

WEBSITE REDESIGN & ENHANCEMENT

Virginia Oyster Trail
1340 N Great Neck Rd, Suite 1272/PMB# 353
Virginia Beach, Virginia 23454
getinvolved@virginiaoystertrail.com

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Posted: July 2, 2024

Questions Due: July 15, 2024 by 3:00 PM EST

(email Questions to: jessica@steelmancoastal.com; CC: getinvolved@virginiaoystertrail.com)

Proposals Due: July 31, 2024 by 11:59 PM EST

1. Summary

- a. **Introduction.** The Virginia Oyster Trail (VOT) is currently accepting proposals for your services on Website Redesign & Enhancement. The Virginia Oyster Trail is nonprofit dedicated to increasing the awareness of the benefits oysters have on local economies in the Commonwealth of Virginia with emphasis on community development, environmental stewardship, entrepreneurial growth, health attributes, and cultural integration of Virginia's distinctive aquaculture and coastal way of life through visitor-directed "journey of discovery" educational programs highlighting participating watermen, aqua-artisan, and aquaculture businesses.

The desired start date for the project is August 15, 2024 with a tentative duration of seven (7) months and ending on or about March 14, 2025.

- b. **Purpose.** The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to solicit proposals from various candidates, conduct a fair evaluation based on the prescribed criteria, and select the candidate(s) who is/are the best fit for the project. The Virginia Oyster Trail reserves the right to award contract(s) as it sees fit and to the bidder or bidders of its choosing when and how it deems appropriate.

2. Nature and Purpose of Work

- a. The primary purpose of this project is to enhance the usability, design, and functionality of the virginiaoystertrail.com website. This involves addressing general and specific concerns related to user experience, accessibility, performance, content management, and overall site optimization. The goal is to create a more user-friendly, visually appealing, and efficient website that effectively serves its users and stakeholders.
- b. The current design platform being used is Expression Engine, however, the contractor is encouraged to propose a change in design platform if they see fit or

have experience in alternate platforms they feel would better meet the needs of the Virginia Oyster Trail as outlined in the Scope of Work below.

3. Scope of Work

OVERALL ENHANCEMENTS

a. Usability

Navigation

Issue: The navigation menu lacks a clear hierarchy.

Improvement: Implement dropdown menus for subcategories to streamline user experience.

Mobile Optimization

Issue: The site may not be fully responsive on all devices.

Improvement: Ensure all elements adjust properly on mobile devices.

b. Design

Visual Appeal

Issue: Inconsistent fonts and color schemes.

Improvement: Use a consistent font style and color palette that aligns with the existing Virginia Oyster Trail brand across all pages for better readability.

Images

Issue: Some images may not be optimized.

Improvement: Ensure all images are high quality and compressed to improve load times.

c. Content

SEO

Issue: Missing meta descriptions and alt tags for images.

Improvement: Add meta descriptions and descriptive alt tags to all images to enhance SEO.

Blog and Stories

Issue: Two sections for the same purpose (Stories & Blogs)

Improvement: Streamline the two sections
Curate by category or theme.

d. Accessibility

Alt Text

Issue: Some images lack descriptive alt text.

Improvement: Add descriptive alt text to all images for better accessibility.

Contrast

Issue: Text and background contrast may be insufficient.

Improvement: Improve the contrast between text and background to enhance readability.

e. Performance

Speed

Issue: Website load times could be improved.
Improvement: Compress images and leverage browser caching to optimize load times.

Broken Links

Issue: Potential presence of broken links.
Improvement: Regularly check for and fix any broken links throughout the site.

Data Analytics

Issue: There are none.
Improvement: Create a user-friendly means of tracking data analytics with the ability to generate monthly reports.

FRONT END

f. Homepage

Featured YouTube videos

Issue: ACV YouTube videos are featured.
Improvement: Feature VOT and VOT member YouTube videos; ensure they are relevant and labeled.

Sponsors

Issue: Visit Yorktown Community Program logo is wrong
Improvement: Correct the Visit Yorktown logo.

g. Trail Sites Page

Trail Sites & Member Categories

Issue: Trail Sites map categories differ from member application categories.
Improvement: Align map categories with member application categories.

h. Plan a Visit Page

Direct Page to Proper Resource

Issue: Page features the Visit Yorktown blog.
Improvement: Page to feature the Itinerary Builder mapping tool.

Itinerary Builder Mapping Tool

Issue: It is currently a static map; it does not function as designed.
Improvement: Fix/implement a feature to build itineraries.

