

NORFOLK COUNTY RETIREMENT SYSTEM

**480 NEPONSET STREET, BUILDING #15
CANTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02021**



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR WEBSITE RE-DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND HOSTING SERVICES

The Norfolk County Retirement System (“NCRS”) invites qualified firms to submit proposals to re-design, develop, implement, and provide hosting and maintenance information for the Retirement System’s website.

BACKGROUND AND GENERAL INFORMATION

The NCRS is a cost sharing, multi-employer, public employee retirement system established under Chapter 32 of the Massachusetts General Laws and is a member of the Massachusetts Contributory Retirement System. The mission of the NCRS is to disburse retirement benefits and to provide services to active and retired employees. The selected firm will operate under the terms set by the NCRS and will comply with all aspects of Massachusetts General Laws and the regulations promulgated by the Massachusetts Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission (PERAC).

The NCRS, located in Canton, Massachusetts, serves approximately 8,000 active members and 3,000 retired members comprised of forty-two (42) county governmental units. Virtually all Norfolk County employees participate in a mandatory retirement process with a single plan serving all members.

Introduction and Scope of Project

The NCRS is seeking the services of an experienced website design firm to re-design, develop, implement, and provide hosting and maintenance information for the Retirement System's website. This project will involve utilizing posted information on the existing website as well as the implementation of new information, products, and features as suggested by the Retirement System and the firm selected. The Retirement System's existing internet website, www.norfolkcountyretirement.org, contains general Retirement System information.

The NCRS is committed to building a premiere website that is designed upon the ease of use from the view point of our members. The Retirement System is interested in an innovative design that aids website visitors who generally know what information they need or service they want to secure. The site shall also equally facilitate usage by visitors who may not understand how to find that information or service within the Retirement System. In addition, it is the Retirement System's intention to expand the current usefulness of the website. As such, future needs and functionality should be demonstrated in the proposal. The Retirement System is committed to being available to provide information and support to respondents and will be actively involved in providing information and support throughout the re-design process.

The successful firm must have substantial experience in website design, development, implementation and maintenance. Respondents are encouraged to contact the Retirement System, in writing as described in the **Other Proposal Information** section below, with any questions or concerns. Final proposals submitted are to be received by the NCRS Retirement System no later than **3:00 p.m. on** Friday, April 15, 2011, at the following address:

Website RFP Committee
NCRS
480 Neponset Street, Building #15
Canton, MA 02021

Minimum Qualifications

The firm must have at least five (5) years of experience in the areas of website design and projects related to website development and implementation. The firm must have demonstrated experience in similar projects and must provide references from at least three (3) successful implementations. Experience with public sector retirement websites will be given preference.

Website Objectives

The goal of the Retirement System's website is to provide simple electronic access for members to receive general information, serve as a public communications tool, provide a portal to the Retirement System's pension administration software and to streamline business operations. The current site structure and design requires redesign to take advantage of new design elements and growing demand for electronic services. Specifically, the Retirement System would like the redesigned site to support on-line forms and applications and a variety of other activities. The redesigned site should have a theme promoting the Retirement System with a friendly and professional feel. The Retirement Board's website should provide easy access to Retirement

System services, be adaptable to current and changing technology, provide content management capability for Retirement System staff and be used as a public communications tool. The website shall meet the following criteria:

- Provide easy electronic access to public information for use by the target audience.
- Easily updated, with a content management system (CMS). Respondent should list the software that would be used to create the site including all graphics software and recommend software and licenses that the Retirement System will need to purchase for the continued maintenance of the website.
- Provide the public with an alternative means of communicating with Retirement System.
- Enhance delivery and awareness of general retirement information and facilitate a clearly accessible process for public inquiry.
- The site must have an attractive mix of text, photos and graphics and be visually appealing.
- Each section of the site should have a common look/theme. The Retirement System logo should be on every page as well as a common header. All font types and basic layout should be used throughout the site.
- Provide a 24-hour Retirement System and the ability to conduct secure transactions online.
- Provide pages for all Retirement System programs, services, and functions.
- Meet ADA Priority 1 requirements. See Example: www.ada.gov/websites2_prnt.pdf
- Be easily upgradeable/portable.

The information on the Retirement System website should be directed towards the active and retired members of NCRS, other public retirement systems, government agencies, civic groups, associations, visitors and any person or agency seeking to conduct business with, or obtain information about, the NCRS.

