

ADDENDUM NO. 1

TO: All Vendors
FROM: Jason McGarry, Procurement/Contracts Administrator
SUBJECT: COG2024-03: Website Maintenance
DATE: July 3, 2024

This Addendum No. 1 modifies the Request for Proposal (RFP) only in the manner and to the extent as stated herein.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What is the overall budget per year for this scope of work?

No budget has been defined.

Within your overall budget, what is the budget for hosting and maintenance?

No budget has been defined.

Within your overall budget, what is the budget for website auditing, recommendations, content strategy, and content creation, including copywriting and graphic design, as well as SEO and ongoing content updates?

No budget has been defined.

Within your overall budget, what is the budget for paid SEM campaigns and associated services?

No budget has been defined.

SEM Campaigns Budget: Is it expected for us to include the campaigns' budget in our proposal, or will you be providing a budget and goals for us to create the campaigns accordingly?

Include the campaign budget in the proposal.

Content Creation: Are we expected to write the content ourselves, or will the written content be provided for us to optimize and publish?

We will provide written content.

Maintaining Link Equity: Do you currently have access to the partners from whom you want to build backlinks?

Yes.

Regarding the fees for these backlinks, are they expected to be included in our costs, or will they be handled as a third-party cost by your organization?

Included in costs.

Backlink Suggestions: If we can suggest other websites with different authority (Mid to high) for generating backlinks, are you open to that?

Yes.

How will you measure your satisfaction with maintenance that is being performed?

Time needed to perform task(s), and clear communication.

What are the KPI for SEO and SEM efforts?

Please see attached website analytics report.

Can you provide a list of plugins per site?

See Attached PDF for plugin info per website.

What page builder is being used per site?

BCDCOG: Divi

Transportation.BCDCOG: Custom Theme

SC Works: Enfold

RTMA: WPBakery

CARTA: Custom built theme

What support is expected for LiveHelp?

We are looking for something that will provide a ticketing system that can give us a clear overview of when items are being worked on, what their status is, and how long each item needs to be completed. If possible, it should also allow for open communication in case there are changes needed or items that you need from us in order to complete the task.

How many users or content providers does each site have?

BCDCOG: 2-3

Transportation.BCDCOG: 3-5

SC Works: 2-3

RTMA: 2-3

CARTA: 2-4

How many internal developers & resources do you have to support this project, and what is their anticipated role in the initial development of the solution, ongoing maintenance, and feature enhancements to the website?

We have no internal developers, but we have staff that handles smaller tasks on the backend from time to time as well as a Marketing team that will provide graphics as well as updates to news items and other broadcasting methods as needed.

Who is your current host provider? Is there any desire to move to a new hosting environment? If so, why?

Our current host is Network Solutions – as of now there is no desire to move to another hosting provider.

What efforts have been made for SEO and SEM on the websites?

I do not believe we have made a concentrated effort into our websites SEO or the SEM – part of the RFP asks that the selected company helps us create an SEO and SEM program that results in an increase in overall visitors to our sites.

In relation to SEO and SEM content/program creation - Is there a budget for creating new website content, and what is it?

No budget has been defined.

Is there a budget for SEM?

Our understanding is that SEM (as well as SEO) is something that would fall under monthly maintenance of the website and not need a separate budget. However if you feel that it doesn't fall under monthly maintenance please outline why and what an estimated budget would look like.

Will you need the vendor to help develop content?

Graphics and documents will be created by us but there will be times where a webpage might need to be created for a project, or as needed based on need.

Do you need documentation for governance of the website?

No.

On average how much content is updated each month per site?

We do most of the content updates ourselves. I would say monthly it is mainly 5-10 event additions as well as the occasional press release, public review document or RFP. These items are not always monthly.

How often is content updated on each site?

Every few months based on needs – unless it is a new project or item and then it will be more often.

How many graphics are updated and edited each month per site?

1-2 on average.

Do you provide the graphics or do you need the vendor to create graphics and conduct image research?

We will provide graphics.

How many events need to be updated each month per site?

We only add events to our BCDCOG and SC Works websites:

BCDCOG: 5-6 events per month

SC Works: 4-10 events per month

What level of compliance are you seeking?

We are at level AA at the moment however the standard was recently updated to WCAG 2.2 in the last few months and we would want to try and get our sites up to that level where possible.

Is a compliance audit required?

I think it would be a good idea to make sure we are meeting most recent updates and changes to requirements.

Are there existing brand guidelines that should be followed?

There are brand standards for each site.

What are you most satisfied about on the current website?

Ease of use on the backend and the layout of the RTMA website.

What are you least satisfied about on the current website?

The CARTA website has too many things locked on the backend it is hard to make certain edits and the webpages themselves need to be cleaned up and updated to better match the updated branding for CARTA.

What are the most important pain points you would like to address right away?

