



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Websites Development

The Tourism Department in Dorchester County, Maryland, is seeking the services of an experienced professional technology team to enhance one existing website and to develop and launch another website for the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway (HTURR Byway).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

On October 16, 2009, the U.S. Department of Transportation named the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway an All American Road, the highest distinction the Secretary of Transportation can bestow upon a public road. The 125-mile long rural roadway winds its way through Dorchester and Caroline Counties, following closely a path used by freedom seekers on the Underground Railroad.

The HTURR Byway has a pared down **community website** using Word Press. Located at www.harriettubmanbyway.com, the current website must be enhanced, redesigned with established brand and images, and written. When launched, multiple contributors must be able to write and add content to the site. Contributors of different content types can be restricted to different areas of the site. Once the website design and development are complete, consultant will train the site manager in proper use of the tools and technology. The manager can then instruct the community content contributors.

In addition, the HTURR Byway requires a **consumer website** to meet the demands of potential visitors to the area. This website will be separate from, but linked to, the community website and will serve the tourism market. It will include such elements as a calendar of events, GPS mapping features, email collection, storage and outbound distribution, cross browser capability, and meet ADA published standards for websites.

The business selected must be a full service website development firm experienced in creating interactive, destination-based websites. Interested firms should be able to demonstrate experience in working with Convention and Visitor Bureaus, Destination Marketing Organizations or Visitor Centers; Heritage Sites and Attractions; Colleges and Universities; etc.

to demonstrate an understanding of both the visitor experience (event calendars and itinerary planning), and how to create accessible and useful content management systems. The business selected must be able to create both the website and corresponding applications for hand-held GPS devices and phones.

The following functionality and design guidelines for consumer website should be addressed within the proposal.

A. Functionality for Consumer Website

- Content Management System (CMS) to manage website content, and detail any additional utilities included with CMS
- Itinerary planning tools with interactive mapping capability
- GPS Mapping features
- Email collection, storage and outbound distribution
- Integration with Dorchester and Caroline County tourism databases
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO) for each section. Vendor will be expected to provide a strategy that drives traffic to the site.
- Dynamic calendar of events searchable by date, geography, type of event
- ADA Compliant per published standards at <http://www.ada.gov/websites2.htm>
- Cross-browser compatibility; site must operate identically on Internet Explorer, Firefox (PC and Mac) and Safari; compatibility with personal mobile devices /.mobi and Naveq preferred, but not required
- Strong security so as to not be vulnerable to common hacking techniques such as SQL injections, cross-site scripting attacks, etc.
- Page integration of social networking
- iPhone and Android integration and apps

B. Design and Features

- Visually compelling, easy to navigate, emotionally oriented, experiential website
- Organized hierarchy of sections, categories, and stories with pages able to link across various sections throughout the site
- Limit the number of clicks necessary for visitors to reach intended information: follow a “two-click rule”
- Simple cut and paste operation and editing of content
- Ability to conduct e-commerce securely for selling merchandise or signing up to attend events/functions, and for commercial exchange for visitor to acquire tickets
- The ability to make secure purchases (payment transaction processing) for merchandise and events.
- Opt-in to receive additional information (e.g., a newsletter, details on events or partner information, hotel or activities)
- High-touch customer service, sales and communication tools such as online chat, click to call, e-mail correspondence forms with auto-responder emails for particular requests
- Links to relevant partner websites, including Harriet Tubman Byway community website