Special Provisions

Internet Provider Services are not part of this contract. The NCRS already has an ISP, therefore these services are not part of this RFP process. However, hosting and maintenance service options should be presented as options to facilitate the design and maintenance of this site.

General and Desired Enhancements:

A. Re-create and greatly enhance the NCRS's existing website to be resourceful, informative, and serve as a marketing asset that provides a business friendly environment.

B. Develop a highly beneficial, cost-effective, easy to use, interactive and architecturally sound website that is flexible enough to support the NCRS's internet for a minimum of three to five years.

C. NCRS's preferred website model calls for authorized NCRS staff to have some ability to perform routine content management related to routine information such as the posting of meeting dates, agendas, minutes, removing old and outdated information and general noticing. A staff webmaster(s) should have more comprehensive ability to provide quality control and the ability to update non-routine information. Therefore, a system needs to be structured for maintenance and updating capabilities by non-technical staff. The NCRS is interested in a content management process and is open to ideas on how best to accomplish this aspect of the website.

D. Create a consistent and standardized format and enhanced graphical look for all pages; thereby establishing a unified theme throughout the NCRS's website. However, the established theme should also provide the flexibility to allow for different NCRS functions and some level of individuality and/or functionality between NCRS functions.

E. For ease of use, the NCRS's website must provide consistent orientation and navigational aids, such as hierarchical menus that tell users how deep they are into a topic or subtopic as well as a homepage link or icon on each page in the same position.

F. Allow for interactivity. The designer must incorporate the ability for users to complete interactive on-line forms, e-mail response, surveys and feedback.

G. Allow for search capabilities. Use existing search engines and/or create NCRS database within home site.

H. Track page hits per NCRS function. Locate hit counter unobtrusively at bottom of each page. Maintenance software which includes reporting functions would be valuable.

I. Form Printing. A number of static forms will be available for printing. Website must have links or embedded plug-ins such as Java and Adobe for opening and viewing these documents.

J. Although the NCRS has some specific requirements, we are also interested in your ideas for content, and more specifically, your approach in re-designing the style of the NCRS's website. We encourage respondents to consider and propose alternative solutions, recommendations and improvements.

Services to be Provided

A. The website must provide for high-speed upload/download response times for both low and high speed computers that are used by the average citizen.

B. As per the Americans with Disabilities Act, the NCRS must provide the same level of service to individuals with visual, hearing, motor, or cognitive disability that we do to the general public. The NCRS expects respondents to offer suggestions regarding accessibility.

C. The site must be designed to function effectively with common versions of software and hardware, which must be identified in your proposal.

D. All documents, including maps and tables, should be in HTML, Portable Document Format (pdf), or in a format approved by the NCRS to provide ease of viewing, printing, and downloading, and in alternate ADA acceptable download formats.

E. Include links for citizens to download any browser plug-in products, such as Acrobat Reader, that are necessary to view information on the site.

F. The site must be compatible with current versions of commonly used Internet browsers. Please identify proposed compatibility with your response.

Other requirements and features:

A. Information currently provided on the website must be included in the proposal.

B. The proposal should include a comprehensive timeline for each phase of the website re-design, including meetings with NCRS staff, re-design, development, draft presentation, implementation, hosting and training.

C. Graphical files should be relative to the site and provide for quickest loading, with little use of cartoons or caricatures.

D. The site must be designed for continuous operation 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with exception for times of scheduled maintenance.

E. Capability to maintain an archive of existing and past records such as agendas, minutes, press releases, newsletters, etc.

F. The proposal should include basic training for a minimum of 12 employees, training plan and timeline for same.

Start and Completion of Work

The tentative schedule for this project/process is as follows:

- Proposals are due no later than 3:00pm, Friday, April 15, 2011.
- Proposals will be evaluated immediately thereafter. During this time we may require interviews at our office with our evaluation team on or about April 27, 2011. You will be notified if this is requested and should plan ahead accordingly.

- The name of the candidate firm who has been selected will be decided on or about May 1, 2011.
- Negotiations will begin immediately with the successful candidate and should conclude no later than May 31, 2011.
- All other candidates will be notified on or about June 15, 2011.
- The project must be completed and delivered by August 1, 2011.

Services required after selection:

A. The selected firm's representative(s) may be required to attend a public meeting(s) during the approval process and during the development process.

B. The selected firm's representatives will be required to meet regularly with the NCRS's project manager and/or representatives to discuss and plan the project(s) and provide progress reports as needed. These meeting will be provided at no additional cost to NCRS.

