

**WASHINGTON, DC ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP
NEW WEBSITE**

Request for Proposals

10/5/2009

Washington, DC Economic Partnership

1495 F Street, NW

Washington, DC 20004

202-661-8670

www.wdcep.com

Request for Proposals: New Website

The Washington, DC Economic Partnership (WDCEP) is seeking proposals from qualified firms (referred to as “the Consultant” in this RFP) to create and implement a new website to replace its current website (www.wdcep.com).

Please respond to this RFP no later than 5pm on Friday, October 30th, 2009.

A pre-bidders meeting will be held at the WDCEP’s office at 10am on Friday, October 16th.

I. About the WDCEP

The WDCEP is a 501(c)3 non-profit, public/private partnership dedicated to promoting business opportunities throughout DC and contributing to business retention and attraction activities. The WDCEP works very closely with the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning & Economic Development (DMPED) in facilitating economic development in the District of Columbia.

We are one of a network of partners—promoting, informing & selling DC as the place for business. We are researchers, marketers, facilitators and most of all, communicators focused on ensuring that DC’s growth is sustainable, that our neighborhoods thrive, and that the large and small contributors to our community and economy not only prosper but flourish and succeed.

II. Project Overview & Background

The WDCEP is looking for the Consultant to assist it in creating a new structure, organization, design and strategy for a new website that better reflects WDCEP’s current programs, initiatives and vision.

The current site was developed in 2004 as an “in-kind” donation. Since then the WDCEP has expanded its focus and programs and its current website cannot accommodate these changes nor integrate new and future technologies.

The WDCEP has already done some internal work on what the new website should convey and do. **However, the WDCEP is open to new ideas, processes and thoughts on how best to achieve and think (or re-think) potential solutions.**

The following pages in the RFP contain the WDCEP’s goals, audience, problems trying to solve, guidelines, budget and other items necessary to respond. For further insight into WDCEP’s internal (and still evolving) work see “Additional Creative Direction” found at the end of this RFP.

III. Goals For The New Website

a) Act as the WDCEP's communication/information hub

- i. The website will be a place for WDCEP's audiences to go to find the latest WDCEP news, information on events and other 1st tier information about how to do business in DC.

1st tier examples: information on DC incentives, new business locations, resources (need help in X, then contact Y), how do I start a business in DC, etc.

If the user requires 2nd tier information the website would direct them to contact the appropriate person/organization. In some cases the WDCEP would be the 2nd tier contact.

2nd tier examples: organization/agency that can offer incentive(s), broker/landlord that can sign a lease with the business, etc.

- ii. Educate website users of the opportunities in DC (allow users to find potential business locations, incentives, resources, etc. that meet their needs).
- iii. The website would act as a repository for the WDCEP's events, videos, presentations, PR, etc. that would allow both the user and the WDCEP's staff to see what the WDCEP has done in the past.

example: the user could visit the inDC event page and watch past events, download presentation(s), learn about sponsorship opportunities, recommend new topics, sign up for future events, share with friends, etc.

- iv. Any "social media" the WDCEP's decides to do in the future (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) would be integrated in some manner with the website.

b) Communicate to an extensive economic development audience

- i. The WDCEP started (and has been very successful) in its retail & restaurant attraction efforts. However, the WDCEP is now branching out into the technology, "green" companies, creative economies, non-profits and traditional "office space" users. The website needs to convey that all are welcome in DC, but in a manner that speaks to each industry individually.
- ii. The WDCEP currently works with large, small, local, national and even international businesses helping them find their first DC location or a new DC location. The website needs to communicate how WDCEP can help businesses find space.
- iii. The website needs to tell the story of why X company needs to be in DC.

c) Market DC's neighborhoods

- i. Educate the user on the business opportunities (buying power, available locations to buy/lease, needed services, etc.) in DC's neighborhoods.

d) Help position the WDCEP as a leader in economic development

- i. The website will allow the WDCEP to showcase all of its efforts, initiatives and services. An individual who attends a WDCEP event or visits the WDCEP's booth at a trade show leave very impressed. If the same person went to WDCEP's website first, they would never think that the WDCEP could produce the same event/booth.
- ii. Convey the WDCEP as forward-thinking, catalysts, conveners, capable, dependable, innovative, and well connected.

e) Create a positive user experience

- i. Allow the user to find information fast & efficient.

example: if WDCEP tells someone "You can find it [presentation, notes, videos, search tool, etc.] on our website," whatever "it" is should be easy to find.

