



**APPALACHIAN
REGIONAL
COMMISSION**

Website Design & Development Services:
Request For Proposals (RFP)

August 2, 2019

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Purpose	3
3. About the Appalachian Regional Commission	4
4. About the Project	4
5. Scope of Services	5
6. Bid Submission	10
7. Evaluation Methodology	10
8. Format for Responses	12
9. Project Schedule	14
10. Cost & Timing	14
11. Intellectual Property	15

1. Introduction

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is soliciting proposals from qualified Contractors to provide Website Design, Development, and Content Migration services for arc.gov.

Each interested party should submit bids in response to this RFP via email to Marc Hutzell, IT Director, mhutzell@arc.gov no later than September 16, 2019 at 5:00pm ET. All Contractors should note the following dates in regards to this RFP.

- RFP Issued: August 1, 2019.
- Contractor Questions Deadline: September 11, 2019.
- RFP Submission Deadline: September 16, 2019.
- Selected Interviews: Completed by October 7, 2019.
- Anticipated Award Notification: October 15, 2019.
- Contracted Agreement Completed: by October 25, with work to begin immediately thereafter.
- Delivery and public launch of revised www.arc.gov: on/by June 30, 2020.

Thank you for your time, and we look forward to reviewing your proposals.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this RFP is for ARC to solicit proposals from qualified Contractors to provide upgraded Website Design, Development, Content Migration, Deployment and Hosting Strategy services for www.arc.gov.

Following receipt of Offerors' responses, ARC anticipates selecting a Contractor, for the design, development and execution phase of the above-referenced Project. ARC anticipates promptly opening exclusive negotiations with the selected Contractor in the expectation of reaching an agreement.

Accordingly, Contractors are requested to provide a bid which addresses all tasks outlined in the Scope of Services.

Final Contractor selection is contingent upon successful execution of a contract with ARC.

3. About the Appalachian Region Commission

ARC's mission is to innovate, partner, and invest to build community capacity and strengthen economic growth in Appalachia.

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is a regional economic development agency that represents a partnership of federal, state, and local government. Established by an act of Congress in 1965, ARC is composed of the governors of the 13 Appalachian states and a federal co-chair, who is appointed by the president and confirmed by the U.S. Senate. Local participation is provided through multi-county local development districts. ARC invests in activities that address the five goals identified in the Commission's strategic plan:

- 1. Economic Opportunities:** Invest in entrepreneurial and business development strategies that strengthen Appalachia's economy.
- 2. Ready Workforce:** Increase the education, knowledge, skills, and health of residents to work and succeed in Appalachia.
- 3. Critical Infrastructure:** Invest in critical infrastructure—especially broadband; transportation, including the Appalachian Development Highway System; and water/wastewater systems.
- 4. Natural and Cultural Assets:** Strengthen Appalachia's community and economic development potential by leveraging the Region's natural and cultural heritage assets.
- 5. Leadership and Community Capacity:** Build the capacity and skills of current and next-generation leaders and organizations to innovate, collaborate, and advance community and economic development.

Each year ARC provides funding for several hundred investments in the Appalachian Region, in areas such as business development, education and job training, telecommunications, infrastructure, community development, recovery-to-work initiatives, and transportation. These projects create thousands of new jobs; improve local water and sewer systems; increase school readiness; expand access to health care; assist local communities with strategic planning; and provide technical and managerial assistance to emerging businesses.

4. About the Project

The project seeks to redesign www.arc.gov and migrate to a new Content Management System (CMS). The new ARC website needs to be simply organized and provide the right information to the right audiences. Some of the key strategic goals include the following:

- **A Stronger Platform for Storytelling:** ARC's website is one of the primary channels for the organization to communicate its impact over the past 50 years in helping Appalachia achieve economic parity with the nation. Better integration of ARC's rich data, information on grants and research, and new projects is necessary through a stronger content strategy for the website that clearly articulates the rich history and extensive impact of continued funding for ARC. The ability to more easily showcase photos, videos, infographics and other multimedia came up often from different internal ARC stakeholders. The ability to easily and often update homepage content to showcase new data, projects, and news on a regular basis is a must to ensure visitors have more reasons to return to the site. The ability to filter and highlight ARC data by location in more interactive ways is a need that was also identified by multiple stakeholders.
- **A Flexible Content Management System that can Adapt to Shifting Priorities:** www.arc.gov will be going through a redesign in parallel with the development of a new Strategic Plan for the organization. The website structure will need to be flexible enough to allow for evolving priorities throughout the lifecycle of the next Plan. Flexible page elements that can be easily updated by ARC staff without requiring a developer's assistance will be important for the long-term maintenance of the site.
- **Stronger Governance Structure Tied to Content Strategy:** With content on the site sourced from a variety of ARC staff with differing needs, we need to ensure to have a governance structure that dictates the workflow and ensures that the Communications and Web Teams can manage expectations and stick to a content strategy that proactively prioritizes the information needs of priority audiences. An important piece of meeting both internal and external stakeholders' needs is a search functionality on the site that better helps users more easily find, browse, and discover data, information about grants, and other key content.