C. The contractor must work directly with the NCRS's staff to deal with the specific needs of the organization.

D. Initial draft website design templates and site maps, will be provided via the Internet on a secure test site, to the NCRS within six weeks from the date of the approved contract for review prior to implementation.

E. If deemed necessary by NCRS, the firm will provide three (3) design revisions, within a reasonable time period agreed upon by NCRS and the firm, after review of the initial draft design. These revisions will be included at no additional cost to NCRS.

F. A testing period and subsequent acceptance testing period, either period not to exceed 15 business days, shall be provided, during which the NCRS may evaluate the website on NCRS property to ensure satisfaction with the website functions and conformance with the RFP. At the completion of each testing period, a letter of acceptance or failure will be provided to the firm selected. Items requiring correction at either testing period must be corrected within 15 calendar days by the firm selected.

G. Once the website is fully implemented, NCRS shall retain all copyrights to the website, including but not limited to, the content, design and function of the website.

Technical Information

A. NCRS has no plan to run the website on an in-house web server, however, viable internal hosting options may be included as an Attachment to the RFP. The website may be hosted by a firm chosen by the NCRS regardless of any recommendations received by the firm selected via the RFP process.

Requested Information and Proposal Format

This section instructs respondents on procedures related to the submission of proposals.

- A. The title page of the proposal must contain your firm's name, address, telephone number, principal contact, fax number and email address.
- B. The proposal should contain a table of contents.
- C. The proposal should include resumes of all principals to be involved in the project and their roles and responsibilities for the proposed project.
- D. The proposal should include necessary software and hardware, any additional communication requirements, integration needs and potential costs necessary to host and maintain the website (i.e. hardware, software, installation, licensing, training, etc.)
- E. The proposal should be all encompassing, with a single vendor identified as the "responsible lead vendor." Please indicate any needed subcontracted services required to meet the needs of the proposal or clearly indicate what portion of the services are not included as part of your proposal.
- F. The proposal should include an estimated summary timeline for completion of each phase of the project. This should be as realistic as possible since this will be part of the contractual agreement.
- G. A detailed work plan describing your approach to designing, managing and coordinating this project. The description should include all tasks listed in the scope of work for all phases of the project and a tentative schedule.
- H. Please state how you intend to gather all the required information, format preferred, and assistance expected from the NCRS in order to complete this project.
- I. Years of experience related to website design. Provide a list of comparable websites, including municipalities and governmental agencies, designed by your firm. Include the website address, company/agency contact person, address, telephone number, and hard copies of the Home Pages. These companies/agencies may be contacted for references; you should provide at least three (3).
- J. Enclose a section on relevant website development experience and information on the extent of your firm's abilities to meet the needs of this project. Please provide a sample of what you envision as the home page for the site.
- K. The proposal should contain the total fixed project cost, as well as detailed "line item" costs for components/phases of the project. All hourly rates and fees, charges, costs must be clearly stated and inclusive.
- L. Four copies of the proposal must be submitted with one unbound copy as well as an electronic version.

M. All proposals must be submitted on or before **3:00 p.m. on Friday, April 15, 2011**, to:

Website RFP Committee
NCRS
480 Neponset Street, Building #15
Canton, MA 02021

Late submissions will not be accepted.

Proposal Evaluation/Selection Process

This section defines the proposal format to be used by respondents. All proposals shall be submitted in the format outlined herein. In preparing submissions, respondents should describe in detail the services proposed to be provided and how service delivery will be accomplished. Respondents should also identify equipment requirements and the cost of providing website design for each category identified. The minimum levels of services to be provided are described in this RFP.

NCRS will receive competitive proposals from firms having specific experience and qualifications in the areas identified in this solicitation. Under competitive negotiation procedures, the terms of the service contract, the price of the service, the method of service delivery, and the conditions of performance are all negotiable. A negotiated contract will be awarded to the agency that best meets the proposed needs at a reasonable price, not necessarily at the lowest price.

For consideration, proposals must contain descriptions of the agency's experience and abilities to perform pursuant to the NCRS's Website Objectives. Unless otherwise stated, all proposals shall address each criterion identified in the following subsection.

Evaluation and Selection Criteria

The NCRS Website Committee shall review and evaluate all proposals and, if appropriate, request a preliminary concept for the design and navigation of the NCRS's Web site. Evaluation of responses will be based, in part, on the following criteria:

A. Qualifications of respondent, including:

- Demonstrated competence and professional qualifications necessary for successfully performing the work required by NCRS as stated in the RFP.
- Recent experience in successfully performing similar services, and the backgrounds and experience of the specific individuals to be assigned to this project.
- Concise statement of project cost. The cost proposal must be a fixed price, inclusive of all anticipated costs, fees and charges.
- Experience in making a website interactive, user friendly, informative, and attractive to the website user.

