

Request for Proposal for Technical Website Development

The Vermont Energy Investment Corporation (VEIC), a non-profit corporation, requests proposals for Technical Website Development to be completed and presented to VEIC by 5pm Eastern Standard Time on 8/20/2010.

Electronic submissions of the proposals are welcome and encouraged. Please send those to ndater@veic.org. **At least 2 of copies of written proposals should be submitted to: Noah Dater, Internet Marketing Project Manager, Vermont Energy Investment Corporation, 255 South Champlain Street, Burlington, Vermont, 05401 by 5pm Eastern Standard Time on 8/20/2010.** Written proposals (including attachments) should be no longer than 10 pages.

Background:

Vermont Energy Investment Corporation:

Vermont Energy Investment Corporation (VEIC) was founded in 1986 and is a non-profit corporation that provides energy conservation and renewable energy programs and projects, nationally and internationally. VEIC includes one division that administers the Efficiency Vermont contract with the state of Vermont. This program is funded by electric ratepayers in the form of a surcharge on their electric bills. VEIC also has a separate division that provides consulting, program development, evaluation, viability analyses, and other expert technical services nationally. VEIC employs over 180 employees in four states, the majority of whom are in Vermont. Further information about VEIC can be found on our website: <http://www.veic.org>.

Summary:

To assist in the creation of a dynamic website site using the Sitefinity (C#) CMS to meet the needs of VEIC and the Efficiency Vermont contract. 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 www.EfficiencyVermont.com web site was originally designed and produced in 2005 in ColdFusion. The site is maintained with in-house resources.

- In 2009 EfficiencyVermont.com received:
 - 499,964 Visits (1,366 per day)
 - 199,000 Unique Visitors
- Due to the continuing evolution of the services that Efficiency Vermont offers, the site is no longer meeting the needs of Efficiency Vermont, our customers or our partners;
- Is built in a programming language that is not aligned with our overall IT infrastructure.

Key Challenges to the current Website:

- Navigation:
 - 43% of our customers indicated they can't find what they are looking for on current site;
 - 37% of customers indicated that we need to "Improve navigation: Ease of finding the information".
- Rebate Center & Marketplace:
 - 50% of our customers indicated that they came to EfficiencyVermont.com "To find rebates and incentives for energy-saving purchases";

Purpose:

Efficiency Vermont currently has a web presence that is outdated in appearance, structure and in the presentation of content. An opportunity exists to re-engineer the site to better reflect the services offered by Efficiency Vermont, and to incorporate the latest web technologies. Upon completion of the development of the site, VEIC will assume full responsibility for web site content maintenance and administration. All content, coding and graphics will become the sole property of the VEIC and Efficiency Vermont.

Description:

Assist in the creation of a flexible, informative web site that connects Efficiency Vermont customers to applicable efficiency opportunities, and provides both information and action regarding their energy efficiency questions. We are looking to develop a site that can deliver large amounts of constantly changing information to our key audiences. In addition to designing a user-friendly site with an intuitive interface, we are seeking to develop a series of Sitefinity based, database-driven administration tools that allows key VEIC personnel to easily update content and maintain the site.

VEIC's primary objectives for this effort include the creation of a website that will:

- Be designed for external customers;
- Connect Customers to appropriate Efficiency Opportunities;
- Be a trusted resource for Vermonters to learn about and understand energy efficiency;
- Have every page provide customers with specific actions to improve energy efficiency in their homes and businesses;
- Be a comprehensive representation of the services that Efficiency Vermont provides;
- Be a scalable tool that can evolve with the Efficiency Vermont Contract.
- Create a site that is easy & intuitive to navigate.

Key Evaluation Criteria of new site:

- Reach (the ability to effectively Market to, and connect with our customers);
- Connect customer to the appropriate efficiency measure;
- Information (quality, depth, accessibility);
- Action (provide specific steps and actions for our customers);
- Cross Sell/Up-sell (other efficiency opportunities);
- Track Key Performance Indicators to measure success (and report).

In addition, we are seeking to build a site that aligns with the established Efficiency Vermont brand guidelines.

Scope:

The Technical Website Developer selected from this RFP process would participate in the technical design, implementation, and testing of the new EfficiencyVermont.com website.

