



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR
WEBSITE DESIGN &
DEVELOPMENT

PURPOSE

The Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP) has initiated a Request for Proposal (RFP) process to identify a vendor qualified to 1) facilitate a discussion and achieve consensus across the RCAP network on how RCAP should promote and brand itself (RCAP's organizational identity) and 2) plan, execute, and deliver the redesign of RCAP's branding, including design, content and website development (www.rcap.org), improving its functionality and visual aesthetic.

WHO MAY RESPOND

RCAP requires a vendor who has demonstrated experience in facilitating organizational communications and consensus building, recommending branding approaches to complex organizations, developing brands and corporate/organizational identities, managing nonprofit website projects and expertise with best practices regarding successful website design, development, and deployment.

Project Overview

The Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP) is a network of nonprofit organizations working to ensure rural and small communities throughout the United States have increased capacity to drive access to safe drinking water, sanitary wastewater, community development and disaster recovery that leads and contributes to economic prosperity. RCAP's six regional partners provide a variety of programs in the respective states and territories they cover to accomplish this goal, such as training and technical assistance in rural communities across the country.

Each of RCAP's six regional partners is an independent nonprofit organization with their own boards of directors and staff. Many of their employees provide services to communities through grants and funding for which RCAP competes and secures nationally for the network. This ensures some continuity across the country in the types of assistance and training each RCAP regional partner provides. Describing the nature of the RCAP network – and what it means to be a part of it – is challenging.

RCAP is seeking a skilled communications firm to help facilitate conversation across the RCAP network and at multiple levels of staff to: 1) identify and recommend how RCAP should describe itself as a network, 2) recommend approaches for how to build buy-in for this description and corporate identity across regional partners and the national office, and 3) note implications for RCAP's work, such as internal communications practices and presentation of information on RCAP's website. The result RCAP is seeking is that all RCAP-affiliated technical assistance providers and regional partners will be able to communicate what RCAP is and does in the same way and think of themselves as part of a larger network. RCAP is looking to work with firms who employ user experience techniques and can quickly understand RCAP and our network.

RCAP sees a website redesign and upgrade to functionality as an important initial phase of recrafting our corporate identity. The RCAP website is used by RCAP's regional partners, technical assistance providers, rural development agencies, RCAP funders, civic leaders, RCAP partner organizations and potential partners, professionals in the fields in which RCAP is involved, and communities. It provides essential resources for both trainers, water and wastewater professionals and community members. It also serves as a method for highlighting RCAP's work in the field to stakeholders, including current projects and successes.

The current website has hundreds of resources but is difficult to navigate. It is a Wordpress site designed by a contractor with whom RCAP no longer works, and the current theme prevents the organization from editing many pages on the frontend. Outdated search functions prevent users from easily accessing information. A website rebuild is necessary to streamline resources, improve navigation, and enhance look and feel. The resource library also will need to be migrated to the new site and organized in a clear, concise manner. RCAP envisions that work on the

website will start concurrently with the identity rebuild discussion, helping to address some of the basic functionality issues on the website proactively.

Visitors should be able to immediately understand the nature and importance of RCAP's work. Improving the organization of the resource library is essential for the new site. RCAP staff and interested parties should be able to find helpful materials with ease on an attractive interface.

RCAP is also seeking recommendations for the best platform to incorporate e-learning modules to our site.

RCAP is seeking firms who can execute on both parts of this RFP and welcomes applications that show how initial steps can be taken to improve website functionality while the facilitated identity/branding discussion is conducted.

Process for Proposal Submission and Evaluation

Submission information

1. Closing Submission Date – 1 month after post date

2. Inquiries

Inquiries concerning this RFP should be directed to Kinsey Brown (contact information below)

Kinsey Brown
Communications Manager
1701 K Street, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20006
kbrown@rcap.org

3. Conditions of Proposal

All costs incurred in the preparation of a response to this RFP are the responsibility of the respondent and will not be reimbursed by RCAP.

4. Submission Instructions

Proposals should be submitted in PDF format via email to kbrown@rcap.org before the closing submission date. If the file is too large for email, a link to the file should be provided.

5. Right to Reject

RCAP reserves the right to reject any and all responses received in response to this RFP. A contract for the accepted response will be based upon the factors described in this RFP.

6. Small Businesses, Minority-Owned Firms, and Women's Enterprises

RCAP will make efforts to utilize small businesses, women's business enterprises, and/or minority-owned firms. A respondent qualifies if it meets the definition established by the Small Business Administration. RCAP does not discriminate based on gender, sexual orientation, race, age, etc. and that we require the same of any vendor.

7. Confidentiality

If the respondent deems any material submitted to be proprietary or confidential, that must be indicated in the relevant section(s) of the response.

