

TAX FOUNDATION REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

WEBSITE REDESIGN AND MODERNIZATION

March 2nd, 2011

The Tax Foundation is seeking proposals for the redesign, modernization, and continued hosting of its main website at www.TaxFoundation.org. The Tax Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in Washington, D.C. and founded in 1937 with the mission of educating Americans about tax policy, is securing funding for the project and hopes to launch during summer or fall 2011.

RFP RESPONSE PROCESS

The proposal is requested no later than 12:00 P.M. Noon Eastern Standard Time, **Wednesday, March 23rd, 2011**. Interested individuals or groups are invited to contact us prior to that time to indicate interest in submitting a proposal.

The Tax Foundation's contact on this project is Programmer and Analyst Nick Kasprak at kasprak@taxfoundation.org.

Please include your contact information for further questions and action. The response can be in whatever form the respondent believes will fully answer the RFP; attachments are welcome. The response should include the total bid price for the initial redesign and content migration, a timeframe for completion, and a price structure for ongoing maintenance and hosting post-launch.

A mock-up or detailed description of what the respondent envisions for the final product is greatly encouraged. Additional information that will enable the Tax Foundation to select the best bid will be welcome.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF PROJECT

The Tax Foundation provides basic information about taxes and tax policy to help Americans learn more about sound tax policy, comparative tax burdens, and tax trends. Our main website includes information about tax rates and tax collections. Additionally, Tax Foundation experts provide analysis and commentary on key tax topics, including scholarly papers.

The Tax Foundation's website is a portal to everything that we do and publish. All of our data, charts, papers, reports, maps, and other publications are published on our website as soon as they are released. Our website is well-known for publishing high-quality information on taxes and tax policy.

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Additionally, our website is the home of our Tax Policy Blog, widely considered to be among the best blogs in its subject area.

The most recent major redesign of the Tax Foundation's website was in 2006; updates since then have been incremental in nature. Standards and best practices in web design have changed substantially in the past five years and the Tax Foundation wishes to modernize its website to take advantage of recent innovations. In addition to a general visual upgrade, we have identified three key priorities:

- (1) Making the site easier for visitors to use and find data
- (2) A flexible and user-friendly CMS (Content Management System) that allows us to have control over as much of the site as possible
- (3) Migration of content from our current website/CMS that is as easy and painless as possible

Regarding priority (1), while our website currently contains lots of data, the CMS we use sometimes makes it difficult to organize it in a way that allows users to find what they are looking for easily and quickly. As an example, there is no way to associate a specific year or date with a piece of content besides the date that it was posted – this is a problem for us since many of our ongoing studies and data products are published a year or two after the year they concern.

Priority (2) concerns our ability to maintain and control as much of our website as possible without the need for assistance from the respondent. As an example, we frequently find that we need to change an item on the right sidebar of our front page, but we have no direct control over what goes there, and each change requires action on the part of the design and hosting company. While we recognize that there will always be certain scenarios that require additional maintenance and design work from the respondent, our goal is to be able to maintain as much of the website as is possible using our own staff, which includes professionals with strong technical skills.

Our website already contains a huge amount of content, publications, and data, so Priority (3) is extremely important as well. Completely rebuilding the site and its content from the ground up is not an efficient use of our staff time.

Beyond these priorities, there are a handful of specific ideas we'd like the new design to include. They are, in no particular order:

- (a) Nicer-looking printer-friendly pages
- (b) Semantic URLs
- (c) Rotating front-page stories that cycle through our most recent content updates

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- (d) Detailed traffic and analytics reports
- (e) Comments on the Tax Policy Blog
- (f) A “get involved” box that could be posted on content pages, which includes donation buttons as well as social media links
- (g) Improved search results – our current search box doesn’t always return the most relevant results (and often returns duplicates in the form of printer-friendly pages)

The site must also be closely integrated with our interactive projects located at interactive.taxfoundation.org. This is a website directly maintained and hand-coded by Tax Foundation staff. The winning bidder will work closely with Tax Foundation staff in integrating the main site with the interactive subdomain.

We invite the respondent to include his or her own ideas and suggestions as well. The bid winner will work closely with Tax Foundation staff on design ideas that are an efficient use of our web resources and are consistent with our key priorities (1), (2), and (3).

SEND PROPOSAL ELECTRONICALLY, IN CONFIDENCE, TO:

Nick Kasprak, Analyst and Programmer, Tax Foundation

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