Ensure it auto-populates when new member profiles are created.

Ensure it's accurate and up to date with current & new members.

Make invisible any 'closed' members with ability to toggle visible if/when they rejoin VOT.

i. Stories Page & Blogs Page

Redundant Pages

Issue: Two pages for the same purpose.
Improvement: Remove Stories page and update Blogs page.

Issue: Blogs page functionality is poor; unable to easily find blogs.

Improvement: List blogs for easy browsing and fix layout issues.

Utilize page numbers for blog sorting.

Categorize blogs for keyword/theme/date searching.

j. Resources Page

Clarity on Resources vs. Members

Issue: Resources are also listed as Members.

Improvement: Distinguish member listings from resources.

k. About Page

Lacks Appeal

Issue: The page is not engaging or visually appealing.

Improvement: Update the page to engage visitors with successes, stories, etc. and guide them around the site.

l. Enroll Page

Language & Purpose

Issue: Poor language for advertising membership.

Improvement: Change to "Join the VOT" or "Become a Member" and add the option to start a community program.

Protect Personal Information

Issue: Security for payment and personal information submitted.

Improvement: Ensure an SSL certificate.

m. Donate Page

Lacks Personalization & Purpose

Issue: Redirects to PayPal with no information or reasons for individuals or organizations to donate.

Improvement: Create a welcoming page with stories and fund allocation details.

Consider use of plug-ins such as Give Lively or other similar platforms.

n. Right Column

Consistency across All Pages

Issue: Inconsistent information and links across pages.

Improvement: Consistently feature all VOT regions and sponsors.

o. Search Tool

Functionality

Issue: Search feature is finicky with accurate spelling or grammar.

Improvement: Improve search algorithms for better handling of variations.

Issue: User must navigate to side navigation panel to find Search feature.

Improvement: Include Search feature in header and footer of each page.

p. Banners

Visual Appeal

Issue: Some banners consume such a large portion of the screen, the actual page is not visible without scrolling.

Improvement: Reduce size for better content visibility.

BACK END

q. **Content Editing**

Not User Friendly

Issue: Difficult to update, edit, preview, and add new content; mostly built off personal code.

Improvement: Implement a more user-friendly CMS and utilize a drag & drop platform or another simple-to-build platform.

r. **Member Applications and Payments**

Lacks Functionality & Efficiency

Issue: When a new business submits a member application, no notification is sent to VOT Board/Staff.

Improvement: Set up automatic new member email notifications.

Issue: When payment is submitted, it is not linked to any member application & names sometimes differ.

Improvement: Integrate tracking and align applications and payments with spreadsheets.

s. **Password Management**

Lacks Efficiency

Issue: Members are unable to reset their profile password.

Improvement: Enable self-service password reset.

t. **Membership Prices**

Fee Structure

Issue: Prices need to be increased.

Improvement: VOT will guide fee structure updates for posting to the website.

Issue: Current structure does not allow for a multi-business (single member) discount features.

Improvement: Design a payment tool that allows for discounts even if members register businesses as members at varying times.

u. **Mail-in Payments**

Impractical & Outdated

Issue: Outdated and not trackable.

Improvement: Remove the mail-in payment option; consider additional methods.

v. **Events Calendar**

No Ability to Add Calendar(s)

Issue: No event calendar or way to add a user-friendly calendar.

Improvement: Implement a user-friendly plugin for calendars to allow toggling of multiple calendar layers.

w. **Training VOT Board Members & Staff**

Current Website is Not User Friendly

Issue: Staff will need to be trained on how to manage and maintain the website (including update of security plugins, widgets, etc.).

Improvement: Train VOT staff on how to manage and edit content, use of the website's back end, and other necessary components.

Develop an onboarding/training how-to packet for future reference as a resource for VOT Board Members & future staff.

4. Selection Criteria

All offer submissions that meet the requirements of this RFP and are submitted by the deadline will be considered based upon the materials provided. The following criteria will be used for selecting the winning bid(s):

- a. Use of correct format for compiling RFP components.
- b. The proposal's ability and likelihood of achieving the desired outcome of the project.
- c. Past performance of bidder's similar services.
- d. The experience and expertise of the bidder's management and staff.
- e. The proposed budgeted costs of the project.
- f. Communication and responsiveness within 48hrs.

Virginia Oyster Trail reserves the right to suspend or terminate acceptance of proposals at any time as it sees fit, for any reason, without notice or obligation to any bidder.