- The Technical Website Developer will work with VEIC, our Information Architect Consultant, and our Graphic Website Developer to develop and launch the new EfficiencyVermont.com site.
 - Collectively this team will be referred to as the "Website Implementation Team".
- The timeline for this work is defined in the section of this RFP titled "Phases of Work".
- It is the responsibility of the Graphic Website Developer and the Technical Website Developer to work together to coordinate between parties to achieve efficiencies in design, implementation, testing and launch.
- Together the Website Implementation Team will share in the success of this project.

As part of this work, the Technical Website Developer will:

1. Modify the Sitefinity CMS to satisfy our business requirements.
 - a. In addition to basic Sitefinity functions, we have identified 5 modules and controls that will provide basic core site functionality:
 - i. Customer Type
 - ii. Efficiency Opportunity
 - iii. Marketplace
 - iv. Cash Incentives Center
 - v. Calendar
 - b. Produce Templates and Master pages for Site implementation.

More information about these proposed functionalities can be found in the “Draft Requirements” document. We will be looking for the Technical Website Developer to assist VEIC in the technical design and implementation of these functionalities among others.

When possible the Technical Website Developer will utilize pre-packaged or native Sitefinity features and controls in an effort to minimize custom development and ongoing management of that development.

2. Help the Client (VEIC) to create and implement technical specifications based on our requirements and business needs.
 - a. Provide alternative approaches and solutions based on our requirements to help achieve development efficiencies (Cost & Time), and ultimately increase the success of the website.
3. Work with our Graphic Website Developer to achieve/implement our desired look, feel and functionality of the proposed website. We anticipate an open communication channel between the client (VEIC), our Graphic Website Developer and the Technical Website Developer.
 - a. We anticipate the development & implementation of the front-end look and feel to be a shared responsibility between the Technical Website Developer and the Graphic Website Developer based on the technical aspects of implementation.
4. Help the Client (VEIC) and the Graphic Website Developer to design and implement a site wide navigation structure that results in a website that is easy and intuitive to navigate while ensuring the minimum “page depth”.
5. VEIC employees are expected to be the primary administrators of the system after completion.
 - a. All code source will be delivered and owned by the client (VEIC) and we retain the right to modify it in any way we see fit after completion.
 - b. Provide appropriate documentation that allows our internal IT team to implement changes and perform maintenance on an ongoing manner for the completed website site.
6. Development guidelines for Core Site Functionality:
 - a. Create a site that 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.
 - i. Where possible implement Web Content Accessibility Guidelines
 - b. Implement Site Search & Results
 - c. Create a site that employs Search Engine Optimization (SEO) best practices
 - d. Create a site that closely integrates with Google Analytics for comprehensive reporting
 - e. Act in a way to facilitate Paid Search Initiatives (Landing Pages, Etc)
 - f. Create a site with cross browser Compatibility:
 - i. PC, Mac, UNIX-based users/clients;
 - ii. IE 6, 7 & 8, Chrome, Firefox, Opera, Safari;
 - iii. Has basic Mobile platform (iPhone) functionality.
7. Testing of the produced website on all applicable platforms to ensure that the website functions and appears as designed. Work with the Graphic Website Developer and VEIC where applicable to ensure compatibility and functionality of all aspects of the site.

8. Alternative approaches and tasks are acceptable as well, understanding that the respondent should explain how the approach will meet the objectives of the scope in different ways.

VEIC will provide:

1. VEIC staff and consultants will provide information required to successfully obtain a design that will adequately meet our needs.
2. During the course of the project, VEIC and it's consultants will provide:
 - i. Information Architecture
 - ii. Site Wireframes
 - iii. Functionality Requirements
 - iv. Design Documents
 - v. Content & Images
 - vi. Shared CSS Implementation (shared between the Technical Website Developer and the Graphic Website Developer where applicable.) *We seek to create/agree to a CSS Framework to facilitate this process.*
3. The following documents used in conjunction will inform the Technical Website Developer of the proposed structure for the design and implementation of the revised EfficiencyVermont.com website:
 - a. Draft Requirements and Notes on Technical Development
 - b. Draft Selected Site Structure & Wireframes*These documents will evolve based on input from the Graphic Website Developer and the Technical Website Developer. In their current state they do not represent a comprehensive overview of our proposed website.*