- Experience in content management website construction. Preference will be given to respondents who have developed successful websites for other municipalities and/or government agencies. Please list the URL of any website you have developed for said agencies.

- Demonstrated creativity in governmental website development.

B. Commitment to work with NCRS in addressing current and future needs with respect to website development, content, equipment and service requirements of NCRS's website.

C. Understanding of the work required by NCRS.

D. Value/Benefit of the Respondent's proposal to/for NCRS.

E. Completeness of responses to specific requirements of the RFP.

F. Proposed approach in completing the work.

G. References. As stated above, at least three (3) references must be provided.

H. Cost.

I. Extent to which the design concept reflects the objectives noted in this RFP.

J. New equipment or license requirements that may affect short-term and long-term costs to NCRS.

K. Evidence of Ability to Perform. Before the award of any contract, each respondent may be required to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the NCRS Website Committee and/or the Norfolk County Retirement Board, that it has the necessary facilities, ability, and resources to provide the services specified herein within the timeline required. NCRS may make reasonable requests deemed necessary and proper to determine the scope of work, and the respondent shall furnish to NCRS all information for this purpose.

Final Selection

Following the review of the proposals, presentation and interviews (if applicable), NCRS may further invite a firm(s) to formally meet with the NCRS Website Committee and/or the Norfolk County Retirement Board prior to making a final determination to address additional inquiries by NCRS and/or to discuss and/or negotiate terms and conditions for a final contract. Factors that will determine the final selection will include the finalization of terms in regards to service agreements and costs. However, NCRS reserves the right to reject any or all quotations, waive any informality in RFP's, and to accept or reject any items thereon.

Contract Commencement and Completion

The selected firm will be required to enter into an Agreement for the project with NCRS. Any contract resulting from this RFP shall not be effective unless, and until, approved by the Norfolk

County Retirement Board or its authorized designee. Upon approval, the contract shall start within 30 days after the award of the contract. The estimated completion date shall be defined in the proposal submitted by the selected firm, but shall be no later than 90 days from the award of the contract.

Other Proposal Information

Questions regarding this solicitation shall be submitted in writing either by email or postal service as indicated below:

Email: Website RFP Committee
www.kkb@norfolkcountyretirement.org
Subject Line must read RFP Questions
or
Postal Service: Website RFP Committee
RFP Questions Enclosed
NCRS
480 Neponset Street, Building #15
Canton, MA 02021

Respondents are cautioned that any oral statements made that materially change any portion of this solicitation are not valid unless subsequently ratified by a formal written amendment to this RFP. No technical questions that may materially change any portion of this solicitation will be accepted during the seven calendar days prior to the time and date set for receipt of proposals.

The contract awarded shall be governed in all respect by the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and any litigation with respect thereto shall be brought in the courts of the Commonwealth. The firm awarded the contract shall comply with applicable Federal, State, and local laws and regulations.

NCRS may materially change the Website Objectives. Such changes may include additions, deletions, or other revisions within the general scope of RFP requirements. No changes or adjustments shall be made without a written amendment to this RFP.

Each respondent, by submitting a proposal, certifies that it is not party to any collusive action or any action that may be in violation of State and Federal law.

A respondent taking exception to any part or section of this solicitation shall indicate such expectations in a separate section of the submitted proposal – such section shall be entitled “Exception of Conditions.” Failure to indicate any exception will be interpreted as the respondent’s intent to comply fully with the requirements of this RFP as written.

There is no expressed or implied obligation for the NCRS to reimburse responding firms for any expenses incurred in preparing proposals in response to this request.

Any proposal received at the place designated in this RFP after the time specified for receipt will not be accepted or considered.

Any proposal that includes terms and conditions that do not conform to the terms and conditions in this RFP is subject to rejection as non-responsive. The NCRS reserves the right to permit the respondent to withdraw non-conforming terms and conditions from its proposal prior to action by NCRS to award a contract.

Respondents may withdraw all or any portion of a proposal at any time during and after the review and award process, up to ratification of an agreement between NCRS and the designated firm.

NCRS retains at all times the right to cancel or withdraw this RFP, to refuse to accept a proposal from any respondent, and to modify or amend any portion of this RFP.