5. Bidder Qualifications

Bidders should provide the following items as part of their proposal for consideration:

- a. Description of relevant experience.
- b. List, title, and employment status of your organization's management and employees.
- c. References, testimonials, or samples of your work (as applicable).
- d. Resources you will assign to this project (number, title, experience).
- e. Full plan of action with phased approach if applicable.
- f. Timeframe for task and overall project completion.
- g. Project management methods and details.

6. Required Format. Proposal should be in the following format and address, in detail, the needs and requirements of the proposed project.

- a. **Contact Information.** Provide the name, title, phone number, and email for the best contact for follow up questions and/or to notify of bid status.
- b. **Summary & Qualifications.** Use this section to introduce yourself, your company, and provide information on your relevant experience and qualifications; include a summary or portfolio of similar past work.
- c. **Methods and Plan.** Describe your methodology and capabilities for meeting project deliverables and detail your plan of action for executing and completing this project. Include a detailed milestone timeline in this section.

- d. **Expectations and Results.** Explain your expectations for the project and summarize the results you anticipate achieving. Include a summary of your anticipated timeline for completion in this section.
- e. **Management and Staff.** List all applicable personnel that would be involved with this project, along with their titles, roles, and qualifications. Include the estimated costs associated with personnel in this section.
- f. **Communications.** Provide a communication plan for how you intend to communicate internally and with VOT project managers to ensure progress and completion of the project.
- g. **Equipment and Resources.** List all necessary equipment and associated costs. Include details of any outsourced or contracted work here.
- h. **Budget and Costs.** Provide a detailed breakdown of all anticipated expenses, as well as a summary of the total proposed costs of the project.
- i. **Insurance.** If applicable, provide details of your insurance coverage related to this project.
- j. **References.** Provide three (3) references for previous work of a similar nature.

7. Process

Proposals will be accepted until 11:59 PM EST on July 31, 2024 as post-marked or email time-stamped. Any proposals received after this date and time will be returned to the submitting bidder. The proposal must be signed by an official agent or authorized representative of the bidder.

Any outsourced or subcontracted work is subject to the requirements of this RFP and must be clearly disclosed in the proposal. Any and all costs must be listed in the proposal, including any outsourced or subcontracted work. Proposals that include outsourced or subcontracted work must provide a name and description of the individuals and/or organizations being subcontracted. All costs must be itemized and include a detailed explanation of all fees and associated costs.

Terms and conditions will be negotiated upon selection of the winning bidder(s) and will be subject to review by Virginia Oyster Trail and/or its legal advisors, including but not limited to scope, costs, timeline, and anything else applicable to the project.

Questions regarding this RFP:

Please email any questions regarding this RFP to:

Jessica Steelman, Communications Specialist

jessica@steelmancoastal.com

CC: getinvolved@virginiaoystertrail.com

Questions will be accepted until July 15, 2024 at 5:00PM
Q&A Amendment document will be posted no later than July 17, 2024 by end of business to:

Send proposals using the following methods:

*Note: It is the bidder's responsibility to ensure proposals arrive to VOT no later than the submission deadline - **July 31, 2024 by 11:59PM***

Via (postmarked) mail to:

Virginia Oyster Trail
C/O Jessica Steelman, Communications Specialist
23316 Front St/PO Box 127
Accomac, VA 23301

Via (timestamped) email to:

getinvolved@virginiaoystertrail.com
CC: jessica@steelmancoastal.com

8. Timeline

Procurement Timeline:

- RFP posted & distributed: July 2, 2024
 - <https://virginiaoystertrail.com/oysters/profile/website-redesign-rfp>
 - <https://philanthropynewsdigest.org/rfps>
 - <https://rfpclub.com/rfps/>
- Questions due: July 15, 2024 no later than 5:00 PM
- Q&A Amendment posted: July 17, 2024 by end of business
- Proposals in response due: July 31, 2024 no later than 11:59 PM
- Review of proposals: August 1, 2024 – August 7, 2024
- Top Bidders selected & notified: no later than August 9, 2024
- Interviews & negotiations with the top bidders: August 12, 2024 – August 14, 2024
- Award to Final Bidder & Contract Executed: August 15, 2024
- Bidders who were not selected will be notified by September 1, 2024

Project Contract Timeline:

- Contract Start – August 15, 2024
- 60% Completion Review – *(on or around)* December 15, 2025
- 100% Completion Review – *(on or around)* February 15, 2025
- Training of VOT Staff & Onboarding/Training Manual – By February 28, 2025
- Contract End – March 1, 2025