5. Scope of Services

5.1 Modern, Scalable Content Management System

ARC is seeking a proposal to rebuild arc.gov on a modern, scalable content management system (CMS). The CMS must include the following specifications:

- Provide publishing workflows that support ARC’s content approval, versioning, staging, and editing processes.
- Provide publishing tools that let ARC content creators produce structured and relatable content, with flexible layouts and simple tools for enriching ARC content with images, videos, etc.
- Follow security and search engine optimization best practices
- The technical architecture must be built for various integrations ARC requires, and have the ability to connect to third-party systems via well-established APIs.
- Provide flexible functionality through the CMS so ARC staff can more efficiently grow and interact with ARC’s audiences.

5.2 Website Features

Feature	Description
CMS	Configuring the development and staging environments, installing the CMS, and performing configurations to provide user access, roles, and permissions.
Post Type Creation and Configuration	Create custom post types and configure the required custom fields as described in the content model. Content types could include but are not limited to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● News● Profiles (Leadership, Members, Partners, Staff, etc)● Program Areas● Success Stories● Data Reports● Research Reports● Grants and Programs● Fact Sheets and Infographics● Publications● Press Releases● Events

Taxonomies	Create the vocabularies and terms described in the content model to classify and organize content on the website and support faceted search capabilities.
Maps	The site should support the embedding of ArcGIS maps and allow site editors to easily include maps in the various post types. Existing mapping applications should be linked to but do not need to be integrated into the website.
Editorial Workflow	The site should allow site editors to create and edit draft content as well as schedule content to be published at a specific date and time.
Layout and sub-sections (microsites)	Content creators should have the ability to use different layout elements to create branded "sub-sections", special landing pages, accommodate and integrate "orphan sites" and include various programs and initiatives that ARC would like to include on www.arc.gov.
Content Editing	The website should allow site editors to easily insert text and images in content via a WYSIWYG editor without requiring the ability to write HTML. This includes the ability to include photo captions, to upload images to the media library, and scale and crop images in the editor.
Search	<p>There should be a robust, easy to use search engine to make it easy for users to find content by keyword. Implementation of faceted search with the following facets available to filter search results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Content Type ● Taxonomy ● Date <p>Additionally, the implemented search appliance should be capable of indexing the content of uploaded documents so they are returned in search results.</p>
Archiving	The website should allow site editors to mark content as archived to indicate that information may be out of date or no longer updated.
Contact Forms	The site should feature a contact form. The site should also allow site editors to easily create forms on an as-needed basis and determine how form submissions are processed.
Careers	The site should feature embedded job listing from JazzHR, or other similar platforms, to dynamically display job opportunities and allow site visitors to easily browse and apply for available

	jobs.
Social media	The site should integrate with social media in order to increase audience reach and engagement. The site should include a plugin such as AddThis to allow users to share, bookmark or link to a page or graphic via Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, email, etc.
Event Registration	The site should allow site editors to easily embed Cvent or other similar registration links in event posts so that site visitors can easily register for ARC and partner events.
Videos	The site should allow site editors to easily embed YouTube videos into website pages in a manner that render gracefully across various screen sizes.
Newsletter	The site should allow site visitors to easily subscribe to ARC newsletters via embedded MailChimp or other subscription forms with relevant calls to action.
SEO	The site should be configured to support SEO best practices, include the required metadata, output standards-compliant content, and automatically generate an XML site map.
Content Migration	<p>Migration schedule oversight and page design support as ARC staff load content onto the new website.</p> <p>Pages containing attached files that are not accessibility compliant can be tagged for review and updating post launch.</p>
Accessibility	At minimum, website design should incorporate best practices to meet Section 508 requirements.
Training	<p>Preparing the curriculum and providing three training sessions for the following roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Site Administrator Training ● Department Administrator Training ● Content Editor Training <p>Training sessions can be recorded and material provided for use in future trainings.</p>

Selected firms will be required to provide Website Design and Development Services reflecting ARC’s scope of work request, inclusive of the following:

1. Initial meeting & project design review: Introduce the respective teams and to discuss

scope, budget and confirm schedule.

