposal should be all encompassing, with a single vendor identified as the “responsible lead vendor.” Please indicate any needed subcontracted services required to meet the needs of the proposal or clearly indicate what portion of the services are not included as part of your proposal.

5. The proposal should include an estimated summary timeline for completion of each phase of the project. This should be as realistic as possible since this will be part of the contractual agreement.
6. A detailed work plan describing your approach to designing, managing and coordinating this project. The description should include all tasks listed in the scope of work for all phases of the project and a tentative schedule.
7. Collection of information. Please state how you intend to gather all the required information, format preferred, and assistance expected from BSMA in order to complete this project.
8. Years of experience related to website design. Provide a list of comparable websites, including public sector, governmental agencies, and non-profit organizations designed by your firm. Include the website address, company/agency contact person, address, telephone number, and hard copies of the Home Pages. These companies/agencies may be contacted for references.
9. Enclose a section on relevant website development experience and information on the extent of your firm's abilities to meet the needs of this project. Please provide a sample of what you envision as the home page for all three levels for the site.
10. The proposal should contain the total project cost, as well as detailed "line item" costs for components/phases of the project. All hourly rates and fees, charges, costs and anticipated reimbursable costs must be clearly stated.
11. The Proposal must be emailed to BSMA.RFP@woh.rr.com.
12. All Proposals must be submitted on or before 4:00 p.m. on Monday, May 14,2012

Other Proposal Information

Acknowledgement of Amendments Each agency receiving a copy of this shall acknowledge receipt of any amendment to this RFP by signing and returning the amendment with the completed proposal. The acknowledgement must be received by BSMA at the time and place specified for receipt of proposals.

Additional Information Questions regarding this solicitation shall be submitted in writing to:

Email:
BSMA.RFP@woh.rr.com

US Mail:
6562 Gander Road East
Dayton, OH 45424

Fax:
937.428.5926

Answers will be posted and available from the Web Site Modernization page on the National site.

Respondents are cautioned that any oral statements made that materially change any portion of this solicitation are not valid unless subsequently ratified by a formal written amendment to this RFP. No technical questions that may materially change any portion of this solicitation will be accepted during the seven calendar days prior to the time and date set for receipt of proposals.

Applicable Laws Shall Apply The contract awarded shall be governed in all respect by the laws of the District of Columbia and any litigation with respect thereto shall be brought in the courts of the District of Columbia. The company awarded the contract shall comply with their applicable Federal, State, and local laws and regulations.

Change in Website Objectives BSMA may materially change the Website Objectives. Such changes may include additions, deletions, or other revisions within the general scope of RFP requirements. No changes or adjustments shall be made without a written amendment to this RFP, signed by the National President.

Collusion Among Respondents Each respondent, by submitting a proposal, certifies that it is not party to any collusive action or any action that may be in violation of State and Federal law.

Exceptions A respondent taking exception to any part or section of this solicitation shall indicate such expectations in a separate section of the submitted proposal – such section shall be entitled “Exception of Conditions.” Failure to indicate any exception will be interpreted as the respondent’s intent to comply fully with the requirements of this RFP as written.

Expenses Incurred There is no expressed or implied obligation for BSMA to reimburse responding firms for any expenses incurred in preparing proposals in response to this request. Materials submitted by respondents are subject to public inspection. Any language purporting to render the entire proposal confidential or proprietary will be ineffective and will be disregarded.

Late Submissions Any proposal received at the place designated in this RFP after the time specified for receipt will not be accepted or considered.

Nonconforming Terms and Conditions Any proposal that includes terms and conditions that do not conform to the terms and conditions in this RFP is subject to rejection as non-responsive. BSMA reserves the right to permit the respondent to withdraw non-conforming terms and conditions from its proposal prior to action by the BSMA to award a contract.

Withdrawal of Proposal Respondents may withdraw all or any portion of a proposal at any time during and after the review and award process, up to ratification of an agreement between the Blue Star Mothers of America and the designated agency.