- ii. Act as a portal for economic development related information (if WDCEP doesn't have it – then point user to who does).
- iii. Encourage audience to come back to the site (repeat users).
- iv. Have engaging & enticing content & design.
- v. Let users know the WDCEP has a lot of content, but never overwhelm the user.

f) Find ways to monetize website

example 1: Are Google ads a possibility?

example 2: How can we "sell" sections of the website to foundations or for grants, branding the page(s) for them, but keeping it under the WDCEP's brand?

g) Win various awards for website (design, functionality & content)

IV. Problems WDCEP Is Trying To Solve With A New Website

a) External problems

- i. Give businesses guidance on where to locate in DC.
- ii. Promote DC's business & development successes to specific audiences.
- iii. Help small businesses find space they can afford.
- iv. Support the DMPED (including DC Office of Planning, Department of Small & Local Business Development, development projects with city investment).

example 1: In many cases DMPED offers tier 2 information (e.g. they are the authorities on incentives). How can WDCEP's website partner/interact with their website/content?

- v. Offer a better platform/infrastructure to promote the WDCEP's events to increase paid attendance and sponsorship.
- vi. Create new "friends" and educate old "friends" of our new services & programs.
- vii. Help writers & researchers find information on DC.
- viii. Learn more about the website user (types of people/businesses, what are they looking for) and did they have a successful trip?

b) Internal problems

- i. Make updates to the site simple so any staff member can update text, add pages, add videos, upload and change images, etc.
- ii. A website that allows for flexible content & design (designing & creating for new programs & initiatives that may arise).
- iii. Create consistency throughout WDCEP's products & services.
- iv. Create efficient ways to incorporate & update existing website content.
- v. How to better incorporate WDCEP's publications into/on the website.
- vi. How to incorporate & manage WDCEP's images & videos into/on the website.
- vii. How to better incorporate WDCEP's e-communications program (Constant Contact), events management program (Event Rebels) and contact database (ACT!) with the website.

V. Audience

The website will need to address the needs of a number of groups & stakeholders:

a) Small & Large Businesses

- i. local, regional, national & international
- ii. businesses looking for space

examples: retail & restaurants, tech companies, creative industries, non-profits, "green" companies, traditional office users

b) Real Estate Community

- i. developers, brokers, landlords, relocation firms, banks, lawyers

c) DC Government

- i. Deputy Mayor's Office for Planning & Economic Development (DMPED)
- ii. DC Council & their staff

d) Community Development Grants - organizations that WDCEP has/will apply for grants

- i. Small Business Administration (SBA), Economic Development Administration and Foundations

example 1: in some cases the WDCEP might propose that a section of the website might be devoted to serving the needs of the grant (e.g. a woman's business center)

example 2: the new website needs to communicate to the grantor that the WDCEP is capable of fulfilling the grant (WDCEP has done X and therefore can do Y).

e) Press/Media

- i. traditional (e.g. newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, etc.)

example: writers/publishers looking for information on DC or a WDCEP event

- ii. social media (e.g. Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.)

example: ability to push/share content to/with social networks

VI. Other Services

The WDCEP currently uses the following services in conjunction with its website (please note that the WDCEP is open to using other programs and services):

a) Constant Contact

- i. mass e-mails, monthly newsletter, event/major announcements, surveys

b) Event Rebels

- i. event registration, event on-line payments, event surveys

c) DC GIS

- i. DC GIS will be hosting the WDCEP's new on-line retail site search tool (wdceprss.dc.gov – no http:// – the site is up for **testing purposes only, but not officially live yet**) which will replace the current retail site search .

d) Google Analytics

e) Host My Site

- i. web host

f) Mad Wolf Technologies

- i. website maintenance

g) YouTube

- i. www.youtube.com/wdcep1495

h) DC Office of Cable Television (OCT)

- i. OCT films the WDCEP's events and hosts the entire video on their site (the WDCEP links to it in its on-Demand section)

VII. Guidelines & Expectations

The following items list the general guidelines of the project and the deliverables that the WDCEP would like the Consultant to address in its response to this RFP. The items are divided into three (3) tasks, but **the Consultant may supplement the items listed below, add additional tasks in their proposal or suggest a different approach.**

a) Task 1: Creating an Infrastructure

- i. Assist the WDCEP to define site & informational architecture (this may include interviewing key WDCEP staff & stakeholders).
- ii. Choose the appropriate CMS (WYSIWYG is favored) that will allow for pages to be created, managed and deleted (open source languages and non-proprietary software are preferred, but all viable solutions will be reviewed) – see *Task 2: Development & Programming for more specific needs/wants.*
- iii. Help the WDCEP create a strategy for incorporating existing content (existing website, publications, research studies, videos, etc.) into the new website.
- iv. Help the WDCEP to identify the necessary functionality (i.e. development & programming).

