



Anacostia Watershed Society

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Anacostia Watershed Society

Request for Proposal

Web Site Design and Development

December 15, 2008

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1 Summary

The Anacostia Watershed Society (AWS) is accepting proposals for the redesign and development of the AWS public Web site, located at www.anacostiaws.org. The purpose of this RFP is to provide a fair evaluation for all candidates and to provide the candidates with the evaluation criteria against which they will be judged.

The existing AWS Web site was originally designed and produced in 2003 and has undergone only minor modifications since that time, although the content communicated on the site has grown substantially. AWS recognizes that the site has become outdated and that the management and organization of content require substantial improvement. The site is maintained with in-house resources through the AWS Communications and Outreach unit.

2 Proposal Guidelines and Requirements

This is a free and open process. All valid proposals will be undergo competitive evaluation and the bidder that represents the best value to AWS will be selected. Though cost is a significant factor, AWS is not obliged to select the lowest cost bidder.

Proposals received after the established deadline will be rejected and destroyed.

The proposal must contain the signature of a duly authorized officer or agent of the company submitting the proposal.

This RFP outlines minimum requirements for this effort as determined by AWS. Bidders who wish to submit alternate approaches are encouraged to do so, however the solution must indicate how it will address these minimum requirements.

Prices quoted should be inclusive of all costs. If the quoted price excludes certain fees or charges, the proposal must provide a detailed list of excluded fees with a complete explanation of the nature of those fees.

If the execution of work to be performed by the bidder requires sub-contracted resources, this must be clearly stated in the proposal, identifying the sub-contractors and the work they will perform. AWS will not refuse a proposal based upon the use of sub-contractors; however we retain the right to refuse the sub-contractors you have selected based on their past performance and other qualifications.

Provisions of this RFP and the contents of the successful responses are considered available for inclusion in final contractual obligations.

3 Contract Terms

AWS will negotiate contract terms upon vendor selection. All contracts are subject to review by AWS legal counsel, and a project will be awarded upon signing of an agreement or contract, which outlines terms, scope, budget and other necessary items.

The issuance of this RFP or the receipt of responses in no way obligates AWS to award a contract. AWS may, at its sole discretion and without explanation, cancel this RFP prior to contract award.

4 Purpose, Description and Objectives

4.1 Purpose

AWS currently has a Web presence that is outdated in appearance, structure and the presentation of content. An opportunity exists to re-engineer the site to better reflect the mission of AWS and incorporate the latest Web technology. As an organization with limited personnel resources, AWS also recognizes the opportunity to improve the management of information through the implementation of a content management system (CMS).

Upon completion of the development of the site, AWS will assume full responsibility for Web site content maintenance and administration. All content, coding and graphics will become the sole property of AWS.

4.2 Description

AWS seeks to create a flexible, informative Web site that is easy to maintain. The site must be user-friendly and deliver large amounts of constantly changing information to our key audiences. In addition to designing a user-friendly site with an intuitive interface, the site must also include Web-based, database-driven administration tool that allows key management personnel to easily update content without directly accessing source code.

AWS will maintain ultimate editorial control of content without burdening existing AWS staff or significantly delaying publication of new information on the site. AWS staff will efficiently manage Web publishing processes, preferably by using a system with a browser-based user interface. Administration of Web content will be based on roles to control access and work flow (e.g. author, reviewer/editor, publisher).

To be effective, our Web site must be:

- Easy and intuitive
- Visually pleasing
- Informative
- Safe and secure
- Quick to load and operate

4.3 Objective

Our primary objective is to continue to build brand identity, awareness, and interest in the organization and the role that it plays in the surrounding community.

4.4 Our Vision for the Site

- Maximize Web-based technologies to disseminate information and build community
- Build loyalty among and enhance relationships of current and prospective donors
- Improve delivery of information regarding AWS's educational, activist, and community-based programs
- More efficiently leverage existing human capital
- Increase awareness of AWS and its mission

4.5 Specific Strategies

- Increase awareness of the AWS mission and promote involvement through programs
- Obtain new donors and program participants, while retaining and improving experiences for current ones
- Strengthen relationships with community partners, donors, program participants and staff
- Attract qualified and diverse staff
- Improve business efficiencies
- Present comprehensive information and resources in an easy-to-use, searchable format
- Increase site promotion activities
- Integrate brand messaging
- Deliver a consistent image
- Deliver a scalable, maintainable foundation

In short we must tell our story through the use of compelling visuals, intuitive navigation, and concise messaging.