Withdrawal of Request for Proposal BSMA retains at all times the right to cancel or withdraw this RFP, to refuse to accept a proposal from any respondent, and to modify or amend any portion of this RFP.

Proposal Evaluation/Selection Process

This section defines the proposal format to be used by respondents. All proposals shall be submitted in the format outlined herein. In preparing submissions, respondents should describe in detail the services proposed to be provided and how service delivery will be accomplished.

Respondents should also identify equipment requirements and the cost of providing website design for each category identified. The minimum levels of services to be provided are described in this RFP.

BSMA will receive competitive proposals from firms having specific experience and qualifications in the areas identified in this solicitation. Under competitive negotiation procedures, the terms of the service contract, the price of the service, the method of service delivery, and the conditions of performance are all negotiable. A negotiated contract will be awarded to the agency that best meets the proposed needs at a reasonable price, not necessarily at the lowest price.

For consideration, proposals must contain descriptions of the agency's experience and abilities to perform pursuant to the BSMA's Website Objectives. Unless otherwise stated, all proposals shall address each criterion identified in the following subsection.

Evaluation and Selection Criteria

BSMA's Web Site Team shall review and evaluate all proposals and, if appropriate, request a preliminary concept for the design and navigation of BSMA's Web site. Evaluation of responses will be based, in part, on the following criteria:

1. Qualifications of respondent, including:
 - a. Demonstrated competence and professional qualifications necessary for successfully performing the work required by BSMA as stated in the RFP.
 - b. Recent experience in successfully performing similar services, and the backgrounds and experience of the specific individuals to be assigned to this project.
 - c. Standard hourly billing rates for the assigned staff, including any sub consultants; sub-contracts; project rate; or module design rate.
 - d. Experience in integrating e-commerce into website content, and experience in making a website interactive, user friendly, informative, and attractive to the website user.
 - e. Experience in content management website construction. Preference will be given to respondents who have developed successful websites for other non-

profits, municipalities and/or government agencies. Please list the URL of any website you have developed or are developing for said agencies.

- f. Demonstrated creativity in website development.
2. Commitment to work with the Blue Star Mothers of America in addressing current and future needs with respect to website development, content, equipment and service requirements of BSMA's website.
3. Understanding of the work required by the Blue Star Mothers of America.
4. Value/Benefit of the Respondent's proposal to/for the Blue Star Mothers of America.
5. Completeness of responses to specific requirements of the RFP.
6. Proposed approach in completing the work.
7. References.
8. Cost – broken down by phase and type of work.
9. Extent to which the design concept reflects the objectives noted in this RFP.
10. New equipment or license requirements that may affect short-term and long-term costs to the Blue Star Mothers of America.
11. Evidence of Ability to Perform. Before the award of any contract, each respondent may be required to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Blue Star Mothers of America, or the designated committee, that it has the necessary facilities, ability, and resources to provide the services specified herein within the timeline required. The Blue Star Mothers of America may make reasonable requests deemed necessary and proper to determine the scope-of-work, and the respondent shall furnish to the Blue Star Mothers of America all information for this purpose.

Final Selection

Following the review of the proposals, presentation and interviews, BSMA may further invite a firm(s) to formally meet with BSMA Web Site Team prior to making a final determination to address additional inquiries by BSMA and to discuss and/or negotiate terms and conditions for a final contract. Factors that will determine the final selection will include the finalization of terms in regards to service agreements, costs, website security, and ease of use. However, BSMA reserves the right to reject any or all quotations, waive any informality in RFP's, and to accept or reject any items thereon.

Contract Commencement and Completion

The selected firm will be required to enter into an Agreement for the project with the Blue Star Mothers of America.

Any contract resulting from this RFP shall not be effective unless, and until, approved by the BSMA board. Upon approval, the contract shall start within 30 days after the award of the contract. The estimated completion date shall be defined in the proposal submitted by the selected firm, but shall be no later than 120 days from the award of the contract.