Ownership:

1. VEIC employees are expected to be the primary administrators of the website after completion.
2. All code source, content and original layered images will be delivered to, and owned by the client (VEIC) and we retain the right to modify it in any way we see fit after completion.
3. Provide appropriate documentation that allows our internal Web & IT teams to implement changes and perform maintenance on an ongoing manner for the completed website site.
4. It is expected that EfficiencyVermont.com will be hosted on VEIC's Servers

Phases of Work:

1. Technical Website Development proposed to commence: Sept 13th, 2010
 - a. Discovery & Design:
 - i. The Technical Website Developer will have the opportunity to sit down with VEIC staff and the Graphic Website Developer to discuss systems, operations, and future needs to best satisfy requirements to properly create detailed technical specifications.
 - b. Implementation:
 - i. The Technical Website Developer will implement the technical specifications agreed to by the Web Implementation Team.
2. Core Technical Website Development proposed to be complete: Nov 8th, 2010
3. Uploading of Content to Commence: Nov 9th, 2010
4. Testing & Review: Dec 6-24, 2010

- a. The site will be required to go through extensive testing to ensure a stable environment and cross browser compatibility. An adequate method and time line will be established during the project by the Web Implementation Team
5. Core Site Launch: Dec 31, 2010.

Proposal Requirements:

Proposals should include a high level design concept which will satisfy the previously stated objectives, and align with our needs as outlined in this scope and additional documents. Suggestions which challenge these objectives are acceptable as well, understanding that the respondent should explain how the approach will meet the objectives of the scope in different ways.

- 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.
- What type of team will be assigned to this project? What will each person's role be? Please include a brief background summary for each key staff member assigned to this project.
- Briefly describe your firm's organizational capacity to produce our web site (e.g. staff, equipment, software, physical space, office location, etc.).
- Provide a company profile, length of time in business and core competencies.
- Briefly describe the percentage of your web staff that would end of working on 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%.
- Provide a Code Sample that is representative of your work that is applicable to our Scope. (If desired, the code sample can be treated as confidential and destroyed upon review).
- Please list and describe any deviations from the Specifications and Scope as outlined in this request for proposals.

Project budget:

List pricing for:

- Discovery & Design:
- CMS Development (Modules, Controls, Templates, Navigation, etc)
- CSS Development
- Testing and Deployment

References:

Please supply at least three (3) references who have used your professional services for a similar project. When submitting a proposal, include the following information:

- **Company name:**
- **Primary address:**
- **Principle contact name, phone, and email:**

Evaluation of Proposals:

Proposals will be due at 5pm Eastern Standard Time on 8/20/2010.

Proposal selection will be based on qualifications and the provision of the highest value to VEIC. VEIC reserves the right to not award a contract should none of the proposals adequately address the requirements outlined in the RFP, or due to cost.

Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Responsiveness to the Scope & Timeline of the RFP (40%)
- Demonstrated experience and expertise in similar projects (30%)

- Proposed Budget (30%)

We welcome companies to apply for both the Graphic Website Development RFP as well as the Technical Website Development RFP as they deem appropriate. Responses should be kept separate, and VEIC may choose to award only 1 contract to a company that submits proposals for both.

RFP Schedule:

- RFP issued: August 6, 2010
- Notification of intention to Submit Proposal: August 13, 2010
- RFP questions must be submitted by: August 13, 2010
- Answers to questions posted: August 17, 2010
- Proposals due: August 20, 2010
- Contract awarded: September 3, 2010
- Work to Commence: September 13, 2010

Notification of Intention to Submit Proposal:

Please notify us of your intention to submit a proposal by August 13, 2010.

- Noah Dater
- Internet Marketing Project Manager
- ndater@veic.org

Questions regarding this RFP:

- All questions should be submitted in writing by 5pm, August 13
- Answers will be posted to <http://www.veic.org/rfp> by 5pm, August 17.

Questions should be submitted to:

- Noah Dater
- Internet Marketing Project Manager
- ndater@veic.org

Attachments to RFP:

- For more information please review the Attachments:
 - Draft Requirements and Notes on Technical Development
 - Draft Selected Site Structure & Wireframes