



navigate

AFFORDABLE HOUSING PARTNERS

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:
WEBSITE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT**

Responses Due
February 28, 2018 at 4:00 PM



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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

Navigate Affordable Housing Partners, Inc. ("Navigate") is a 501 (c) (3) corporation, incorporated in the State of Alabama with offices in Alabama (Headquarters), Mississippi, Connecticut, Virginia, and Washington, D. C. Pursuant to an Annual Contributions Contract ("ACC"), as amended, with the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development ("HUD"), we are the current Performance Based Contract Administrator ("PBCA") for the states of Alabama, Mississippi, Connecticut, and Virginia. Navigate has other active lines of business as well, including consulting, training, and property development services which we provide to a wide range of clients across the United States.

Navigate is soliciting qualifications for website design and development services: (1) Professional design of the site; (2) Implementation of an infrastructure that allows Navigate entities to maintain their specific information within a common framework; (3) Hosting of the website.

Our primary objective is to build brand identity, brand consistency, awareness, and interest in Navigate and the services provided.

SECTION II: SUBMISSION TIME AND PLACE

Responses to this RFQ may be submitted by regular mail or email.

Submissions by regular mail must be on 8.5" x 11" paper, printed on one side, typed using 1" margins and numbered pages. Place the words **Website Design and Development** in the bottom left corner of the envelope and address it to:

Attn: LaShunda Cameron

Navigate Affordable Housing Partners, Inc.
1827 1st Avenue North, Suite 100
Birmingham, Alabama 35203

Submission by email must be in a portable document format (.pdf) or Microsoft Word. Place the words **Website Design and Development** in the email subject line and send to:

lcameron@navigatehousing.com



All responses are due **Wednesday, February 28, 2018 by 4:00 PM.**
Responses received after this date and time will not be accepted.

Navigate will not be responsible or reimburse for any cost incurred in the preparation of responses

SECTION III: SCOPE OF WORK

Navigate currently has two websites – NavigateHousing.com launched in 2013 and Consulting.NavigateHousing.com launched a year later. Today, Navigate has outgrown the functionality of the current sites and would like an updated interactive robust site. Navigate needs a single online platform that reflects its enhanced and evolved mission. This platform should showcase Navigate’s many capabilities, demonstrate its offerings to a diverse national audience and position Navigate as the premier provider of safe and affordable housing.

The scope of this project is to create a new vibrant state of the art website that provides easy navigation for visitors and will be smart phone compatible. Navigate wants to establish a design that uses color, photos and text to enhance communication via the web. This web design must also provide uniform interfaces.

A similar look and feel throughout the site should be maintained and intuitive navigational aids and links should be consistently used throughout the site. A common framework and standardized style will enable users to easily navigate.

The Navigate site should be quick to download. The page should make it easy and convenient for visitors to navigate, locate, and select information and services on the site. An intelligent rapid Search Engine Optimization (SEO) should be incorporated into the design as an enhanced navigation tool.

Depending on the selected concept, provide home page, navigation pages, and individual content pages that allow visitors to move freely and without unnecessary graphics or other items that impede or slow down accessing information. These templates should allow content and links to be easily updated, added, or replaced without disrupting the template.

Design standards will be incorporated into the website. Design should be flexible and render properly for different screen resolutions on the popular browsers (Internet Explorer, Microsoft Edge, Firefox, Safari and Chrome). The vendor will create a guide that details standards for use of fonts, colors, templates, graphics and photos as well as suggestions for how to handle site growth.



The vendor will create site side and custom graphics that help brand the site and identify individual sections of the site. This can be done with photos, color, and other techniques applicable to the web.

The selected vendor will work closely with the Navigate staff to achieve the desired look and feel of a new site. The intended outcome of this collaboration will be a site that represents Navigate.

Deliver relevant, high quality content, attractive use of media, appropriate amount of information, timely and current information, and consistent themes.

The Navigate staff will provide content for the new site. Navigate will maintain ownership of the website, its components, and content, and will maintain the site with internal staff. The site must include a technology solution that allows the in house staff to easily and cost effectively update content and modify site design after initial launch

Although Navigate has some specific requirements, we are also interested in vendor ideas for content, and more specifically, vendor approach in designing the style of the website. We encourage respondents to consider and propose alternative solutions and recommendations.

SECTION IV: SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

- Increase market share
- Increase visitation via organic search
- Present comprehensive information and resources in an easy to use and downloadable format
- Provide for social interaction via links to social networks (add this button)
- Incorporate blog platform, RSS (Really Simple Syndication), landing pages and Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
- Incorporate Content Management System to allow for easy updating
- Strengthen relationships with partners, owners, agents, customers and other organizations (business directory, calendar of events)
- Improve business efficiencies
- Increase site promotion activities
- Integrate brand messaging
- Deliver a consistent message
- Collect email addresses and create comprehensive database
- Offer subscription services that include a Learning Management System
- An interactive site that includes a customer portal that is a private, secure Website that enables Navigate to share account-specific information with customers.