Make it easy – Redesign the site to deliver intuitive navigation, an improved graphical user interface, and easy-to-find content organization.

Make it compelling – Develop tools to deliver timely, relevant answers to the breadth and depth of member questions.

Make it happen – Reinforce AWS's brand and market leadership and give potential donors from multiple audience groups the incentive to take action.

5 Timeline

AWS will observe the following schedule for the RFP process and ensuing contract:

Event	Date
RFP issued	15 December 2008

Event	Date
Questions due from bidders (Submission via e-mail)	7 January 2009 5:00 PM ET
Bidder conference call	14 January 2009
Submit intent to bid (e-mail)	19 January 2009 12:00 PM ET
Proposals due	23 January 2009 12:00 PM ET
Oral presentations	28 January 2009
Vendor selection and notification	3 February 2009
Contract negotiation	4 - 6 February 2009
Work commences	9 February 2009
Phase I completed	6 March 2009
Phase II completed	17 April 2009
New site deployed	20 April 2009

6 Budget

Please provide a cost proposal to accomplish the scope outlined below. Where appropriate, please cost alternate scenarios. The budget must encompass all design, production, and software acquisitions necessary for development and maintenance of the Web site.

Hosting will be addressed separately and costs for hosting are not included in the budget for this project.

List pricing for:

- Phase I: Discovery, Requirements Planning & Site Definition
- Phase II: Site Development, Testing and Deployment

AWS has allocated \$10,000 for this project (Phase I and II). However, we will entertain responses up to \$15,000 if they show significant cause why the work cannot be completed within budget or substantial added value offered by the cost increase. As a 501(c)3 nonprofit, AWS will accept proposals that incorporate professional services donated in-kind to the organization.

7 Background of Organization

7.1 Our Mission

The mission of the Anacostia Watershed Society is to protect and restore the Anacostia River and its watershed communities by cleaning the water, recovering the shores, and honoring the heritage.

The vision is to make the Anacostia River and its tributaries swimmable and fishable, in keeping with the Clean Water Act, for the health and enjoyment of everyone in the community. Community involvement is critical to achieving this vision and AWS seeks win-win solutions through strong partnerships and coalitions, with all parts of the community, government, and other stakeholders.

Core to our work is reaching out to, educating and engaging the next generation of decision-makers, our youth.

7.2 Products and Services Overview

AWS develops and implements products and services in three primary business areas: environmental advocacy, environmental education, and environmental restoration.

A significant portion of AWS's advocacy programming focuses on influencing environmental regulation and policy in the State of Maryland and the District of Columbia. While the organization does not lobby, it provides valuable information and perspectives to local officials and agencies on environmental issues effecting the health and quality of life of approximately 1.1 million people in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. AWS also works to increase awareness of and access to the Anacostia River and local water quality issues among the general public. These activities include, but are not limited to promoting recreational activities on the river and in natural areas throughout the watershed.

AWS's environmental education programs focus on providing "meaningful watershed experiences" to public, private and public charter school students in grades K-12 in Prince George's County, MD; Montgomery County, MD; and the District of Columbia. (Curriculums conform to educational requirements specified by Maryland and the District of Columbia.) Programming includes two major service-learning offerings requiring participants to engage in classroom learning, field study and a community service project. Other offerings include opportunities for students to participate hands-on in Anacostia River wildlife restoration efforts and learn about the local region's rich human and natural histories. In addition to school offerings, AWS offers professional development courses for local educators interested in environmental education. Occasionally, AWS adapts or creates special educational offerings for audiences of younger children (under age 5), college students and adult learners. These offerings range from slide shows for local community groups to paddling clinics to teach basic canoe and kayak paddling techniques on flat water.

AWS's environmental restoration programs provide hands-on, community-based solutions to environmental issues facing the Anacostia River, its tributary streams and creeks and the remaining natural areas located inside the Anacostia Watershed. Programming includes trash monitoring and cleanup; invasive, non-native plant removal; native tree and shrub restoration; and water pollution monitoring and reporting. Past programming has included the prevention of stream bank erosion. Programming is expanding to include construction and installation of eco-friendly stormwater controls, such as rain barrels and rain gardens, as part of a larger foray into contemporary Schoolyard Greening projects in conjunction with AWS's educational offerings.