8. Notification of Selection and Timeline

It is expected that a vendor will be selected within two to three weeks of the closing submission date. Upon conclusion of negotiations with the successful respondent, all respondents submitting responses to this RFP will be informed in writing of the name of the successful firm or individual.

The following timeline to be completed upon release:

RFP Released: Wednesday, November 27, 2019

Proposals due: Friday, December 20, 2019

Potential vendor interviews: Thursday, January 9 – Friday, January 17, 2020

Vendor selection made: Monday, January 20, 2020

Project begins: Monday, February 3, 2020

Criteria for Selection

RCAP will select the proposal which it feels will deliver the highest quality facilitated discussion, corporate identity recommendation, website navigation and design at the best value, both in initial cost terms, project cadence and ability for RCAP to continue to benefit from results, such as ease of site maintenance. Proposals will be initially reviewed by the Communications Manager who will submit the best three proposals to the Senior Director for Research & Programs, the CEO, and the Communications Committee of the RCAP Board for a final decision.

Because RCAP is a non-profit organization, price will be a significant, but not the only, criteria in evaluating the proposals.

Consideration will also be given to the following:

- Ability of the respondent to provide services that meet all aspects described in the project overview: user experience design, facilitation and consensus building, corporate identity recommendations, website design, infrastructure, migration, e-learning integration.

- Compliance of the vendor and proposal with the project requirements outlined above.
- The extent to which the proposed website meets the scope and goals outlined below.
- Experience with branding and corporate identity recommendations for complex, multi-level organizations, especially non-profits, as well as experience recommending internal communications strategies.
- Experience with development of similar websites and a portfolio of work that shows relevant examples for RCAP.

The award will be made to the most qualified respondent using the following scoring mechanism:

- Budget – 35%
 - The proposal includes a detailed budget for each stage of the scope of work
 - Proposed costs are reasonable
- Qualifications – 35%
 - Consultant has the qualifications necessary to successfully complete the scope of work
 - The consultant has prior experience working on similar projects
 - The consultant has prior experience working with similar organizations
- Scope of Proposal & Workplan – 30%
 - The proposal demonstrates an understanding of the project objectives and desired results
 - lead to the successful rebranding of RCAP as an organization as well as a new website
 - The proposal illustrates the consultant’s ability to successfully execute the proposed approach
 - The proposal includes an appropriate process to interact with RCAP Regional Program Managers, national staff and RCAP Board Members

About the Organization

Founded in 1973, the Rural Community Assistance Partnership, Inc. (RCAP) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit service delivery network comprised of a national office and six regional partners that provide technical assistance, training, and tools to small rural communities – including tribal communities – each year throughout the U.S., Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Most communities RCAP assists are economically disadvantaged and have a population under 2,500, and many have significant minority group populations. The RCAP network’s approximately 200 field staff members include registered professional engineers, certified operators, utility finance and board management specialists, community planners, and people with other relevant backgrounds.

Examples of the types of RCAP works to achieve outcomes in small rural communities are:

- Improved environmental and community health
- Utilities in compliance with federal and state regulations
- Sustainable water and waste disposal systems with increased management and finance capacity
- Increased capability of local leaders to address current and future needs
- Improved collaboration between communities as well as coordination among federal, state and local agencies
- Strong rural entrepreneurial ecosystems and economic strategies that ground wealth in rural communities

Each RCAP regional partner offers an array of services that directly respond to the needs of its area. These region-specific services include affordable housing development assistance, loans for water and wastewater infrastructure, community and economic development, job training and placement, community-based education programs, and special programming for underserved populations. RCAP field staff track performance data to enhance our capacity to fulfill our mission of “improving the quality of life in rural communities.”

The RCAP national office engages in program management, applied research, policy development, public education, and advocacy on rural issues. It also supports the work of the network by obtaining financial support, sharing knowledge and best practices across the network, and promoting dialog to help communities understand the relationship between the environment, public health, and economic viability. More information is available at <http://www.rcap.org>.

Scope of Work & Deliverables

RCAP expects the project to include the following:

- Project management
- User-oriented (in this case, technical assistance provider-oriented) corporate identity and brand recommendations, involving facilitated discussion across the RCAP national office and regional partners
- Primary talking points not only about RCAP’s brand but how regions and the national office relate to each other
- Content strategy
- Visual design
- Information design - specifically a new site map
- Responsive design
- Testing & quality assurance
- Content management system

- A training calendar automatically pulling events from regional partners' calendars
- Graphic design/illustration, including brand/identity themes
- Search engine optimization
- Front-end coding (HTML/CSS, animations)
- Back-end coding (Angular/Node, Drupal, CMS, third-party APIs, custom software/features)

Project Goals & Target Audience

Project Goals

RCAP seeks to strengthen its identity as one network. RCAP is looking to receive organizational direction from a third-party expert so that all RCAP-affiliated technical assistance providers and regional partners will be able to communicate what RCAP is and does in the same way.

