



**Re: Website Request for Proposals**

Dear Contractor:

The City of Benton Harbor is seeking bids for replacement of its website ([www.bhcity.us](http://www.bhcity.us)). The attached Request for Proposals outline is intended to guide prospective contractors in developing their proposal.

The City appreciates the time and effort that submission of a proposal requires. However, the City will not compensate prospective contractors for any costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal. Further, the City Commission may accept or reject any or all proposals without cause. All proposals become the property of the City and are subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions pertaining to this Request for Proposals.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Moore  
City Clerk  
[tmoore@bhcity.us](mailto:tmoore@bhcity.us)

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)**

### **City of Benton Harbor Website**

#### Introduction

The City of Benton Harbor, Michigan is seeking proposals for development of a new website. Proposals must address the qualifications of the company and personnel; a detailed description of the website design including features; a timetable for initiating and completing the website; licensing, hosting, system requirements and capacity for the hardware/software; security assurances to prevent unauthorized access; procedures for internal access and loading of documents and information; and pricing options, including periodic charges for support, maintenance, upgrades and repair.

#### Contractor Requirements

All proposals must contain company history and qualifications of the employees demonstrating experience in website design, implementation and support. Experience in municipal website designs, especially pertaining to small communities, is preferred, however, experience in website design for businesses, nonprofit organizations, schools or religious organizations may be considered. A minimum of three references from previous customers must be included with links to those customers' websites.

Contractors must consider the content of the current City website and the migration or replacement of that information on the proposed website. Contractors may also consider the format or content of other municipal websites that may be modified for use by the City. Proposals may include graphic examples from comparable work by the contractor to illustrate a concept, idea or format that may be of interest to the City.

#### Proposal Submission

Requests for additional information or clarification and questions concerning this proposal are to be addressed to Tiffany Moore, City Clerk, at [tmoore@bhcity.us](mailto:tmoore@bhcity.us). Such requests and responses will be shared with all potential bidders.

Proposals must be received by the City of Benton Harbor at 200 E Wall St, Benton Harbor, MI 49022 or by email to [tmoore@bhcity.us](mailto:tmoore@bhcity.us) no later than 12:00 p.m. (noon) on Thursday, May 19, 2022.

Late submissions, even though postmarked prior to the deadline, will not be considered. Proposals will be opened on Thursday, May 19, 2022, following the deadline for submission.

Clarification or additional information may be requested via telephone, email or mail from contractors prior to awarding a contract. At the discretion of the City Commission, or its Communications Committee, or City Clerk, contractors selected as finalists may be asked to provide a personal presentation and/or address questions pertaining to their proposal. Should a personal presentation be requested, contractors will be provided notice a minimum of seven (7) calendar days in advance of the meeting for this purpose.

### Proposal Content

Each proposal must include a breakdown indicating hard costs (materials, software, equipment, domain costs, etc.) and labor costs, preferably by category to enable approval of reduced content should budget constraints require a more basic initial presentation. Further, contractors must disclose any periodic or ongoing costs associated with maintaining the website in addition to the initial costs of development and implementation.

Contractors are prohibited from requesting payment for or including the cost of development of the presentation and materials in their proposal. The City assumes no liability for proposals submitted, whether accepted or rejected. All proposals become the property of the City of Benton Harbor upon submission. Further, all proposals are subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act pertaining to retention and release of public documents.

The City Commission, or its Communications Committee will evaluate each proposal on the basis of content, format, appearance, ease of use, cost and contractor qualifications, among other factors. The City Commission reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals submitted. Further, the City Commission is under no obligation to accept the lowest cost bid. In addition, the City may conduct direct negotiations with any contractor should proposals exceed the allocation amount for development of the website.

### Website Requirements

Of primary consideration in the website design is ease of use for:

- City employees
- City residents
- Visitors/guests
- Business/industry

The website will enhance communication between the City and residents, visitors and business/industry. This will be accomplished by providing access to required

documents (agenda, minutes, budgets, audit information); online access to forms; contact information for City officials and employees; 24 hour access to plans, reports and maps; links to relevant websites; a calendar of events; and legally required posting of City Commission meetings, committee meetings, special meetings and public hearings.

The website must permit in-house updating of information and calendar and the addition of content, such as agenda, minutes, budgets and reports. Further, City staff must be able to include additional links to other websites, modify or replace outdated links or delete obsolete links. The contractor will provide necessary login and password information along with detailed instructions to enable in-house maintenance of the website.

The selected contractor will be expected to provide initial training to City staff pertaining to maintenance of the website. Further, immediately prior to the launch of the completed website, the contractor will be expected to provide a presentation of the website to demonstrate the finished product and/or to discover any errors, omissions or problems prior to launch.