- Ability to push online marketing messages through wired and wireless network, and other HTML-based items, such as Branded Desktop Applications, etc.
- Remember visitors for track-and-trace purposes
- Make suggestions to the customer visiting the site, on what to do based on pages and/or listings viewed
- Make offers and incentives available during and after the visitation, and be able to guide them easily through any process they request; follow-up options for coupons/special offers
- Ability to highlight various promotions throughout the website with banners and development of micro-sites
- Website templates containing creative foundation established through brand strategy effort. The website will serve as the foundation for the bulk of HTURR Byway communication outreach
- Website capable of supporting other Web 2.0 initiatives (blogging, RSS feeds, forums, etc.), including suggested or best-practices as outlined within Google Webmaster Tools
- Ad-serving functionality to allow the HTURR Byway to serve banners on various sections of the site complete with reporting ability and ability to sell sponsorship for sections and/or portions of the site with access vertical ad networks
- Search Engine friendly with pages able to be captured by search spider
- Web pages with search-friendly URLs
- Consolidated section for all publications available for download and/or ordering
- "Email this page to a friend" and "Print this page" available on *all* pages
- Capable of supporting user-generated content
- Help/Training Manual
- Interactive video capability
- Development of enhanced virtual postcard section
- All forms that are developed for site must generate email notifications of entries and have customizable distribution to different HTURR Byway team members; with system to track recipients of forms
- Quick loading time for website to show video content and photo animation and movement
- Site map and efficient search engine to allow users to search on site by
 - Experience
 - Heritage Sites
 - Topic
 - Events
 - Date Range
 - Keyword
 - Attractions
 - Press Releases
 - Family Travel
 - Lesson Plans

C. Content Development

Much of the content needed will come from the existing website, existing press releases and stories, and existing collateral materials. Archiving and version control of out-of-date content and development of new content will be necessary. **Please include your strategies for assisting the HTURR Byway with creative writing services.**

The Dorchester and Caroline County Tourism Departments will retain rights to ownership of website content and source code once completed and is looking to the vendor for help in developing strategies.

D. Site Map

Please include a site map of the proposed organization of the site. Suggestions for making the site easy to navigate, engaging and interactive are critical and should be addressed.

E. Content Management System (CMS)

An effective CMS is critical to this project and vendor proposals in this regard will be judged accordingly. The CMS must have the ability to handle a large, comprehensive set of data.

At a minimum the CMS must include the following:

- Ability to allow multiple users to manage different sections of the website via CMS; CMS should be easy to use and require little training and have the ability to customize permission rights to different tools
- Ability to crosslink pages between various sections
- Ability to sort and prioritize navigation items – easily rank order based on preference (primary navigation, secondary navigation, etc.)
- Ability to upload files to link on website
- Ability to add/edit/delete primary and/or secondary navigation items from website
- Ability to manage 100% of the site from CMS

F. Technology, Scalability and Infrastructure

Website should have an information and technical architecture with multi-system integration, web services and standards, and scalable in hardware. Website should be able to be modified and changed quickly by the HTURR Byway based on the needs of our markets, and customers, and our varied marketing strategies. Websites should be able to withstand crisis in the event of an emergency; fully describe Disaster Recovery Plan. (If applicable, provide no more than three (3) case studies where such a plan was actually executed.) Consultant will be expected to estimate traffic volume, and the must be able to effectively handle that volume.

G. Website Management and Diagnostic Tools

- Accessibility checks – test the pages on the site to make sure each respects current ADA standards, cross-browser compatibility
- Broken link checks
- Spell checking
- Page level hit counters with reporting

ESTIMATED TOTAL COST

It is estimated that total costs for these services would be \$55,000.

TIMETABLE

Request for proposal deadline, 2:00 PM, August 18, 2010

Project awarded by September 10, 2010

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Selected vendor must be registered on <https://ebidmarketplace.com/>. All qualified responses must include the following.

- A. Qualification Format Definitions. The proposals must contain the following information. Quotations submitted in any other form may be considered not responsive and may be rejected.
 - a. **Business Identification** - State name of individual or business, including sub consultants, address of home and branch offices, nature of the organization (individual partnership, or corporation; private or public; profit or non-profit) and the number of employees. Identify the state in which the firm is incorporated or chiefly located. Include name, title, and telephone number of person(s) in your organization authorized to negotiate the proposed contract.
 - b. **Qualifications** - Describe the general background and services provide by the organization, including any sub consultants. Describe your role in developing other projects, objectives and measurement of results. Describe briefly the qualifications of key staff who will be actively engaged in the proposed project. Indicate what their responsibilities are with respect to the project.
 - c. **Experience** – Dorchester Tourism and its partners in this project will evaluate the experience of the proposer and its ability to provide proposed services. Include a description of relevant experience, especially in projects for tourism industry businesses, CVBs, National Heritage Areas and/or National Scenic Byways, hotels, attractions, etc. Be specific and identify projects, dates and results. For the initial evaluation process, provide *at least two* samples of similar work and corresponding client references, including name, address and phone number of contact person. Identify the year in which the work was performed.
 - d. **Financial Capability** - The proposer must provide evidence that he or she has the financial stability and capability to perform the work outlined within the scope of work. Therefore, the proposer must submit one or more of the following financial statements or reports: 1) Audited balance sheets for the past three (3)

years (If unavailable, an unaudited balance sheet is acceptable); 2) Internal report which provides a three (3) year financial trend analysis; 3) Current credit report; or 4) Any other financial trend report which can be used to demonstrate financial stability.

