



Town of Ashford

Comprehensive Website Update and Hosting Services Request for Proposals

A: OVERVIEW

1. Project Description

Ashford's current website is hosted by an outside vendor and is maintained solely by Town staff. Ashford has determined that an updated website with increased functionality is necessary to continue to serve the community. Ashford's goal is to modernize the website while also providing a resource that is both easy to use and update.

Ashford needs an updated website to enhance the user experience, simplify content management, and provide improved citizen-centric information and customer service to the community, while meeting high standards for design quality and visual appeal. At a minimum, the new website must be developed with a responsive design that will adjust to all devices. Further, the site must be easily maintained without requiring HTML knowledge. The new website will have the depth of functionality to enable Ashford's staff to streamline processes and provide the best user experience for our citizens.

In addition, the vendor should have a team of experts who have in-depth experience working with local government and will equip our staff with the training, resources, and tools to do their jobs quickly and efficiently, both during implementation and after system launch.

Ashford also seeks a vendor that has the capability of integrating additional features and functionality that may be identified in the future. Ashford would like the vendor to provide secure, cloud-based hosting services and 24/7/365 support.

Responses will only be considered from vendors who have extensive experience partnering with municipalities and are regularly engaged in the business of providing and performing similar services requested in this solicitation.

2. Questions, Requests for Clarification & Addenda

All questions and requests for clarification shall be made in writing and sent via email to the following individual at least 10 days prior to the submission deadline.

Contact: Sherri L. Mutch Email: smutch@ashfordtownhall.org

Ashford will answer all questions and requests for clarification in the form of an addendum that will be published on Ashford's website. It is the responsibility of the vendor to check for any issued addenda before submitting a response.

3. Submittal Requirements:

Email Submittal only. Submit one .pdf electronic file via email to: Sherri L. Mutch, Town Clerk at smutch@ashfordtownhall.org

Indicate in the subject line "RFP re: Website Redesign – [Vendor Name]". Ashford will only accept attachments up to 15MB.

Submittals not received on or before the deadline of **December 18, 2023 at noon** will not be accepted (no exceptions). Proposals submitted in response to this RFP shall be valid for 90 days from the submittal due date. Ashford reserves the right to request follow-up information or clarification from vendors in consideration. Vendor is responsible to ensure delivery by the date and time included.

4. Evaluation Criteria & Contract Award:

Responses to this RFP will help Ashford identify the most qualified vendor and will be indicative of the level of the vendor's commitment. Ashford will evaluate the qualifications, references, overall fit with the Town, as well as take into consideration the proposed scope and pricing submitted to determine the most qualified website vendor.

B: MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

The information in this section represents required functional capabilities necessary to meet the Town's goals for a website redesign. The items listed are not all-inclusive, and other items may be recommended or added that would benefit the Town. Respondents' proposals should include the following:

1. Website Redesign & Content Management System

Minimum functional requirements must include:

Engagement & Communication

- Alerts & Notifications - Display alerts prominently on website with notifications sent via email and text messaging to subscribers
- Calendar - Update/publish calendars for departments/categories with a main calendar to display all events
- News & Announcements - Post news releases or updates dynamically to relevant pages based on category
- Sharing Capability - Links to share content via email and social media on every page
- Website Visitor Profile - Visitors can pick and choose the information that automatically becomes fed to their profile upon site login

Document Management

- Agenda Management - Upload existing, create new, categorize, approve and manage agendas
- Archival of Recurring Documents - Store agendas, minutes, newsletters and other documents
- Document Storage - Upload/download capability for files up to 1GB, back-end ability to search within published and unpublished documents

Information & Navigation

- Frequently Asked Questions - Ability to categorize FAQs by department or page
- Directories for Staff - Ability to allow citizens to search for information about staff members
- Online Job Postings and Application - Applicants can also create an online profile, fill out application and attach additional documents
- RFP/RFQ/Bid Posting - Allow for easy posting of bids to the site

Administrative Features

- Permissions - Allow system administrators to establish levels of rights for staff to update/manage/access content based upon roles
- Printable Pages - Print-friendly function
- Responsive Web Design - Fully mobile responsive design - site adjusts to the screen size of all devices it is being viewed on, includes forms, calendars, etc.
- Site Search - Internal site search engine and log of search terms
- Social Media Interface - Display feeds and push to social media accounts

2. Project Management & Implementation

The chosen vendor will supply a professional project team to oversee and provide the implementation services needed for a successful implementation of the Town's new website. The vendor's project team shall be responsible for developing a comprehensive project management plan to include outlining methods of communication for implementation, supplying a detailed project timeline, and identifying tasks and deliverables for both Ashford staff and vendor's staff.

3. Training

Ashford expects the vendor to provide in-depth, professional training services which will educate Ashford's staff on functionality, features, processes, and best practices. After training sessions, Ashford's staff should be confidently prepared to maintain the new website after launch.