### Website Content

The following outline of content is not necessary all-inclusive of the desired content of the website. Further, the website must allow for expansion of content and contain sufficient capacity to provide access to legally required documents, forms, policy, ordinances and other materials without compromising the effectiveness of the website. Some items may constitute a “wish list” for future expansion of the website, depending on costs associated with the item.

Aesthetic or visual content:

- The home page must contain the City logo (Refer to the accompanying letterhead.) and motto (“Port of Opportunities”). The City will have both combined into one “camera ready” image.
- The website should enhance and promote the community image and its unique identity.
- Event and/or critical information (street closings, weather emergencies) banners may be included that scroll across the screen.
- Capacity for current and historically significant artwork, photographs or drawings may be included where appropriate with transition among 10-12 items for visual effect.
- Advertising banners should be limited to businesses relevant to information provided on the City website, such as commercial/industrial real estate listings within the City.
  - Advertisers must pay a periodic fee for display of banners.
  - Banners may be stationary or scroll vertically along the right margin of the homepage so as not to interfere with the content of the website.

- Advertising banners must be of a limited and common size.
- No more than six advertising banners are permitted at one time.
- The City reserves the right to approve, modify or reject any banner for content or all banners without cause.
- Ability to accept Online Payments through the City's payment processor
- Quick Access Buttons on Homepage

#### Content Menu

- The website must have the potential to expand in scope and content in the event that the initial website must be restricted in consideration of the budget line item allocated to its development or to enable inclusion of new technology and content over time without having to replace the entire website.
- City content must be displayed in tabs along the top margin.
- Primary emphasis is that the website would be 'user friendly.'
- Content tabs must display drop-down menus when the cursor moves over each tab/sub-tab such that users need to click once on the desired item to display that item.
- The content menu may include links to documents (such as the City Code of Ordinances) rather than the actual documents.
- Primary, secondary and tertiary content tabs should consist minimally of:
  - Home
    - Welcome
    - History
    - Demographics
    - City street map
    - Calendar
    - Events
    - Newsletter
    - Citizen engagement
      - Volunteering
      - Surveys
      - Comment form
  - Government
    - General description of City structure
      - City Charter
    - Ordinances
    - City Commission
      - Meeting dates
      - Agenda/Minutes (current and previous calendar year, minimally)
    - Board Vacancies and Applications
    - City Commissioners and Staff information
  - Services
    - Parks

- Calendar
  - List of Parks
- Sanitation
- Water
  - Notices
  - Lead Line Informaiton
- Public Safety Department
  - Name, Picture, Contact Info
  - Facebook Banner
  - Tip311 Mobile App
  - Submission of Anonymous Tips
  - Alert Sign Up
- Community & Economic Development
  - Master Plan
  - Consolidated Plan
  - Annual Action Plan
  - Ongoing Projects & Programs
  - Planning Commission
    - Meeting Dates & Minutes
    - Zoning Board of Appeals
- Building & Code Compliance
  - Zoning Map
  - Zoning Ordinance
  - Forms
    - Alcohol License Application
    - Blossomtime Peddler Vendor Rules & Application
    - Building Permit Application
    - Business Registration
    - Citizen Complaint Form
    - Code Violation Complaint Form
    - Demolition Utility Disconnect & Permit Application
    - Electrical Permit Application
    - Event Approval Form
    - Night Club License Application
    - Application for Liquor License
    - Peddlers and Solicitors Application
    - Rental Complaint Form
    - Rental Registration, Single Unit
    - Rental Registration, Multiple Units
    - Rezoning Application
    - Right of Way Application
    - Rummage Sale Application
    - Application for Sign Permit
    - Site Plan Review Application
    - Special Use Application

- Tobacco Sales Application
  - FAQ
- Clerk
  - FOIA
  - Election Information
- Human Resources
  - Current Job Openings
    - Applications or link to posting
- Financials
  - Citizen's Guide & Performance Dashboard
  - Property Taxes
  - Income Taxes
    - Income Tax Forms
  - Tax Assessment
    - Assessing Forms
    - Real Property Forms
    - Personal Property Forms
    - Assessing Calendar
  - Budget
  - Audit
- Links
  - Benton Harbor Public Library
  - Downtown Development Authority
  - Kinexus
  - Benton Harbor Housing Commission
  - Southwest Michigan Community Action Agency
  - Benton Harbor Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
  - Southwest Michigan Tourist Council
  - Cornerstone Alliance
  - Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber
  - Benton Harbor Are
- Contact
  - City Hall Address (& Map)
  - Staff Listing
  - Commissioner Contact Information