2. Hosting of collaborative workshops: Develop goals, objectives and key measures of success for the website and a plan for how the targets are to be achieved.

3. Audience Research, Analytics and Content Modeling: to include an Analytics Audit, Audience Analysis, Content Audit & Modeling, Technology and Architecture Planning, Quality Assurance Planning and the development of a shared Vision Statement for the project.

4. UX and Design Direction: To incorporate Technical Architecture and design elements of the homepage and subpages.

5. Provide context to external technology partners: How to apply the new ARC design and branding to their digital resources. This context includes HTML code for headers and footers, as well as style guidelines to change fonts and colors on these websites:

- LinkedIn
- Twitter
- Facebook
- YouTube
- Mailchimp
- Cvent
- JazzHR
- Formstack
- SurveyMonkey

6. Content Migration & Loading:

- **Define a content migration plan, approach and development schedule for the ARC team. Full content migration, SEO, Taxonomy will be performed by the vendor. Staff will be available to consult on the relevance of the content.**

7. Provide Analytics Setup and Configuration Assistance, including:

- **Developing a comprehensive analytics reporting roadmap, including identifying and configuring on-site analytics enhancements, establishing a reporting timeline for ongoing analysis, and selecting and setting up applicable reporting tools.**
- **Creating and configuring performance reporting dashboards based on previously established definitions of ARC's KPIs and specific measures of success in line with**

organizational mission and goals.

- **Providing guidance and training to ARC staff on day-to-day use of analytics and reporting tools.**

8. Delivery of the project to include: Site Development, Quality Assurance, Content Migration & Loading, Analytics Setup & Configuration, Website Management Training, Acceptance Testing & Launch Planning, Main Website Launch and Site Rollout.

- **Define a content migration and development schedule for the ARC team.**
- **Define with ARC what content to keep (i.e. migrate), or leave behind (not migrate), and plan for tracking.**
- **Governance planning, to help guide the future governance planning discussions, and define and set up the roles within the CMS that give access and permissions to different users according to the governance plan.**
- **Vendor will work with ARC's SMEs and staff to identify relevant content for Vendor to assisting with tweaking, and be responsible for loading to the new site.**
- **Continually test and refine site functionality as it is completed.**
- **Conduct testing as features are completed and check against site requirements and design. Work with the ARC team as they accept requirements as they are completed.**
- **Conduct cross-browser compatibility testing, assuming compliance with the latest two versions of web, tablet, and mobile browsers.**
- **Conduct accessibility testing to confirm compliance with industry accessibility standards.**

9. Managed Website Hosting and System Administration: Please include a hosting recommendation to host this website in a Cloud-based environment. This should include a fully managed hosting support package and monthly system administration services and website monitoring 24 hours a day, seven days a week, including the following:

- **Robust, faceted search capabilities, with the ability to weight items, create synonyms and adapt to misspelled or approximate query terms.**

6. Bid Submission

Please note the following:

1. All proposals must be signed by an officer of the responding Organization, and the response must include a statement as to the period for which the response remains valid, which must be at least 90 days from the date responses to the RFP are due.

2. Electronic submissions shall be made in .pdf format and the Proposal must be received by Marc Hutzell, Director, IT, mhutzell@arc.gov by September 16, 2019, 5:00 pmEST. Contractor interviews may be conducted at ARC's discretion.

3. Questions pertaining to the selection process should be directed to Marc Hutzell, Director, IT; mhutzell@arc.gov.

7. Evaluation Methodology

The Contractor will be selected through a process that will review qualifications and proposal merits. Please note the following information:

7.1 Clarifications / Discussions

ARC may request additional information or clarification after reviewing received proposals for the sole purpose of eliminating minor irregularities, informalities, or apparent clerical mistakes in the proposal. Clarification does not give Contractors an opportunity to revise or modify the proposals, except to the extent that correction of apparent clerical mistakes result in a revision. After the initial receipt of proposals, ARC reserves the right to conduct discussions with those Contractors whose proposals are determined likely to be selected for award. ARC will not assist Contractor with bringing its proposal up to the level of other proposals through discussions. ARC will neither indicate to a Contractor a cost or price that it must meet to obtain further consideration nor will it provide any information about other Contractors' proposals or prices.

7.2 Past Performance

Past performance is relevant information regarding a Contractor's actions under previously awarded contracts. Past performance includes the administrative aspects of performance; the Contractor's history of reasonable and cooperative behavior and commitment to customer satisfaction; and generally, the Contractor's concern for the interests of the customer.