4. Continuing Services

Ashford anticipates an on-going partnership with the chosen vendor after launch of the system, which shall include:

Technical Support & Services

- Technical Support – The vendor shall provide U.S.-based, live technical support, including emergency support after business hours. Technical support shall be available through multiple communication channels, including phone, email, and chat. Self-service training (video tutorials, documents, or webpages) shall be available for Ashford staff to access at any time.
- Maintenance – The vendor shall continually work to enhance and update the systems. This should include, at a minimum, development, testing, backups, and regularly scheduled fixes, patches, and other enhancements.

Hosting & Security

- 99.9% uptime (outside of scheduled maintenance) guaranteed by Service Level Agreement
- U.S.-based, tier II data center with 24/7/365 system monitoring
- Automated software updates and security patches
- Disaster recovery process with a recovery time objective no greater than eight hours and recovery point objective no greater than 24 hours
- Geographically redundant backups

C. SUBMITTAL FORMAT & REQUIREMENTS

Ashford will evaluate vendor experience, qualifications, and capabilities for developing and implementing the technology requested in this RFP. The narrative portion and the materials presented in response to this Request for Proposals should be submitted in the same order as outlined and must contain, at a minimum:

1. Executive Summary

- Provide a short overview of how vendor will assist Ashford in achieving the goals outlined in this RFP

2. Company Profile

- Include an overview of vendor's company, which encompasses a brief company history highlighting your experience working with local governments, the length of time the company has been in business, and the number of current employees
- Name the vendor's main point of contact for the RFP process, including their email address and telephone number
- Describe any differentiators that set vendor and vendor's systems apart from your competitors
- One-source vendors are preferred. If utilizing subcontractors for any portion of the RFP requirements, provide subcontractor company information and key personnel involved

3. Experience

- Provide a minimum of three municipal references, and include the following information for each:
 - Client name
 - Website URL
 - Client contact person and title
 - Phone
 - Email address
- Provide a portfolio of 4-6 examples of vendor's website design experience

4. Project Team

- Identify and define vendor's project team roles for implementation
- Include a project team organization chart showing the relationship of each role

5. Features & Functionality

- Provide a brief description of how vendor's solution meets the minimum functional requirements as identified in Section B.1
- Identify any functional requirement vendor's solution cannot provide as described in Section B.1

6. Implementation Plan

- Provide a typical phased implementation timeline including major tasks and deliverables
- Include a description of the vendor's implementation approach
- Outline what role Ashford will play in the implementation of the new website
- Include a description of how existing content and documents from Town's current website will be migrated to new website prior to project completion.

7. Ongoing Services

- Technical Service & Support
 - Describe vendor's technical support services, including hours of support, methods to access support, and the availability of emergency support
 - Identify any online, self-service training, and support resources available after launch
 - Describe provided maintenance, including system releases, patches, and enhancements
- Hosting & Security
 - Describe proposed hosting and security services that meets the requirements in Section B.4
 - Describe security, backup, and disaster recovery processes

8. Cost

- All pricing must be provided as an all-inclusive/lump sum amount. Include the following:
 - One-Time Implementation Services
 - Include specific details and amounts of any content or data migration, training hours, and any included enhancements and functionality to meet the requirements
 - Annual Services
 - Include details on hosting and security, technical support, and maintenance
 - Fees
 - Total first year cost (combined one-time fees and first year annual fees)
 - Annual fees beginning year 2
- Separately list any optional enhancements that vendor believes will benefit Ashford's project.

9. Exceptions

- Identify any exceptions to the specifications of this RFP and attachments. Exceptions must reference the relevant section(s) and an alternate solution or substitute language in lieu of such requirement or specification.

D. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. Contract Negotiation & Insurance

Ashford reserves the right to enter into a contract with a selected vendor that Ashford deems to offer the best overall qualifications and experience. It is the intent of Ashford that after the successful vendor has been selected, Ashford and the selected vendor will enter into contract negotiations containing all terms and conditions of the proposed service. Any acceptance of a proposal is contingent upon the execution of a written contract and Ashford shall not be contractually bound to any bidder prior to the execution of such written contractual agreement.

Before signing a contract with the successful vendor, Ashford requires satisfactory proof that the vendor has adequate ongoing insurance coverage for the work to be performed under the contract.

2. Costs of Proposal

Ashford will not be liable for any costs incurred by the vendor in preparation of a proposal submitted in response to this RFP, in conducting of a presentation, or any other activities related to responding to this RFP.

3. No Obligation

This RFP does not obligate Ashford to award a contract for services specified herein.

In addition, Ashford reserves the right to cancel this RFP, to reject any and all proposals, to waive any and all informalities and/or irregularities, or to re-advertise with either the identical or revised specifications, if it is deemed to be in the best interest of the Town.

4. Modification or Withdrawal of Proposal

Prior to the scheduled closing time for receiving proposals, any vendor may withdraw their proposal. Only written requests for the modification or correction of a previously submitted proposal received by Ashford prior to the RFP due date and time will be accepted. Oral, telephone, or fax modifications or corrections will not be recognized or considered. After the scheduled closing date and time for receiving proposals, no proposal may be withdrawn.

5. Proposal Submission Certification

By submitting a proposal, vendor certifies that he or she has carefully examined all the documents, thoroughly reviewed this RFP, and understands the nature and scope of the work to be done and the terms and conditions thereof.