SECTION V: DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES:

The website designed by the successful candidate must meet the following criteria:

- Create an easy content management system that will permit non-technical staff to instantly update website content to specific pages.
- Easy Updating – Once the site has been completed and accepted by Navigate, the site will be maintained by Navigate staff.
- Be visually appealing – The new site must have an attractive mix of text and graphics.
- Common Theme – The website should promote brand consistency in font, color, etc.
- Photographs, fonts and layouts should be consistent throughout the site.
- Easy to Navigate – The site should be easy to navigate. Information should be grouped and presented in a logical manner.
- Provide necessary software and licenses to maintain the site internally or externally as decided by Navigate.
- Provide search capabilities using key words or phrasing that will identify content from throughout the site.
- Capability to share documents with customers through DocuWare a document management system.
- Capability to gather email, areas of interest and demographic information from visitors in a format that permits Navigate to maintain a single database of users and email each according to their area of interest and profile.
- Provide training and all necessary support to permit easy use by selected Navigate staff.
- A more prominent call to action for calendar events and special promotions.
- Social networking sites to be present on Homepage.
- Cross browser accessibility (IE, Firefox, Chrome and all current browsers).
- Support transactions such as online forms and applications, etc.
- Implement a two way system allowing customers to communicate and request information.
- Integrate capabilities for hosting and streaming videos.

SECTION VI: REQUIREMENTS:

Navigate encourages creativity in the proposals submitted; however there are certain requirements for the website project. Your proposal must account for the listed requirements and all other sections of this request.

- Website must not require plug-ins as a default.
- Fast Loading Pages – The website must be designed with a balance of



text and graphics.

- Site must display well on mobile devices.
- Multiple level security, completely contained within the website infrastructure, and not reliant on the existing Navigate network security or peer-to-peer connectivity.
- Easy content management for designated staff to add, remove and update content using tools and templates that do not require extensive knowledge of web development languages or technical structure.
- Capability of the general website administration staff to:
 - Control size of individual web pages
 - Control size and types of images used within the site
 - Control publishing of links to other websites.
 - Report website maintenance activity and statistics on content type: updates, downloadable documents, web pages, calendars, and broken links.
 - Report number of visits to each page of the site.
- Email interfaces, not dependent on a specific email client.
- Capability to share documents with customers through DocuWare a document management system.
- Social bookmarking popup generates after time spent on the site.
- The site and hosting must be designed for continuous operation 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with maintenance windows clearly communicated ahead of time.
- Provide Service Level Agreement from data center where site will be hosted.
- Description of platform, whether open source (preferred) or proprietary, that website will be built upon.
- Provide a staging site for development, training and signoff before “go live”
- Technical Support must be inclusive in the contract for maintenance and support that is not setup for the Navigate staff to provide.
- Adequate training to maximize the use of the website is mandatory. Training shall include administrator and security level as well as a user level. Training will be provided at a minimum in an interactive Webinar format. On-site training would be ideal for administrators.
- Annual support and maintenance of the website would be determined by a maintenance contract and include services such as refreshing the design elements, updating of technology in the website design, engineering, Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and other elements associated with the website. Navigate would like to have these elements included with this project beginning with the first day of “go live” for the website for one (1) year and, as an optional ongoing item and cost with the continuation of this support in one (1) year increments thereafter.
- All linked documents should be in Portable Document Format (PDF), or in a format to provide ease of viewing, printing, and downloading, and in alternate downloadable formats.



- Include links for visitors to download any browser documents, such as Acrobat Reader, that is necessary to view information on the site.
- Option for future development of blogs and/or newsgroups both restricted within a department's portion of the website and made available generally while hosted by a specific department.
- Ability to use current interactive and social networking mediums such as Facebook, Twitter, and RSS feeds, as well as flexibility to add these types of features in the future.
- Respondent will provide availability of standard or custom programming to support audio, video and/or cinemograph integration. Information and pricing for this option should be described separately.

SECTION VII: TRACKING (SUCH AS GOOGLE ANALYTICS TO MINIMIZE COSTS)

Implementation of tracking software to produce user defined site log reports. We need a tool to help us better understand and measure web visitors' behavior and improve website performance and availability. Including:

- Web traffic analysis
- Path analysis
- Visitor trends
- Page views
- Entry pages
- Top pages
- Exit pages
- Page – length of stay
- Technical analysis: browsers and platforms

SECTION VIII: SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The Proposal shall include the qualifications requested. Information should be complete and demonstrate that the Service Provider can perform professional work. You are welcome to provide any other information deemed appropriate for this project.