7.3 Donor Demographics

Financial support for AWS programming and services is derived from a number of different sources; however, a vast majority (approximately 70%) of its operating costs are covered through a combination

of public and private grants. The remaining 30% of annual revenue is generated by contributions from individuals and corporations. In the interest of further diversifying its funding sources, AWS seeks to increase private donations from individuals and corporations by improving brand recognition and program promotion among members of several new potential audiences.

8 Audience

8.1 Stakeholders and audience groups:

At present, AWS's core audience consists of older adults (age 50 to 65), primarily female, from relatively well-to-do households in predominantly Caucasian neighborhoods located within or near Anacostia Watershed boundaries. While these attributes describe many of AWS's constituents, the organization's base of support includes representatives of a number of different local communities, including local college students, residents of the watershed's many ethnically and racially diverse neighborhoods; socially-aware local youth; and environmentally-conscious adults between the ages of 25 and 49.

8.1.1 Primary:

AWS maintains that its current Web presence adequately serves the needs of its most dedicated constituents and private donors (see above). The organization wishes to use this opportunity to provide additional incentive for individuals from groups with lower representation within its current constituency to become active and repeat AWS volunteers, grassroots advocates and, most importantly, financial contributors.

8.1.2 Secondary:

In addition maintaining and expanding AWS's primary audience of donors and constituents, the organization's Web presence must continue to serve as a source of information for local elected officials, environmental organization and agencies; local, regional and national media representatives; and national and international researchers interested in learning more about local response to broader watershed and environmental issues. The site also will serve a number of concerned individuals (and contributors) living outside the Anacostia Watershed in locations throughout the United States.

9 SCOPE & GUIDELINES

The scope of this project is to update the existing AWS Web site. AWS's in-house Communications and Outreach department will create/provide all of the site copy and provide the successful bidder with the most necessary original and stock photography. AWS also will provide an information architecture and navigational structure for the revised site, but welcomes expert advice from the successful bidder on recommended enhancements to these elements. A firm that can handle all site interface design, technological architecture, and production is required. The site must include a technology solution that allows the in-house staff to easily and cost-effectively update content and modify site design after the initial launch.

9.1 Discovery

Confirm audiences, objectives, graphic look and feel, navigation, site marketing, technology issues and assumptions, required functionality, phasing, and budgetary constraints, resulting in a creative brief.

9.2 Design

Demonstrate web site information architecture, graphic look and feel, user navigation, home page and main navigation templates for each of the main navigation links. As mentioned above, AWS will provide the information architecture and navigational structure for review and consultation with the successful bidder.

9.3 Development Guidelines

The Web site designed by the successful candidate must meet the following criteria:

- Create a content management system that will permit non-technical AWS staff to instantly update Web site content on specific pages.
- Easily Updated – Once the site has been completed and accepted by AWS, the site will be maintained by the AWS staff using WYSIWYG tools.
- Convert substantial amounts of existing content to new Web site.
- Visually Appealing – The site must have an attractive mix of text and graphics.
- Common Theme – Each section of the site should have a common look and feel. The AWS logo should be prominently displayed on every page as a common header.
- Consistent Design – As stated above, each section of the site should have a common look and feel. The use of photographs, fonts and layouts should be consistent throughout the site.
- Easy to Navigate – The site should be easy to navigate. Information should be grouped and presented in a logical manner and require no more than three levels of “drill down” for the user to find the desired information.
- Development of Web pages to accommodate the proposed navigation scheme.
- Provide necessary software and licenses to maintain site internally or externally, as decided by the AWS.
- Provide search capabilities using key words or phrasing that will identify content from throughout the site.
- Gather e-mail, areas of interest and demographic information from visitors in a format that permits the AWS to maintain a single database of users and e-mail each according to their area of interest and profile. Provide training and all necessary support to permit easy use by a selected AWS staff person.
- Project Management – An assigned project manager will be made available to present information and coordinate with AWS staff, including a reasonable number of meetings to present design and development solutions.

Once the Web site has been completed and accepted by the AWS, the Web site design and all of its contents, software and architecture become property of the AWS.