- Font, color and basic layout of the CARTA website (not a whole redo just an update to match the branding)
- Get the events calendars on the SC Works and BCDCOG websites to be more stylized.
- Update the look to how jobs are listed on the BCDCOG website
- Ensuring that all sites are updated to latest standards
- Improving our SEO and SEM
- Improving the safety of the website

Can you share the URL of websites that you feel are successful?

<https://www.maine.gov/dps/>
<https://catchthecometsc.gov/>
<https://ridetricountylink.com/>

Is there any existing user research or user feedback available?

No.

Are you interested in having user research and usability testing to ensure a user-friendly website?

Not at this time.

Are you able to provide participant recruitment if user research is desired?

N/A

Can you elaborate on who the primary and secondary target audiences are for the website?

BCDCOG: Regional residents (Primary) Local Government Agencies and Municipalities (Secondary)
SC Works: Regional residents seeking employment and training opportunities (Primary)
Employers in the area (Secondary)
CARTA and RTMA: Transit riders (Primary) Ne transit riders (Secondary)

Is there an incumbent vendor?

Yes.

If so, is that vendor bidding on this contract?

Question is not applicable to public procurements.

When do you anticipate the selection of a vendor to be made?

August.

What is the budget/range for the project?

No budget defined.

What was your budget on the current sites?

No budget defined.

What is the deadline for completion of the work?

This is an on-going monthly service.

Are you looking for a fixed-price contract or time and materials?

Fixed.

How many meetings do you anticipate per month?

Once a month.

Who attends these meetings?

Project Manager and others of the team as assigned.

What is currently included in the 40 hours?

Monitoring of all the websites to ensure all plugins are updated and working as well as any updates to WordPress as needed. Completion of tasks as needed (this can be anything like updating forms on the sites, checking pages for any problems, adding information as needed, graphic or coding updates to pages, etc.)

For the required Cost Worksheet, could you clarify - *"Attach a SEPARATE sealed envelope titled Cost Worksheet itemizing the cost per hour with an annual maximum. The number of hours per month of ongoing maintenance across all sites is 35-40 hrs."*

Please provide a cost per hour with annual maximum.

Should the Cost Worksheet include one-time costs and expenses outside regular maintenance?

You can include them as a separate line item.

What does the *"Annual Cost (Not to Exceed)"* under Maintenance include?

Setting an annual cap on the cost.

Can you provide more details on maintaining link equity with our partners and stakeholders? Include the quantity of partner and stakeholder websites involved as well as more detail on the expectations for this tactic?

Adding links to external websites.

Which sites have a calendar of events functionality?

BCDCOG and SC Works websites.

Do all sites with this functionality use the same events platform? Which event platform(s) are being used?

Both sites use the plugin "The Events Calendar Pro".

Do any sites have e-commerce functionality?

CARTA and RTMA.

Have any of the sites been hacked in the past?

Yes.

If so, when did this occur, and were they appropriately remediated, or are problems still being addressed?

Both happened about 2+ years ago and have been fixed since then.

Within your overall budget, what is the budget for hosting and maintenance?

No budget defined.

Within your overall budget, what is the budget for website auditing, recommendations, content strategy, and content creation, including copywriting and graphic design, as well as SEO and ongoing content updates?

No budget defined.

Within your overall budget, what is the budget for paid SEM campaigns and associated services?

No budget defined.

Are there any specific issues or challenges with the current websites that need to be addressed?

What are the primary goals for each of the five websites (bcdecog.com, ridecarta.com, ridetricountylink.com, sworkstrident.org, lowcountrygo.com)?

No.

Are there any major changes, new features, or redesigns planned for any of the websites soon?

No.

Can you elaborate on the current hosting situation for each website? Are you open to considering a change in hosting providers?

No.

How frequently is content typically updated on each website (daily, weekly, monthly)?

Are there any specific content areas that require special attention or expertise (e.g., legal, technical writing)?

Question answered on page 3.

Are you satisfied with the current design of each website, or are you looking for redesigns?

To be determined after award.

Are there any specific areas where you'd like to see improvements in user experience (e.g., navigation, mobile responsiveness)?

To be determined after award.

Do you have existing brand guidelines that we need to adhere to for design and content creation?

Each website has a design standard.

What SEO/SEM practices are currently in place for the websites?

Can be discussed after award.

Do you have specific goals for website traffic or ranking in search results?

No.

Are there any keywords or phrases you want to target with your SEO/SEM strategy?

No.

Have there been any security incidents with the websites in the past?

Yes.

What security measures are currently in place to protect the website?

That is part of the routine maintenance.

Are there any specific security compliance requirements (e.g., GDPR, CCPA) that we need to be aware of?

No.

What analytics tools are you currently using to track website performance?

See analytics report.

What specific metrics are most important to you when evaluating website performance (e.g., traffic sources, conversion rates)?

To be determined.

What level of detail do you expect in the quarterly reports on website usage and effectiveness?

Can be discussed after award.

Which social media platforms are most important for BCDCOG?

Not relevant to RFP.

How deeply integrated do you want social media to be on the websites (e.g., social media feeds, sharing buttons)?