Introduction:

Prepare a brief introduction including a general demonstration of understanding of the scope and complexity of the required work. The title page of the proposal should contain your firm's name, address, telephone number, principal contact, fax number, and email address. The Proposal should contain a Table of Contents as well as the below qualifications:

- Minimum of five (5) years of verifiable experience designing, developing and implementing enterprise-level web applications.



- Knowledgeable in Web 2.0 functionalities and beyond.
- Experienced in SEO standards proficient in UI design.
- Briefly describe your firm’s organizational capacity to produce our website (e.g. staff, equipment, software, physical space, office location, etc.).
- Provide a company profile, length of time in business and core competencies.
- Please discuss your firm’s project management process.
- Please discuss any hardware/software vendor partnerships used.
- Please discuss your testing and support plan.
- Please explain your service level agreement structure.
- Please disclose any relevant conflicts of interest and/or pending lawsuits.
- Include time frame for completion for evaluation. In addition, timeframes will be part of the contractual agreement; therefore, a realistic timeframe for completion is requested.

Client References:

Provide three comparable websites designed by your firm that exhibit complexity: blend of information and online services, multiple departments providing content, and a wide range of intended audiences. Include the website address, company/agency contact, address, telephone number, and hard copies of the Home Pages. These companies/agencies may be contacted for references. Only sites that are live will qualify during evaluation. Briefly list the role your firm played in each project. Clearly specify which services are provided in-house and which are outsourced.

Pricing and Budget:

The proposal should contain a total cost of the project, as well as a detailed “line item” breakdown of costs for the Website, Learning Management System, Customer Portal, Hosting fees, etc. In addition, please specify:

Hourly rate schedule for each service showing the lowest and highest rate quotes.

Any additional costs/charges (such as traveling expenses) must be clearly defined.

Proposals should include necessary software and hardware, any additional communication requirements, integration needs and potential costs necessary to maintain the website (i.e. hardware, software, installation, licensing, training, etc.).

Proposal should be all encompassing, with a single vendor identified as the “responsible lead vendor”. Please include any subcontractor(s) that will be required to meet the needs of the proposal or clearly indicate what portion of the services are not included as part of your proposal.

Proposal should outline separate costs any add-ons or optional requests specified in RFQ.



Appendix:

An appendix with full resumes is allowed. The appendix material may or may not be considered as part of the selection process.

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will form the basis upon which Navigate will evaluate proposals. The mandatory criteria must be met and include:

Proposals that meet the requirements, as stated above, will be evaluated with the following criteria:

- Suitability of the proposal – the proposed solution meets the needs and criteria set forth in the RFQ
- Expertise in recommending and communicating appropriate technical and aesthetic solutions as evidenced by the proposal and references
- Aesthetic capabilities – Prior work demonstrates artistic and innovative user-friendly interfaces that engage viewers
- Candidate experience – Candidate has successfully completed similar projects and has the qualifications necessary to undertake this project
- Value/Pricing Structure and Price Levels – The price is commensurate with the value offered by the proposer
- The candidate firm has appropriate staff to develop the site in the timeframe needed
- Proposal Presentation – The information is presented in a clear, logical manner and is well organized
- Demonstrated commitment to high service level agreements

E-Verify: The Agent must certify that they do not knowingly employ, hire, or currently employ an unauthorized alien.

Debarment: Respondents to this RFQ must certify that neither it nor its principals are presently debarred, suspended, declared ineligible, or excluded from participation in the activities proposed under this RFQ by any Federal, State, or City Agency.

Equal Opportunity Requirements: Each Agent responding to this RFQ must certify compliance with all applicable equal opportunity requirements

Compliance: All contractors will be required to comply with all applicable federal and state equal opportunity, affirmative action and minority representation laws.



Questions and Responses

02/07/2018

1. **What do you feel your website is currently doing well?** It is easy to navigate on the both ends. It is not too busy.
2. **What are the top three pain points of your current website? (Dense text, hard to navigate, complicated back-end, etc.)** We need more functions. See the RFQ.
3. **Could you please expand on ‘Implement a two way system allowing customers to communicate and request information’?** What is Navigate envisioning here? We are looking to have a portal through the website if possible. We added language to have a portal along with the aforementioned functions.
4. **We see that there is a requirement for the website to not have any plug-ins, is there a reason for this? It appears the current Navigate website is utilizing a few helpful plug-ins.** We requested this because we currently have plugins that can sometimes be problematic. Some do not work well together. Some initially work well together but an update can cause issues. This may be an issue across the board with other options. Our hope was to eliminate plugins for these issues. If plugins are the best option, you can state that within your response.
5. **Could you please clarify what “email interfaces, not dependent on specific email client” entails? What sort of functionalities are you wanting to see?** When the user clicks on a website link, the browser should be smart enough to know that it should open up the default email program.
6. **Does Navigate have an ideal timeframe for this project?** We are in need of an updated site as soon as possible. This is an approved budgeted item to be completed within this year.