b) Task 2: Design, Development & Delivery

- i. Development & Programming
 - There is currently a “development search” on WDCEP’s existing website (www.wdcep.com/development/search.php) and similar functionality will need to be implemented on the new website. This data is currently in an Access database and the WDCEP exports a .CSV file and uploads it to the site to make changes. Photos of the projects are uploaded via a FTP site.
 - Create an Incentives Finder that allows for the user to select their industry and the “finder” returns all relevant incentives with a description (WDCEP would provide the data).
 - Ability to quickly post press releases & other news items (and archive them).
 - Ability to easily add logos of events or others sponsors to page(s). In some cases multiple logos will need to be shown on one page.
 - Ability to integrate YouTube videos on the new website.
 - Ability to create pages that allow for multiple images & multiple videos marketing a program or initiative (or past events)
 - The website (and its content) need to be search engine friendly
 - Create dynamic ways of showing images/content

ii. Design

- The consultant must present at least three (3) design alternatives for the new website. The WDCEP is looking for a website that markets DC as a vibrant/active/welcoming environment.
- The WDCEP would like design/page templates for various content such as (but not limited to) events, PR/news items, how to do business page(s), neighborhoods, etc.

iii. Delivery

- The website must be compatible with recent versions of common web browsers and testing of the website should occur on all applicable platforms to ensure that the website works as promised.
- The selected Consultant must deliver and upload the website to the selected host.

Optional development for the new website

iv. Mobile Devices

- Please price out separately any additional work that would be needed to make the website accessible/portable to handheld mobile devices (e.g. Blackberry, iPhone, Palm Pre, etc.)

v. Cool Space Finder

- Please price out separately an option to develop a “cool space finder” that will help artists find space in DC. A good example of the functionality that the WDCEP would be looking for can be found at www.chicagoartistsresource.org/spacefinder

Task 3: Creating Content

- i. Help the WDCEP create the text for each webpage (goal would be to have no more than three paragraphs on most pages).
- ii. Provide images to use on website (WDCEP is looking for downtown & neighborhood pictures, businesses in operation, business owners, aerial images of DC, etc.).

VIII. Budget

The budget must encompass all design, production, content, programming, and software acquisitions necessary for the creation of the website. All costs associated with the delivery of the project should be presented in a flat rate, fee-for-service format with a break-out of the different project tasks mentioned above. Please also include estimates for ongoing maintenance and necessary upgrades to your solution for a year following launch.

The WDCEP's estimated budget for the new website is **\$50,000 - \$75,000**. The Consultant may include additional items/recommendations beyond WDCEP's budget limit with a detailed explanation justifying the additional costs along with the line-item costs to perform such tasks. Please clearly mark the additional services beyond \$75,000 so the selection committee can easily separate them from the rest of the proposal.

All provisions in the Consultant's proposal, including any estimated or projected costs, shall remain valid for ninety (90) days following the deadline date for submissions or, if a proposal is accepted, throughout the entire term of the contract.

IX. Submission Requirements

Proposals shall include the following minimum information, preferably in this sequence. While the WDCEP encourages detailed responses, please keep in mind the length and the amount of technical language of your proposal as the selection committee will comprise of people with various technical understandings.

a) Cover Letter

- A cover letter signed by an individual who has authorization to commit the Consultant to a contractual agreement.

b) Proposal

- Scope of work proposed including a description of your understanding of the project. Describe a detailed work program including the scope of each task and identify specific deliverables and products to be submitted where applicable. **Include any additional tasks/components in that you believe would strengthen the outcome of this project.**

c) Design Samples

- Provide design samples of previous work that is best related to this project. Please send no more than 5 samples.

d) Project Timeline

- Provide a timeline for completing each task of the project showing how the project will be completed within #X weeks from the execution of an agreement with the WDCEP.

e) Project Budget

- Provide a project budget outlining the total cost (including expenses) for completing each task of the project. The budget should include an allocation of staff time by task and a list of hourly/daily rates or total cost per task for each person working on the project.

f) Qualifications & Experience

- For each of the key staff people who may be working on this project, provide a description of their capabilities and experience **as relevant to this project**.
- If a teaming structure is proposed, then submit capabilities and experience for each key team member.

g) References

- Provide a list of references with contact information. If a teaming structure is proposed, then submit references for each key team member.