To be determined.

Are there any special features or functionalities required for the event calendar (e.g., registration forms, recurring events)?

No.

How have you handled emergency website issues in the past (e.g., hacking, downtime)

Immediate support from website maintenance provider or IT.

How many staff members will need training in content updates and website management?

To be determined.

What is the current level of technical expertise among your staff who will be managing website content?

We have staff on site who can assist.

Is there a preferred start date for the website maintenance services?

By September.

On-Shore/Off-Shore Model - Does the BCDCOG have any restrictions on where the work is being done and location?

No, as long as you can be responsive to our business hours and meet all of the RFP requirements.

What is your preferred method for communication regarding website maintenance?

Varies – virtual or on-site may be required.

Are there specific goals or KPIs you aim to achieve with this website maintenance contract?

We want to be able to track what works and doesn't work on our websites to help us understand how to better gauge our progress and success. We want to be able to see what is needed to keep our communities engaged and returning to our websites for information.

Which technical tools and subscriptions (e.g., Gmail, LiveHelpNow) are currently in use, and are there any plans to expand or change these?

We currently have Google Map Platform set up for our websites (spread across three accounts) and we have eCommerce being used on two of our websites for pass sales. We currently do not have plans to expand or change these. If down the road you have suggestions it is something that can be discussed at that time.

Are there any specific analytics tools or platforms you prefer for tracking site performance?

At the moment I believe we are using basic tools (Monster Insights and Google Analytics) but are open to suggestions.

While WordPress seems to be the only preference, are you open to considering other CMS platforms if they offer better performance, security, or functionality?

Potentially.

If an alternative platform is recommended, would BCDCOG be interested in a detailed comparison to understand the potential benefits and drawbacks

Can be discussed after award.

What security measures are currently in place to protect the sites from spam, hackers, and viruses?

We currently use a two-step authentication system for our websites.

What is the period of performance for the contract? More specifically, what is the anticipated start date? How long (how many years) will the contract last?

The contract will be on an annual basis up to 5-years.

Will small business certifications through the SBA count toward the DBE participation credit?

No, SCDOT certified.

What type of content is BCDCOG looking for in response to “Relevant Project Material” listed on page 5 of the RFP?

Any additional information you would like to share with the selection committee.

Who is the incumbent provider for these services?

Can provide after award.

In Section 7 “Cost Proposal Requirements”, the table provided has the heading “website maintenance” and requests hourly rates. Is the annual cost in this table expected to be for website maintenance only? May offerors include other pricing options for the other services listed in the Scope of Work? For example, hosting is generally provided as a monthly price based on website traffic.

Hosting should be priced separately from maintenance.

For each of the five websites, what is the estimated traffic per month?

See attached report.

The Scope of Work includes “Create a SEO and SEM program that results in an increase in overall visitors.” Please provide more information about the scope of work anticipated for SEO and SEM. SEM often includes ad buys – is this something the Contractor would be involved

with? When were the current SEO and SEM programs implemented? Are there any third parties involved that the contractor will need to work with?

Contractor not involved in ad buys. Additional details can be provided after award.

We respectfully request an extension to the deadline so that all offers have time to incorporate answers to questions with their proposals and mail proposals after the July 4 holiday.

Deadline extension cannot be granted due to internal deadlines.

When were these sites launched? How long have they been in maintenance mode?

This information can be provided after award.

Who is currently managing the websites? How many content managers do you have for these websites?

We will provide website content.

Can you provide more details on the current state of each website listed?

Please refer to analytics report.

Have you set up the deployment environment with a staging and production instance? Do you have a defined code-management process (involving Git or Bitbucket kind of tools)?

Can be addressed after award.

How frequently do you push from staging to production?

Not very frequently.

Do you have an issue tracking system in place already? (such as JIRA, Bugherd, etc)?

No

Have you had any major outages or events that have needed support outside the 9-5 pm PST time window? If so, can you elaborate on what they have been like?

No major outages that required emergency response.

How often do you do plugin upgrades? When was the last time you upgraded them?

As needed.

Are there existing performance issues or areas of improvement identified in the current setup?

No.

What amount of training or support is estimated to be required for your internal team during the maintenance period?

Should be minimal.

Are you okay with an ADA level of A or need an AA?

Please see question on pg. 3.

Could you provide details on the expected SLAs, including response times, resolution times, and any specific performance metrics or targets for the project?

Please see attached report.

Please provide information on the expected number of site visitors and any specific traffic patterns or peak usage times we should know.

Please see attached report.

Do you currently have a DevOps setup in place?

No.

Are there any specific tools or platforms you currently use for support and issue tracking?

No.

Can you provide more details on the types of services that might fall outside of routine maintenance and how you would like these to be handled?

Requests that fall outside of routine maintenance will be discussed with vendor and quoted separately.

Offeror shall acknowledge receipt of Addendum No. 1 in the space provided below and return with their proposal. Failure to do so will subject the proposal to rejection.

Authorized Signature

Company Name

Date