This project is also contingent on redesigning the RCAP website so that 1) RCAP's work in communities is prominently featured through strong visuals and stories and 2) resources are easier to access. The site should make it apparent that RCAP is a leader in the field of rural development with a proven track record of success in training and technical assistance to communities. We want to express this through case studies, videos, visuals, and a library of helpful resources and news items.

The site should also:

1. Help us continually grow the subscriber base for RCAP content, including for the RCAP newsletter and magazine.
2. Highlight our presence and increase our following on social media.
3. Allow flexibility to promote initiatives on which RCAP is a partner, such as Rural Homecoming and RuralRISE.
4. Drive traffic to regional partner sites.
5. Allow for features such as exporting a feed to be inserted in a partner web site (portlet) or inserting a portlet from a partner.
6. Allow for tight integration with content from Esri ArcGIS software including story maps and other interactive elements.

LMS Integration

The RCAP National Office is currently exploring learning management system (LMS) options to incorporate e-learning network wide. This portal would be the primary resource for trainings, and possibly be a place for conversation and announcements between regions. It needs to be clean, easy to read, and simple to navigate. The LMS would need to:

1. Integrate easily into rcap.org
2. Have a one-time login – when switching between resources on rcap.org and learning modules, users would not need to log in multiple times

RCAP is seeking guidance on the most cohesive LMS integrations to whichever platform is decided for rcap.org.

Target Audiences

The target audience for the corporate identity and facilitated discussion portion of the project is initially the technical assistance providers and staff across the RCAP network, with the ultimate goal of harmonizing how RCAP is viewed by communities, funders, decision makers, partners and the general public.

The target audiences for the site and their primary usage of the content are as follows:

1. RCAP technical assistance staff: Use the website to access the RCAP resource library, blog posts and LMS
2. Rural Communities: Use the site to find resources and opportunities for training in their area. Communities use the news blog for the latest in water, wastewater, and community development news from EPA, USDA, and general media outlets. They also use to the site to find their regional RCAP's contact information and website.
3. Funders and Collaborators: Use the site to evaluate RCAP's efficacy and learn about current work/projects in communities.
4. Policymakers: Use the site to learn what RCAP does, policy implications of RCAP's work and research findings, how communities are affected, and where projects are located.
5. Press: Use the site to view stories on RCAP's work, review RCAP research, find potential leads on larger articles, and better understand RCAP's mission and work.
6. General Public: Looking for information on small water and wastewater systems, rural development, water regulations, etc.

Technical Website Requirements

1. Current Usage / Website Statistics

The current site uses Google Tag Manager/Google Analytics to track site usage. Attached are several site activity reports from the past year including a browser report and acquisition overview. RCAP would like to continue using Google analytics on the new site.

2. Third Party Sites

See LMS integration section.

3. Web Integrations

RCAP currently uses Mailchimp for our email newsletter and marketing. There will need to be a sign-up option on the website that populates the newsletter list

(note – there are currently multiple pages with subscription buttons, some of which do not work).

4. Accessibility

The website must comply with ADA Section 508.

5. Mobile Ready Design

RCAP will require a responsive design that works on all mobile devices.

6. Web Hosting

RCAP currently hosts with AWS.

7. Content Management

RCAP currently uses Wordpress but we would be open to another open source CMS such as Drupal. The Communications Manager is currently responsible for all content management on the site. They are proficient with Wordpress and Drupal platforms and some basic coding.

Sites from which RCAP would like to draw inspiration:

- <http://water.org> –large images, clean layout
- <http://www.heifer.org> –highlighted statistics
- <http://www.nature.org> –resource library, use of icons

Ownership and Confidentiality

All intellectual property will become the property of RCAP. All data remains the sole property of RCAP. The developer will be required to sign a transfer of ownership statement. The developer shall further agree to keep information related to any and all contracts with RCAP in strict confidence, including, but not limited to, the terms of the contract(s) and any confidential business information or proprietary information learned through its dealings with RCAP.

Ongoing Support / Retainer

We do not expect to require ongoing support, upon receiving a new CMS. If support is needed, we will contract additional support with the company.

Recommended Format for Submissions

To best evaluate the ability of the vendor to meet our goals, please include the following in your proposal:

- Examples of similarly complex projects, both for corporate identity building and website development and design
- An explanation of your approach to developing corporate identities and brands

- An explanation of your approach to website design
- Details regarding your website project management process
- A summary of website development experience
- Client references
- Suggested project timeline with major tasks and milestones, including how the corporate identity and website portions of the project may overlap
- Project budget by line item
- Plan for mobile / responsive design
- Sample Project Plan
- An outline of the project team, including their relevant experience