X. Questions

Questions about this RFP should be sent to cshuskey@wdcep.com **on or before 10/23/09 at 5pm** (the Consultant is encouraged to send in questions before 10/23). Any **questions received after 10/23/09 at 5pm will not be answered**. All questions and answers will be made available on the following webpage, within a few days after submission (www.wdcep.com/aboutus/rfp.php). Please do not call with questions, as you will be told to submit the question(s) via e-mail.

XI. Timeline

This RFP is dated October 5th, 2009. All proposals are due no later than **5:00pm, Friday, October 30th, 2009**. Please send your proposal to the contact listed below. Electronic proposals are preferred, but the Consultant can send both electronic and hard copies.

Attn: WDCEP Website RFP
1495 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20004
(202) 661-8674
cshuskey@wdcep.com

Proposals will be evaluated thereafter. During this time the WDCEP may conduct interviews with several Consultants at our office. You will be notified if this is requested.

Upon selection of a Consultant(s), we will immediately begin work with the selected Consultant(s) to create a timeline, budget and final scope of services & expectations for project completion.

There will be a pre-bidders conference at 10am on **Friday, October 16th** at 1495 F Street, NW (Pepco Conference Room) to address any questions the Consultants may have. Please RSVP to cshuskey@wdcep.com by **Wednesday, October 14th** so the WDCEP can make appropriate arrangements.

XII. Team Structure

If a teaming structure is proposed as part of the RFP response, the Consultant's team will designate one firm as "Prime" and the remainder as "subs." The Prime firm will provide management of the Consultant team's overall schedule and will ensure that work is completed in a timely manner and to the highest quality standards. This task not only includes the Consultant's management of its own staff, it also includes its oversight of the other team members. The Prime is expected to monitor the performance of the Consultant's team and other specialists, review their work for technical accuracy and completeness, and ensure that deliverables are completed on time and within budget. The Prime will also advise the WDCEP on the Consultant's team process, timeline, and staffing issues.

XIII. Evaluation Criteria

The WDCEP will conduct a comprehensive, fair and impartial evaluation of all proposals received in response to this RFP. The WDCEP may appoint a selection committee to perform the evaluation. Each proposal will be analyzed to determine overall responsiveness and qualifications under the RFP. Criteria to be evaluated may include the items listed below. The selection committee may select all, some or none of the Consultants for interviews. If the WDCEP elects to conduct interviews, firms may be interviewed and re-scored based upon these same criteria, or other criteria to be determined by the selection committee. The WDCEP may also request additional information from firms at any time prior to final approval of a selected Consultant. The WDCEP reserves the right to select one, or more, or none of the Consultant(s) to provide services. Final approval of a selected Consultant is subject to the action of the WDCEP and its selection committee.

Point Range

A. Proposal Meets the WDCEP's Needs & Vision	(25)
B. Design Samples	(15)
C. Qualifications & Experience	(15)
• ability to accomplish work in required time	
D. Schedule & Availability	(15)
• availability of key personnel	
• proposed timeline(s)	
E. Proposed Budget	(10)
F. Uniqueness of Proposal & Solution(s)	(10)
G. The Consultant is a DC Based Business*	<u>(10)</u>
 TOTAL	 (100)

**if a teaming structure is proposed and some of the "subs" are non-DC based businesses partial points will be awarded*

XIV. Reservation of Rights & Award of Contract

1. All proposals become the property of the WDCEP upon receipt and will not be returned. Any information deemed to be confidential by the Consultant should be clearly noted on the page(s) where confidential information is contained.
2. Any cost or expense incurred by the Consultant(s) that is associated with the preparation of the Proposal, if any, or during any phase of the selection process, shall be borne solely by the Consultant(s).
3. The WDCEP reserves the right to award one, several or no contract(s) in response to this RFP.
4. The contract, if awarded, will be awarded to the Consultant(s) whose proposal(s) is deemed most advantageous to the WDCEP, as determined by the selection committee.
5. The WDCEP may accept any proposal in whole or in part. If subsequent negotiations are conducted, they shall not constitute a rejection or alternate RFP on the part of the WDCEP. However, final selection is subject to the WDCEP's approval.
6. The WDCEP reserves the right to accept one or more proposals or reject any or all proposals received in response to this RFP, and to waive informalities and irregularities in the proposals received. The WDCEP also reserves the right to terminate this RFP, and reissue a subsequent solicitation, and/or remedy technical errors in the RFP process.
7. The WDCEP will require the selected Consultant(s) to execute a contract with the WDCEP. No work shall commence until the WDCEP signs the contract document(s).
8. In the event the parties cannot negotiate and execute a contract, the WDCEP reserves the right to terminate negotiations with the selected firm and commence negotiations with another.
9. This RFP does not commit the WDCEP to enter into a contract, award any services related to this RFP, nor does it obligate the WDCEP to pay any costs incurred in preparation or submission of a proposal or in anticipation of a contract.
10. The WDCEP reserves the right to change its Guidelines & Expectations after the Consultant is selected.
11. The Consultant agrees and understands that, if selected, it and all persons designated by it to provide services in connection with a contract, is (are) and shall be deemed to be an independent contractor(s), responsible for its (their) respective acts or omissions, and that the WDCEP shall in no way be responsible for its actions, and that none of the parties hereto will have authority to bind the others or to hold out to third parties, that it has such authority.