- e. **Price Structure** - The fee structure should be provided per your billing system so that HTURR Byway understands how fees would be determined based upon hourly rates, projects, and for subcontractors. If sub consultants are proposed, provide information pursuant to the above and identify the percentage of total project hours to be completed by each sub consultant.
 - f. **Time and Schedule for Work to be Completed** – Starting date: September 16, 2010.
 - g. **Signature Page** - Proposers must sign and return one (1) Signature Page and submit it as the first page of one (1) proposal package.
 - h. **Designation of Confidential and Proprietary Information, if applicable.**
- a. **Interviews:** Selected Consulting Groups will be given an opportunity to personally present their qualifications and review samples. Dorchester Tourism and its partners will contact finalists to schedule this presentation.
 - b. **Multiple Proposals:** Multiple proposals from a vendor are not be permissible.

PROPOSALS SHOULD ALSO INCLUDE:

- Original proposal and three (3) copies
- Service provider name & date
- Contact information and phone numbers
- Concise description of the services proposed for the work (as outlined in this RFP)
- A copy of the resume(s) of the person(s) who will perform the work
- If applicable, no more than three (3) examples where such a similar project was executed

SUBMITTING PROPOSALS

Your sealed bid MUST be delivered to:

Dorchester County
501 Court Lane, Room 108
Cambridge, MD 21613

Wednesday, August 18, 2:00 P.M.*

Envelopes MUST be marked: **"Proposal: Byway Website"** in the lower left corner.

** Proposals not received by the time and at the place indicated will not be considered.*

INQUIRIES CONCERNING THIS PROPOSAL

Please direct any questions or comments to:

Amanda Fenstermaker, Director - or -
Ceres Bainbridge, Project Manager

Dorchester Tourism Department
2 Rose Hill Place
Cambridge, Maryland 21613

Email: Amanda@tourdorchester.org - or -
ceres@tourdorchester.org

Telephone: 410.228.1000
FAX: 410.221.6545

The proposed websites will undergo review and approval by representatives from the Dorchester County Tourism Office and/or Heart of Chesapeake Country Heritage Area, an entity within the Dorchester Tourism Office, and the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway Management Team. A consultant will be selected based on a combination of proposal quality, professional experience, and price.

*Dorchester County Tourism Department reserves the right to accept or reject, in whole or in part, any and all proposals received in response to this **Request for Proposal**; to waive or permit cure of minor irregularities; and to conduct discussions with any or all qualified Service Providers in any manner necessary to serve the best interests of the County. This **Request for Proposal** creates no obligation on the part of the County to award a contract.*



Dorchester County Tourism Department
Amanda Fenstermaker, Director
2 Rose Hill Place
Cambridge, MD 21613
Phone: 410-228-1000 * Fax: 410-221-6545

Proposal Form

Project: Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway Websites (2)

Description: Bid includes:

- Original proposal and three (3) copies
- Service provider name & date
- Contact information and phone numbers
- Concise description of the services proposed for the work
- A copy of the resume(s) of the person(s) who will perform the work
- Description of past experience with similar efforts

TOTAL: \$ _____

Please submit additional information on the services you will provide as an attachment.

To be considered, please submit bid by 2:00 pm, Wednesday, August 18 2010:

Dorchester County
Attn: Tourism Department
501 Court Lane, Room 108
Cambridge, MD 21613

To be valid, you must mark the outside of the envelope: "RFP: Byway Websites"

Interviews for selected candidates will be held the week of August 23, 2010. Decision to hire will be made by September 10, 2010.

Company Name

Contact Name

Telephone

Signature

Date

Your signature will guarantee the proposed production quote will be effective for 120 days.