9.4 Site Specifications

The AWS encourages creativity in the proposals submitted; however there are certain requirements for the Web site project. Your proposal must account for all of these requirements.

- Site must be compatible with IE, FireFox and Safari browsers.
- Web site must not require plug-ins as a default.
- Meets ADA Requirements – The site should be developed to meet all Federally-mandated access requirements adopted by the Federal Access Board under section 508 subsection 1194.22 of the Rehabilitation Act.
- Site must be built in accordance to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, provided by the W3C and should also be easily accessible to the novice as well as the experienced Internet user.
- Fast Loading Pages – The Web site must be designed with a balance of text and graphics such that each page loads in 8 seconds or less on the average computer (using a 56K modem).

9.5 Testing

Testing of site on all applicable platforms to ensure Web site works as promised. Explain testing plan through development process (i.e. focus groups, etc.).

9.6 Delivery

Delivery and uploading of site to client for internal hosting, to an outside third party, or hosting by consultant (to be determined).

9.7 Tracking

AWS uses Google Analytics to measure Web site traffic.

10 AVAILABLE TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES / INTEGRATION ISSUES

We will use much of our existing Web content. New content will be identified and written by AWS staff.

There are no existing databases that will need to be imported or connected to the new site.

We do not have existing e-Commerce systems, Web forums or other tools that the new site should be connected to. Online donations are currently handled by referral to the Network for Good site.

11 QUALIFICATIONS

All bidders must outline their qualifications to complete the required work by addressing the following points:

1. List the five Web sites your firm has produced that best reflect your work and relevancy to this project. Briefly list the role your firm played in each project. The URL should be submitted. Only sites that are live will qualify during evaluation.

2. Describe your experience in producing sites for non-profit and/or community-focused projects.
3. Provide current reference information for three former or current clients.
4. Briefly describe your firm's organizational capacity to produce our Web site (e.g. staff, equipment, software, physical space, office location, etc.).
5. Outline the number of full-time staff your firm employs and include a copy of your firm's organizational chart.
6. Provide a company profile, length of time in business and core competencies.
7. Briefly describe the percentage of your Web staff that would be assigned to this project relative to your entire staff (using full time equivalents). For example, if you would use five staff on the project and you have ten Web designers and developers, the percentage would be 50%.
8. Describe the team that will be assigned to this project, including each person's role and a brief background summary for each key staff member assigned to this project.
9. Briefly describe your firm's project management process.
10. Outline the percentage of total revenue that is derived from site development vs. other business areas.
11. Please discuss your testing and support plan.
12. Please explain your service level agreement (SLA) structure.
13. Please confirm your organization's ability to meet the timeline for completion outlined above or suggest an alternative timeline that you feel best meets the objectives of the project.

12 Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will form the basis upon which AWS will evaluate proposals.

Criteria	Percentage of Overall Score
Suitability of Proposed Solution	20%
Qualifications	20%
Past Performance	15%
Staffing	15%
Cost	20%
Proposal Preparation	5%
Oral Presentation	5%

13 Proposal Preparation and Delivery

Please use the following as a guideline to format your proposal:

13.1 Length and Font Size

Please use fonts no smaller than 10 point. Maximum proposal length including title page, cover letter, proposal, qualifications and budget should not exceed 35 pages.

13.2 Title Page

AWS Web Site Development Proposal, your company name, address, Web site address, telephone number, fax number, e-mail address and primary contact person.

13.3 Cover Letter

Signed by the person or persons authorized to sign on behalf of the company (1-2 pages).

13.4 Proposed Approach

Discuss your proposed solution, including the features, benefits and uniqueness of your solution. You should also touch on your ability to deliver the project in the timeframe noted in Section 5 (3-10 pages).

13.5 Qualifications

Provide the information requested in Section 11 (10-20 pages).

13.6 Budget and Fees

List budgets as requested above. Identify staff you anticipate working on the project and their hourly rates for work that may be needed for Phase I and Phase II.

13.7 Delivery of Proposal

Three (3) copies of your proposal must be received no later than 12:00 PM ET on Friday, January 23, 2009. Your proposal must include a cost proposal as described above. All costs associated with the delivery of the project should be presented in a flat rate, fee for service format.

Deliver proposals to the attention of:

Steven Reynolds
Director, Communications and Outreach
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