XV. Cancellation & Modification

The WDCEP reserves the right to cancel or modify this solicitation for any reason.

Additional Creative Direction

On the following pages you will find the Washington, DC Economic Partnership's notes and early "brainstorming" work on creating a new website. This information is presented "as is" and may not represent "final approved" work or "final" direction. It is intended to supplement, but not replace, the RFP document.

I. Websites to Review

The following websites were noted for having either good design, content, navigation or structure.

A) Economic Development Authority (EDA) websites

- www.nycedc.com
- www.fairfaxcountyeda.com
- www.createboston.com
- www.philadelphiaretail.com

B) Good websites (general)

- www.apple.com
- www.brookings.edu

II. WDCEP & Economic Development

1. What does Economic Development Mean to You?

- Creating connections & infrastructure for businesses to grow (i.e. providing tools, making tools accessible)
- Support the entrepreneurial/innovation culture
- Bringing/creating jobs
- Increase tax base
- Provide hope, opportunity and vision

2. What is WDCEP's role in economic development?

- Marketing arm of DMPED
- Recruit & retain businesses
- Connect people with resources/info
- Showcase opportunities in DC

3. WDCEP is (we are...)?

- Facilitators
- Translators
- Connectors
- Researchers
- Marketers/Educators
- Conveners
- Communicators
- Guides
- Catalysts

III. Website Form & Function

1. Does the website/each webpage?

- Inform
- Connect
- Serve

2. What should the user's impression be of WDCEP after visiting the website?

- Dependable
- Highly skilled
- Informed
- Connected
- Timely
- Forward-Thinking/Innovative
- Capable
- Current
- Smart
- Fast

IV. Reasons for Visiting (why people come to the website)

1. It is a tool/resource

- A place to find incentives for businesses
- Case studies showing what specific incentives companies have used/received (to show other businesses what is possible)
- A place to find DMPED RFPs
- A place to learn how to do business in DC
- A place to find new business locations
- A place to learn about DC neighborhoods for business opportunities

2. The site is interactive

- Retail site search
- Development search
- Explore DC (maps of the city)
- Videos & photos of DC neighborhoods
- Videos & photos of WDCEP events

V. Website Paths

In certain situations we may want the user to either follow or recognize that they can follow a specific path to get to a result. One such path is detailed below.

User: person wanting to start a new business in DC

Step 1: Reading through Business section of website (content from *Doing Business in DC* guide & YouTube videos)

Step 2: With a better understanding of the permitting process, potential incentives, resources, etc. (from Step 1) user now starts reviewing DC neighborhoods for a potential business location (content from *Neighborhood Profiles*)

Step 3: User uses the Retail Site Search to find a vacant location/site for their future business location

VI. Website Outcomes

1. Increase site consultations

- drive businesses through a “retention/attraction process” that results in WDCEP being the main point of contact

2. Increase event participation

- better job marketing/showcasing events (past & future) on site

3. Increase traffic to site

- currently avg. about 150 – 200 visits per day

4. Better tracking metrics

- what people are looking for on the site
- who is visiting the site (type of people/ businesses)
- did they find what they were looking for

5. Generate revenue from site

- ads on specific pages
- sections are “sponsored by...” or “powered by...”

6. Accessible/portable to handheld mobile devices (e.g. Blackberry & iPhone, Palm Pre)

7. Win award for website (identify awards to submit website too)

VII. Other Comments

- Can we use both horizontal and vertical navigation within the webpage (see www.apple.com)?
- Is it possible for vast majority of pages to have no more than 3 paragraphs of text?
- Can we create an incentives finder that asks the user “who they are” and then matches appropriate incentives to their answers? Then allow the user to read case studies on the incentives (X business used Y incentive to do Z)

- WDCEP has over 100,000 images (most are 3MB or larger), some which we will want to use on the website. How do we manage these images and make it easy to select a few from the 100,000+ to use on our website?