7.3 Evaluation Criteria

ARC will review and evaluate all responses in accordance with, and subject to, the policies and procedures of ARC's procurement practices and the following criteria:

- Familiarity with latest products, trends, and technology associated with website design and development.
- Understanding of ARC's mission and vision, key issues pertaining to the

Appalachian Region

- **Familiarity with ARC’s content, expertise, and history as a regional clearinghouse and convener.**
- **Qualifications and relevant prior experience in designing and building websites, especially for public funded entities.**
- **Ability to execute appropriate ARC staff training.**
- **Credible staffing proposal and the capability to carry out the project in a timely fashion.**
- **Quality Response to interview.**
- **Quality and complete response to all RFP requirements.**
- **Cost effectiveness of the proposal.**

8. Format for Responses

Submit all required attachments in the format specified below:

- **Introduction / Executive Summary**
- **Project Vision**
- **Detailed Project Approach & Project Management Methodology**
 - **Detail past performance working with and collaborating with other vendors and clients in tandem to achieve project goals.**
 - **Please describe your Design, Development and Migration plan**
- **Hosting Approach, proposed Solution and Past Experience, and associated costs.**
- **Content Strategy and Migration Approach and Past Experience.**
- **Detailed Timeline including Key Milestones**
- **Detailed Cost Estimates in line with Scope of Services requirements.**
- **Proposed Staff and Resumes for the project.**
- **Three (3) Past Performance / Relevant Project Examples**
- **Three (3) Past Performance / Relevant Project References ARC may contact directly.**

8.1 Contractor Profile

Please provide a concise Contractor profile (for prime and any consultants or subcontractors, if applicable) that addresses the following topics:

- **Contractor history, including length of continuous time in service and years of**

experience.

- Contractor's overall reputation, service capabilities and quality
- List and brief description of 3 - 5 similar projects completed by Contractor or currently in progress; include Contractor's role, and discuss contract amendment history, if applicable.
- List and description of any litigation; arbitration; claims filed by Contractor against any project owner as a result of a contract dispute; any claim filed against Contractor; any termination from a project
- Contractor's capacity and intent to proceed without delay if selected for this work, and deliver project in its entirety in less than 10 months.

8.2 Team Experience & Qualifications

- Describe each proposed team member's position within the Contractor. Provide resumes of each proposed team member.
- Briefly describe each team member's anticipated role and activities on implementing the proposal.
- Provide team experience working together on similar projects.
- Identify any proposed consulting teams or subcontractors, including key personnel and how they will be involved in the project.
 - Selected Contractor will be required to furnish the services of the individuals identified in the proposal as key personnel. Any change in key personnel will require written approval by ARC.

8.3 Contractor References and Past Performance

Contractor shall provide a list of at least three (3) customer references where services similar to those outlined in this RFP are being provided or were provided. References will include the following information:

- Company Name
- Address
- Contact Name and Title

- Phone Number

- Email

Contractor should provide information about past performance/experience on similar projects.

8.4 Approach to the Work

Contractor shall summarize its concept of how it will approach the tasks described herein.

8.5 Cost Proposal

- This section must include all itemized cost information, including direct labor costs, labor overhead, estimated costs of any subcontracts, other direct costs, and total cost and fee or profit. Contractor shall identify any assumptions and exclusions made in its cost proposal, and shall provide sufficient details as to proposed staffing, implementation strategy, and other factors of its plans to enable ARC to understand the Contractor's basis for its cost proposal. Cost proposal shall list each phase of design separately:
 - Strategy Development
 - Design Direction
 - Website Delivery and Training
 - Migration
 - Hosting

Contractors should also include hourly rates for all proposed professional services by all individuals listed in section 8.2.

9. Project Schedule

The proposed contract term will be for the duration of the period as set forth below:

- Project Kickoff Arranged and Strategy Development Outlined: On or by October 25, 2019.
- Launch and Delivery of www.arc.gov website: No later than June 30, 2020.

ARC reserves the right to alter this time period upon review of all proposals.

10. Cost and Timing

ARC expects this project to be funded in the \$250,000-\$300,000 range. The contract awarded for this research project will be a firm fixed-price contract with payments on a quarterly schedule, or other schedule negotiated between the selected contractor and ARC staff. The contract scope of work and budget shall remain firm during the project. The project should be completed within 10 months.

11. Intellectual Property

The federal government, through the Appalachian Regional Commission, reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use, for federal government purposes, any work developed under a contract, grant, subgrant, or contract under a grant or subgrant, and to use, and authorize others to use, for federal government purposes, any copyrights which a grantee, a subgrantee or a contractor purchases with grant support or contract funds.